

AZ Giving: Junior League of Phoenix Celebrates 85 Years

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AFM: Tell us about Junior League of Phoenix.

WB: Junior League of Phoenix is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. We are more than 1,000 members strong locally and one of 291 chapters in four countries totaling more than 140,000 women.

AFM: What are some of the highlights from the past 85 years?

WB: The Junior League of Phoenix has been instrumental in changing the fabric of our community since we initially incorporated as the Welfare League of Phoenix in 1930. From helping war efforts to advocating and funding efforts to preserve Camelback Mountain, renovating Rosson House and Orpheum Theatre to bringing Komen Race for the Cure to Phoenix, establishing the Ronald McDonald House, assisting with building the Phoenix Zoo Education Center, Arizona Science Center, Ryan House and Children's Museum of Phoenix; Junior League has made a positive difference in our community.

AFM: How does Junior League of Phoenix develop women into leaders and impact the Phoenix community?

WB: Junior League helps develop women by hands-on training in how to be an effective committee member and leader. Some of the training is nuts and bolts training: how to create an agenda and run a meeting, how to solicit donations and then properly thank your donors, how to prepare and stick to a budget, how to develop relationships with community partners and then effectively leverage those partnerships to move your collective goal forward, how to mentor and empower women. Other training is more strategic: how to evaluate a community's needs in order to fine-tune a focus area where we can make and see a difference, how to determine long range goals and needs so all actions taken circle back to our mission. Our volunteers impact our community with a hands-on mentality. Additionally, we have financially assisted many community partners in order to help them move their mission forward.

How are you celebrating the 85th anniversary?

To commemorate our 85 years of sustainable community change, we granted \$85,000 to the Phoenix Rescue Mission so that they were able to purchase a mobile food pantry. Additionally, our members are collecting components for weekend food backpacks so the neediest and most vulnerable in our community will be able to eat when school is not in session. Once completed, these backpacks will be given to The United Way, another community partner, to distribute. As both these examples show, we know that change comes from a coalition of changemakers who work together to move the needle on pressing social issues.