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**Junior League of Greenwich Celebrates 60 years of Community Impact**

It has been said many times that if you live or work in Greenwich, chances are you or someone in your family has felt the effect of a project of the Junior League of Greenwich (JLG). This year, the JLG is celebrating 60 years of impacting the lives of countless Greenwich residents through the design and creation of programs and projects addressing critical community needs. Over the last six decades, the JLG has taken on bricks-and-mortar projects like Kids In Crisis, the daycare center at the Children’s Day School, Greenwich Skatepark, Boundless Playground at Bruce Park and most recently the Greenwich Pool in Byram Park. Projects addressing the environment, parent education, domestic violence, AIDS awareness and affordable housing were conceived, initiated and implemented by the Junior League, as were community mainstays like YES (Youth Employment Service at Greenwich High School), the Den for Grieving Kids and Safety Town.

The JLG was chartered on February 22, 1959 and has continuously served the Greenwich community for 60 years. The Junior League of Greenwich trains its volunteers to research and identify community needs. Through the funds it raises, it initiates programs that meet these needs and then works in partnership with other civic organizations and agencies to implement solutions. The JLG typically administers projects for approximately 2 to 10 years, usually turning them over to an existing agency or organization, but some projects become independent entities.

The League supports its community partners in more ways than just collaborating on projects. Each year, the Junior League of Greenwich awards a Community Grant to an organization seeking financial support for a community need not currently being met by the JLG. The grant is awarded to fund new initiatives or expand programs relating to community needs. Last year, the JLG presented the Community Grant Award to Kids In Crisis (KIC) in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich (BGCG). The grant was utilized to expand KIC’s existing program, “Youth Mental Health First Aid Training,” to the staff at the BGCG. The collaboration allowed KIC to assist the BGCG in supporting the growing need for mental health services for the youth aged 6 to 18 that attend the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich.

Training and developing members is an integral component of the JLG’s mission, as well. The Junior League offers ongoing training sessions to members throughout the year, covering topics like non-profit budgeting, presentation skills, leadership techniques, and even CPR and self-defense. Women who join the JLG spend their first year in the New Member Class where they receive training on how the League operates and then go on to complete several projects of their own. The current New Member class of over 30 women is in the planning stages of projects with three community organizations. The class will provide Neighbor to Neighbor with “Baby Bundles” – packages of necessities for newborns such as diapers, clothing, bottles, and other items for new moms in need. The class will also work with Global Partnership to End Human Trafficking (Global PEHT) by creating wellness kits for women entering Global PEHT’s new mission program. Last but not least, the class will work with the Greenwich Senior Center in executing a “Tech Night” at which new members will assist seniors with technology needs such as setting up an iPad and downloading and logging into apps. Women interested in membership can join the JLG for an Open House on Tuesday, October 1 at 7:30pm. More information can be found at [www.jlgreenwich.org](http://www.jlgreenwich.org).

The Junior League also encourages and recognizes voluntarism within the Greenwich community. Each year, the JLG presents the Community Service Award to a young woman in grades 9-12, who either lives in Greenwich or attends school in Greenwich. The award is intended to recognize a student who exemplifies the mission of the JLG and has clearly demonstrated initiative, leadership and a sustained commitment to community service. Applications are available on the JLG website ([www.jlgreenwich.org](http://www.jlgreenwich.org)) and are being accepted until Friday, March 8, 2019.

Perhaps what the League is best known for, however, are its ongoing community projects. The League is currently running four projects and piloting a fifth. The JLG currently runs two signature programs for Greenwich youth: PositivelyMe! and Boys Achieving More (BAM!). Over 140 girls across 4 sessions participate in the PositivelyMe! program each year, which helps 3rd grade girls develop the skills to be confident, to make good decisions, to be assertive and to express themselves. The program is held at the JLG Headquarters and is free to participants.

The Boys Achieving More (BAM!) program was created to enable development amongst 5th grade boys on the concepts of respect, trust, communication and leadership. The program, delivered in partnership with the Greenwich Council of Boy Scouts of America, the YMCA of Greenwich, REACH Prep and the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich, attracted over 70 fifth grade boys in its pilot year. The JLG welcomed 31 fifth grade boys from 11 schools in Greenwich at Seton Scout Reservation this past fall. The program was in such demand that the session filled within the first 48 hours of opening registration. A second session will take place on Saturday, May 18.

The Done in a Day program develops one-day projects impacting the Greenwich community at large. Most recently the committee hosted its 12th Casino Day at The Nathaniel Witherell for close to 100 residents who enjoyed Roulette, Blackjack, slots and Bingo, with food and drinks. At this annual event, laughter truly is the best medicine! In December, the committee hosted a gingerbread cookie workshop for 80 children at the BGCG, a beloved pre-holiday tradition for both the JLG and the Club. The gingerbread cookie workshop allows eager children to use their creative talents to create and take home a fully decorated, one-of-a-kind “cookie masterpiece.” Other community projects have included a family Halloween trick or treat event and a pajama party for children at the Bruce Museum.

One of the largest brick and mortar projects to date is the Greenwich Pool in Byram Park Project. A public-private partnership was created between the Junior League and the Town of Greenwich to build the new, state of the art outdoor community pool and revitalize Byram Park.  The JLG worked for eight years to advocate for this incredible recreational resource. The successful three-year, $2.5 million capital campaign is open through this May.

The Greenwich Pool in Byram Park opened in June 2018 and had an incredible first season of operation. According to the Greenwich Time, on one of its first days, the pool saw 1,202 people during one eight-hour session. Attendance was steady throughout the summer at an average of 900-1,000 people per day. This new pool will be a landmark in the Greenwich community for years to come.

These programs all occur thanks to fundraising through longstanding community events including the JLG Luncheon held this past spring, the Children’s Theater Series and Touch a Truck. Save the date for the next Children’s show – on Saturday, March 30, 2019 The Cat in the Hat comes to Greenwich! And on Sunday, June 9, 2019 Touch a Truck will return to Greenwich Town Hall!

**About the Junior League of Greenwich**

The Junior League of Greenwich has been bettering the community for 60 years. It is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained individuals. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. The JLG is committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals and reaches out to women of all races, religions, and national origins who demonstrate an interest in and commitment to voluntarism. For more information about the JLG or questions about the show, please contact the Junior League of Greenwich at jlg@jlgreenwich.org and visit our website at [www.jlgreenwich.org](http://www.jlgreenwich.org).

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