



JUNIOR LEAGUE  
*of* SOUTH BEND

LEAGUE  
LORE

2024-2025

# *Our Mission*

*Junior League of  
South Bend*

## Mission Statement

The Junior League of South Bend, 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.



# JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SOUTH BEND

## *Table of Contents*

1	Thank you to the Board of Directors 2024-2025
3	Member Directory
6	Sustainer Directory
7	DIAM, DIAD, 2024-2025 Project
10	Holiday Ball
13	Endowment Supporters
16	Financials
17	New Members
18	Sustainer Updates
19	Conferences
20	Socials
21	Trainings
22	In Memoriam
22	Letter from the 2024-2025 President
23	Board Bios
27	2025-2026 Project

# *A Letter from the 2024-2025 President*



Greetings! We have come to the end of another successful league year! I am so proud of all that was accomplished by our amazing members and Leadership Team. Here are a few of the highlights from this past year:

- Hosted our annual Holiday Ball and raised over \$55,575.
- Partnered with the St. Joseph County Parks and helped create a new indoor Pond Exhibit.
- Developed a new 3 year strategic plan.
- Welcomed 14 new members across two cohorts
- Granted \$25,000 to 3 local nonprofit.
- Raised over \$7,800 during our internal endowment campaign.

At the heart of the Junior League of South Bend (JLSB) is volunteerism. We exist to engage in our community and to invest in meaningful partnerships. This year, our members voted to partner with St. Joseph County Parks as our project. There were many volunteer shifts to participate in including splitting wood, preparing the maple trees for tapping and Sugar Camp Days. To celebrate the completion of this successful relationship, members attended and volunteered at the opening of the new indoor Pond Exhibit. I would like to thank our friends at the St. Joseph County Parks for allowing us to work alongside them on this project.

As I reflect on the past two years as the president of this incredible organization, I continue to hear one word in my head: grateful. I have been grateful for the opportunity to serve our members and community. I have been grateful for the skills I have obtained and for the growth I have seen in myself. I am grateful for my family, friends and members for their love and support. I would like to show my gratitude by acknowledging a special group of ladies who I was blessed to work with during my years as president. I would like to thank them for their commitment to the Leadership Team; some of which served two terms. Thank you ladies, for taking time away from your families, friends and careers to invest into our league.

*Allyson Triplett (two terms as Membership Vice President and President-Elect)*

*Becky Beckman*

*Nancy Owsianowski (two terms as Sustainer Advisor)*

*Sandy Van Vooren (two terms as Treasurer)*

*Sandi Pontius (two terms as Secretary)*

*Abbey Sheldon (two terms as Communications Vice President and Nominating Director)*

*Lisa Slomka*

*Jenna Schwartz*

*Areeba Shaikh*

*Kat Gardner (two terms as Community Vice President)*

Although we may be ending a league year to begin another, it isn't a true restart. The mission will continue to be carried out. The only change is the Leadership Team, who is eager to begin implementing the new strategic plan and creating an Annual Plan for the upcoming year. Our league members will work together so we do not lose sight of our goals by allowing the old leadership to transition the new team. Each year brings about its own new challenges and goals; however, we all remember who JLSB is at its core. A training organization of women who are building better communities.

*Jennifer V. Liddell*

*Thank you to the 2024 – 2025  
Leadership Team*

*Leadership Team*



*Front row, left to right:  
Sandy VanVooren, Treasurer  
Sandi Pontius, Secretary  
Areeba Shaikh, Communications VP  
Abbey Sheldon, Nominating Director*

*Back row, left to right:  
Lisa Slomka, Membership  
Nancy Owsianowski, Sustainer Advisor  
Jennifer V. Liddell, President  
Allyson Triplett, President Elect  
Becky Beckman, Executive Vice President  
Kat Gardner, Community VP*

2024 – 2025

# Member Directory



*Erin Adamo*



*Holly Alexander*



*Lauren Angela-Mattox*



*Stephanie Baxter*



*Becky Beckman*



*Erin Bonin*



*Carrie Bossung*



*Kristen Capitano*



*Christina Clark*



*Amy Clark*



*Erika Costantini*



*Jacquelyn Doyle*



*Melanie Ellis*



*Helen Finnan*



*Katherine Gardner*



*Heather Goralski*



*Aubrey Grossnickle*



*Laura Hall*



*Ilean Harris*



*Cheryl Hartman*



*Natalie Haut*



*Jeni Heselbarth*



*Maureen Hosinski*



*Sabeen Khan*



*Elizabeth Klesmith*



*Safija Kovac*



*Clover Kuehn*



*Liz LaVine*



*Jennifer Liddell*



*Madelyn Martinec*



*Leah McGinty*



*Cheron Merten*



*Renae Michalski*



*Adria Minniear*



*Stephanie Moreland*



*Megan New*



*Janice Nichols*



*Gloria Niedbalski*



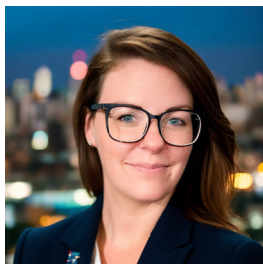
*Kelley Penrose*



*Sandi Pontius*



*Jackie Potter Mullin*



*Jennifer Purdy*



*Jessica Reasons*



*Vanessa Rednour*



*Breanna Schuler*



*Jenna Schwartz*



*Binti Shah*



*Areeba Shaikh*



*Abbey Sheldon*



*Audra Sieradzki*



*Jessica Simeri*



*Claire Slebonick*



*Lisa Slomka*



*Nina Spitznogle*



*Amy Stewart-Brown*



*Emily Swanson*



*Paige Taelman*



*Habiba Tariq*



*Sarah Taylor*



*Allyson Triplett*



*Carly Truhler*



*Ginny Vanderbeek*



*Sandy VanVooren*



*Alexia Velazquez*



*Robin Vida*



*Sarah Witt*

## Sustainers

Beverly Ainsley  
Lauren Alavanja  
Louise Anella  
Louise Axelberg  
Nancy Ball  
Nancy Baranay  
Ann Bartels Tackett  
Patricia Bayliss  
Kathy Beeler  
Courtney Bennett  
Gloria Berg  
Carol Bieneman  
Jo Ann Blazek  
Nancy Boren  
Kathryn Brennan  
Christine Buczynski  
Bettegene Butler  
Maureen Cahir  
Lenore Cassady  
Martha Casteel  
Patricia Cavanaugh  
Jennifer Chadwell  
Andrea Christensen  
Sandra Taradash  
Karey Circosta  
Linda Clements  
Marcia Coble  
Nadine Collier  
Maureen Conboy  
Julie Considine  
Molly Corba  
Ellaine Cox  
Jennifer Craig  
Patricia Cressy  
Lori Davey  
Julie Deahl  
Katy Demarais  
Jean Dennen  
Angela Dennig  
Lisa Deputy  
Jane DuComb  
Suzanne Dunne  
Angie Dvorak  
Kathleen Dvorak  
Mary Jane Elias  
Jane Emanoil  
Jeanne Everett  
Angela Faccenda  
Deborah Fleming  
Laura Flynn  
Joyce Foley  
Patricia Ford  
Jody Freid  
Donna Freidline  
Janet Frieden  
Krista Furry  
Patricia Gable

Jan Gates  
Nancy Gerber  
Pamela Gibboney  
Lynne Glass  
Linda Grainger  
Barbara Green  
Chris Grossnickle  
Deborah Grounds  
Anne Gruenig  
Barbara Gruszynski  
Jacqueline Guyer  
Carolyn Hahn Kremer  
Jeanette Hamel  
Christie Hannewyk  
Kathryn Hardig  
Erin Harding  
Janice Harding  
Mary Harding  
Bonnie Hay  
Mary Lou Heath  
Mary Heck  
Jennifer Helmen  
Helen Hepler  
Mary Hesburgh  
Jessica Hilary  
Janice Horan  
Janet Horvath  
Bridget Hubbard  
Ruth Hubner  
Laura Hyde Schaefer  
Hina Aslam  
Mary Jaicomo  
Katherine James  
Laura Jamrog  
Jennifer Jermano Miller  
Cindy Joers  
Lori Johnston  
Andrea Jones  
Marcia Jones  
Erika Joo  
Marianne Keber  
Marijo Kelly  
Colleen Kendzicky  
Micki Kidder  
Peggy King  
Genelle King  
Margaret King  
Edwina Kintner  
Joanne Knoop  
Carol Kraabel  
Lyndsay Krieger  
Cherese Krueper  
Kathleen Laderer  
Ginger Lake  
Jane Lamb  
Kathleen Lawton

Judith Lentych  
Barbara Levan  
Linda Linnen  
Barbara Lorch  
Jessica Luczynski  
Rachael Lynch  
Katha Machalleck  
Claudia Mager  
Sarah Mager  
Mary Jo Malstaff  
Megan Martin  
Mary Mathews  
Nanette McCartney  
Gay McCrea  
Anne McGraw  
Vicki McIntire  
Roberta McMahan  
Sharon McManus  
Deirdre McTigue  
Norma Lu Meehan  
Lisa Metros  
Betty Meyer  
Emee Miller  
Kim Miller  
Mo Miller  
Susan Miller  
Connie Minzey  
Charlotte Mittler  
Karen Mowery  
Martha Jo Moynahan  
Mary Lou Mullen  
Sue Mullett  
Pamela Mullin  
Carmen Murphy  
Jane Murphy  
Connie Nelson  
Sharon Nelson  
Elsie Nemeth  
Ilene New  
Mary Newbold  
Pamela Newman  
Mary Pat Nussbaum  
Bette O'Malley  
Barbara Obenchain  
Nancy Owsianowski  
Diana Panzica  
Maryanne Pfannerstill  
Laura Pflum  
Cinda Pittman  
Julie Plagens  
Marcia Polaski  
Pat Potts  
Mitzi Psarakis  
Karen Putt  
Nancy Racine  
Jean Ricchiute

Margaret Rich  
Anne Riordan  
Carla Robinson  
Mary Ann Rogers  
Ina Rosenberg  
Trish Ross  
Sandra Rousseve  
Sue Ruszkowski  
Barbara Schafer  
Sarah Scheuer  
Frances Schmuhl  
Teresa Schrager  
Cheri Schuster  
Julia Schwartz  
Kathleen Seidl  
Bonnie Shaffer  
Michelle Shakour  
Chris Sieradzki  
Ann Silverman  
Kathleen Simeri  
Marjo Sindy  
Vicki Skodras  
Angie Skwarczan  
Sandy Smith  
Joyce Sopko  
Teresa Stack  
Connie Stamper  
Mary Jane Stanley  
Jolene Stiver  
Ellen Stolte  
Andrea Swanson-Loop  
Janet Thompson  
Kathleen Toothaker  
Holly Troeger  
Jill Truitt  
Rikki Tuesley  
Janet Rzepka Turnock  
Amy Tyler  
Lucinda Ullery  
Susan VanFleit  
Kate Voelker  
Denise Wager  
Sara Walters  
Stacey Weirich  
Janice Weller  
Catherine Wells Bentz  
Leslie Wesley  
Kathleen White  
Joann Whitfield-Welsh  
Marsha Williams  
Terry Williams  
Mari Linn Wise  
Jane Wright  
Carrie Yarger  
Ruth Yarger  
Terry Zelvy  
Cari Zielinski

# A Year of Impact and Community Engagement

*JLSB Members Step Out to Support Those in Need*

# DIAD PROJECTS

Over the past year, the Junior League of South Bend (JLSB) proudly partnered with St. Joseph County Parks on an exciting primary project that brought hands-on educational opportunities to the Bendix Woods Nature Center. Thanks to funds raised during Holiday Ball 2024, JLSB helped support the renovation of the Nature Center and the creation of an impressive new pond exhibit. This exhibit offers school-aged children and visitors an up-close experience with wildlife and nature. With over 300,000 visitors to the parks annually,



JLSB is honored to contribute to enhancing the educational experience for local schools and the wider community.



In addition to funding, League members volunteered alongside park staff and fellow community members throughout the year to maintain trails and assist with hallmark events, including Sugar Camp Days, the Tail-Waggin' Hayride, Tapping Day, and more.

Holiday Ball's continued success has enabled all funds raised to be reinvested directly into the community. As a result, JLSB has expanded its impact by awarding multiple community grants.

One highlight from this past year was JLSB's sponsorship of a water station at the Girls on the Run (GOTR) Michiana 5K. Members crafted signs and bracelets to cheer on local runners, encouraging them as they were "Mountain Movers"—this year's theme—to reach the finish line. GOTR Michiana, part of a national organization, empowers young girls through mentorship and physical activity. JLSB is proud to be a longtime partner, with many members serving as coaches, mentors, and supporters.



Another impactful grant was awarded to Hannah's House, a local nonprofit offering a nurturing environment and shelter for pregnant



women in need. Their request to enhance their wellness center aligned perfectly with JLSB's 2024 focus on supporting mental and physical health initiatives. The grant helped purchase new equipment and renovate the space to better facilitate yoga and mindfulness classes.

Through partnerships with organizations like St. Joseph County Parks, Girls on the Run, and Hannah's House, JLSB continues its mission of promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. We are grateful for the opportunity to make a meaningful difference—together.

Together with our community partners, the Junior League of South Bend is proud to invest in programs that create lasting change, foster growth, and uplift individuals and families across our region.

In addition to our primary projects and grantmaking efforts, the Junior League of South Bend remains deeply committed to regular volunteerism through Done-in-a-Day (DIAD) and Done-in-a-Meeting (DIAM) initiatives. These service opportunities allow members to contribute meaningfully to local organizations—both during monthly meetings and through one-time, hands-on volunteer events.

Below are highlights from the 2024–2025 League year:

# Done in a Day

## (DIAD)

### **Cultivate Food Rescue**

*Ongoing monthly volunteer shifts to support food recovery and distribution*

### **Logan Center Christmas Party**

*Provided volunteer support for a festive holiday event for individuals with disabilities*

### **South Bend Venues Parks & Arts**

*Assisted with Daddy-Daughter and Mother-Son Dances*

### **St. Joseph County Parks**

*Participated in monthly event support and nature trail maintenance*

### **Studebaker Trunk-or-Treat**

*Decorated vehicles and handed out treats at a community Halloween event*

# Done in a Meeting

## (DIAM)

### **I Support the Girls Supply Drive**

*Collected undergarments and feminine hygiene products for women in need*

### **Life Plan Supply Drive**

*Gathered essential supplies for families served by Life Plan*

### **Girls on the Run Cheering Station**

*Created encouraging signs and bracelets to support race participants*

# Member Led Projects

Many of our members also initiated and led individual service efforts, amplifying JLSB's reach and impact across the region. These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to developing the potential of women and improving our community through the effective action of trained volunteers. Whether through a supply drive, a holiday event, or ongoing community partnerships,

**JLSB members continue to show up with purpose, passion, and dedication.**



# Holiday Ball

## A Black & White Affair

*JLSB's Annual Holiday Ball*

Junior League's annual Holiday Ball, held on December 7, 2024, was a celebration to remember. This year's Black & White Affair shimmered with elegance as 172 guests danced the night away to the energetic sounds of Shock Roxy. Attendees enjoyed a lively evening filled with delicious food and drink, a robust silent auction, and the excitement of the League's first-ever live auction, which raised an impressive

**\$13,425.**

The evening also featured the debut of our annual impact video, which shined a spotlight on our meaningful project at Bendix Woods, highlighting the difference we're making in the community. A special moment of the night was the presentation of the Mary Lou Schwartz Award by our two-time president, Jennifer V. Liddell, to sustainer Carolyn Hahn Kremer, a devoted and inspiring member whose work with the CASIE Center was celebrated by a strong showing of support from her colleagues.

In total, the event raised an incredible

**\$55,575.**

The Holiday Ball Committee was deeply grateful for the support and collaboration within Junior League that made this level of success possible. It was a night filled with purpose, celebration, and community pride.

*Thank You to Our 2024 Holiday Ball Committee*



*Heather Goralski  
Jenna Schwartz  
Holly Alexander  
Jessica Simeri, Holiday Ball Chair  
Melanie Ellis  
Jennifer Jermano Miller, PP, Sustainer Chair  
Madelyn Martinec*



***A Special Thank You to Our 2024  
Holiday Ball Sponsors:***

**Diamond Sponsor**

Schwartz Wiekamp Foundation  
*In Loving Memory of Mary Lou Schwartz*

**Gold Sponsors**

Gurley Leep Automotive Family  
Kashif & Areeba Shaikh

**Silver Sponsors**

1st Source Bank  
Apollo Printing & Graphics Center  
Century Builders  
Lippert  
Chris & Carmi Murphy, PP

**Bronze Sponsors**

Ansari Charitable Foundation Inc.  
Beacon Health System  
Ryan & Erin Harding  
North American Signs  
Patrick Industries, Inc.  
Shady Creek Winery  
TJ21 Media Group  
University of Notre Dame

### **Friends of The Junior League of South Bend**

Ancon Construction  
Holly Alexander  
Bowen Health  
Stephen & Nancy Ball  
Joel & Courtney Bennett  
Wills & Kat Gardner  
Golden Legacy  
Robert & Maureen Hosinski  
Indiana Trust Wealth Management  
Jess Simeri Yoga  
Kelly Cares Foundation  
Michael & Colleen Kendzicky, PP  
Alen & Safija Kovac  
Lake Life Realty - Union, MI  
Dan & Megan New  
Richard & Mary Pat Nussbaum  
Old National Bank  
Parnomi  
Stuart & Jessica Reasons, PP  
Matthew & Abbey Sheldon  
The Honorable James & Amy Stewart-Brown, PP  
Jason & Allyson Triplett

### ***Endowment Initiatives***

In 2025, Junior League of South Bend actively pursued fundraising efforts to bolster its endowment. These initiatives included engaging micro fundraisers during general membership meetings, featuring raffles for gift cards, and a wine pull at May Dinner. Collectively, these creative and membership-driven activities successfully raised over \$1,500, contributing significantly to the endowment's growth and the League's ongoing mission.



*Congratulations to our 2024 Mary Lou Schwartz Award winner, Carolyn Hahn Kremer!*

# Financials

JLSB Statement of Activities for FYE June 30, 2025

<b>Revenue and Other Support</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Permanently Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
Membership Dues	\$ 22,625.00		\$22,625.00
Endowment Fund Income		\$7,974.00	\$7,974.00
Cookbook Sales	\$ 185.00		\$185.00
Cookbook Sales, Cost of goods sold			\$0.00
Holiday Ball	\$ 79,260.55		\$79,260.55
Holiday Ball/Fundraising, Direct Costs	\$ (27,085.67)		-\$27,085.67
Net assets released from restrictions:			
Endowment Distribution - Community Foundation	\$ 19,587.00		\$19,587.00
Endowment Distribution - 1st Source Bank 2024	\$ 33,809.72		\$33,809.72
Endowment Distribution-1st SourceBank 2025	\$ 33,993.89		\$33,993.89
	<b>\$ 162,375.49</b>	<b>\$7,974.00</b>	<b>\$170,349.49</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
Communications	\$ 19,343.07		\$19,343.07
Community: Projects/Grants/Sponsorships	\$ 31,371.89		\$31,371.89
Membership	\$ 9,446.81		\$9,446.81
Training	\$ 12,764.65		\$12,764.65
AJLI Dues	\$ 11,665.20		\$11,665.20
Management & General	\$ 64,695.82		\$64,695.82
	\$ 149,287.44		\$149,287.44
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$ 13,088.05</b>	<b>\$7,974.00</b>	<b>\$21,062.05</b>
<b>*Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 375,999.72</b>	<b>\$1,187,935.65</b>	<b>\$1,563,935.37</b>

\*Investments are Market Value 6/30/25

# A Year of Meeting New People and Giving Back

*2024-2025 New Member Class is Already Making an Impact!*



This year's New Members were the first we trained using the new training model introduced by AJLI last Spring. Much thanks to Amy Stewart-Brown and Angie Skwarcan for taking the new guidelines and running with them to bring our New Member cohorts through to the end of the league year.

Our Fall and Spring Cohorts were introduced to the Junior League through training sessions, an opportunity to visit one of JLSB's long-standing partners, the CASIE Center, and volunteering with Cultivate. Additionally, New Members attended GMMs, volunteered at DIAD and project shifts, and attended socials throughout the year. Once members of our Fall Cohort completed their training, they shadowed one of our four councils. This allowed them to have hands-on experience within their areas of interest and provided opportunities to connect with active members.

*Please extend a warm welcome to*

## New Members

*Lauren Angela-Mattox*

*Kristen Capitano*

*Aubrey Grossnickle*

*Laura Hall*

*Sabeen Khan*

*Clover Kuehn*

*Liz LaVine*

*Renae Michalski*

*Leah McGinty*

*Paige Taelman*

*Carly Truhler*

*Alexia Velazquez*

*Robin Vida*

*Sarah Witt*

# A Busy Year For JLSB's Sustainers!

*Committee offers a wide variety of events for local sustainers.*

Thanks to the many women who worked in various capacities, both front and center and behind the scenes, to ensure another successful League year! We would also like to thank all of the Sustainers who helped make that happen!

We had a full house for the Fall Cocktail Party this year! Thanks to Jeanette Hamel (PP) and Michelle Shakour for chairing the event, and to Mari Linn Wise for opening her home to host the evening; it was a great success! We saw familiar faces and some we hadn't seen in quite a while!

Thanks to Jennifer Jermano Miller (PP) for stepping up to co-chair Holiday Ball, and to Angie Skwarcan for serving the Membership Council as Sustainer Advisor, welcoming the New Member class, among other things. Their extensive organizational and historical knowledge provided valuable guidance and mentorship.

We had a wonderful time at the Holiday Luncheon hosted at Carmi Murphy's home. The food was delicious and the atmosphere was festive. Many thanks to Pam Mullin (PP) and Lisa Deputy for chairing that event, and to Carmi for sharing her beautifully decorated home with us.

Our final event of the year was the Spring Luncheon, co-chaired by Mo Miller and Trish Ross, and hosted at The History Museum in South Bend.

Sustainers participated in various DIAD and DIAM events throughout the year. It was really nice to reconnect with some Sustainers who had been away for a while! Our Sustainers also met regularly throughout the year for book club, euchre, and bridge.





# Conferences





Over the summer, the Membership Council organized casual socials, giving League members an opportunity to connect over good food and conversation at local restaurants and bars. As the League year got underway, we continued the momentum with seasonal socials throughout the Fall and Spring. Highlights included a downtown South Bend lunch, a festive Galentine's Wine & Girl Scout Cookie pairing party, a combined volunteer social during Bendix Woods' Sugar Camp Days, and a fun-filled bowling night that sparked interest in starting an official Junior League bowling league.

# Socials





# Trainings

The Membership Council hosted four innovative and engaging trainings this year. We kicked things off in September with a session on voter registration, highlighting the Junior League's historic role in the Women's Suffrage Movement.

In October, members got creative at a Fall-themed training, crafting their own festive foliage wreaths. January's training took a fun and social twist as New Members Alexia Velazquez and Clover Kuehn led a crochet and knitting workshop during a lively takeover of local bar Hammer & Quill. In February, our most popular session of the year focused on estate planning, covering living wills and strategies for safeguarding the future of both yourself and your loved ones.



Special thanks to Janet Horvath for leading the impactful estate planning session, and to Alexia and Clover for sharing their skills in fiber arts with fellow members.

# *In Memoriam*

## MOMENT OF SILENCE



NANCY  
DEACON



MELVA  
FREEMAN  
(PAST PRESIDENT)



JIMITA  
POTTER  
(PAST PRESIDENT)

## *Meet the 2025-2026 JLSB Board of Directors*



### *Allyson Triplett, President*

Allyson and her husband moved back to Indiana in 2022 from Omaha, Nebraska. They had their son Charlie last year and he enjoys attending JLSB events with his mom! Originally from the Culver, Indiana area, Allyson attended Indiana University where she earned her MS, MA, and MPA focusing in nonprofit management. She and her husband have both followed career paths in the nonprofit sector and she is currently a Major Gift Officer at Holy Cross College.

Allyson first joined Junior League back in 2019 during her time in Omaha. She has served on the diversity and inclusion committee, fundraising council, community council, and membership council prior to taking on this leadership role. Besides networking and lifelong friendships that have come from Junior League, two of her favorite things are the diverse projects members select to support within the community as well as the opportunities for professional growth and development outside of the workplace.



### *Becky Beckman, President Elect*

Becky Beckman is a dynamic connector, storyteller, and builder of brands who currently is on the Regional Sales team in the Marine Division at Lippert. With a career that spans nonprofit leadership, major brand campaigns, and high-impact sales strategy, Becky thrives at the intersection of vision and execution.

Prior to joining Lippert, Becky served as Partner & Sales Executive at Gibson from 2018–2025, where she led transformative initiatives that strengthened community engagement, relationships, and sales growth. Her earlier tenure as VP of Marketing at Carbon's Golden Malted saw her launch the company's first food trucks in Chicago and South Bend—blending innovation with bold brand presence.

Rooted in purpose-driven work, nonprofit leadership is at the heart of every project she takes on. Known for her enthusiasm, authenticity, and ability to rally teams around a shared goal, Becky believes that every touchpoint is an opportunity for connection and the ability to help others.



### *Angie Skwarcan, Sustainer Advisor to the Board*

Angie lives in South Bend and has been a proud JLSB member since 2001. She is married to Dean, her high school sweetheart, and they are very busy raising three daughters: Anna (22), Beatrice (20), and Clementine (16). They also have two goldendoodles: Dash (her favorite child) and Ellie. The whole family enjoys spending time together at Barron Lake in Niles, MI.

Angie graduated from Indiana University with a BS in Early Childhood Education and a MS in Elementary Education. She is currently the Director of Prevention Programs at The CASIE Center, one of JLSB's past projects. She works with families, schools, and other community organizations to help prevent child abuse across St. Joseph County and the state.

Over the years, Angie has participated in so many different League committees: Internal, SPAC, Holiday Ball, Thrift Shop, Training Resource, Nominating, Future Planning, Chefs Showcase, Fund Development, DIAD, and Community Research to name a few. She is hoping to bring some of her past experiences and love of League to support the Leadership Team in everything they want to accomplish this year!



### ***Madelyn Martinec, Secretary***

Madelyn Martinec is a dedicated nonprofit professional, with over 10 years of experience in fundraising, grant administration and volunteer management. As the Director of Grants Administration at YWCA North Central Indiana, she oversees the development, management, and compliance of grant funding, ensuring vital resources reach those in need. With a strategic approach to fundraising, Madelyn has successfully led initiatives that strengthen programs, expand services, and drive impactful change. Over the past several years, she has held roles at REAL Services, the Center for the Homeless, and the Food Bank of Northern Indiana.

She is a proud graduate of Holy Cross College, where she obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Communications, and Bethel University in Mishawaka, where she earned her Masters in Business Administration.

Beyond her professional role, Madelyn is actively engaged in her community. She serves as an ambassador for the Young Professionals Network South Bend, is a member of the Board of Directors for Leadership SBM, and is the 2025-2026 Junior League of South Bend Secretary. Additionally, she volunteers at the Food Bank of Northern Indiana regularly, further demonstrating her commitment to service and social impact.



### ***Safija Kovac, Treasurer***

Safija Kovac has been an active member of the Junior League of South Bend since 2020, holding placements such as Done-In-a-Day Assistant Chair, Holiday Ball Committee, and now Treasurer. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from Indiana University of South Bend and is the founder and president of SAFInancial Group, Inc.

For Safija, her work with the League is not only about leadership but also about self-care, as it provides balance and fulfillment. Outside of the League, she served as a board member of Neighbor to Neighbor and is a dedicated volunteer.

Safija is married to her best friend, Alen, and together they are raising three children. She loves spending time with her family and enjoys traveling whenever she gets the chance.



### ***Areeba Shaikh, Executive Vice President***

Originally from Toronto, Canada, Areeba has proudly called the Midwest home for more than two decades. Since relocating to South Bend in 2017, she has been an active member of the Junior League of South Bend. Following her involvement across the Communications, Membership, and Community councils, she now serves as Executive Vice President.

Areeba spent eight years working in recruitment and project management at CareerBuilder in Chicago, and has since expanded her impact across several community-focused initiatives. She has supported fundraising and event planning efforts for the LOGAN Center and Cultivate. Her nonprofit involvement in Indianapolis included School on Wheels, Best Buddies International, the United Way of Central Indiana, The Julian Center, and BRIDGE, where she served as PR Director. She currently sits on the Board of the Children's Museum of South Bend.

Areeba holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies from Indiana University and recently began her Executive Master's in Nonprofit Administration at the University of Notre Dame. Outside of her professional and volunteer commitments, Areeba serves as a personal assistant/snack curator to her two young children and enjoys traveling.



### ***Abbey Johnson Sheldon, Nominating***

Abbey is excited to serve as the Nominating Chair after serving as Communications VP for the Junior League of South Bend. She also previously held the role of Marketing Chair. She started her Junior League journey in Kalamazoo in 2020. She works as the Clubs Program Director for the Alumni Association at the University of Notre Dame. Previously, Abbey worked for a nonprofit organization, Say Yes to Education, based in New York City.

Abbey is a 2015 graduate of High Point University, where she earned a BA in Nonprofit Administration and Management. She earned her Masters of Nonprofit Administration from the University of Notre Dame in 2018. She resides in South Bend with her husband Matthew and three dogs - Quinn, Roscoe, Milo. She enjoys early morning workouts at Burn Boot Camp, dog walks, reading books, trying new restaurants, and planning her next vacation.

## ***Meet the 2025-2026 JLSB Management Team***



### ***Natalie Haut, Communications Vice President***

Born and raised in the South Bend area, Natalie brings both local roots and a strong professional background to her new role as Communications VP for the Junior League of South Bend. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Marketing from Indiana University and began her career in Chicago with SmithBucklin, Inc., working as a Market Researcher. After relocating to Indianapolis, she continued her work with SmithBucklin as an Independent Contractor, balancing her professional career with raising her three children—Madelyn (18), Gavin (16), and Mia (12).

In 2008, Natalie and her family returned to South Bend, where she remained dedicated to community involvement and professional growth. In 2024, she began a new role as Marketing Manager at LOGAN Community Resources, Inc., further expanding her impact through strategic communications and advocacy for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

A member of the Junior League of South Bend since 2019, Natalie joined the organization to both give back to her community and connect with like-minded women committed to service and leadership. Most of her time in the League has been spent on the Community Council, where she helped plan and coordinate DIAD (Done in a Day) volunteer opportunities. In her new leadership role as Communications VP, Natalie is excited to strengthen the League's voice, build connections, and elevate the incredible work being done by its members throughout the South Bend community.



### ***Breanna Schuler, Membership Vice President***

Breanna is originally from the Chicagoland area of Illinois but has spent most of her life in the Granger/ South Bend area. She currently lives in Osceola with her husband, Chris, and their two dogs Bluebell and Levi. Breanna has a BA in General Studies, minor in Education from Indiana University. She has committed the last 9 years to the field of Applied Behavior Analysis as a BCaBA working mostly with children on the Autism Spectrum. Breanna has recently shifted to working with individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and dual diagnosis as a Program Director of several group homes in the Northwest region of Indiana.

Breanna has been in the Junior League since 2022. During that time, she has organized the YWCA birthday parties on membership council and chaired the main community project with the St. Joseph County parks. She is passionate about getting out and helping in the community, there are hardly any opportunities in the Junior League that she misses, if there is an event she is usually there.

In her downtime, Breanna enjoys spending time out on the water kayaking, going for a hike out in nature, and seeking out live music locally or at a music festival.



### ***Erika Costantini, Community Vice President***

Originally from Connecticut, Erika Costantini brings over 20 years of experience as an educator and leader in independent schools. Prior to moving to Indiana in 2019, she taught middle and high school Spanish at Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford, where she served as Middle School World Language Department Chair and Form Dean for the sixth grade. While at Kingswood Oxford, she also led a senior advisor mentoring program and helped develop an exchange program with a school in Caracas, Venezuela.

Erika holds a B.A. from Denison University and an M.A. in Spanish from Middlebury College, where she studied in both Toledo, Spain, and Guadalajara, Mexico. She currently teaches high school Spanish at Culver Academies.

Since relocating to South Bend with her husband, Ryan, and their son, T.J., Erika has found great joy in attending AGLI conferences and connecting with members across the country. Raised by a mother who modeled community engagement, Erika is proud to carry on that legacy and hopes to instill those same values in her own son.

In her role as Vice President of Community, Erika looks forward to sharing her enthusiasm for volunteerism, deepening our partnerships with Reins of Life and Ronald McDonald House Charities, and inspiring member engagement throughout the year.

When she's not teaching or volunteering, Erika enjoys hiking, traveling, attending concerts and performances, and cheering on the Fighting Irish.



### ***Jenna Schwartz, Vice President of Fundraising***

Jenna Schwartz is excited to serve her second year as the Fundraising Vice President. She looks forward to fostering community engagement and bringing philanthropy to the forefront of our organization. Jenna is eager to strengthen ties with our community partners and expand our donor base to support our mission and advance our fundraising initiatives.

Jenna joined the junior league in 2021 and has served on the Holiday Ball committee in various capacities including Chairing the ball in 2023. Outside of League Jenna serves on the board and volunteers at Reins Of Life, a local organization that provides equine assisted therapy to those in need. Originally from New Jersey, Jenna first came to South Bend to pursue her education at Saint Mary's College and the University of Notre Dame. Drawn to the vibrant community, she returned to South Bend permanently after college. Today, she lives here with her husband and their two young children, Jaime (2) and Amelia (under 1).

# Looking Ahead

As we look to the year ahead, the Junior League of South Bend (JLSB) is proud to continue our tradition of meaningful community impact through new and continued partnerships with outstanding local organizations.

## **Primary Project: Reins of Life South Bend Training Facility**

For the 2025–2026 League year, JLSB is thrilled to support **Reins of Life** as they complete renovations on their new **South Bend Training Facility**. JLSB funding will help establish a **sensory gym**—a dedicated space equipped with specialized tools designed to support individuals with **sensory processing challenges**. These environments promote the development of sensory regulation, motor coordination, and social interaction.

Reins of Life provides equine-assisted services to individuals of all ages and abilities, creating transformative experiences through activities like horseback riding, grooming, and barn care. This new sensory gym will further enhance their therapeutic programming and offer participants a space to grow and thrive in a nurturing, adaptive environment.

Throughout the year, JLSB members will also engage with Reins of Life through **hands-on volunteer opportunities**, supporting their mission and building Relationships with participants and families.

## **Grant Recipient: Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Michiana**

JLSB is honored to award a grant to support the **Ronald McDonald House** and their **Nourishment Program**, which provides comforting meals and snacks to families staying near their hospitalized children. In addition to grant funding, JLSB looks forward to exploring **ongoing volunteer opportunities** with the organization to further support families in crisis.

## **Grant Recipient: Robinson Community Learning Center**

Another 2025–2026 grant recipient is the **Robinson Community Learning Center**, a dynamic space dedicated to education, enrichment, and community-building for youth and families in South Bend. JLSB's funding will help support their efforts in providing **educational programming, youth mentoring, and outreach services**, all of which closely align with the League's mission to improve communities through the action of trained volunteers.

**REINS OF LIFE, INC.**

Therapeutic Horseback Riding



**Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
Michiana**



**Robinson  
Community  
Learning  
Center**



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF  
**SOUTH BEND**