



PALM BEACH ILLUSTRATED®

THE PHILANTHROPY ISSUE

MISSION: NUTRITION

HOW ONE CHEF (AND MOM) IS BRINGING KIDS TO THE TABLE

KATHERINE GAGE BOULUD

DRIVING CHANGE

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE CELEBRATES 85 YEARS OF SERVICE



DESIGN FORWARD
INSIDE THE WORLD OF A HGTV STAR

FROM THE EDITOR



DOING GOOD

It's no secret that philanthropy is a big conversation in Palm Beach County, where significant wealth is juxtaposed with equally substantial need. I've seen it firsthand in my own volunteerism for the West Palm Beach Library Foundation, where I serve on the board of directors. Libraries are, by nature, open to all, so the disparity is clear any day of the week, when you can see everyone from well-to-do young families coming in for story time to teenage girls picking up monthly supplies they can't afford at home. It takes all of us to make a community, and helping each other benefits everyone.

That's the guiding principle of the Junior League, whose Palm Beach chapter turns 85 this year. Over the decades of its existence, its all-female members have provided thousands of volunteer hours and helped build incredible facilities for unmet needs. Through service, these women have become leaders and lifelong advocates for underrepresented voices. In this issue, we salute the Junior League of the Palm Beaches with a series of member profiles, photographed at nonprofits the Junior League has impacted over the years. Turn to "A League of Their Own" on page 104 and meet five philanthropic powerhouses.

Speaking of powerhouses, I am convinced there is nothing this month's cover star can't do. For the first Palm Beach fundraiser for Spoons Across America, Katherine Gage Boulud—chef, young mom, and wife of celebrated chef Daniel Boulud—transformed Café Boulud into a flower garden and welcomed more than 100 glamorous guests in hats. Walking into the exquisite scene, it was impossible to guess she did it all practically single-handedly. Katherine's dedication to Spoons stems from her conviction that American eating habits need to change for the better, especially when it comes to children. Read about her mission and everything that led her to this point in "Taste Tester" (page 98).

Continuing with our fabulous female lineup, we present the story of HGTV star Sarah Baeumler, who famously moved her family from Canada to a Bahamian island to renovate a derelict hotel and document it in the series *Renovation Island*. Having stayed at that resort, Caerula Mar in South Andros, post-renovation, I can tell you her design choices are impeccable. Meet Sarah and read about her growing list of fascinating projects in "Doyenne of Design" on page 110.

Enjoy this issue and the accompanying *Palm Beach Charity Register*, which I hope you'll use to deepen your knowledge of our incredible nonprofit community for your own philanthropic projects.

Daphne Nikolopoulos
daphne@palmbeachillustrated.com



FOR 85 YEARS, THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF THE PALM BEACHES HAS HELPED MEET THE NEEDS AND SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES—NOT TO MENTION THE WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ITS GUIDING LIGHTS

BY KELLEY MARCELLUS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARRIE BRADBURN/CAPEHART

A strong, vibrant community doesn't happen by accident. No one knows that better than the women who are determined to build a place worth living in, by evaluating unmet needs, making plans to address them, and providing the training needed to sustain them.

Started in 1941 by 15 visionary women, the Junior League of the Palm Beaches (JLPB) operates under the umbrella of the Association of Junior Leagues International, welcoming all women who value its mission of promoting volunteerism, developing leadership in individuals, and improving communities.

JLPB has been critical in the development of West Palm Beach's Cox Science Center and Aquarium, Quantum House, and Fun Zone at Gaines Park, as well as the renovations at Vita Nova, to name just a few projects. Over the past four years, JLPB has distributed more than a million feminine products to those in need and helped bolster the reading skills of area school children with more than 24 free Little Libraries that have been installed at Title I schools across the county. The organization also supports the work of other nonprofits and governmental programs, and it provides training to its members on effective volunteerism, bolstering leadership skills and relationships that fuel each member's personal growth.

"We are a group of women who want to inspire and be inspired," says Kate Stamm, JLPB's current president. "There's nothing more powerful than a group of women who want to work together. The things that can be done are simply amazing." (@jlpb.org)

Kathryn VECELLIO

Photographed at Cox Science Center and Aquarium, West Palm Beach

A storm blew through on Kathryn Vecellio's birthday in 1992 and changed everything. She'd become president of JLPB a few months earlier, and when Hurricane Andrew hit on August 24, the organization shifted its focus toward getting supplies to Miami-Dade County. "Any plans we had stopped for a while," recalls Vecellio. "The next day, we started to get everything we possibly could, from food and water to paper towels and diapers, to Miami Dade County."

JLPB sent 28 truckloads of supplies to those affected and donated \$4,000 to the Salvation Army for immediate needs and additional funds to the local Junior League for longer-term relief efforts. Yet, Vecellio and her league of volunteers charged ahead with other plans too. "That year," she says, "we had 1,853 children from 27 preschools and daycares that we put through our Eye and Ear Alert program."

JLPB also had a health and immunization clinic for adults and children who did not have access to health care.

These are just two of the many projects JLPB initiated and supported between 1992 and 1993. For the league's members, the planning and execution of such programs result in lasting relationships. "You build lifetime friendships," Vecellio says. "So many projects have benefited so many people that I've had a chance to really get to know the community."

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

104 PALM BEACH ILLUSTRATED

PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM | NOVEMBER 2025 105



Laura RUSSELL

Photographed at Vita Nova, West Palm Beach

When Laura Russell found JLPB, she was brand new in town and feeling unsettled.

"I grew up in Tallahassee, went to college there, and had a really close-knit group of friends," she says. Someone encouraged Russell to consider the Junior League, and she never looked back. "It truly was one of the best decisions I ever made. I met my best friends in the provisional classroom. We've grown together, gone through loves and losses, and come together as leaders."

Russell served as JLPB's president from 2015 to 2016 (during its seventy-fifth anniversary) and worked on supporting those aging out of the foster care system as it partnered with Vita Nova to give people ages 18 to 25 a "lovely place to go and grow and figure out the next stage of their lives," she says.

Russell is grateful to the women who laid the foundation for the Junior League's ongoing programs and for what she's gained through her involvement. "I learned how to plan, run, and contribute to effective meetings and the critical role governance and structure play in nonprofit work," she says. "There's truly no better teacher than the hands-on experience you gain in the Junior League. Not to mention you can do it with some of your best friends."

106 PALM BEACH ILLUSTRATED



Julie RUDOLPH

Photographed at Palm Beach County Food Bank, Lake Worth Beach

Julie Rudolph's Instagram profile boasts "Junior League 4 Life," and it's a motto she stands behind.

Rudolph grew up in South Florida and caught the volunteer bug in high school, so joining JLPB was a natural step. When she assumed the role of president in 2020, however, she realized the organization was a pillar of her own strength.

"My mom was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and the week she got the news I volunteered," says Rudolph, whose mother ultimately passed away from the disease. "The only thing that made me feel better was helping other people."

Given the timing of her presidency, opportunities exploded. JLPB joined forces with Feeding South

Florida to operate its pandemic relief food distribution program. "By 8 in the morning, we'd have a line of 2,000 cars," she says. "We'd stay until the trucks were empty, but we never saw the end of the line."

JLPB also marked its eightieth anniversary that year, but plans for a glamorous celebration were dashed. "We got through it, and

here we are at the eighty-fifth," Rudolph says, noting that though the pandemic impacted membership, the Junior League has rebounded, and its members are ready to serve. "When you volunteer, it makes you feel better as a human, as a society, and a woman. When you can't control anything else, you can control what you do."

PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM | NOVEMBER 2025 107



Roberta JURNEY

Photographed at Quantum House, West Palm Beach

Roberta Jurney was a mother with young children when her neighbor planted a seed about JLPB.

"I liked the idea that I could do something that really represented who I was, not as somebody's mom or wife," Jurney explains. "It was work that I was going to do to give back to the community."

Jurney served as JLPB's president from 1994 to 1995 and, over the course of three decades, has been involved with myriad projects—including one that eventually shaped her career. Beginning in the late 1990s, the Junior League worked to open West Palm Beach's Quantum House in 2001, the only pediatric health care hospital-ity house between Orlando and Miami. Jurney went on to serve as Quantum House's CEO for 15 years, after which she returned as a member of the organization's board of directors.

"One of the things that the Junior League has focused on is to train women to become exceptional volunteers who go out to serve on boards of other organizations in the community," she says of training that is the backdrop for lasting friendships. "[These] women come from all different backgrounds, occupations, and family situations with no other agenda than getting things done right. It's really a very homegrown vision of making sure that the place where you live is doing the best it can for its people."

Kate STAMM

Photographed at Junior League of the Palm Beaches' office, West Palm Beach

At a dinner last May, Kate Stamm stood in a line of women who once led the Junior League of the Palm Beaches. They passed a gavel until it landed in Stamm's hands, marking the start of her yearlong term as president.

"I was so impressed by these women," she recalls. "They had their missions. They were driven. They knew how to carry themselves. I just want to emulate that [example] and have an impact on my community and be of service."

One of JLPB's focuses this year is on literacy. The approach is multipronged, supporting kids with educational and recreational activities that promote reading, comprehension, and creativity as well as installing Little Libraries at Title I schools, serving more than 13,000 students with book donations for lending.

Over time, JLPB will shift to meet other community needs, but Stamm assures that gaps are not lost.

"When something new comes to the page, we work hard to continue all those [previous] projects into perpetuity," she says.

That continuance ("you can join at 22 and be a volunteer at 80," she says), camaraderie, and mentorship have been the secrets to the Junior League's success during its 85 years.

"Some come to make friends and others come to make a lasting impact on the community," Stamm says. "All of us find our place within the community." ◀◀

