

# volunteers forever

## Junior League of Little Rock builds leaders for life

WE ASKED JoBeth McElhanon, current president of the Junior League of Little Rock, a simple question. Where would Little Rock be without a Junior League?

“We may never fully comprehend the number of lives touched along the way, but I can testify to our legacy of service. Volunteers of the Little Rock Junior League began by caring for infants and mothers in 1921 through the Well Baby Station and later extended the reach to all family members. Today, 70 years later, the elderly and sick continue to feel the outreach of the Visiting Nurses Association. We’ve protected and cared for children through programs such as SCAN (1972), The Parent Center (1980), Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (1977), Buckle Up and Be Safe car seat safety, and KOTA Camp for Kids.

“JLLR has given the gift of knowledge and education through the Speech Correction School (1947-1955) and numerous literacy programs. Today, we provide the tools necessary for learning to more than 1,500 students through Stuff the Bus. Since its inception in the 1970s, we remain as Volunteers in Public Schools (ViPS) in conjunction with the Little Rock School District.

“We’ve expanded the creative minds of Arkansans by building the Arkansas Arts Center (1958), by founding The Arkansas Wind Festival now known as Riverfest (1977) and by volunteering and initiating the Imagination Station of the Museum of Discovery (1996). We’ve fed the hungry through the food recovery program, Potluck (1989), and we established Gaines House (1966). In 2001, we were at the forefront of revitalizing downtown Little Rock with the purchase and renovation of the Woman’s City Club, which was renamed the Junior League of Little Rock Building in 2006. We continue to believe in the strength of the women, mothers and girls we mentor through our other current community projects – FACT (Families and Community Together), Partners for Hope, GROW (Girls Realizing Opportunity Within), and Nightingales,” McElhanon concluded.

Here’s what members of the JLLR Board have to say about their League experiences: (in order from top left)

**MELANIE HOOVER:** I have continued to participate in the Junior League of Little Rock because I have thoroughly enjoyed serving with talented and dedicated women whose concerted efforts make a real difference in our community.

**JOBETH MCELHANON:** The League gives me the opportunity to be linked to the 87 years and thousands of volunteers before me who have made a tremendous impact in the lives of women and children.

**AMY KURCZEK:** I really love that we do so much good for the community. I am constantly around like-minded women who push me to be better and do more while supporting me in multiple ways which keeps me excited about continuing my League service.

**JENNIFER PIERCE:** What has kept me involved in the League is my commitment – to the League, to our community and to training volunteers and future leaders for our community.

**ELLEN HILL:** Seeing our GROW girls graduate, students receive school supplies or car seats installed correctly to keep children safe have been just some of the things that keep me involved.

**MIMI HURST:** The legacy of the JLLR’s good works is well known, and I wanted to be a part of that type of organization and hopefully help keep the legacy growing for future volunteer women.

**MISSY DUKE:** I remain active in the League because of its longstanding commitment to the community and its willingness to meet those needs not otherwise being met.

**COURTNEY MCLARTY:** The JLLR improves our community through providing volunteers, funding and leadership support, developing the potential of its members through action and training, AND has a great time in the process!

**ASHLEY OLINGHOUSE:** JLLR is an organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and children, and it is our tremendous impact in the community and our commitment to service that drives me!

**TISHA GRIBBLE:** All of the women in the Junior League are drawn together by the spirit of volunteerism. That common bond has created lasting and meaningful friendships for me.

**BECKA WEBB:** Every time that I would get to see one of the GROW Girls learn something new or try something they had never experienced before; it made all of the hard work worth every minute. I guess you could say that I benefited from GROW as much as the girls did.

To find out more about the Junior League of Little Rock, visit [Jllr.org](http://Jllr.org), or call 375-5557. ■

