

Mission & Legacy

The Junior League of Winston-Salem, Inc. (JLWS) has proudly been serving the Winston-Salem community for almost 100 years. JLWS is one of the nearly 300 independent leagues of the Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. All Junior Leagues are guided by the same mission: “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.” The collective power, wisdom and efforts of these women make the JLWS, and all Junior Leagues around the world, catalysts for lasting community change. These are women building better communities.

Our members have always been women of action. The JLWS began in 1923 with a focus on health as they opened a prenatal clinic to reduce infant mortality in Forsyth County. By the decade’s end, the JLWS established the Hospital for Incurables, which finally brought care to underserved patients of the community. The JLWS pioneered the avocation and developed awareness about mental health in our community, and helped establish programs and organizations that are still serving throughout Winston-Salem today. Horizons Residential Care Center, Youth Opportunities, Inc. is an organization that provides intervention, support and therapy for children, adolescents and their families dealing with profound behavioral and mental health issues. The Junior League of Winston-Salem has also supported learning disability awareness, provided funding for a primary education teacher for the handicapped at The Children’s Center, and developed a mental health education project in collaboration with the public school system, and the Mental Health Association in Forsyth County. Our organization also helped with the establishment of The Enrichment Center of Winston-Salem that empowers children and adults through artistic expression.

The members of the JLWS have always valued the importance of creative arts for both personal enrichment and as an expressive outlet. **JLWS started the first arts council in the country.** The creative arts were brought to children and adults through The Children’s Theatre, underwriting the performance of dramatic plays by New York’s Contemporary Theatre Series, adding works of art in schools and hospitals, helping to produce the first performance of “The Nutcracker,” creation of the Civic Music Association, creation and production of the BOOKMARKS Festival of Books (which is a literacy event to inspire all ages through presentations by authors, illustrators, storytellers and chefs). JLWS continues to support this City of the Arts and Innovation.



The Junior League of Winston-Salem has worked to increase early childhood literacy for nearly 50 years. JLWS started this effort by supporting a Professional Tutorial School Coordinator position in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School district and developing an Infant Stimulation Project. JLWS recognized the need for parents and caregivers to expose infants and very young children to literature in order to improve early childhood literacy rates that ultimately impact school readiness, performance and graduation rates. JLWS created the Read-to-Me Program, which has been offered in English and Spanish for nearly 30 years through large festivals, small group settings and one-on-one interactions with new parents. In honor of the 75th anniversary of JLWS in our community, over \$4 million dollars was raised in order to give the city the Children’s Museum of Winston-Salem, which is based on and filled with children’s literature.

JLWS has worked to protect and strengthen families through helping to establish the Ronald McDonald House of Winston-Salem and the Child Abuse Puppet Show (which reaches third-grade students to educate them about neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and Internet predators and empower and support them to get help). JLWS has also initiated Battered Women’s Services, Inc., Work Family Resource Center, Inc. (which educates families on how to identify quality child care) and Girls on the Run® (which uses running and group exercise to teach elementary-aged girls self-respect).

JLWS members are honored and excited to continue the 100-year legacy of service through support of JLWS-established programs and organizations via service to their Boards of Directors, service as Executive Directors, organization volunteers as well as the development of new initiatives and programs.



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
WINSTON-SALEM