

THE MAGAZINE OF
THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF TULSA

Volume 6, Issue 2

SPRING 2009

gusher

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from the editor...

Spring is upon us! Not just in nature but internally at JLT. Our four successful fundraisers for the year are complete, the Nominating Committee has finalized the 2009 – 2010 chair positions and in April the membership will participate in our annual placement scramble for their committee positions next year.

The Family Resource Library at the Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, a JLT Signature Project, has now been open one year. Our cover honors the partnership between JLT and Saint Francis with accompanying story on page 12.

With "women in transition" as the focus of JLT, we also look at a project begun this year: a partnership with Resonance helping women reenter the work force.

We review our third successful fundraiser of the year, the American Girl Fashion show, a favorite not only for League members but for the 150 or so girls who participated and their family members who attended.

Impact projects provide short term "done-in-a-day" assistance to many organizations in the community and we review a few of them.

There are many examples of JLT members stepping up whenever there is a need. When we heard Provisional member Erin Remington and her husband Steve had adopted five children, it piqued our curiosity! Photographer Leslie Hoyt did a photo session with them for *Gusher*: "What a great family! I went into it thinking how lucky the kids were, and came out thinking how lucky Erin and Steve are!" We share Erin and other JLT members' stories of adoption.

The Junior League of Tulsa endeavors to be good stewards of the funds we raise. One example of which is the funding of *Gusher* through our advertisers. Please take a few moments to review them carefully and thank them sincerely on our behalf when patronizing their businesses.



Happy Spring,

Mary Anne Thoman

Mary Anne Thoman
Editor 2008-2009

On the cover: JLT volunteer Lauren Cornwell and four year old patient Sicily Zeka at the Family Resource Library at the Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, a Signature Project of the Junior League of Tulsa. Sicily was diagnosed with bi-lateral Wilim's tumor, cancer of both kidneys, in August 2008. You can read about Sicily's valiant battle against this aggressive disease at www.caringbridge.org/visit/sicilyevelnzeka. Photo by Saint Francis photographer Randy Kindy.

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gusher is a quarterly publication of The Junior League of Tulsa, Inc., 3633 South Yale Ave., Tulsa, OK 74135, and is devoted to informing the membership and the community of current League projects, events and issues. For information on advertising in *Gusher* please go to www.jltulsa.org and click on *Gusher* or e-mail gusher@jltulsa.org.

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Judy Ingraham
Stephanie Long
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Melissa Siemens
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Letter from the president

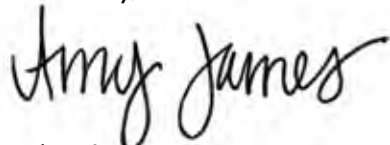
I love spring. Every year, I feel so blessed to live in a place where we get to experience the full beauty of each season, but I think Tulsa does spring best of all. The new growth and renewal each year is so energizing, and so closely parallels what we are doing in Junior League this season. We have worked tirelessly since our year began, but this time of year we are not only winding down this year's projects, but we are also doing lots of planning, training and preparing for the next JLT year--and beyond.

Our Strategic Planning Committee and Board of Directors have worked many hours on crafting a new and forward-looking strategic plan that will guide our organization into the future. We have realigned some of our committee structures so they are more in keeping with our goals and our direction, and we have created new committees and redefined others to meet our own emerging needs. Our membership has elected a slate of intelligent and talented leaders who have been busily training and preparing for our next league year. Our fundraisers and community projects are in place, so we can seamlessly transition into the next year of community service. Active members are evaluating the placement choices to determine where they will serve next year. Our Provisional class is filling with eager women who have a heart for improving our community.

Nelson Henderson said, "The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit." In Junior League, we truly have that opportunity. The cover so accurately depicts just that idea. We planted the seeds for our Signature Project, the Family Resource Center at the Children's Library at Saint Francis, last year and have touched the lives of so many children and their families. The simple attention we pay to a child working in their garden plot through our Global Gardens project at Rosa Parks Elementary has exponential effects we may never know about. The volunteer program we developed for Child Abuse Network will help many children we may never meet. The simple acts of caring we perform at the Laura Dester Children's Shelter provide a bright spot for a child who may have had few in their short life. With every member we train for volunteer service, we are essentially planting a tree that will shade many, many lives in the years to come.

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month. Most of us joined the Junior League to make a difference in our community, not for the accolades. Often, volunteer work is thankless. Each member of the Junior League of Tulsa, whether a Sustainer, Active or Provisional, is sincerely appreciated. Whatever your role in JLT, your commitment and service is valuable to our organization and the community. With every tiny act, you are touching a life and making a difference, and the benefits are multiplied. Thank you for all you have done during the JLT year to make our community a better place to live. I hope you find the time you spend volunteering with JLT is time well spent, and adds richness and depth to your life that far exceeds the value of the precious time you've invested.

Sincerely,



Amy James
2008-2009 President



Mission Statement

Core Values

Junior League of Tulsa reaches out to women of all races, religions, & national origins who demonstrate an interest in and commitment to voluntarism.

The Junior League of Tulsa, Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

- Community:** It is the heart of all we do
- Diversity:** The synergy of different perspectives
- Voluntarism:** An essential component of our society
- Mentoring:** Essential growth for future generations
- Leadership:** The development of individual potential
- Respect:** For our members' time, energy and skills
- Collaboration:** Forming partnerships and strategic alliances
- Well-being:** Physical, mental, emotional and social

Board of Directors 2008-2009

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President-elect Rachael Hunsucker
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Transitions

JLT Hugs Committee celebrates our members! Let us celebrate with you and share the exciting times that are taking place in your life! You are encouraged to share the following: birth announcements, engagement and wedding announcements, condolences, any community or business recognition, or announcement of a new job or promotion, etc. Please send all details to Heather Duncan, hduncan@casciahall.org. We look forward to celebrating with you!

Small Miracles

Jon Heinz Martens
Son of Pamela (A) & Mark
Born October 14th 2008



Jenna Payton Todd
Daughter of Jennifer (A) & Patric
Born November 24, 2008



William Henry Koehler Miller
Son of Laura (A-NR) and Donnie
Born November 26, 2008



Braden Daniel Favell
Son of Elizabeth (A) & Brian
Born December 22, 2008



Lila Charles Bates
Daughter of Melanie (A) & Trip
Born January 6, 2009



Walker Edwards McAninch
Son of Jill (A) & Casey
Born January 22, 2009



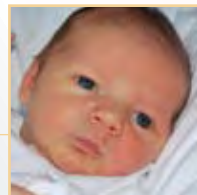
James Logan Cravens
Son of Jennifer (A) & Mark
Born January 22, 2009



Mary Lillian "Lily" Phelps
Daughter of Marnie (A) & David
Born January 22, 2009



Michael McAlister Stewart II
Son of Sarah (A) and Grant
Born February 17, 2009



Achievements

Nancy Meinig (S) received a 2009 Pinnacle Award presented by the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women and the Tulsa Women's Foundation.

Phyllis Dotson (S) and **Peggy Helmerich (S)** received 2009 Newsmaker Awards presented by the Tulsa chapter of the Association for Women in Communications.

Tulsa Area Alumnae Panhellenic will recognize the following as "Women of the Year" at their annual luncheon to be held at the Tulsa Country Club:
Shelli Holland-Handy (A), Alpha Chi Omega
Michelle Gresham Hassell (S), Alpha Gamma Delta
Connie Hamernik Doverspike (S), Alpha Phi
Christy Southard (S), Chi Omega
Pattie Gaffney Wheeler (S), Delta Delta Delta
Julie Landon Twilley (S), Kappa Alpha Theta
Elaine Perett Hanner (S), Kappa Kappa Gamma
Jill Stewart Corey (A), Zeta Tau Alpha

Condolences

To **Claudia Hollingsworth Brierre (S)** on the death of her father.

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Belinda Hedgecock
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Hello, Sustainers!

Wow! What a fun year this has been. We had such a lovely time at our fall and holiday parties. We especially want to thank Beverly Schafer for letting us come into her lovely home and see her gorgeous holiday decorations. She had Christmas trees with the most exquisite ornaments. Everyone seemed to have a fun time and the food was great too. Thank you, Deborah! Fortunately, the weather cooperated with us this time and we didn't have any snow or ice.

We also want to thank our Actives for the lovely Sustainers Luncheon they had for us in February at JLT headquarters. The food was superb and so many sustainers attended the event. Everyone seemed to have a great time and enjoyed hearing from the President, Amy James. It was nice to hear about the projects that the League was involved with this year and how successful their fundraising activities were. We have some great pictures shared here from the luncheon.

Since our year will be ending soon, we lined up a great spring party for you. We have Chef Tuck Curran, owner and Chef of Local Table, attending and catering this event. It will be at Sue Curry's home on Thursday, April 23, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. We hope that you will be able to attend.

Also, don't forget about our Book Club and Restaurant Club. These clubs meet monthly and are great ways to get involved and see your friends. For more information, please feel free to contact Ann Foster (492-7154) for Restaurant Club or Annabel Jones (742-2707) for Book Club.

Since this will be my last year as your president, I want to thank you again for all your support and making this year a great time. I truly have cherished the past three years of service. We have had some amazing events, including one in Mayor Taylor's home. None of these events would have happened if it weren't for our great Sustainer board. Each board member has contributed so much and I truly appreciate them. I also want to thank Ann Foster and Annabel Jones for all their hard work and hosting the restaurant and book clubs. They continue to do a wonderful job. Thank you again and I hope to see you at the spring party on the 23rd of April.

Sincerely,
Shari Graham
President of the Junior League of Tulsa Sustainers



LuAnna Galles, Brittany Kollmann, Leslie Hoyt



Shirley Hawkins, Cookie Coffey, Faith Rountree, Maggie Cornell, Fritz Prather



Patty Lawson and Amy James



Claudia Brierre, Nikki Bell



Sharon Bartlett, Lynette Danskin, Jean McGill, Francine Bandy



Georgia Snoke, Donna Bost



Carol Bush, Sarah Dougherty, Sarah Stewart

Shari Graham
Sustaining President

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Connecting Women with Careers

By Betsy Endicott, Stephanie Long and Abigail Prescott

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow."

— Mary Anne Radmacher



Resonance Job Development Coordinator Kim LaBass, JLT Committee chair Thayla Bohn and vice chair Betsy Endicott

Reflecting on the difficulties we have faced in our lifetimes, most of us can identify a handful of people whose wisdom and support gave us the determination to succeed in spite of dubious circumstances. A spouse or parent, a friend, a teacher, a pastor, or perhaps your child inspired you to persevere, to overcome.

You are among the fortunate ones.

For many women in our community, life's toughest challenges—unemployment, the loss of a loved one, an addiction, a criminal record—are faced alone.

To help address this need, Junior League of Tulsa (JLT) has joined forces with Resonance Center for Women, a non-profit organization and certified substance abuse facility that provides services leading to self-sufficiency for women and families facing challenge, change or adversity.

Resonance Center for Women was launched in 1977 after its founder, Eleanor Hill, suffered the unexpected loss of her husband. Reflecting on her own experiences of widowhood and recognizing Tulsa's need for a system of support and educational resources for women, Ms. Hill founded Resonance with the hope that the volunteer-based non-profit would be a resource for women facing personal challenges. Today, Resonance collaborates with other local organizations to offer a variety of programs to its clients.

As part of the 2008-2009 Community Program, JLT recently launched a new partnership with Resonance to serve women in the Tulsa community.

JLT's primary role is supporting existing Resonance programs for Career Services and Job & Resource Development. These programs offer employment resources to women who are ex-offenders, often including

those referred by the Federal Probation & Parole Board. JLT also serves to educate local employers on the benefits of hiring these women.

JLT's Resonance Committee, chaired by Thayla Bohn, centers its outreach around a series of workshops for women who are looking to re-enter the workforce after being involved in the criminal justice system. Some workshop topics include: interview skills, conducting a job search, educational and training opportunities and job application/resume skills. The first workshop, held in January, enjoyed a positive response, with more workshops to follow.

In addition to educational resources, JLT is offering Resonance clients another asset that will provide new confidence during their search for gainful employment: a professional wardrobe. To augment clothing remaining from JLT's fashion-swap fundraiser, Diva Day, the Resonance Committee has launched a clothing drive among JLT members to collect business clothing, jewelry and accessories. JLT's Resonance and Diva Day Committees will join forces to present a special Diva Day event just for Resonance women. Plans include a fashion show, a "shopping" opportunity to outfit job seekers, hair and makeup tips and encouragement to continue on a successful path. (Tax-deductible donations of new or gently-used clothing, shoes and accessories can be brought to JLT Headquarters.)

The work of JLT and Resonance has enabled some of Tulsa's most isolated women to secure a new start for their lives. But it's not only the clients who benefit — JLT members are reaping heart rewards for their service. Betsy Endicott, Resonance Committee Vice-chair, characterizes her work on the committee as "rewarding," and particularly enjoys meeting Resonance clients, whom she describes as women "working to overcome adversity and become more self-sufficient, often under difficult circumstances."

Thanks to the joint efforts of Junior League of Tulsa and Resonance, women in Tulsa have one more bastion of support to which they can turn in times of trouble.

Resonance Programs also include:

- Resonance Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment programming serves clients referred by various sources including Tulsa County Drug Court, Community Sentencing, Child Welfare, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Oklahoma Probation & Parole. Our gender-specific programming offers hope and alternatives to women and families in transition, with the ultimate goal of breaking the cycle of multi-generational chemical addiction and criminal offense.
- CERTIRestore™ powered by Resonance is a program and business that provides female ex-offenders with job skills training in fine wood-furniture restoration.
- Girls Empowered (GE) gender-specific summer sessions for at-risk girls, ages 12-16, that explore leadership skills, communication, decision-making, self-esteem, confidence-building and awareness of health and safety issues, community service and career options.
- Going to Bat for Tulsa Kids is an award-winning, school-based mentorship program that pairs caring, adult role models with students at Tulsa Public School (TPS) sites. Junior League of Tulsa (JLT) helped found this program in partnership with Resonance in 1989.

Roll out the Red Carpet

Share Junior League of Tulsa with More Fabulous Women in 2009!

The wheels of the 2009-2010 Provisional Class are turning at full speed and we are looking for bright, motivated women to jump on board. We depend on these fresh faces to breathe new life and ideas into the League and, ultimately, to make a difference in our community. Do you know a woman who has a heart for volunteering? If so, please invite her to come visit with our Provisional Liaisons and learn why she should make JLT her volunteer choice.

The benefits of joining the Junior League of Tulsa are tremendous. We welcome women who want to:

- Get training for effective community leadership, including community research, fundraising, finance, leadership, public relations and personal development.
- Work with other women to create positive community change.
- Gain insight into community needs and strategies for solutions.
- Get exposure to creative strategies in problem solving and administration of a non-profit organization.
- Build friendships with a diverse group of current and emerging women leaders
- Share talents with a network of interested women
- Increase interaction with community agencies and civic leaders
- Improve our community through organized and effective teamwork
- Become a part of an international association of nearly 200,000 women. Membership is transferable throughout all Junior Leagues in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Great Britain.

Prospective Member Open House
May 11, 2009
5:30-7:00 p.m.
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Happy Anniversary

the Family Resource Library

at Saint Francis Children's Hospital

By Melissa Siemens and Mary Anne Thoman

The Junior League of Tulsa volunteers are so proud to be in partnership with the Saint Francis Children's Hospital. We selected the Family Resource Library as a JLT Signature Project in 2007 and now the library and children's hospital have been open for a full year! The original goal of the project was to create an accessible environment for patients' families to obtain health information about their child's medical condition and become informed participants in the health care process. In addition to the \$25,000 financial donation JLT contributed to the Family Resource Library to purchase furnishings and computers, our volunteer time is what really makes a difference!

In the last year our 25 JLT volunteers put in approximately 150 hours per month for a total of 1,800 hours worked. Our JLT volunteers become a part of the Saint Francis Auxiliary and are really the life blood of the library. There are 115 Children's Hospital volunteers working

in 9 different areas of the hospital, in addition to the 360 Saint Francis Hospital volunteers. Since the Children's Hospital opened, Auxiliary volunteers have worked a total of just under 19,000 hours there. The Independent Sector National Organization uses \$19.51 per hour as a monetary value for volunteer time. This equates to 9.12 employees working full-time (40 hr/wk) for a savings of \$370,097.

Mary Jane Evans, Director of Volunteer Services at both hospitals says: "I have been thrilled with the public interest in volunteering at the Children's Hospital and feel the volunteers are a key aspect of our goal of providing family focused patient care. I have been very pleased to partner with the Junior League of Tulsa as an organization and appreciate their support financially as well as their willingness to give of their time and talents."

Patients of the Children's Hospital and their family members come into the Library and are greeted by a JLT volunteer who shares all that we have to offer. There are health resource books for both adults and children, as well as an extensive list of websites that parents can use to research health issues by using our two guest computers or their own computers via the wireless internet throughout the state of the art facility. Our volunteers are also there to assist families with research if needed.



JLT volunteer Laura Cornwell, Sicily Zeka and her mom Kerry.

A happy beautiful child with a big smile, in a red wagon, reading *The Cat in the Hat*, surrounded by loving caring adults. What could be more representative of a carefree childhood? With a smile so bright that at first you don't notice the lack of hair or glance at the background where Sicily's IV pole reminds us of the arduous battle these children and their families are engaged in. As JLT volunteers it is our pleasure and our honor to support them and serve them.

Sicily Zeka, featured on our cover, is a pediatric cancer patient diagnosed with bi-lateral Wilm's tumor, cancer of both kidneys, in August 2008. Her story began with a preschool physical in July 2008; the doctor found a mass on Sicily's right side as she performed a routine abdominal exam. Her mother Kerry reports "After six frustrating weeks of searching for an answer a CT scan delivered the worst and most unbearable news I thought my ears could ever hear. Our daughter has cancer of the kidneys. Not just one kidney, but both. Bi-lateral Wilm's tumor." For many parents the best way to combat fear of the unknown is to educate themselves. JLT Library volunteers help families search for information on diseases which in turn helps parents and children to become better advocates and patients.

The most popular reason for patients to visit the library, though, is to borrow Xbox 360 games and DVD movies. Each patient room is equipped with an Xbox game system and DVD player. This source of entertainment is always a fun way to pass the time during treatment and recovery at the hospital.

Catherine Costanza, JLT volunteer, says: "Some days it seems like quite a chore to get to my shift at the hospital. But any annoyance I have immediately fades when I see a kid pulling along his IV into the resource room. He nods at me, assures me he doesn't need any help and then pulls out a big grin when the movie/game that he wants is in. Some families I see time and time again and while trying not to intrude I ask how they and their family are doing. It's always good to hear the good stories. My very favorite is the little girl going through chemo that I see every once in awhile. She is very energetic and not afraid to tell me about her treatment plan and her counts. When she leaves, she always says, 'I hope I don't see you

next time!' and then always runs back in and giggles, 'you know what I mean, right?' I absolutely do!"

Sometimes the children served are not patients at all, they are family members patiently waiting while a sibling receives necessary treatment. Volunteer Kathleen Jones recounts: "There is a boy (age 10-12) that comes in often. He gets a game, asks for a sheet of paper and plays the game in the library, sometimes for over an hour. He has a sibling that comes to the hospital on a regular basis for treatment. Although he is pretty quiet while he is here, he obviously feels very comfortable. Each time he comes in, I always think that it is so nice that we have the opportunity to be there for him. I am sure it is very difficult on him to have to be out of school and away from his friends in order to come to the hospital with his family—they do not live in Tulsa—and it is just really neat that he can get his mind off of why he is there and be a kid for a little while."

The library is open Monday through Friday from 10:00a.m.-2:00p.m. and in the evenings from 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m. as well as Saturday and Sunday from 2:00p.m.-4:00p.m. JLT collects and accepts donations of Xbox 360 games and DVD movies for the Library; visit our website, www.jltulsa.org and click on Community Programs for more information.

President Amy James comments: "We were so thrilled when the opportunity came up to furnish and staff the Family Resource Library, and we are grateful the partnership has been so successful. For 85 years, we have been identifying needs within the Tulsa community and building partnerships such as this one. It's truly wonderful when those relationships are such a perfect fit!"

Thank You...

"Sicily got to ride in a red wagon downstairs to the Family Resource Library staffed by Junior League of Tulsa volunteers for her fifteen minutes of fame. I worried that she may not do very well as she was in the middle of her blood transfusion and looking tired. These pictures were for the cover of the Junior League's magazine *Gusher*. The first pictures taken were with one of the League's volunteers. Once the photographer raised his camera into position, Sicily's smile appeared bright and cheerful. Every time he stopped to check the picture or adjust his camera, stoic Sicily would re-appear, smile completely gone. Camera up, smile on. The other ladies in the room, along with Sicily's nurse who accompanied us, laughed. It was like she had an on/off switch. I was very proud of her for handling it even though I know she was a bit weary. It was a sweet experience for her just the same.

"A sincere thank you to the women of the Junior League of Tulsa for what they have done for the Family Resource Library at the Children's Hospital at Saint Francis. I can't express enough the appreciation for all the efforts! I'm sure I speak for all the families who are served, time and time again, at the hospital!"
Kerry Zeka, Sicily's mom

Tulsans Support a New Standard of Care for Oklahoma Children

The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis opened in its new facility January 2008.

Inspired by the smallest and most helpless of Oklahoma's patients, the new 104-bed, 265,765-square-foot Children's Hospital is an architecturally impressive structure located at 61 Street and South Yale Avenue in Tulsa. Connected to the existing Saint Francis Hospital on the 61 Street side, the new structure is not only vibrantly colorful, open and full of natural light but is also the most advanced and sophisticated for pediatric treatments and services available in Oklahoma. Improving the healthcare of children in Oklahoma will secure a future of healthier adults, improving our state's resources.

Families have been at the core of all considerations. The Children's Hospital rooms are spacious with sleeping accommodations for parents, all rooms are private with bathtubs, showers and most have a bathing sink for infant care. Wireless technology, television and entertainment systems are among a few of the modern comforts also available. Family lounges and playrooms on each floor were designed to meet the essential and comfort needs of healing families during a hospital stay.

The Junior League of Tulsa has provided monetary donations for materials, computer supplies and furniture for the Family Resource Library also located within the Children's Hospital. But their more important donation is the time Junior League volunteers continue to provide. These Tulsa women have trained as Saint Francis Volunteers and joined the Saint Francis Hospital Auxiliary. They have also received specialized training in searching and supplying families with information on diseases through electronic and printed means. They serve throughout each week in partnership with the Children's Hospital at Saint Francis to support families and help empower them with information.

Families also use the computer stations to stay in touch with others by email. Patients and their siblings enjoy borrowing library media materials or finding books donors allow them to keep. A family advisory committee, comprised of patient families, continues to provide advisement on the growing needs of the library. The Family Resource Library is just one of the gems at The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis which continues in its second year to serve as one of Saint Francis Health System's most forward-thinking and advanced endeavors.

Clearly, The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis is much more than a building. It provides an individualized healing environment designed for the love and well-being of children and their families created with the generosity of so many in the Tulsa community including the Junior League of Tulsa.

American Girl

Fashion Show Review



Model Greer Boedeker, daughter of Ashleigh, with her American Girl Doll Kit Kittredge



Intermission models Ella Long, daughter of Stephanie and Charlotte Boedeker, daughter of Ashleigh

"To be an American Girl..." are the lyrics that the AG Fashion Show Committee members may still be singing long after the final performance of our Show this year! The fifth annual American Girl Fashion Show was held at Junior League of Tulsa's Headquarters in December 2008. While this year's show is over, the memories created will long be relived in the hearts and minds of all the little girls who participated. Whether one of the almost 150 models, ages four through ten, who participated in the production or one of the almost 900 audience members who attended, everyone was treated to a festive celebration of being an American Girl.

The weekend kicked off with a Friday night seated dinner. Guests were able to participate in a silent auction while enjoying the ambiance of the transformed Mabee Room. The usually neutral space was covered with bright colors of orange and pink, polka dots and stars, poinsettias in all of the holiday colors and a lighted catwalk suitable for the runway shows of Fashion Week in New York City. Guests for the other six shows throughout the

weekend enjoyed tea party treats served on tiered servers at their assigned tables. While sipping lemonade, the audience enjoyed the hour-and-a-half Fashion Show.

Our models traveled from Tulsa and all surrounding areas to participate. The girls arrived early to begin dressing in their costumes and then visit the hair stylists. Last

but not least, the model would find her matching American Girl doll. Models then strutted down the catwalk while special guest commentators told of the historical importance of each character.

Commentators for the event were sophomore, junior and senior girls from local high schools. One of our commentators, Sarah Hedgecock, a senior at Edison and step daughter of Belinda, played the harp in between the shows. Attendees were also able to shop the booths of vendors offering everything from doll accessories and clothing to personalized paper goods, all presented by local women. It was a weekend full of positive female role models full of potential and talent, dedicated to celebrating all of the ways a young girl can express herself and impact others in a positive way.



Proud grandparents Tom and Linda Mann with grandson Griffn support granddaughters Greer and Charlotte in their modeling debut.

The successful event raised funds that will benefit the Community Programs of the Junior League of Tulsa. It couldn't have happened without the hard work of the American Girl Fashion Show Committee: co-chairs Ashleigh Boedeker and Stephanie Long, Maura Wilson, Krystie Cupp, BJ Weintraub, Liz Winsby, Stephanie Currington, Kelly Kirchoff, Candice Grandon, Kathy Knight,



Cookie break! Stephanie Long, Kim Smith, Kelly Kirchoff, Liz Winsby and Krystie Cupp

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Jean Millwee and Sara Franzen.

The success of the event is also due in part to our sponsors, listed at left. Many in-kind donations were provided by vendors who participated in other capacities ranging from attending fittings and rehearsals to the production of the show. And last but not least, any event that takes

SAVE THE DATE!

American Girl

FASHION SHOW

November 6-8, 2009
Junior League of Tulsa

To receive email updates about American Girl please send us your email address to americangirl@jltulsa.org.

place at JLT Headquarters could not happen without the help from resident experts Doris Brown and Laurie Brumbaugh! Thank you to everyone who contributed to our fabulous event!

2008-2009 Community Projects

Each year the Junior League of Tulsa (JLT) conducts in-depth research to identify critical emerging needs within our community and respond by developing projects to address those needs. Through collaboration with sponsoring agencies, intensive training of our membership, and direct service through volunteer hours and fund development, JLT strives to establish each community project as self-supporting before it is returned to its sponsoring agency for long-term implementation, usually within three years. This unique leadership model has allowed JLT to serve a vital role in the success of Tulsa's most prominent community agencies, such as Ronald McDonald House, Youth Services of Tulsa, Mayfest and the Francis Willard Home for Girls, while providing essential training for Tulsa's next generation of community volunteers. Current community projects of the Junior League of Tulsa include:

The Children's Hospital at St. Francis Family Resource Library Signature Project

Chair: Melissa Siemens

JLT volunteers staff the Family Resource Library in the new Children's Hospital at Saint Francis to assist families in obtaining information about their child's medical condition and help them become informed participants in the health care process. In conjunction with this project, JLT also donated \$25,000 to the hospital to completely furnish the library.

Scholarship

Chair: Vanessa Hoose

This committee oversees all aspects of awarding two \$1500 scholarships to high school seniors who have demonstrated a commitment to volunteerism. Also, the committee will oversee the awarding of a \$1500 need-based scholarship to a woman in transition living in our community. The committee will also work to maintain contact with former recipients.

Laura Dester

Chair: Jill McAninch

This committee provides volunteer assistance to the Laura Dester Children's Shelter. A variety of "Done in a Day" projects are chosen, planned, and implemented by the committee with direction from shelter staff.

Resonance Connecting Women with Careers- Career Services

Chair: Thayla Bohn

This project will provide financial assistance and volunteers to support the Career Services Program at Resonance Center for Women Inc. The Career Services Program currently provides job readiness and life skills training for women re-entering the community from the state and federal criminal justice system.

Child Abuse Network (CAN)

Chair: Carissa Cooper

This committee assists in the development and implementation of the Child Abuse Network (CAN) volunteer program which will enable CAN to serve children who are victims of child abuse.

Impact

Chair: Mary Catherine Ward

Impact provides short-term volunteer assistance to 501(c)(3) organizations in the Tulsa community. Organizations apply for assistance and short-term ("Done in a Day") projects are chosen, planned, and implemented by the committee. Also falling under this committee is *Kids in the Kitchen*, a national initiative designed to promote healthy eating and lifestyles among children. In addition, we also participate in the Tulsa Metro Chamber's Partners in Education through our activities at Project 12, an alternative learning environment in the Tulsa Public Schools.

Community Schools - Global Gardens

Chair: Shea Eby

JLT will work with Community Schools to provide financial assistance and volunteers to expand the Global Gardens after-school program to establish garden spaces for high-risk students and their families at Rosa Parks Elementary School. Global Gardens currently serves about 30 third- through fifth-grade students at Eugene Field Elementary School and with JLT's assistance, the project is expanding to Rosa Parks.

Community Project Development Committee (CPDC)

Standing Committee

Chairs: Alison Wade

This committee identifies and develops community projects, focusing on JLT's mission statement and focus area (women and children in transition) and community needs.

Meet your Junior League of Tulsa Board Members:

Susan Kenny Financial Council VP

PLACE OF BIRTH: Hendersonville, NC

PROVISIONAL YEAR: 2003

EDUCATION: Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA, BA in French and History

FAMILY: Husband, Richard and two sons, John and Cooper



Susan and Richard with John and Cooper

EMPLOYMENT: Executive Director, Jenks Public Schools Foundation

HOBBY'S / INTERESTS: I enjoy reading, scrapbooking, and yoga.

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY: Summertime visits with my grandparents and family vacations.

GOAL YET TO ACHIEVE: I would like to have my own business or possibly buy Queenie's.

ADVICE TO PROVISIONALS: Do something that you have never done before, join that committee that pushes your comfort level and do something completely different from your work, education or other volunteer activities. This is the best advice I received as a provisional and it continues to help shape my time in JLT.

FAVORITE PLACES: The Outer Banks of North Carolina and upstate New York, around Cooperstown.

BEST SKILL LEARNED IN LEAGUE: Project management, it has helped with everything from home renovations to planning events.

IF I COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME: As a French and History major, this is a tough question. It is usually whatever time I am reading about whether fiction or non-fiction. Recently, my son did a project about Teddy Roosevelt (we share the same birthday) and so next on my reading list is Theodore Rex by Edmond Morris.

FAVORITE PLACEMENT: Past Chair of Gusher — It was a new challenge. I learned a great deal about the history of JLT and the contributions to the Tulsa community. I learned about past JLT leaders who brought lessons learned at JLT to other boards and community organizations. It is an opportunity to know about the special activities of every council and the exciting events of each year. In addition, the responsibilities cover every area of project and time management, public relations, creative thinking and writing, problem-solving, and financial management.

FAVORITE FOOD: I love lunch. It is my favorite time of day. I like having the respite in the course of a busy day and I love lunch food, like soup and sandwiches, (hence my interest in Queenie's).

Sarah Stewart Community Council VP

PLACE OF BIRTH: Tulsa

PROVISIONAL YEAR: 1999

EDUCATION: Jenks High School and Baylor University

FAMILY: Grant, husband and Nelson (4½), Maggie (3) and our newest addition, Michael

EMPLOYMENT: Temporally retired from the formal workplace and currently stay-at-home mom

HOBBY'S / INTERESTS: Spending time with family and friends, long-distance running, travel, decorating and design.

FAVORITE SPORT: Running, swimming and golf

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY: The hundreds of memories I have at Grand Lake with family and friends. Everything from eating blueberry muffins and cantaloupe at dawn, sitting on the bow of the boat while going on long boat rides, floating on rafts with family, friends and dogs, skiing across the lake with my brothers, watching firework shows on the summer holidays, fishing on the dock, going on early morning Ranger rides with the kids to buy ice and M&Ms and sitting by the fire on a crisp night.

GOAL YET TO ACHIEVE: Successfully raising 3 children, running my second marathon, traveling to Asia and playing golf well. I would also like to be better read and even reread the classics, but with three children ages 4 and under I am lucky to achieve anything. I will probably have to wait 18 years to get caught up on most of my goals.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT: Birthing 3 children and running a marathon.

FAVORITE JLT PLACEMENT/WHY? My favorite placement was chairing the 2007 — 2008 Provisional Class. I enjoyed working with the liaisons as they interacted with the provisionals and to watch the liaisons enhance their leadership skills. It was so refreshing to see actives take a sincere interest in the provisionals to ensure that their league careers started on the right foot.

MY FAVORITE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY: I spent a year volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, which was one of our past JLT Community Committees. It was such a hands-on and meaningful experience to work there. The best part was being able to be a listening ear when families needed to unwind from the stress of having a sick child in the hospital.

FAVORITE PLACE YOU HAVE TRAVELED: Florence, Italy. Grant and I stayed at a fabulous boutique hotel, had a private tour of Uffizi and Accademia, shopped, devoured delicious meal after meal and enjoyed fine wine.

ADVICE TO PROVISIONALS: Get involved! Being involved is how you will build your leadership skills and make lifelong friendships. Go beyond being a committee member. Become a vice chair, chair, double place, etc. You will gain from JLT exactly what you put into it!



Grant and Sarah with Maggie and Nelson

The First Mrs. W. Albert Cook Scholarship

By Vanessa Hoose and Abigail Prescott

On November 22, 1905, on a farm owned by Creek Indian Ida E. Glenn, a crew of wildcatters sank a test well into the soil in hopes of finding oil. The resulting strike, a gusher so massive it would become known as the Glenn Pool, launched the Oklahoma Oil Boom and turned a sleepy town on the banks of the Arkansas River into the "Oil Capital of the World."

Eighteen years later, the population of Tulsa had exceeded 110,000 people, bolstered by settlers from cities such as New York, Boston, Memphis and Washington, D.C. Among Tulsa's burgeoning population was Mrs. W. Albert Cook, a woman with a vision for the potential of volunteers. In 1923, Mrs. Cook joined forces with twelve other women to found the Junior League of Tulsa (JLT).

Eighty-six years later, the legacy begun by Mrs. Cook and her fellow volunteers is alive and well among a new generation of Junior League members. Last fall, in honor of the women whose dedication has built a better community, The Mrs. W. Albert Cook Scholarship was established by the Junior League of Tulsa to support the education of a woman in transition through a need-based scholarship. The Sharon Bartlett "Women in Transition" Fund, kicked off at Decadance Gala 2008, is earmarked for funding this scholarship.

The Junior League of Tulsa Scholarship Committee is proud to announce the first Mrs. W. Albert Cook Scholarship has been awarded to Jamie Barrientos.

Jamie has served as an example of dedication to overcoming obstacles in pursuit of achievement. Married at the age of sixteen, she became a mother by the age of eighteen. Jamie and her husband divorced in 2002. Firmly believing education was a priority, she pursued and received her high school diploma from a community college program. She joined the Air Force in 1998 to help support her education. After completing her military service in 2004, she received an associate's degree in radiology and worked in the field for several years before returning to school. Jamie, who remarried in 2005, currently attends Tulsa Community College in anticipation of enrolling at

the University of Oklahoma to pursue a bachelor's degree in radiology. Her long-term educational goal is to complete the Physicians' Assistant training program at OU. Although being a full-time student has not been easy, Jamie enjoys knowing that every class brings her another step closer to her goals, not to mention setting an excellent example for her daughter.

The Junior League of Tulsa congratulates Jamie Barrientos for her accomplishments and thanks our membership for its continued support of the legacy of our founder, Mrs. W. Albert Cook. If you would like to contribute to The Mrs. W. Albert Cook Scholarship Fund, please contact Laurie Brumbaugh, Financial Manager, at (918) 663-6100.



Sustainer Sharon Bartlett, Scholarship committee member Toni Moseley, vice-chair Tiffany Culver, recipient Jamie Barrientos, chair Vanessa Hoose, committee member Neil Dieterle

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IMPACT PROJECTS

Youth at Heart Bowling

A couple strikes, a few spares and several gutter balls. Ten Junior League members spent two fun Saturdays practicing their bowling skills with a group of amazing kids from Tulsa's Youth at Heart organization.

In the fall of 2003, Helping Hands of Tulsa and Destination Discovery merged into Youth at Heart. The mission of Youth at Heart is to shape, support and encourage inner city youth.



When approached about the bowling event as an idea for an Impact project, the Junior League of Tulsa was thrilled to be able to support, with both volunteers and monetary support for the event.

Youth at Heart in Tulsa focuses on single parent head of households living in poverty. On two Saturday afternoons, September 20 and 27, five Junior League members met at Andy B's Tulsa, formerly Riverlanes, and were introduced to around 30 youth, grade school through high school ages, who all live in low income housing complexes. Members, along with Youth at Heart staff, bowled with the youth, monitored their lane, then had pizza and pop with them afterward. For the youth, it was a chance to spend a Saturday doing something safe and fun.

Junior League members got the opportunity to interact and socialize with the youth. Becky Cariker, Impact Project coordinator, says: "The best part of the day was getting to talk with the kids. They really wanted to tell you about their lives, their school, and their families. We got to meet some great kids."



Laura Stafford, Kristen Lowell, Project Coordinator
Becky Cariker, Emily Wynn, Kelly Feemster



Mothers Group Santa Project

For several years, Junior League has partnered with the Mothers Group Santa Project. The Mothers Group, Inc., a non-profit organization, was founded by past JLT President Brenda Lloyd-Jones in 1988 and celebrates 20 years of community service this year. In 1999, she proposed the idea for the Santa Project. JLT Sustainer Cynthia Pierce and her husband, Michael, have portrayed Mrs. Claus and Santa for several years. JLT member Charlotte Shillingford is a founding member of the group and current Membership Recruitment Chair.

The Mothers Group is a group of women dedicated to promoting books and presents them to children who may struggle with reading and who desire access to educational resources. The Santa Project gives underserved families the opportunity to take a picture with Santa, apply for a library card, and receive a free book. This event demonstrates the wholesome qualities of generosity, compassion, and kindness that Santa represents, as well as gives the gift of literacy which is the gateway to the world.

This year's Impact Committee volunteers, including Mary Catherine Ward, Tara Bashaw, Kristen Lowell, and Edie Burr, collected books, wrapped the books as gifts, and volunteered to staff the Santa Project.

The Santa Project enjoyed an excellent turn out at the Greenwood Culture Center in the historic Greenwood district of north Tulsa. The never-ending line of families stood waiting to get their picture made with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Awaiting them were age-specific books, library cards, and candy canes. And in the center of it all, a talent show featuring some of Tulsa's finest youth performers held everyone's attention. It was very entertaining!

Working with Impact gives JLT members the instant "feel good" reward of volunteerism as we directly work with those most in need. This project was even more rewarding because it was a holiday related event that touched so many families in Tulsa in such a positive light. Project Chair Edie Burr states: "I must say that the Mothers Group is an incredible foundation and I was very proud to get to work them. This team of ladies understands the needs and challenges of underserved children and their families. I look forward to working with them again as we share a common goal: children, which in itself symbolizes transition and possibility."



JLT volunteers Edie Burr, Mary Catherine Ward and Mothers Group member Monica Lawrence

By Becky Cariker and Edie Kalkbrenner

Junior Iron Chef

Tulsa Public Schools made eating healthier an event! Lisa Griffin, Child Nutrition Coordinator for TPS, Cara Phibben from Get Fit Tulsa and JLT Kids in the Kitchen Project Coordinator Stephanie Brown began planning a Junior Iron Chef competition last fall.

Four high schools—Will Rogers, Nathan Hale, Edison, and East Central—finalized teams to compete. Each team was paired with a mentor chef to help them come up with a menu and learn how to prepare the food properly and safely. They met with their mentor chefs for about three to four months prior to the competition. Students enrolled in Tulsa Technology Center's culinary program were asked to be judges and to moderate the competition.

The exciting event was held at the JLT Headquarters. Each Junior Iron Chef team had two electric burners, coolers, cutting boards and their ingredients to work with. In one hour they were to prepare a meal that included chicken, a starch and a vegetable. The winning team won iPod Nanos and the opportunity to prepare their meal for the Junior Iron Chef dinner that evening, also held at the JLT.

Rogers High School took the top honors with their delicious



TPS Junior Chefs - at the front are members from the Will Rogers High School winning team, backed up by chefs from the other teams in the competition who acted as their sous chefs.

JLT volunteers Jessica George, Pamela Martens, Meredith Bass, Kelly Karlovich and Kami Painter



JLT volunteers Ashlee Smithee and Sarah Shepherd serve the delicious meal TPS Junior Chef's prepared.

menu of Moroccan chicken, braised carrots and olives with lemon zest, and coucous pilaf with raisins and almonds. The Junior Chefs arrived at Junior League headquarters at 7am and began to prepare their tasty menus for the fundraiser dinner at JLT that night.

Junior League provisionals signed up for workshifts to help with set up, service and tear down at the dinner. A team of provisionals arrived at 3PM to set up tables and begin slicing and plating the dessert. Once the guests began

to arrive, provisional volunteers seated them and drinks, all while the jazz band from Booker T. Washington played. The meal was plated by the chefs from the winning team at Rogers, and JLT provisionals served the guests. All proceeds raised at the dinner were for the Eat, Exercise, Excel program at Marian Anderson Elementary.



Project coordinator Stephanie Brown, TPS's Barbara Marshall, Tulsa Run's Marcia Whitaker

When there is Too Much Love for Two

By Stephanie Long and Mary Anne Thoman

Adoption is certainly not an uncommon thing; however, when we heard that Provisional Erin Remington and her husband Steve had adopted five children, ages diapers to seven, we took notice. That is indeed a remarkable story, and caused us to look further within our JLT membership for more stories, finding that many members have adopted or were themselves adopted. Gusher staffer Stephanie Long spent some time with Erin and her family to tell their story.

Three other JLT members share their adoption stories in their own words. Susie Stava and her husband Jeff presented their two adorable adopted sons Will and Luke on our Transitions page in our last issue. Active Stephanie Long tells shares her story of being an adopted child. Growing up in a loving home, dealing with the idea of a mother who “gave her away” and ultimately realizing that was the greatest gift her birth mother could ever have given her. Here are their stories.

Sustainer Judy Ingraham and her husband Jack, after successfully raising their own two sons and beginning to enjoy a new, more relaxing phase of life, put things on hold and stepped up to adopt a third cousin. Their love and concern for this child far outweighed the convenience of their new lifestyle and so they began again with the adoption of Nicole.

Erin and Steve Remington always knew that they wanted to adopt, even before they met each other. Three years into their marriage they began discussing children. They both agreed that they wanted to adopt before they had their own biological children simply because they had the time, freedom and energy. They looked into many adoption options, but with the cost and various restrictions that go along with an overseas adoption, it made more sense for them to adopt from home.

Erin stumbled upon the DHS website in March of 2007. At that point they began the process required for a DHS adoption, including classes and a home study, planning to adopt one school aged girl. When they learned of the importance of keeping siblings together and that there was a greater need for sibling adoption, they expanded their options to two school-aged girls.

Erin and Steve attended their first Adoption Party put on by DHS for “hard to place” children. There weren’t any children there that met the profiles they had set, but they did meet three little boys (Angel, Daniel and Jordan). They found out that these boys also had two sisters who weren’t at the party because the social worker could not fit all five of them in the car! Erin couldn’t help but notice how cute little Angel’s chubby hands were - and that was the moment she knew these were her kids. They agreed to take all five children before they had even met the girls.

When Erin and Steve arrived home that evening it finally sunk in what had just occurred. Steve asked, “Do you really think we can do this?” Although Erin had some reservations, she knew these children were destined to become a part of her family. They were a little scared and uncertain, overwhelmed but hopeful, and excited to face the unknown future ahead.

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) provides foster care and adoption services for children who are in the custody of OKDHS and cannot live in their own homes. Child welfare provides services to the child’s family to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect so that the child can return home and live there safely. Some children live in foster homes while their families are accessing services to help them care for their children in a safe and health way. Other children have parents who are unable to ensure their child’s safety and well being, and these children are provided a safe, permanent home through adoption.

The children who wait for adoption are children who have special needs. These children need adoptive homes because their birth families cannot care for them in a safe and nurturing way. Most of these children are school-aged. They might have problems in school, they may misbehave because of the abuse they have suffered. They may have medical conditions or they may be siblings trying to stay together. All these children have one very special need: they are waiting for an adoptive home.

Erin will be the first to stress the importance of adopting through DHS. She feels that these are the community’s children. They belong to each and every one of us and it is our responsibility to step up and see that these children have a place to call home where they are loved and cared for by a “forever Mommy and Daddy”. Erin believes that there is no excuse for a “hard to place” child. She has seen firsthand that a little love and a lot of stability gives these little children the opportunity to become great adults – adults that will change the world.

Erin calls her children amazing and can give a detailed description of why they light up her life. From ballet and cheerleading to excelling at school, socializing and learning the “ABC’s,” these children have made more progress since the adoption than anyone could have imagined. Three out of five of the children had pneumonia when they arrived at the Remington’s home. The baby had a severe intestinal infection and they had been so neglected, and spent time in foster homes where they had not been fed, that she found them eating out of the trash can. But, the Remingtons got through it with love, laughter, tears and determination. The children have flourished in an environment where they are well taken care of. You can see the love not only in the children’s faces but also on the faces of Erin and Steve.

People are always complimenting how amazing Erin and Steve are for taking on this responsibility and how lucky the kids are for having such great parents. How they have adjusted to becoming an instant family, learning to follow a strict schedule and feed seven mouths. They found that it was much harder than expected, but in many ways, it has been abundantly easier. Erin readily admits that people who think that she and Steve are amazing are mistaken - they just followed their hearts. Erin thinks that these kids are the amazing ones because they are survivors and have brought so much love and life to the Remingtons home. Erin says, “We are lucky for getting to be their parents.”

Our Adoption Story

By Susie Stava

When Jeff and I were dating we talked about many things – having children was a big topic of conversation. I am one of six and he is one of three. At the time, I had 17 nieces and nephews and he had four. We talked about the love we had for those kids and each of our desires to have a family.

I told him that one of my sisters had adopted two babies through the Angel Baby program in California (she also has two natural children). He too had friends who had adopted. We talked about how great a gift that was and how the additions naturally completed those families.

When things got more serious between us we again talked about children, the desire to have a large family and how adopting children was certainly one way for us to build our family. Little did we know at the time that after we got married we would learn, after more than a year of trying to have a baby, that I wasn’t able to have children without undergoing fertility treatments.

We considered all the options, did some research on different agencies, and decided to apply to adopt a child through Catholic Charities. Jeff and I both had friends who adopted through Catholic Charities, so we were pretty comfortable with this choice. We also spread the news to our family, friends and co-workers. I also spoke to many attorneys in town and had them keep an eye out for an opportunity for us.

We had our home study completed, state and federal background checks and put together our “life book” for Catholic Charities in Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Arkansas.

Just about a year after we made the decision to adopt, we got a call in February 2008 from one of my sisters. She had a sister-in-law in her masters program at college who had unexpectedly become pregnant. She had known about our problems conceiving, our decision to adopt and knew us personally through our family reunions and asked that we adopt her unborn baby. Jeff and I were thrilled beyond words but cautiously optimistic. We were so, because we had heard of numerous other potential opportunities over the previous year that never panned out.

This baby would be born in September of 2008. Not more than two weeks after receiving this call from my sister, Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City called on a Friday and said we had been selected

to adopt a 3-month-old boy, “William John IV,” and could we be there the next Wednesday to pick him up! That was April 2, 2008.

Five months later my sister’s sister-in-law gave birth to our second son, Richard Luke.

We went from having no children to two in a matter of five months! The two boys are nine months and one week apart in age and each day are becoming each other’s best friends. Today, Will is 15 months old and Luke is 6 months old. God blessed us then and continues to each day.

The adoption process with an agency like Catholic Charities is typically long (although ours was relatively short compared to others who wait between 2 and 5 years), invasive and an emotional roller-coaster—but very well worth it! We have had two home studies (one for each boy) and six post placement visits. Our home and our lives have been inspected in all aspects and evaluated more thoroughly than you can imagine. We would do it ten times over if we could get more children like our two boys. We look forward to expanding our family and are considering putting our names back on the list early next year!

Love is Ageless

By Judy Ingraham

Believe it or not, volunteering in the JLT’s community program has been invaluable! My JLT placements gave me a foundation to navigate the child welfare system. Through placements on the Public Affairs committee, CPDC, and the Community Council, I got quite an education about the interrelated issues of child welfare, abuse and neglect, juvenile justice, foster care and adoption. Advocating for the JLT’s project, Child Abuse Network, helped enormously in understanding the layers of jurisdictions, including the even more convoluted system involved in adopting state to state. Who knew I would need and use all that information some day?

Our adopted daughter, Nicole, is my third cousin. At age five, Nicole was taken into foster care by the state of New Mexico. We had known Nicole since birth and had spent time sporadically with her. We knew she was a great kid. While she was in foster care, my sainted husband, Jack, and I began to think seriously about adopting her.

Our biological sons, Andy and Rob, had both gone off to college so we knew we would have time to care for her, even though we were older (54 and 57 at the time). Of course we discussed the ramifications of adopting such a little kid with them. I recall saying something like, “You know this will change everything we do, all our traditions, even how we celebrate Christmas.” One of our proudest moments was when Andy said, “But think what a difference it will make in her life.”

We had to qualify as foster parents through Oklahoma’s DHS, which then confirmed to the state of NM that we were suitable. That

entailed a ton of paperwork (not my forte), interviews and several home visits with social workers from DHS.

We were required to take parenting classes which we chose to do on Saturdays during OU football season, no less – now, for an avid football fan, that’s true commitment! At first, we smugly considered the parenting class requirement ridiculous, as we had already raised two nice sons. We changed our minds almost immediately



The Remington Family



Judy, Jack and Nicole Ingraham

as we learned that parenting adopted or foster children required additional skills, and the classes were really worthwhile.

Part of our qualification process was an OSBI investigation. Everyone in our home had to be fingerprinted. Imagine the fun of picking up our sons at the airport for Thanksgiving vacation and taking them immediately to the sheriff's office to be fingerprinted. Some welcome home!

We brought Nicole home on June 6, 2005 – D-Day! Nicole was assigned an Oklahoma DHS case worker, a lovely woman named Alicia Bullock, who helped Nicole and us in so many ways. We officially adopted Nicole on April 28, 2006, which we celebrate as "Gotcha Day"!

It has been helpful in many ways that Nicole is a family member. It's much easier for us as parents, knowing the family history, who's who, understanding the dynamics, knowing a lot of her medical history. When she went into foster care, she was old enough to remember most of her extended family. Having access to many relatives whom she knew and loved has been beneficial and healing.

It has changed our lives. We went from no babysitters and sleeping late on the weekends to the tooth fairy and PTA again. With our sons, we focus on college majors and jobs; with Nicole it's Breyer horses and spelling tests. Most of our friends have grown children, and we're not free on the spur of the moment. However, our friends understand and have been especially sweet to Nicole. They agree with us that it's fun to have a kid around!

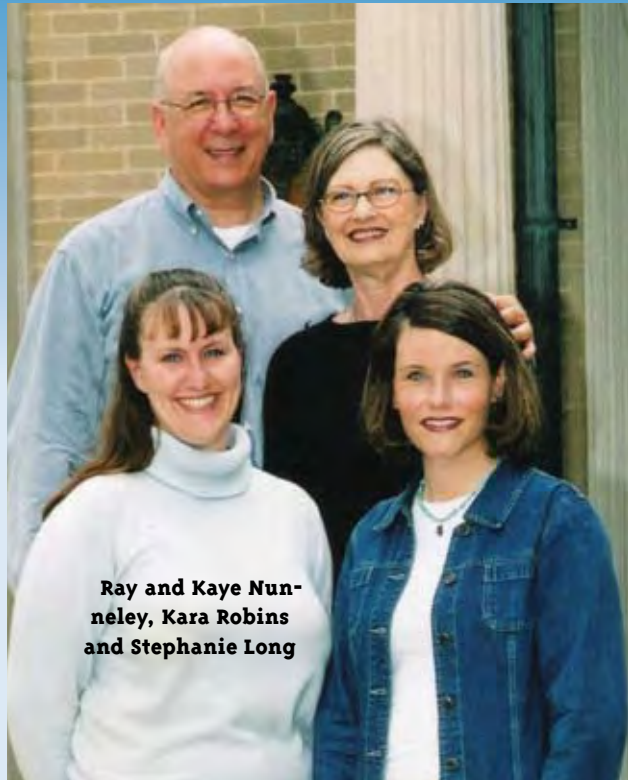
In an older child adoption, the child may have some tough issues. At times it's been difficult, but Jack and I love our daughter. We enjoy being parents. Our sons have a little sister who adores them, and whom they love back. Nicole has enriched all our lives.

P.S. People often say, "Raising Nicole will keep you young." I invariably reply, "Uh, sorry, the horse is out of the barn on that one."

Being Adopted, the Gift of Life and Family

By Stephanie Long

I was adopted at birth by my wonderful family who had been trying to adopt for years. Medical reasons prevented my mother and father from having biological children so they turned to adoption through a local agency. Four years later, when that agency no longer



Ray and Kaye Nunneley, Kara Robins and Stephanie Long

offered adoptions, my parents chose to try private adoption. They traveled to Alaska to bring home another baby girl to add to our family, my sister Kara.

I grew up always knowing that I was adopted, and how much my family wanted me. It was a very loving and nurturing environment. My family always said...I was chosen and how special that was. Because of my awareness of what adoption meant and the knowledge that my parents weren't my biological parents, I can't remember a specific time when I found out I was adopted. While I always knew, the thought rarely entered my mind. However, I was occasionally reminded when people would comment on how much my mother and I resembled one another by not only appearance but by mannerisms. This still makes us laugh today.

Once I turned twenty, the agency here in Tulsa contacted my family to see if I would like contact with my biological mother. It was a little overwhelming as I had a mother, father and sister as well as extended family with whom I was very close. I had grown up and experienced my childhood and was finishing college at the time. While I was interested in my biological family, I didn't seek a relationship at the time. Instead we exchanged letters and photos. It was comforting to have some clarity on the adoption, and that my biological mother had chosen my parents out of a number of other applicants.

Now as a mother myself, I can only begin to truly understand this most unselfish gift my biological mother gave to me and to my mother and father. She gave them the gift of life and family. While she was not prepared to raise a daughter at the time, she gave me to a family who had been waiting and preparing for nearly a decade. I cannot find words enough to thank her.

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