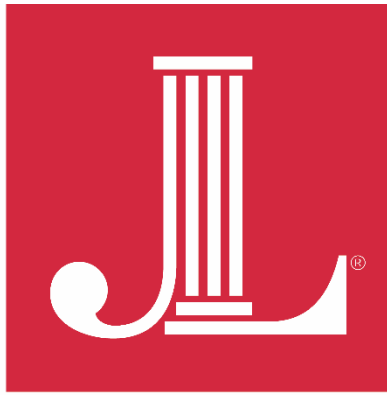




JUNIOR LEAGUE

DULUTH

ANNUAL REPORT

2024–2025





JUNIOR LEAGUE
DULUTH

Mission:

Junior League of Duluth is an organization of women whose mission is to advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training.

Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The Junior League welcomes all women who value our Mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations and communities.

Vision:

The Junior League: Women Around the World as Catalysts
for Lasting Community Change

Junior League of Duluth, Inc.

2711 W Superior St., Suite 205

Duluth, MN 55806

Phone: 218.727.0341

Email: info@juniorleagueduluth.org

www.juniorleagueduluth.org

President's Letter

A Message from the President: Lauren Farden

As I reflect on this year with the Junior League of Duluth, I'm overwhelmed with pride and gratitude. Our theme, Roots and Branches: Cultivating Our Growth, has guided us in everything we've done — grounding us in our legacy while pushing us to grow, stretch, and expand our reach in meaningful ways.

Our roots are strong. They are the foundation laid by generations of women who came before us — women who believed in the power of community, leadership, and service. That legacy continues today, carried forward by the dedication and passion of every single member of our League.

This year, we've seen our branches grow in inspiring and impactful ways. Our board has led with incredible heart and intention — creating opportunities, providing support, and fostering a culture of collaboration and purpose. This work has been essential in shaping the success of this League year.

We celebrated another successful and record-breaking Festival of Trees, which always brought joy to our community. Our second annual Find the Good Day was another reminder of how small actions — rooted in kindness and intention — can spread far and wide, creating a ripple of good throughout our region.

We've welcomed new faces to the League with multiple New Member events, and it's been a joy to watch these incredible women jump in with energy and ideas. We've also made the most of our time together by launching several "Done in a Day" and "Done in a Meeting" service drives, directly benefitting our local communities with donations, support, and hands-on action. These moments of impact — both large and small — remind us why we do what we do.

We've also invested in the growth of our members, with a slate of engaging speakers and community leaders who joined us to offer training, share stories, and inspire us to lead with courage and compassion. The learning and leadership that happens within our League strengthens not only our organization but also the many spaces our members influence in their professional and personal lives.

This year, we were proud to nominate two of our members for prestigious honors, including AJLI's 40 Women Over 40 Awards and the Rosie Award. These nominations reflect the deep talent, passion, and leadership that lives within our League — women who are creating impact, inspiring others, and helping shape the future of Duluth and beyond. It's a joy to see their work recognized and celebrated.

Thank you to every single member who played a role in making this year so special. Whether you served on a committee, participated in an event, brought a guest to a meeting, or simply shared the League's mission with a friend — your contributions mattered. They helped grow our reach, our strength, and our ability to serve.

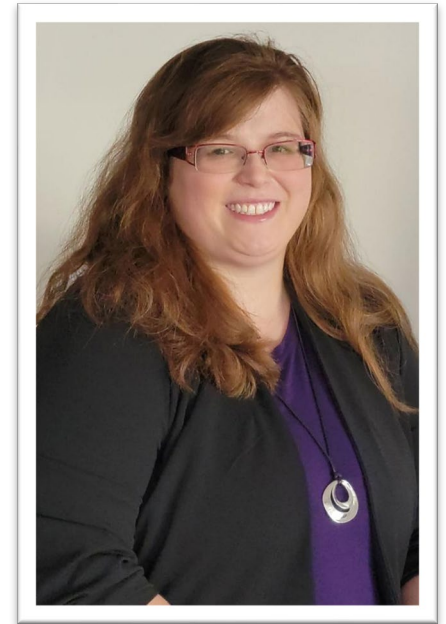
It has truly been an honor to serve as President of the Junior League of Duluth. This year has deepened my belief in the power of women coming together with purpose, and I'm so grateful to have shared this experience with all of you.

As we look ahead, I'm filled with hope and excitement. The Junior League of Duluth is growing — not just in numbers, but in impact, visibility, and leadership. And I know that with our strong roots and ever-reaching branches, there's no limit to what we can do.

With deep appreciation,



Lauren Farden
JLD President 2024–2025



LEADERSHIP

President: Lauren Farden*

President-Elect: Addie Trettel*

President-Elect-Elect/Secretary/Arrangements: Melissa LaTour*

Sustainer Reps: Michelle Hargrave* and Lisa Plachta*



Community Council

Director: Patty Salo Downs*

Community Funding Lead: Breanna Guthmiller

Sustainer Representative: Brenda Beard Conley

Communications Council

Director: Emily Andrews*

External Communications Lead: Anna Nelson

Internal Communications Lead: Kathy Jensen

Web Lead: Allison Garver

Sustainer Representative: Jennifer Berry

Finance Council

Director: Nikki Staton*

Treasurer: Ann Chouinard

Endowment Chair: Lisa B. Plachta

Sustainer Representative: Beth Ahrens

Membership Council

Director: Jenna Schmidt*

Training/Ed Lead: Alexis Elder

Member Development Lead: unfilled

Nominating/Placement Lead: Sue Murphy*

Nominating/Placement Advisors: Stephanie

Forslund and Patty Salo Downs

Sustainer Representative: Rita Rosenberger

* denotes Board of Directors member

Festival of Trees Committee: Gina Apodaca, paid staff; Angela Engblom, assistant to Gina and Santa; Lauren Farden, food bank/CHUM; Addie Trettel, raffle gift basket and volunteer coordinator; Sue Murphy, sponsorships; Michelle Hargrave and Lisa B. Plachta, toffee; Melissa LaTour, tree decorating and auction; and Katie Kuettel, assistant/past tree lead



2024–25 JLD Board of Directors: Left to right: Susan Murphy, Nicole Staton, Melissa LaTour, Lauren Farden, Jenna Schmidt, Lisa B. Plachta, Patty Salo Downs, Michelle Hargrave, Emily Andrews, and Addie Trettel.

SUSTAINERS

Sustainers

Michelle Hargrave and Lisa B. Plachta, Sustainer Advisors to the 2024–2025 JLD Board

- The Fall Sustainer Gathering was held on a lovely afternoon in October. Hosted by Jan Stone at beautiful Zvago Lake Superior, this event was well attended by sustainers and JLD Board members alike. We shared a table laden with delicious appetizers and enjoyed an afternoon of lively conversation.
- 400 pounds of JLD toffee was ordered from Canelake's Candies and sustainers pitched in to break and package it at First Lutheran on the Thursday before FOT. The 35 bags that remained after FOT were sold at The Depot's Great Hall Marketplace in December.
- Sustainers filled well over one third of the shifts for Festival of Trees with others stopping by when they could to help fill inevitable holes in the schedule. We had a VERY successful FOT, thanks to all who made this possible!
- Wine Not? Our FOT raffle basket took second place for number of tickets sold, cheers!!!
- On December 17th we enjoyed a festive Holiday Social at Pier B while taking in the beautiful lights from Bentleyville.
- Celebrated our nominees: Sustainer Jennifer Webb, for the 2025 Rosie Awards on March 5 and "Actainer" Patty Salo Downs for AJLI's 40 over 40 Award.
- Sustainers continued to meet monthly for First Wednesday throughout the year.

We would like to thank each of you for your strong and committed support to JLD. Your contributions through heart, hand, and wallet alike help amplify our voice, continue our commitment to this community, and sustain this League!

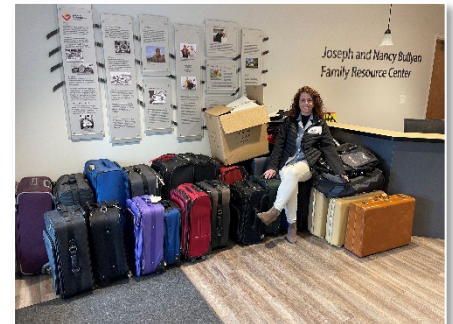


COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Community Council

Community Council Committee Members: Patty Salo Downs, Director; Breanna Guthmiller, Community Funding Lead; Brenda Beard Conley, Sustainer Representative; Carly Gosar, Vickie Meyers, Amanda Sutton and Gwen Woerpel, council members

- September: coordinated press conference to celebrate **Find the Good Day**, an AJLI initiative. Several 2024 grant recipients spoke about their organizations; the event garnered excellent publicity and was covered by all three TV stations and the Duluth News Tribune.
- October: DIAMs Damiano coffee mug drive (66 mugs donated) and ECFE diaper drive (836 diapers collected)
- October: Kayla Pridmore, Community Action, provided an update on the Deep Winter Greenhouse at the GMM and, in January, offered a tour of the greenhouse for members. It was a joy to see green plants growing in the dead of winter!
- October: launched Finding a Focus for JLD; members responded to AJLI Five Pillars and results were presented at the February GMM; updates will be presented at Annual Dinner
- October: Creating Connection: Authentic Listening and Speaking workshop with 52 attendees; high ratings were received on the evaluation and 16 people signed up to attend monthly practice sessions. This workshop was funded by a grant from JLD Endowment and St. Louis County Family Services Collaborative.
- October: launched a gym equipment drive for Bethel; over 16 large workout machines and numerous smaller items were collected from members and community partners. At the January GMM, Kim Gerads, Bethel Clinical Supervisor, discussed the organization's mission for supporting those in recovery and extended appreciation to JLD for their work.
- December: hygiene and beauty products were donated by members at the Holiday Social for women in recovery at Highlands Restoration and Wellness Facility, Superior, WI. Executive Director, Emily Mack, gave a presentation about the facility and what inspired her to build it.
- February: members assembled 75 Breakfast Bags for the CHUM Lincoln Park Warming Center. Drew Filkins, Director of the center, provided information about their services and highlighted their collaboration with other organizations.
- February/March: Community Council and the Endowment Committee reviewed 19 grant applications and selected 11 nonprofit organizations to receive grants for a total of \$30,878 (\$15,000 from the General Fund and \$15,878 from Endowment). Recipients were honored with checks at the April GMM reception.
- March 6: Patty Salo Downs participated in the South St. Louis County Resilience Conversation. Over 30 area nonprofits participated in the inaugural event to define and address challenges that affect long-term community health and well-being. JLD will continue to be a participant at these quarterly meetings.
- March/April: launched DIAM Luggage of Love bag drive for Bethany Crisis Shelter.
- May 3: hosted a Basic Self-Defense class for members and their families and friends held at Inner Strength Martial Arts, Superior, WI.



 WOMEN BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES® 		
Name of Organization	AMOUNT	For the Purpose Of
1. Armory Arts & Music Resource Center	\$1,800	Computer, Software, Microphones for Recording Music
2. Center for Women and Children	\$8,128	Purchase of Food for Weekly Food Boxes
3. CHUM - Steve O'Neil Apartments	\$5,000	Purchase of Food the Once a Month Community Meal
4. Community Action Duluth	\$2,000	Power of Produce - Free Food for Kids & 60+
5. Damiano Center	\$3,000	Purchase of Food for Community Kitchen
6. Duluth Farm to School	\$1,200	Gardening Supplies & Youth Programming
7. Lincoln Park Children & Families Collaborative	\$2,250	Grocery Shopping Carts
8. Northern Expression Arts Collective	\$2,000	Art Supplies for Family Art Activities
9. PAVSA	\$2,000	Trauma Informed Yoga
10. The Depot Foundation - Arts for All	\$1,500	Scholarships for Arts & Cultural Activities
11. YMCA - Youth Cultural Enrichment	\$2,000	Youth Cultural Enrichment Summer Program
TOTAL:	\$30,878	COMMUNITY GRANTS AWARDED IN 2025

COMMUNICATIONS/PLANNING COUNCILS

Communication Council

- Completed AJLI's Find the Good Day (FTGD) campaign; updated website with FTGD content and graphics, modified AJLI content for relevance to JLD and posted on social media and website
- Updated the Junior League of Duluth public- and member-facing websites to provide event information and facilitate registration for all events including Festival of Trees (vendor applications and volunteers), Holiday Social, Duluth Thrives workshop, Annual Dinner, and New Member events
- Facilitated Community grant opportunity and set up application portal
- Revised membership status and placements for 2024–25, updated member directory, and set up 2025–2026 dues/donation payment in the member portal
- Publicized important information and updates to members through Take a Minute Mondays, E-Lights and other email communications
- Produced the Junior League of Duluth newsletter, League Lights, and arranged both electronic and hard copy delivery
- Compiled and formatted content for Annual Report and arranged for printing
- Additional promotions included DIADs, DIAMs, New Member events and AJLI social media campaigns

Planning Council

- October: Melissa LaTour arranged the Festival of Trees tree auction decorating party with the assistance of Katie Kuettel. We had a record number of trees to auction this year including a full-size tree.
- November: JLD participated in the Christmas City of the North Parade hosted by KBJR
- December: JLD held their Holiday Social at Pier B Resort overlooking the beautiful Bentleyville Tour of Lights. At this social, Alexis Elder spoke about AI and members donated their gently used JLD swag in our JLD Swag Swap.
- January: Melissa LaTour updated the 2024–2025 mini directory, mailed to all Sustainers/Sustainer Emeritus members. Thank you to Sue Murphy, Mickey Ferguson, and Katie Kuettel for assistance with proofing.
- February: President-Elect Addie Trettel and President Elect-Elect Melissa LaTour traveled to San Diego for AJLI's 2025 Executive Leadership Training where they attended classes including *Every Woman, All Things, Roles You Oversee* and *Being An Ambassador for Your Brand, Small Leagues with Unified Board/Council Structures*, and more!
- April: Addie Trettel and Melissa LaTour met with Leadership Duluth's Director to create a Memorandum of Understanding securing a spot for a JLD member to participate in the program with paid tuition. Addie and Melissa also worked with the Chamber of Commerce to update their website with information on the history of JLD's partnership with the Chamber. Speaking opportunities will also be considered for members of JLD.
- Work has continued on updating the bylaws, policies, and procedures with the goal of having them all updated and ready to go for the 2025–2026 league year!



MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Membership Council

The council held three New and Potential Member events during the 2024–2025 League year:

- Monday, October 7, at the Loch Café and Games
 - Three potential members joined a handful of active members to play the board game Pandemic while enjoying the specialty drinks the Loch Café and Games offers.
- Thursday, February 6, at Mix Cosmetics in Superior
 - Ten new and potential members joined active members in making a body scrub at Mix Cosmetics' new location on Tower Avenue in Superior.
- Wednesday, April 9, at Wild State Cider in the Craft District
 - We had six new and potential members join us for a social hour with Wild State's free Bingo following. We had Yes, Cheese provide a charcuterie platter for snacks.

We also held a New Member Orientation at LSAR on Saturday, March 1. At this 2-hour session, we provided an overview of the following topics: AJLI and JLD history, membership benefits and requirements, community impact, and governance and councils.



We are very excited to welcome six new members that are joining this year:

Jodi Anderson, Cecelia Boyle, Jodi Broadwell, Carly Gosar, Ciara Macklanburg and Amber Zibrowski

Odd and Ends:

- Unofficially the cutest Festival of Trees Raffle Basket theme: Book Worm
- Updated onboarding process including an onboarding packet, timeline, and orientation curriculum
- GMM training and experiences including:
 - Restorative Practices, Healthy Hillside Initiatives, and Ethel Ray & Diversity in Duluth
 - Thank You cards to Festival of Tree Vendors, And, more!

Other Membership Accomplishments:

- Nominated Patty Salo Downs for AJLI's 40 over 40 Award which received over 200 applications and sadly she was not selected but she is still our honoree.
- Nominated Sustainer Jennifer Webb for the Rosie Award, the competition was stiff and, unfortunately, she was not selected. JLD supported this event by participating as a table sponsor and many JLD members and friends of Jenn's attended the event in her honor.
- Several members attended St. Luke's/Aspirus Foundation Circle of Light Gala honoring Sustainer Dr. Anne Whitworth on being selected 2024 Physician of the Year.
- We will be honoring 23 Sustainer Emeritus members at Annual Dinner.
- Reactivated the Applause Applause in E-Lights and League Lights to recognize members' accomplishments and notes of rest.



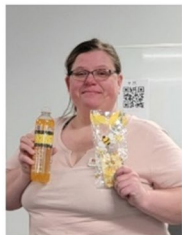
MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Nominating and Placement

- Two more sustainers have returned to active status; Beth Ahrens will be the Finance Lead and Michelle Hargrave will be Secretary on the 2025–2026 Board.
- JLD sponsored numerous members to leadership conferences:
 - Nikki Staton: Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Duluth Class
 - Gwen Woerpel and Sustainer Michelle Hargrave: Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce's 2nd Annual Women in Leadership Conference
 - Jenna Schmidt, Membership Council Director, and Brenda Beard Conley, Sustainer Representative, to the Community Council: SLBI (Small League Big Impact) AJLI conference in Orlando, FL
 - Breanna Guthmiller, Community Funding Lead, and Melissa LaTour, President Elect-Elect: AJLI Community Impact/Advocacy Institute in Chicago, IL
 - Melissa LaTour, President Elect-Elect, and Addie Trettel, President Elect: AJLI Executive Leadership Training in San Diego, CA
 - Lauren Farden, President, and Addie Trettel, President Elect: AJLI Annual Conference in Orlando, FL
 - Breanna Guthmiller, Community Council Director 2025–2026, and Lynnea Emerson, Sustainer Representative to the Board 2025–2026: Be On Board Training in Hermantown, MN
 - Several Actives and Sustainers attended the Compassionate Communication Workshop by Ann Harrington
 - Numerous Actives and Sustainers took advantage of online training offered by AJLI



We also recognized the accomplishments of members with different awards. The Volunteer of the Month award is given to members who have gone above and beyond in their contributions either to JLD or the community. The Busy Bee award is presented to members who have been instrumental in accomplishing their council's goals.



Volunteer of the Month:

September:	Jenna Schmidt
October:	Sustainer Brenda Beard Conley
November:	Addie Trettel
February:	Breanna Guthmiller
April:	Natalie Broberg

Busy Bee Award:

September:	Community Council Patty Salo Downs, Breanna Guthmiller, Vickie Meyers, Amanda Sutton, Gwen Woerpel, and Sustainer Rep Brenda Beard Conley
October:	Communications Council Emily Andrews, Kathy Jensen, Anna Nelson, Allison Garver, Angela Engblom and Sustainer Rep Jennifer Berry
November:	Carly Gosar
February:	Kathy Jensen
March:	Vickie Meyers

ENDOWMENT

DALE HEIMBACH WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND

The Dale Heimbach Wheeler Memorial Fund was established in 1983 in memory of Dale, who died while an active member of the Junior League of Duluth. The management of the Memorial Fund is the responsibility of the Endowment Fund Committee.

Contributions Received May 1, 2024 to April 12, 2025

Lynne Bauer

Ann Chouinard in honor of Sally Zelen

Melissa LaTour in honor of Katie Kuettel

ENDOWMENT FUND

The JLD Endowment Fund was initially funded by a devise of the estate of sustainer Margaret Mitchell. The Fund was established in 1992.

Contributions Received May 1, 2024 to April 12, 2025

Connie Dinan

Patty Salo Downs

Lynnea Emerson

Lauren Farden

Patty Salo Downs in honor of Lauren Farden

Mary Evans in honor of Carolyn Sundquist

Mickey Ferguson in memory of Mollie Thibodeau

Cary Thompson Gilbert in memory of Mollie Thibodeau

Kay Gower in honor of Lisa B. Plachta

Michelle Hargrave in honor of all present, past and future JLD members

Maren Hustad in memory of Mollie Thibodeau

Julie Johnson in honor of Mary Evans

Mickey Ferguson

Kathy Jensen

Correne Jenson

Melissa LaTour

Lisa Mandelin

Lail Beste Michelson

Sue Murphy

Lisa B. Plachta

Suzanne Rauvola

Carolyn Sundquist

Dawn Kregness in memory of Karen Andresen

Dawn Kregness in memory of Mollie Thibodeau

Katie Kuettel in memory of Mollie Thibodeau

Melissa LaTour in honor of Katie Kuettel

JoAnn Mattson in honor of Patty Salo Downs

Rita Rosenberger in honor of Elaine Killen

Jenna Schmidt in honor of Susan K. Zmyslony

Anne Whitworth in memory of her mother

Jane Worley in memory of Tom Donaldson

RECIPIENTS OF ENDOWMENT FUNDING

The Endowment Fund Committee awarded \$3628 from the Dale Heimbach Wheeler Memorial Fund and \$12,250 from the Endowment Fund during the 2024–2025 year. The following organizations received funding: Duluth Center for Women and Children, CHUM, Community Action Duluth, Lincoln Park Children & Families Collaborative, and YMCA Duluth.

KING'S DAUGHTERS BEQUEST SOCIETY

King's Daughters Bequest Society, established in 1999 by the Endowment Committee, honors those who have made a significant commitment to the future of JLD by remembering us in their will, trust, life insurance policy or other estate plan. The Society's members include: Sherry DeWulf, Angela Dougherty, Kay Gower, Katie Kuettel, Margaret Mitchell, Mary Olin, and Mollie Thibodeau.



FINANCE COUNCIL

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025 (unaudited)

<i>For the period ended March 31,</i>	Actual 2025	Budget* 2024
Public Support and Revenue		
Arrangements	\$ 715	\$ 250
Endowment Funds, net	24,212	-
Interest and Dividends	3,040	-
Donations	1,165	-
Membership Dues	8,300	9,140
Festival of Trees, net	90,876	73,300
Total Public Support and Revenue	\$ 128,308	\$ 82,690
Expenses		
Operations	\$ 16,029	\$ 26,125
Planning Council	9,912	11,450
Community Council	251	15,350
Finance Council	12,038	20,620
Membership Council	5,179	10,250
Communications Council	2,474	9,950
Total Expenses	\$ 45,884	\$ 93,745
Change in Net Assets	\$ 82,424	\$ (11,055)

*Based on annual budget

Statements of Financial Position - Selected Information

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025 (unaudited)

<i>As of March 31,</i>	2025	2024
Assets		
National Bank of Commerce – General Fund	\$ 104,299	\$ 75,304
Republic Bank Savings – Let It Grow **	-	10,982
U.S. Bank – Money Market /Mutual Funds	94,322	90,492
U.S. Bank Trust – Endowment/DHW	334,842	355,906
Total Assets	\$ 533,463	\$ 532,684

**Balance transferred to General Fund 03/26/25



Festival of Trees

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025 (unaudited)

<i>For the period ended March 31,</i>	2025	2024
Public Support and Revenue		
Sponsorships	\$ 2,350	\$ 5,483
Toffee	8,670	9,352
Trees	2,635	1,654
Raffle	3,649	1,950
Gate	34,526	29,372
Vendors	68,388	64,712
Total Public Support and Revenue	\$ 120,217	\$ 112,523
Expenses		
Toffee	\$ 6,510	\$ 6,325
Trees	391	1,454
FOT Administrative	19,104	19,199
Promotions	2,450	300
Miscellaneous	887	8,987
Total Expenses	\$ 29,341	\$ 36,265
Festival of Trees, net	\$ 90,876	\$ 76,258

