



**For Immediate Release:**

August 2, 2022

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**Junior League of Indianapolis shifts efforts to supporting area foster youth  
*New community focus area will address the needs of youth in foster and kinship care***

**INDIANAPOLIS** – The Junior League of Indianapolis (JLI) announced a new community focus to support thousands of children in central Indiana who are currently living in foster or kinship care. For the past 100 years, JLI has strived to effect lasting change in the lives of children and their families through community grants, service projects and volunteer hours. Now, the organization will concentrate its volunteer and charitable resources on supporting youth in foster and kinship care.

“We saw a crucial need in our community,” said JLI president Stephanie Flittner. “The statistics are staggering, especially for those children who remain in the foster care system until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.”

Each year approximately 20,000 foster youths age out of the system and 20% of them will be instantly homeless. Only half will find gainful employment by the age of 24.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there were more than 400,000 children in foster care in 2020. In Indiana, there were 13,000 foster youth, a high concentration of whom live in Marion County.

In addition, 5,500 children in Indiana are under kinship care, which is care provided by a grandparent, aunt, uncle or other family member who is not their parent. These relatives receive little to no funding or support services.

“We want to ensure children in foster and kinship care receive the support and resources they need to be successful,” Flittner said. “JLI is well positioned to positively impact the lives of these children and our members are passionate about this cause.”

JLI will approach the problem with well-designed strategies for change. The organization will cultivate relationships with community partners that are already committed to working with foster youth and identify opportunities for advocacy, fundraising and other philanthropic endeavors. JLI will also use its community grants program to assist nonprofits that support these populations.

JLI recently commemorated 100 years of service to the Indianapolis community. As JLI embarks on its next century, the organization is planning how it can further its impact in new and innovative ways. Each year, JLI members contribute approximately 15,000 hours of service to a variety of nonprofits across Marion County. In addition, JLI awards grants to nonprofits in the Indianapolis community – more than \$4.9 million since 2000.

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**About Junior League of Indianapolis**

JLI 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. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.