

FALL 2024

DONOR REPORT



JUNIOR  LEAGUE
of **WASHINGTON**

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FALL 2024

2024

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WASHINGTON



"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life." –Melody Beattie

Dear JLW Members, Partners, Supporters and Donors,

Words cannot express the level of gratitude I hold for your generous support. For over 112 years, the Junior League of Washington (JLW) has maintained a vibrant presence in the greater Washington, DC area, serving as a transformational volunteer and community resource for women, children and their families. Because of your time, talent and treasure, we continue to fulfill and enhance our mission of advancing women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration and training.

For the 2024-2025 League year, our call to action is simple: to make our League and community S.H.I.N.E. We are dedicated to S: Serving the Community, H: Honoring our Mission, I: Expanding our Impact, N: Nurturing the Next Generation and E: Empowering our Members. Your support helps us make a direct impact in the community by supporting pathways to opportunity for those in need.

Whether you are a new donor, monthly recurring donor, ticket purchaser, an in-kind gift donor, or corporate sponsor, I have two special words: thank you! Thank you for believing in JLW and helping us to S.H.I.N.E. bright and do good!

I hope you enjoy our Fall 2024 Donor's Report and see the impact your donation has in our community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CS', written in a cursive style.

Charlyn Stanberry
President, 2024-2025
Junior League of Washington

2023-2024

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FRIENDS OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE



Dear JLW Members,

I have been a member of the Junior League of Washington (JLW) for over a decade, and have served in leadership roles and varied capacities across different committees, councils, and board positions. During this time, I was (and still am) growing as a woman in the Washington D.C. area, as a friend, and as a professional. I can say with confidence that the opportunities the League afforded me set me up for success not only for my roles within JLW, but they also impacted my ability to grow in my career, strengthened my friendships, and furthered my commitment and roots in the Washington, D.C area.

This is my “why,” as it’s what motivates me to give to the League. I encourage each reader to think about their own “why,” while reflecting on the perspectives shared by Caroline Bruckner, the Chair of the Literacy Events Planning (LEP) Committee, Kris Panico, a Member of both the Esprit and Friends of JLW Committees, and Betsy Bennett, donor and JLW Board Member, who are all featured in this report.

Each person I spoke with had a different reason for joining and getting involved. I was inspired by each one of them. By that, I mean, why we devote our time to the League, why we contribute our funds to the League, and why we hope to cultivate that culture of philanthropy within others in the organization and beyond.

Donations of any kind are incredibly important and valued by the League. Whether it’s a one-time donation to a fundraiser, a recurring monthly contribution, or a gift of \$5 or \$500, each donation is vital to help the League further its mission. Our ultimate goal is to have maximum participation!

This Fall 2024 Donor’s Report is meant to help readers understand the “why” of our donors and also understand the impact that our organization has on our community. We know there are hundreds of women like the ones featured on these pages who have their own reasons for giving to the League, and we hope this report encourages everyone to join them.

To those that have already donated, thank you. You are integral to the success of the League. We appreciate you and value the support that you have provided to our organization.

Yours in service,

Mandy Asgeirsson
Chair, Friends of JLW Committee

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: BETSY BENNETT

Interviewer: Mandy Asgeirsson

Editor: Gabrielle Murphy

Friends of the Junior League Chair, Mandy Asgeirsson, sat down with Junior League of Washington (JLW) Member and current Board Member, Betsy Bennett, to discuss why she donates to JLW each year, in addition to her consistent support of the League through her time and talent over the past seven years.

Mandy: Betsy, thanks so much for meeting with me today. Tell me, what inspires you to remain committed to contributing to JLW not just financially but also with your time and talent?

Betsy: I moved to the DC area in 2015 for work, and when I did, I didn't know anyone—not even a friend of a friend. I decided to join JLW to get my footing and create roots in the area. In the years since I joined, the organization has given me so much and has built the community I was searching for when I joined. Because of this, I now strive to give back to an organization that has given me so much.

Mandy: That makes so much sense. In talking with others, the League serves that same purpose for many women—our shared purpose gives us a sense of community. What are some of your JLW experiences that you think contributed to your motivation to give back?

Betsy: Over the years, I have attended so many Development & Trainings (D&Ts), other leadership trainings, and social activities, but one experience that stands out to me is the Get on Board Training. This training provides JLW members with the knowledge and networking that can eventually help in their journey to non-profit board membership. This incredibly valuable opportunity was provided to me at no additional cost. I wouldn't even know where to look to try and find comparable training on my own.

Mandy: That is great! I know when I was involved with the New Member Council, I would constantly talk to prospective new members who were looking for that exact experience. The League affords us so many training and service opportunities that would be much more expensive and harder to find if JLW did not facilitate those opportunities. You mentioned briefly that you give to the League because of how much it has impacted you as a member and woman. What are some of the things that you think about when deciding how much to give and when to donate?



Betsy: When I began to get involved with leadership, I was involved in the Membership Development Council and the Strategic Sustainability Council. It was at this point that I was also in a position where I could contribute financially. I learned about how our dues do not cover all of our expenses, and I started giving because I saw the value in the opportunities that we provide to our members. For example, I love the Women's Leadership Breakfast (WLB). If I were to search outside of the League for something comparable, I would probably pay more, and the networking and development opportunities would fall short of what I think JLW's events can provide. I think about the networking activities and benefits that can be gained from events like WLB, along with the social opportunities that are available at little to no cost to the members, and I am motivated to ensure that we can keep providing those opportunities to our members.

Mandy: If you had to think about one parting thought to provide our readers, what would that be?

Betsy: I think it's important to note that I haven't always been able to contribute financially to the League. When I first moved here, I wasn't able to attend all of our ticketed events or contribute regularly from a financial perspective other than my dues. Now that I've been here for a while and am at a place in my life where I can do so, I feel I must do so while I can. I also am encouraged to know that when my life circumstances change, I can tailor my contributions to fit my life, in the same way that the Junior League has done that for me.

Mandy: That is such an important point. We don't expect our members to give every year or give very much, but we encourage them to think about what the League has given them and how they can give back. It's such a great perspective to think about having the League fit and change with your life circumstances. I appreciate you chatting with me today, and of course, am so grateful for your contributions of time, talent, and treasure to JLW. Thank you for being such an inspiration today – I hope your reflections can inspire others as well!

LITERARY EVENTS PLANNING COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: CAROLINE BRUCKNER*

Mandy Asgeirsson, Chair of Friends of the Junior League, met with Caroline Bruckner, the current Chair of the Literacy Events Planning (LEP) committee. The LEP committee is tasked with planning and managing the JLW areas of the National Book Festival (NBF). NBF has been run by the Library of Congress for over 20 years and is one of the most prominent literary events in the nation. The festival was founded by First Lady Laura Bush and then Librarian of Congress James H. Billington in 2001. Since its founding, attendance has skyrocketed from 25,000 attendees in 2001 to more than 200,000 in 2024. LEP is also tasked with running JLW's Resolution Read initiative, which distributes thousands of new books to children and families who do not readily have access to them, and administering the Youth Poetry contest for DC Public and DC Public Charter school students in grades four through eight. The committee also implements other literacy related events with community partners and local nonprofits. The discussion between Mandy and Caroline focused on the NBF, its impact on the community, and its reliance on the JLW.

Mandy: Caroline, thanks so much for meeting with me today. You've been involved with LEP for many years. Tell me a little more about your experience with the NBF?

Caroline: The NBF was founded when Laura Bush was First Lady. The first year, JLW was not involved. As a Junior League member herself, Mrs. Bush reached out to JLW in search of an organization that could mobilize a large group of volunteers. We have been working with the NBF ever since. The JLW is integral in ensuring that the NBF runs smoothly. Without us, the book signing lines would not run the same, along with many other tasks run by JLW volunteers. I think it is an amazing event because it is the one day where JLW has a critical mass of women in the League volunteering at the same place. It's our largest signature volunteer event, and its impact on the people who attend each year is well-known by people from all over the country.

Mandy: That is so great to hear. With such a large League, having an event where women across the organization can volunteer and come together is important to the community we build internally. You noted when we first started chatting how important JLW volunteers are to the NBF. Tell me a little bit more about our role, and how our volunteers impact its success.

Caroline: As you know, one of our primary roles is leading the book-signing lines. This last year, the NBF hired a new literary director. With that addition, the NBF had more authors, and had introduced new genres (such as romance), and increased the popularity of the event. Our institutional knowledge and expertise allowed us to successfully run the book lines and provide a great experience for both the fans and authors. For example, Rebecca Yarros was present this year. As a wildly popular author, she has had to actually shut down her book-signing lines at other book festivals due to crowds. Her management team said that the author has "never been able to sign that fast or that smoothly, so [our process at the NBF] was really quite impressive." This year, we increased the number of JLW volunteers to a total of 350 - an increase of 130 volunteers from 2023.

Mandy: You've talked a lot about how JLW plays a key part in the success of the NBF. This means that JLW needs to be able to run and operate in order to provide volunteers. What would you say to prospective donors and their downstream impact on the NBF?

Caroline: I can't emphasize enough that the NBF relies on our volunteers to run efficiently. As such, donating to JLW and our operations is critical to our ability to execute. The NBF is an event where the JLW brand really shines. In addition to being featured in our marketing materials, attendees know that the women in the white and black hats are resources. This marketing opportunity is so important and wouldn't exist if we didn't have donor support within the League.

Mandy: Lastly, you've been in the League for quite some time and served almost exclusively on LEP. What would you say motivates you to come back to the League and back to LEP each year?

Caroline: I joined JLW so that I would have opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways in the community. Once I found that LEP was a way I could do so, I have been committed to both ever since. It's been a great experience to be able to continue to contribute in different ways as my life has changed. I was a member of the committee for many years while my children were younger and was able to take on this leadership role now, which has been such a rewarding experience.

Mandy: Caroline, it was so nice chatting with you and learning about your experience as a member of LEP, a leader of LEP, and an outspoken advocate for the NBF. Thank you for sharing your story and JLW's impact has had on the NBF and our community.

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

LEP SPOTLIGHT

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: KRIS PANICO

Friends of the Junior League Chair, Mandy Asgeirsson, chatted with Junior League of Washington Member, Esprit volunteer, and a secondary placement on the Friends of the JLW, to discuss why she volunteers on multiple committees, and why she contributes financially to the league.

Mandy: When and why did you join JLW?

Kris: During the pandemic, I took that time to reflect on what I wanted to do with my life once things got back to normal and I was able to return to activities with more people. I knew I wanted to be more engaged with the DC community and contribute to helping my neighbors. I began googling volunteer opportunities in DC and ran across the JLW. Although I had heard of it before, I didn't really know much about it. [I learned that] the League was much more than the opportunity to volunteer, and was impressed with the training and development activities. So, I registered for an information session and the rest is history. JLW continues to exceed my expectations. What really stands out to me is there is nowhere else where I have met so many amazing, smart, compassionate women who inspire me.

Mandy: Well, we are so glad to have you in the League, and so glad you found us. One of the reasons I reached out to you is because you are on Esprit and also a secondary on Friends of JLW? It clearly shows your commitment to the League, and your passion for our donors and members. Can you tell me a bit more about your motivation to get involved, and your motivation to join more than one committee?

Kris: I initially joined Esprit because the committee was flexible, and I could serve around my busy work travel schedule. As I got involved, I realized that Esprit is the heart of the League. I could have gone to a soup kitchen, tutoring program, or shelter to volunteer on my own instead of joining the League, however, what makes JLW special is the bigger impact we have as part of a group, and shared friendship with people who care about their community and want to make a difference. I also saw how people were in need of opportunities to have meaningful connections with others. Esprit brings people out of their committee silos and strengthens our relationships across the organization. It creates social support for JLW women who work so hard volunteering on top of demanding careers and family responsibilities. The more experience I have gotten on Esprit, the more critical I know the committee is, and the more I want to create positive, meaningful events for our members to connect. As I learned about the League, I knew there was much more potential in fundraising. In a prior phase of my life, I was a professional fundraiser in New York City. My expertise is in raising large donations from wealthy philanthropists. I saw more potential in our individual donor strategy. When I asked how I could contribute to our strategy, they referred me to the Friends of the Junior League, so I reached out and took it on as a secondary placement.



Mandy: We are so happy you've found a home within JLW, and that you were able to make time for two committees! You also give back as a donor to JLW. What motivates you to donate?

Kris: Our work is invaluable to our members and the community, and I want to advance JLW's mission. Whenever someone tells me they support or advocate for something, I ask them if they support it with their time and money. That represents true commitment to me. Some people are uncomfortable talking about money, or think that there is something wrong with having resources. However, I worked in the non-profit sector for years and I continue to work in the social service sector. I've seen firsthand that if you want to have impact, you need resources, and that includes funding. And that means you have to give money, and talk about giving. Every person has different means and abilities to give, but when I find something that is rare and providing value, I want it to succeed and I do what I can to support it financially.

Mandy: I love that notion so much, and it ties in so well with what we do on the Friends of JLW Committee. Do you have any thoughts or advice to share with our potential donors to JLW?

Kris: We have only scratched the surface of what JLW can do in DC, for serving those in need in our community, and for building up the women who are members to be leaders in the region. It is an organization like no other, needed more than ever, and there is so much more potential in JLW - but that potential needs funding. The talent of our members and the resources we have can be leveraged for greater impact. We need the women who have benefited from JLW, and who believe in the mission, to invest in the future of the League. If that sounds like something you agree with, and you have the means, I challenge you to make a significant multi-year financial commitment to support the League and take us to a new level of impact. A multi-year commitment provides the stability needed to free up the intense resources and time spent on fundraising many one-time small donations so that the organization has financial stability and can focus on our mission. We need members to help take the organization to a next level. I challenge you to join me and give not just of your time, but of your resources as well to the League.

Mandy: Kris, thank you so much for your time today, and your continual contributions of time, talent, and treasure to JLW. We are so lucky to have you as a member.

DONOR RECOGNITION 2023-2024*

Capitol Champion

Betsy Bennett

Gold

Jacqueline Frederick-Maturo

Barbara Franklin

Kris Panico

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Gretchen Ehle

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Charlyn Stanberry

Robin J. Griffin

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Katherine Gensler

Alexis Olive

Mandy Asgeirsson

Amanda Walke

Chloe Taylor

Jennifer Fitzpatrick

Rachel Volkmann

Jessica Taylor White

Lauren Dudley

Louisa Watson

Abbey Kang

Bronze

Lori Ann Terjesen

Emily Jordan

Kelly Hunter

Carolyn Wilson

Rynnie Cotter

Randi Williams

Brian Harbison

Brittany SmithShimer

Deena Smith

Ashley Douglass

Joan Caton Cromwell

Katherine Rodriguez

Maria Barroso

Prianka Sharma

Smruti Radkar

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Jashawn Stewart

Beverly Rouse

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Chien Hua Pan

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Malik Anwar

Melissa E. Miller

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*Based on donations captured 1/1/2024 through 11/1/2024.

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