

Junior League of Little Rock Community Projects

BUCKLE UP AND BE SAFE!

This is a hands-on program designed to help prevent deaths and serious injuries from motor vehicle crashes by educating children, ages 3 to 10, their parents, and educators about the importance of buckling up for every ride. Children and their parents will also learn how to buckle up, and how to determine whether the children need to ride in a booster seat or if they can correctly fit into an adult lap and shoulder belt. Families are educated through school visits and city-wide car seat check-ups sponsored by the Junior League of Little Rock. The Buckle Up and Be Safe committee uses the I'M SAFE! IN THE CAR curriculum as well as a car seat simulator. At the spring 2007 car seat check up event, the Junior League volunteers and technicians from the UAMS Child Passenger Safety Education Program checked 54 car seat positions to ensure that car seats and booster seats were properly installed. 12 replacement seats, provided by the Junior League of Little Rock, were distributed. Overall, the Buckle Up and Be Safe volunteered over 200 hours in educating the community on car seat safety.

COMMUNITY BANK

Committee members work in several community areas to assist other non-profit organizations on short-term projects, as well as organizing league-wide projects to benefit the community. These areas include more than 30 non-profit groups that fit the JLLR focus statement of helping women children and families in our community. Race for the Cure, Riverfest, Women & Children First, Centers for Youth & Families, Arkansas Rice Depot, CARTI, Easter Seals, Arkansas Candlelighters, and the Red Cross are among many of the groups assisted. The Community Bank committee also organized a reading day at Watson Elementary in which 50 League members volunteered to read to the students. They also had the general membership make encouraging cards and healthy snacks to be passed out at Watson during standardized testing week. The Community Bank committee volunteered over 1,100 hours in the Little Rock community last year.

GROW- GIRLS REALIZING OPPORTUNITY WITHIN

This project is designed to reach adolescent girls at a time when their self-esteem and self-image is most vulnerable. Approximately 65 girls from 6 Little Rock School District middle schools will be targeted for participation this year. GROW girls attend monthly Saturday meetings and two retreats throughout the school year. At the meetings the JLLR volunteers will help each girl to develop an inner confidence to make better choices in her life and develop leadership skills through educational and enrichment activities. Program topics include goal-setting and communication skills, career orientation, manners and etiquette, voluntarism, money management, and health and nutrition. Since the project began in 2004, GROW has mentored 180 young women. Through empowering girls in the community, the JLLR will develop a solid core of girls with the ability to be community leaders as they mature.

KOTA CAMP FOR FUN: SPECIALTY CAMP AT ALDERSGATE

JLLR, in partnership with Camp Aldersgate, sponsors two one-week summer camps and mini weekend camps in the Fall and Spring for children with and without disabilities. These camps allow siblings to go to camp together and provide a respite for parents with children who have unique needs. KOTA camp is beneficial to all campers from ages 6-18 years old and gives all children the opportunity to succeed and feel a sense of accomplishment. In addition to helping the camp provide lodging, providing staff for camps, meals, and materials needed for activities, the JLLR sponsors registration day, an ice-cream social, a carnival, a dinner and dance, fishing derbies and closing ceremonies. This year over 200 children benefited from KOTA camps.

NIGHTINGALES

This project provides volunteers who plan and facilitate weekly activity nights and special event dinners for parents and families of Arkansas Children's Hospital patients, and patients and parents residing at the UAMS Family Home. Junior League members provide much-needed diversionary activities such as games, crafts, massage and relaxation programs, and snacks. The committee also serves holiday meals to over 200 people at event and delivers treats to the waiting areas during the holidays. These activities and other special events to help families cope with a long-term hospital stay. This year, the Nightingales Committee members volunteered over 3,000 hours to families in need. This project continues to expand and touch new patients – as one woman said “For a moment, I forgot I was even sick.”

PARTNERS FOR HOPE

JLLR, in partnership with the Hope Center, developed this program to address issues facing women transitioning from welfare to work. This non-profit organization is dedicated to meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of participants, enabling them to become self-sufficient members of the community. Monthly programming includes educational seminars on parenting, smoking cessation, domestic violence, dental hygiene, health screenings and wellness, budgeting and finance, job training, as well as car seat safety. Partners for Hope committee members are trained to mentor these women and help them set goals to improve their quality of life. The committee also plans family outings around the

community at no cost to the women and their families. Partners for Hope provides a safe environment for women to share and realize their goals and talents. Since its inception in 1999, Partners for Hope has dedicated more than 400 volunteer hours per year and helped more than 80 women receive job training, gain new employment, earn raises and become financially independent, and even obtain college degrees.

STUFF THE BUS

This is a program designed to help ensure school-age children in Little Rock have the school supplies needed for a successful school year. It is the hope that these children having all the necessary tools will be more engaged in the learning process and less likely, in the future, to drop out of school. During the 2007-08 school year, the 1,256 students at both Watson and Chicot Elementary schools benefited from this program. \$26 was spent on each student to ensure that all essential school supplies were provided. League members, teachers, and school families helped to deliver the supplies before school began. The Stuff the Bus committee members dedicated over 1,000 hours to the success of this project. Over the past two years, more than 1,800 students in the Little Rock School District have benefited from the supplies provided by Stuff the Bus.