



Junior League of Greater Orlando *History*

As far back as the late 1920s, the Junior Auxiliary of the Orlando Day Nursery and the Junior Welfare Association, predecessors of the Junior League of Greater Orlando, began a tradition of community service. They dispensed food and milk to undernourished children, supported a free clinic for the indigent, and provided funds to "Fair Oaks," a facility for children removed from unstable homes.

During World War II, a surgical dressing unit was staffed, dances were held for enlisted men and clothing was collected for Allied war refugees. Realizing the need for additional community support, the Junior League founded the Volunteer Service Bureau in the late 1940s. The League's focus turned to the needs of children with the founding of the Children's Theatre. In addition, they gave support to Forrest Park School for special education and the Child Guidance Clinic, known today as the Parent Resource Center.

The 1950s brought an effort led by the Junior League to establish a youth center for Orlando's teenagers. The group's focus expanded to promoting the cultural arts by sponsoring the first "Gala Night at the Opera," featuring the Florida Symphony Orchestra and Metropolitan artists. This successful program was turned over to the community in 1969.

The 1960s brought the evolution of several new projects, including an award-winning puppet show for hospitalized and kindergarten children, a docent program and suitcase exhibit for the Central Florida Museum, a new art library and studio classroom for the Loch Haven Art Center, and new program development for public television.

Most notable in the 1970s was the merger of the Junior Service League of Winter Park with the Junior League of Orlando to form the Junior League of Orlando-Winter Park, Inc., in 1975. The group's focus was education issues: the Discovery Room and the Five Sense Store at the Orlando Science Center, the beginning of the ADDitions school volunteer program, and an environmental education center at the Central Florida Zoo. Senior citizens' needs were met when the group established the first adult daycare center and enlisted their assistance in Volunteers Intervening for Equity.

The 1980s presented new areas of focus, as evidenced by the organization's involvement in Hospice, Seagrave House, Partners in Education, Spouse Abuse, the Neonatal ICU at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children and Women, the Coalition for the Homeless, an organ donor awareness program, and SWEEP (Solid Waste Education for Environmental Protection.) Additionally, in keeping with their tradition of endorsing the arts, the group supported the Meissen Porcelain Exhibit at the Orlando Museum of Art.

Moving into the 1990s, the group's numbers blossomed just as our community grew in population and diversity. To reflect these changes, the organization changed its name to the Junior League of Greater Orlando, Florida, Inc. (JLGO.) Facing new challenges, the focus became childhood health and development and ultimately, family enhancement. Programs included Back-to-School Fairs, the



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Ronald McDonald House, Boggy Creek, HIV/AIDS Awareness, Green Circle, Date/Acquaintance Rape Awareness, and the opening of the Crisis Nursery and the Family Support & Visitation Center.

In the new millennium, the Junior League is a dynamic organization of hundreds of diverse women striving to improve the quality of life in Central Florida. They accomplish this by anticipating and researching the needs of the community and reacting to those needs with effective programs and trained volunteer support. By collaborating with other organizations, JLGO dramatically multiplies its results.

Over its long history, the Junior League of Greater Orlando has contributed over \$1 million and more than 1 million hours of service to our community. Efforts have reached all areas of concern: young people, the elderly, families, health issues, education, the arts, and the environment.