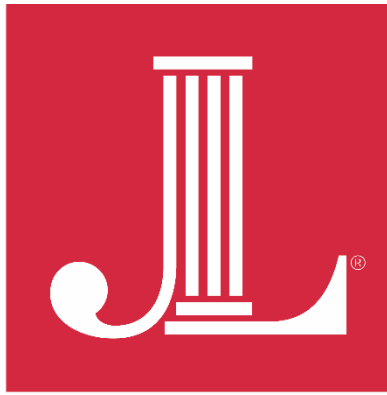




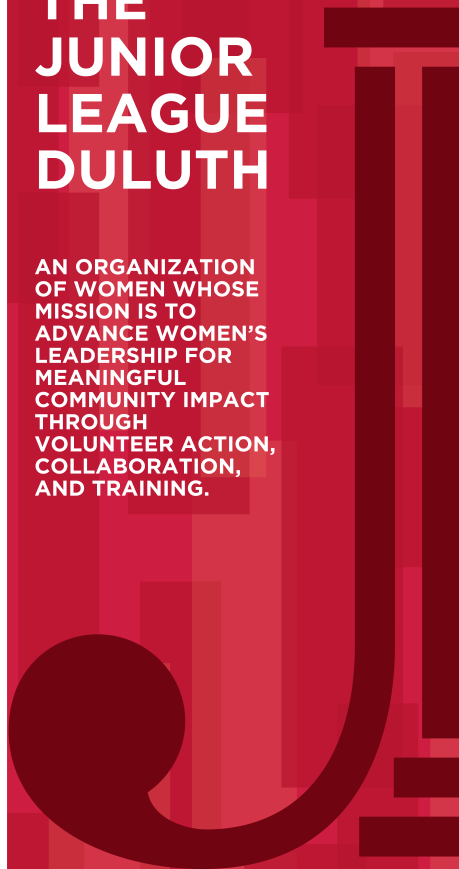
JUNIOR LEAGUE **DULUTH**

ANNUAL REPORT

2025–2026

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE DULUTH

AN ORGANIZATION
OF WOMEN WHOSE
MISSION IS TO
ADVANCE WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP FOR
MEANINGFUL
COMMUNITY IMPACT
THROUGH
VOLUNTEER ACTION,
COLLABORATION,
AND TRAINING.





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: Addie Trettel

"It goes by fast" is what I was told by many previous JLD Presidents coming into my presidential year, and was that not the most accurate statement? This year has filled my cup in so many ways, and being surrounded by such smart, kind, passionate, and generous women has been so fulfilling.

This year's theme was "Empowered Women, Intentional Impact," and my hope for the year was that every member felt they had an impact on the League, developed leadership skills, felt a sense of belonging, and recognized the positive impact they had on the community. I feel confident that most, if not all, of these goals came to fruition. By utilizing intentionality through our Annual Plan, derived from the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, we were able to accomplish many of those objectives.

This year, as the leader, I wanted to help slow the organization down to focus on the mission and be intentional in our movements, commitments, and the use of human and financial resources. We had another successful Festival of Trees fundraiser, participated in various DIAD and DIAM initiatives, increased our active membership from 19 at the start of the 2023 JLD year to 35 at the end of the 2026 JLD year, expanded the training component of our general membership meetings, and made strides in researching what our next major project may be. In the subsequent pages of this report, you will continue to read about the amazing work our members were able to contribute to and accomplish.

I want to thank the '25–'26 Board of Directors for their creativity, dedication, time commitment, and support this year. This year I made an intentional investment for the board to receive leadership and CliftonStrengths® training. This allowed the board members to learn more about each other's strengths, insights, and how the group could utilize those strengths throughout the year. Not only did the training benefit their time on the board but also as women leaders. This group of women leaders made my presidential year feel meaningful, inspiring, and deeply rewarding. To the members, including sustainers, thank you for your continued commitment to the League. You all make it possible for the League to continue its positive work and impact on our community.

Looking back at the year, I am filled with pride, joy, a sense of accomplishment, and gratitude. This organization continues to be a pillar in the community, and it has been an honor to play a part in ensuring the organization continues its commitment to the community.

The sentiment I started the year with still stands as we close out another great JLD year: Your presence here matters, your voice matters, and your impact begins now.

With gratitude,



Addie Trettel
JLD President 2025-2026



LEADERSHIP

President: Addie Trettel*

President-Elect: Melissa LaTour*

President-Elect-Elect: Not Placed

Secretary: Michelle Hargrave

Arrangements: Sue Murphy*

Sustainer Reps: Meagan Avery* and Lynnea Emerson*



Community Council

Director: Jennifer Maki*

Community Funding Lead: Carly Gosar

Community Projects Lead: Stephanie Honig

Sustainer Representative: Brenda Beard Conley

Communications Council

Director: Emily Andrews*

External Communications Lead: Lauren Farden

Internal Communications Lead: Alexis Elder

Web Lead: Natalie Broberg

Digital Cheetah – Member Essentials Coordinator:
Angela Engblom

Finance Council

Treasurer: Ann Chouinard *

Finance Lead: Beth Ahrens

Endowment Chair: Lisa B. Plachta

Fund Development Lead: Lauren Farden

Membership Council

Director: Jenna Schmidt*

Training/Ed Lead: Angela Engblom

Member Development Co-Leads: Lauren Farden
and Vickie Meyers

Nominating/Placement Lead: Sue Murphy*

Nominating/Placement Lead Elect: Stephanie
Honig

Nominating/Placement Advisor: Patty Salo Downs

* denotes Board of Directors member



SUSTAINERS

Sustainers

Meagan Avery and Lynnea Emerson, Sustainer Advisors to the 2025–2026 JLD Board

- In October, sustainers gathered at Vintage Italian Pizza for a fall event with a strong turnout. It was especially meaningful to host an event in Superior, Wisconsin, making it more accessible for members who live there and further south.
- Sustainers showed strong support by donating items to create two wine baskets for Festival of Trees, and many also volunteered at the event, something that remains essential each year. With no toffee supplier this year, the council did not host its traditional toffee-breaking gatherings.
- Monthly lunches continue to be a reliable touchpoint for engagement. Sustainers meet the first Wednesday of each month at noon at Blackwoods on London Road in Duluth, and all are welcome to attend. These informal gatherings provide an easy way for members to stay connected and involved.
- We have seen a noticeable increase in sustainer engagement, both in supporting councils and participating in League activities, with some even reactivating their membership. The ongoing involvement of sustainers, through their time, experience, and mentorship, continues to strengthen the organization and support its future.



COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Community Council

Community Council Committee Members: Jennifer Maki (*Director*), Carly Gosar (*Community Funding Lead*), Stephanie Honig (*Community Projects Lead*), Cecelia Boyle, Vickie Meyers, Nikki Staton, Meaghan Bell, Jodi Broadwell, Ciara Macklanburg, Valeria Rodriguez Busenbark, Brenda Beard Conley (*Sustainer Representative*)

Done in a Meetings (DIAMs):

- **October:** Candy Drive for Northern Expressions Arts Collective (NEAC) for their family community Halloween event.
- **December:** JLD collected items at the Holiday Social to donate to the St. Luke's Pediatric Clinic and the Obstetrics department. Both areas provide a free closet of various items for families to have.

Done in a Day (DIAD):

- **February:** Volunteered to help at CHUM's 2026 Gala that raised critical funds to support programs.
- **March:** Prepared meals for medically fragile children's families over 3 dates in March 2026.

Community Needs Assessment Review:

- 11 organizations were identified that would fit our needs for future JLD large project or volunteer opportunities.
- The biggest areas of needs in our community have been identified in the areas of mental health and housing.

Community Grants:

November through January: Opened grant applications in November and received 23 grant applications!

February: The Community Council and the Endowment Committee selected 14 nonprofit organizations to receive grant funding for a total of \$45,195 (\$28,000 from the General Fund and \$17,195 from Endowment/Dale Heimbach Wheeler Memorial Fund)

April: Celebrated and awarded grant money to 12 of the 14 Funding Ceremony at our GMM. WDIO joined us before the meeting and covered this wonderful event.

Community Award:

2026 Community Award Winner: JLD members voted and selected the *Duluth Center for Women and Children* to award the 2026 JLD Community Award plaque and recognized them at the Annual Dinner on May 19th.



COMMUNICATIONS/PLANNING COUNCILS

Communications Council

- During the summer we transitioned the internal member platform from Digital Cheetah to Member Essentials, which supports our members including registration for events, our community grant process, maintenance of member resources, and more.
- Starting in the summer through November we provided support for Festival of Trees vendor management and marketing promotions.
- Ongoing internal communications through Member Essentials and E-lights to promote our GMMs, training, and volunteer opportunities, plus an annual edition of League Lights and the annual report to memorialize the League's accomplishments throughout the year.
- Ongoing external communications through news media outlets, our social media platforms (reaching over 1,500 followers on Facebook and other platforms) to promote various press releases, graphics, and other content developed by councils for greater reach to others within the community and to support the League's goal to increase membership base.
- Ongoing maintenance of our public facing website to further promote the League.



Planning Council

- Attended Past Presidents Luncheon held at the Lyric Kitchen and Bar on Thursday, September 11th 2025.
- Attended 2025 Executive Leadership Training in Grapevine, Texas, that included incoming President, Melissa LaTour, incoming President-Elect, Michelle Hargrave, and incoming President Elect-Elect, Jenna Schmidt
- Planned the Holiday Social and Annual Dinner
- President, Addie Trettel, and incoming President, Melissa LaTour, attended the 2026 AJLI Annual conference in Indianapolis, Indiana
- President-Elect Melissa LaTour worked closely with President Addie Trettel to learn the responsibilities at each level to ensure continuity
- Continued networking as a long-standing tradition with League members of Roanoke, VA and Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
- Filled President-Elect position with Michelle Hargrave
- Filled President Elect-Elect position with Jenna Schmidt
- Updated the Yearbook bylaws, policies, and history sections

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Membership Council

This membership year has been an energizing and successful one for the Junior League of Duluth, marked by growth, connection, and meaningful progress. We welcomed a strong cohort of enthusiastic new members whose excitement has infused our League with fresh momentum. Throughout the year, the Membership Council offered a variety of impactful trainings and made significant strides in strengthening our onboarding process, creating a more supportive and engaging experience for those joining our community. Members at every level found opportunities to connect through engagement events, thus deepening their commitment to our mission. In addition, our membership efforts helped build valuable connections with organizations across the Duluth area, further expanding our presence and impact in the community.



Several trainings were offered:

- 1 Board of Directors Training
- Clifton Strengths Finder facilitated by Lori Peterson
- The Training and Education Committee hosted trainings at GMMs:
 - October: Fearlessly Aligned Leader Workshop conducted by Stacy Crawford
 - November: Focus on Connection, Impact, and Invitation conducted by Anna Nelson
 - January: Leading with Influence conducted by Michelle Nelson
- February: Strength Training conducted by Blake Peters
- March: Women's Heart Health conducted by Adela Alvarez
- March: Every Woman, All Things conducted by Sue Murphy and Angela Engblom

The New Member Development Committee held 2 New Member Events:

- September 2025: Playfront Park Clean-up, where a mix of about 10 new and active members got together to tidy up Playfront Park and warmed up at Pier B afterwards.
- February 2026: Shower Oil Making Class at Mix Cosmetics where a mix of about 10 new and active members got to know each other while customizing a unique shower oil blend to take home.
- New Member Development Committee onboarded 7 New Members (introduced in the Nominating & Placement report)



2 General Membership Events to recruit new members and to provide connection experiences for the community and for members:

- August 2025: Warrior Brewing for National Night Out
- April 2026: Wild State Cider for a Membership Mixer with charcuterie provided by Yes, Cheese.

Odds and Ends: Continued to update the onboarding process, including:

- Orientation events – we held 2 this year instead of 1
- Updated the New Member Packet and Orientation PowerPoint

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Nominating and Placement



JLD sponsored members to attend numerous leadership conferences:

- Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Duluth Class: Carly Gosar
- Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce's 3rd Annual Women In Leadership Conference: Emily Andrews, Cece Boyle, Jodi Broadwell, Carly Gosar, Cassandra Greene, Stephanie Honig, Melissa LaTour, Ciara Macklanburg, Jennifer Maki, and Addie Trettel
- AJLI's ODT (Organizational Development Training) in Chicago, IL: Ann Chouinard, Carly Gosar, Jennifer Maki, and Vickie Meyers:
- SLBI (Small League Big Impact) conference in St. Louis, MO: Cassandra Greene and Ciara Macklanburg

- AJLI's Executive Leadership Training in Grapevine, TX: Michelle Hargrave, Melissa LaTour and Jenna Schmidt
- Be On Board training (hosted by the Head of the Lakes United Way): Melissa LaTour
- AJLI Annual Conference in Indianapolis, IN: Melissa LaTour and Addie Trettel

We continued to recognize the accomplishments of members with two 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 to the community. This year they also received a traveling sign to post in their yard for the month. The Busy Bee award is presented to members who have been instrumental in accomplishing their council's goals.

Volunteer of the Month:

September	Emily Andrews and Angela Engblom
November	Cassandra Greene and Amanda Sutton
December	Stephanie Honig
February	Alexis Elder
March	Carly Gosar
April	Beth Ahrens



Busy Bee Award:

October	Katie Kuettel, Melissa LaTour, and Patty Salo Downs
November	Natalie Broberg and Lauren Farden
February	Vickie Meyers
March	Community Council
April	Ciara Macklanburg and Sue Murphy



Sustainers who worked FOT – Meagan Avery, Angela Dougherty, Lynnea Emerson, Betsy Harmon, Correne Jenson, Susan Johnson, Katie Kuettel, Lisa Mandelin, JoAnn Mattson, Lisa Plachta, Barb Sheedy, Gretchen Takkunen, Dana Varland, Jennifer Webb and Anne Whitworth for a total of 66 hours

The following members are changing status for the 2026-2027 League year:

Changing to Sustainer Status:

Beth Ahrens
Rebecca Butler

Changing to Active Advisory Status:

Alexis Elder
Amanda Sutton
Patty Salo Downs

Returning to Active Status:

Chelsea Loining

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

We are delighted to introduce our newest members!



Valeria Rodriguez Busenbark is originally from Mexico City and moved to the U.S. about four years ago. Her family is still in Mexico. She moved to Duluth eight months ago where she lives with her husband. She recently started a new job as the Executive Chef at The Boat Club. She enjoys going out and experiencing new places and has a big love for animals. She joined our league because she was looking for something new to get involved in and meet other women who, like her, want to connect and be a part of something meaningful. She really likes the mission and the focus on giving back to the community.



Debbie Gitar has lived in the Twin Cities and Colorado and she and her husband have been back in the Duluth area for a little over five years. Her daughter and husband live in Superior, her granddaughter is a traveling nurse, and her grandson works for the postal system in Eau Claire, WI. She is a retired elementary and special education teacher and works as a substitute teacher for the Duluth School district. She enjoys reading, gardening and bicycling. She is also an artist and dabbles in a variety of medium, fiber art, pottery, print making, and collage. Our mission to empower women and the positive impact we have had on the Duluth community attracted her to become a member. She wanted to join a group that has a solution-based vision working for equality for all.



Heather Kothbauer lives in Superior and works at the College of St. Scholastica in Human Resources. She and her husband have one son who will be heading to college in the fall. She joined our league because she believes in servant leadership which she feels JLD is all about!



Megan Lange moved to Duluth last summer with her two cats, Wallace and Davis. She is fairly outdoorsy and wanted to be closer to her favorite Great Lake. When she is not enjoying the outdoors, she can be found knitting, crafting, or reading. She has also continued to run the virtual romance book club she left behind in Milwaukee. Moving solo to a new city she wanted to meet people, especially like-minded women who are actively making a difference in the community and feels JLD is a good place to do this.



Sarah Lewis moved to Duluth from St. Louis, MO nine months ago with her husband Wes for their jobs. She works as an Academic Advisor in the College of Education and Human Service Professions at UMD. She and her husband love to hike, watch movies and walk their dog, Pongo. She decided to join the Junior League because she was looking for a meaningful way to get involved in her community while also continuing to grow personally and professionally. She was especially drawn to our league's focus on creating lasting community impact, not just short-term volunteer work, as well as the opportunity to develop leadership skills.



Kay Robinson and her two boys, ages 8 and almost 11, moved from Oklahoma to Duluth in July when she accepted a new job as the Vice Chancellor for Student Life at UMD. She is a 100% solo parent so her hobbies are keeping up with two growing boys who are involved in everything! When she has time, she enjoys going to the movies, bowling, walking, and shopping. She was active within the foster care community in Oklahoma City and has recently connected with New Hope for Families and learned how few foster parents/families we have in Duluth/St. Louis County and why. She hopes to get involved in addressing this issue. She was a member of the Junior League of Columbus in her 20's and made a ton of friends who she is still connected with and found it to be a great way to get involved in the community which she is hoping will happen again here.



Adalyn (Addie) Smith moved to Duluth in July of 2025. She has lived all around the Midwest in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and now Minnesota! They chose Duluth because of the abundance of outdoor activities which satisfies her love of hiking, skiing, snow shoeing and lake days! She also loves working in her garden, reading, exercising and playing with her two mini-Australian Shepards. She has had many friends join different Junior League chapters across the Midwest and has heard amazing feedback on how positive of an organization it is, which is exactly what she is looking to be involved in. She loves that it is a women run organization and is so empowering!

In Loving Memory

With deep sadness, we remember the members we lost this year. We extend our sincerest condolences to their families and loved ones. Their dedication to our mission will not be forgotten.

Sustainer Elizabeth Jacobson
Sustainer Mary Evans
Sustainer Susan Beasy Latto

Sustainer Marianne Rheinberger
Sustainer Dawn Kregness

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.

Contribution Received 2024 to 2025

Katie Kuettel

Contributions Received April 13, 2025 to April 25, 2026

Betsy Harmon in memory of Judy Salyards
Candace Kolenda
Michelle Wallerstein in memory of Gloria Herbst

Julie Johnson in memory of Dawn Kregness
Connie Dinan
Katie Kuettel in memory of Mary Evans and Dawn Kregness

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.

Contribution Received 2024-2025

Katie Kuettel

Contributions Received April 13, 2025 to April 25, 2026

Denise Bussa in honor of Lauren Farden
Sally Buck in memory of Sally Tarnowski
Betsy Harmon in memory of Dawn Kregness
Correne Jenson
Suzanne Rauvola
Angela Dougherty
Amanda Sutton in honor of Patty Salo Downs
Barb Sheedy in memory of Michael Sienko
Lail Beste-Michelson
Carolyn Sundquist
Mickey Ferguson in memory of Karen Andresen
Kay Gower
Meagan Avery in honor of Addie Trettel
Anne Whitworth

Jane Worley
Emily Andrews
Jodi Broadwell
Angela Engblom
Michelle Hargrave in honor of Elinor Deemer
Karis Boerner
Nicole Widdes
Lynnea Emerson
JLD in memory of Karen Andresen
Emily Andrews
Jodi Broadwell
Lynnea Emerson
Michelle Wallerstein in memory of Gloria Herbst
Katie Kuettel
Jenna Z Schmidt in honor of Susan Kay Zmyslony
Melissa LaTour in honor of Addie Trettel

JLD in memory of Marianne Rheinberger
JLD in memory of Mary Evans
Lynne Frigaard in memory of Nancy Fifield
Candace Kolenda
Cary Thompson Gilbert in memory of Mary Evans
Brenda Sproat in memory of Mary Evans
Barbara Sheedy in memory of Michael Sienko
Jennifer Webb
Lisa Plachta
Connie Dinan
Suzanne Rauvola in memory of Mary Evans
Sue Murphy
Janet Stone
Katie Kuettel in memory of Mary Evans and Dawn Kregness

RECIPIENTS OF ENDOWMENT FUNDING

The JLD Endowment Committee awarded \$3845 from the Dale Heimbach Wheeler Memorial Fund and \$13,350 from the Endowment Fund during the 2025-2026 year. The following organizations received funding: Duluth Community Garden Program, Brightwater Health (formerly Human Development Center), Mentor North, Boys & Girls Club of the Northland, and Head of the Lakes United Way

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



	Fiscal Year 2025-2026	
<u>Year-to-Date Income*</u>	Actual	Annual Budget
Arrangements	\$1,555	
Interest and Dividend Revenue	\$5	
Membership Dues	\$9,175	\$10,910
Festival of Trees	\$120,656	\$100,500
Total Income	\$131,390	\$111,410

<u>Year-to-Date Expenses*</u>		
Operations	\$15,720.19	\$18,985.00
Planning Council Expenses	\$8,027.27	\$10,720.00
Community Council Expenses	\$241.03	\$500.00
Finance Council Expenses	\$5,691.81	\$16,630.00
Membership Council Expenses	\$12,930.36	\$19,265.00
Communications Council Expenses	\$6,178.79	\$9,250.00
Total Expenses	\$48,789.45	\$75,350.00

Change in Net Assets	\$82,600.77	\$36,060.00
*through May 5, 2026		

<u>Current Assets (as of 4/5/2026)</u>	May-26	March-25
National Bank of Commerce - General Fund	\$113,974	\$104,299
U.S. Bank - Money Market/Mutual Funds	\$99,439	\$94,322
U.S. Bank - Endowment/DHW	\$368,737	\$334,842
Totals	\$582,150	\$533,463

Festival of Trees		
<u>Income</u>	2025	2024
Sponsorship Revenue	\$4,500	\$2,350
Toffee Revenue	\$0	\$8,670
Trees Revenue	\$3,334	\$2,635
Raffle Revenue	\$3,908	\$3,649
Gate Revenue	\$37,961	\$34,526
Vendor Revenue	\$70,953	\$68,388
Total Income	\$120,656	\$120,218

<u>Expenses</u>		
Toffee Expenses	\$0	\$6,510
Trees Expenses	\$2,851	\$391
Raffle Expenses	\$522	\$185
Vendor Expenses	\$986	\$0
FOT Admin Expenses	\$26,774	\$19,104
Promotion Expenses	\$0	\$2,450
Miscellaneous FOT expenses	\$365	\$887
Total Expenses	\$31,498	\$29,527

Net Income	\$89,157.74	\$90,690.61
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