

**State Public Affairs Committee
2008 Summer Taskforce Meeting
Sunday, August 24, 2008
Orlando Museum of Art**

Meeting began at 11: 15 AM

11am Welcome

Elizabeth Hughes, 2008-09 President, JL of Greater Orlando
President of Junior League of Orlando, Elizabeth Hughes welcomes the group. Talking about the moment SPAC ‘clicked’ for her. *We want to have that moment for all JL members this year. One of our goals is to have SPAC connect on a more grassroots level with JL memberships.*

Dorothy MacDiarmid, SPAC Chair, JL of Boca Raton
SPAC chair, Dorothy MacDiarmid, then welcomed the group reminding them that JLS have a long and successful history of voluntarily identifying unmet needs in the community and meeting those needs with fundraising dollars, trained volunteer’s time and sharing inspired solutions. Since the 1930s when many Leagues created State Public Affairs Committees to influence public welfare policy, we have been educating ourselves on issues important to our community and relaying that knowledge to our members and elected friends to complete the circle of support to our community projects. Since the early 1900s, JLers have been responding to the needs of the community by initiating such basic projects like providing free hot lunches to indigent children in schools, funding and running nutrition, health and physical education programs—long before ‘childhood obesity’ was an issue—bringing arts to schools and communities...many of the things we think of as good government initiatives had their origins with the JL. We have a proud tradition of partnering to find innovative solutions. And we will continue this year with that in mind.

11:25 League of Women Voters & JL GOTV partnership

Elise Minkoff, JL of St. Petersburg & AJLI Nominating Board Member
Elise Minkoff, JL of St. Petersburg and AJLI Nominating Committee member speaking about the work of the League of Woman Voters (LWV) in an effort to help us motivate our members to get out and VOTE! The LWV’s mission is to educate and advocate. The League of Women Voters is strictly nonpartisan; it neither supports nor opposes candidates for office at any level of government. At the same time, the League is wholeheartedly political and works to influence policy through advocacy. Women fought for over 77 years for the right to vote, we’ve had that opportunity for over 80 years. In the last election year, 20 million women didn’t vote. 15 million of those women aren’t even registered. She passed out two fabulous handouts (see attached) which are chock full of excellent ideas for eblasts, newsletters, and seat sheets for the September/October general membership meetings. Check out YouTube: My Very First Time ...Voting. She says it’s a real eye catching way to get your membership’s attention. She also encouraged us to use caution and our own discretion to determine what would be most appropriate for your own JL membership. You want to have fun, but not offend! She also challenged us as SPAC members to work with our Leagues to begin tracking the

11:55 Introductions to Task Forces

Becker Holland, Task Force Chair, JL of Gainesville

Becker presented the purpose of the taskforces is to research issues, share that information with SPAC members so they can make an educated decision about which issues to vote as a legislative priority and finally track legislation related to those issues. *At this time, delegates will choose a task force to sit on. This will be your task force for the remainder of the SPAC year. If you have more than one member from your League in attendance, please be sure to sit on different task forces.*

Noon- Lunch Served

12:30 **How to Advocate Effectively**

Chris Carmody, GrayRobinson

1-Presence is power. Know your electeds and cultivate relationships with them. This can be done a number of ways. Since it's an election year, he suggested stuffing envelopes or walking neighborhoods with your friends for a candidate. Get a group of friends or co-workers together and donate \$25 checks. **DO NOT DO THIS AS A JUNIOR LEAGUE MEMBER OR SPAC MEMBER**, but as an individual you are allowed to donate up to \$500. This kind of activity is sometimes more memorable to an elected than just calls or visits.

If you have a good relationship with your legislators and get your message out early, then you won't have to do last minute lobbying (like calls and email blasts) which isn't very effective.

2-Have a clear, effective message. Refine it and bounce it off people first. Know who you're talking to and how they like to receive information. Are they detail oriented? Do have an aide read for them? Listen when an elected tells you how to communicate with them.

3- Fly-ins/Drive-ins are very effective. (We do this when we go to Tallahassee in early February during committee meetings.) While you're there, treat everyone with respect because you never know who can help or hurt. Sometimes the lowliest aide is the one controlling the information flow to the legislator. Chris also thought it was wise of us to continue going to Tallahassee during committee meetings before session begins because everyone is in a good mood and more receptive. Hope is eternal, no bills have been killed yet.

Suggested reading from Chris:

Senate & House Rules

Sayfie Review www.sayfiereview.com

Tax Watch www.floridataxwatch.org

When asked how to get legislators to attend events, Chris suggests having news cameras or press coverage. Letting the legislators know that your audience is chock full of new constituents and no hard questions will be asked. Basically, setting up an event that offers a good photo op and contact with potential voters is appealing.

When asked how to find measurables on difficult to measure topics like DCF actions, Chris suggests looking at other states stats and programs. Sometimes a successful program in another state is compelling evidence.

Task Force Focus Issue Application Presentations

At this time, I explained why I thought it was so important to have a focus issue application for each potential issue. Thank you for those of you who made the effort to get the information on an application. With our group all over the state, clear communication is key. I wanted everyone to have access to the information on the proposed issues, so that come Fall Conference we can make an informed decision on our 2009 Legislative priorities without it being all about any one person's personal political agenda. Keep in mind SPAC is here to support the work and mission of the JLs.

1pm Girls Advocacy Project (GAP)

The GAP representative from the Orlando site wasn't able to make it, but Vicki Lukis had submitted a thorough summary of GAP so that we could have a pretty full discussion about it. Right now 3 JLs in the state have GAP as a project. The immediate past SPAC Chair, Melissa Fritsch, has joined the GAP board. Only \$150,000 of their \$500,000 budget is currently included in the DJJ budget. They are looking for \$350,000 in funding and would need help advocating for that this session.

1:30 Youth Caregiving

Karen Harwood, MSW Caregiving Youth Partners' Project Volunteers for the Homebound & Family Caregivers

This is the only program of its kind in the country. This is an issue that has a huge need and very little awareness. Karen showed clips from ABC and NBC news on youth caregivers. These children are caring for chronically ill or disabled parents and/or grandparents. They are currently identified in Palm Beach County public schools by a middle school wide survey at the beginning of the school year. Then they meet with the child, receive family consent and verify the situation with a home visit before enrolling the child in the after school support events once a month. This group offers tutoring, camps and other educational and fun events. They are currently privately funded by local FL foundations. I've included Karen's PowerPoint presentation in this summary packet. Right now, this group is looking to raise awareness.

What can SPAC do?

The SPAC Education, Children & Families Task Force can draft a Position Statement for this issue. The Position Statement can be presented at the Fall Conference. If approved by SPAC, it will be presented in November at GMMs for membership approval.

2:00 HPV /\$1 Cigarette Tax/Sun Awareness Education Ladies from the Junior League of Gainesville

- **HPV** Becker Holland presented this information from the Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council of Florida (CCRAB). Legislation to have the Department of Health provide parents of 11 and 12 year old females information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on the human papillomavirus (HPV) and the optional vaccination for girls 11-12 years of age. CDC information will be provided in English and/or Spanish. Legislation will be similar to last year's bill sponsored by Senator Nan Rich and Representative Kelly Skidmore. This is an issue that has had SPAC support for the past 2 sessions.
- **\$1 Cigarette Tax** June Allen presented this information from CCRAB about raising taxes on cigarettes as another deterrent to continue or begin smoking. CCRAB didn't include any specific information as to where they prefer the tax

revenue to be allocated, but SPAC Legislative Analyst, Charlotte Mather, said that Senator Deutch is drafting a bill to propose the revenue be allocated to hospitals and health issues. Representative Waldman is drafting a bill that would allocate revenue into the general fund. Charlotte said there is a chance the Governor may jump on this in an effort to raise potentially \$1 billion for the general fund.

- **Sun Awareness Education in Florida's K-8 schools**

Laura Gillman shared this CCRAB proposal that a mandatory sun awareness education component be added to the State's education wellness plan statute. A simple informative brochure was included, which is in your Summer Conference Agenda Packet. We discussed how this would be assimilated into schools whether it would become part of the curriculum or simply having posters in the school common areas and brochures sent home to parents. As a group we preferred the latter, and Becker will verify with CCRAB that is the case.

I suggested this could be a nice way to draw in our general membership with a hands-on activity for our JL members when preparing backpacks that are donated to children, perhaps including sunblock in the packs. Another member suggested we put sunblock dispensers in schools the way hand sanitizer is made available. However, one member shared that her niece is super allergic, so we would have to proceed with caution.

Thank you, JL Gainesville, for taking the time to bring these issues to the group.

2:45 **Child Abuse/65% Solution***

Presenters Pending

- **Child Abuse** Thanks to JL of Sarasota for submitting the focus issue application for Child Abuse. No specific action was mentioned. We agreed that we are against child abuse and the history & work of the JL backs that up. SPAC also has a Position Statement on this issue.

What can SPAC do? The Education, Children & Families Task force will see if any specific legislation is going to be presented this session before voting this into our Legislative Priorities for 2009.

- **65% Solution** This has long been an issue supported by SPAC friend Majority Leader Adam Hasner. This issue was discussed 2 years ago, but didn't get any traction. The group present seemed open to learning more about this issue. More information was gathered and has been included in this Summary packet. Please review the attached pros and cons. Look forward to more discussion at the Fall Conference.
- **Booster Seats** There was no focus issue submitted for Booster Seats. It was brought up by some returning SPAC members. Our Legislative Analyst, Charlotte Mather, agreed to work the bill this legislative session if SPAC voted to bring the issue forward again. In her professional opinion, she felt that with our major opposition termed out the bill had a real chance of passing this year.

- *There was a suggestion to reduce the number of focus issues to be advocated in the 2009 legislative session. The general idea was that 10 were too many, and 3 may be too few. We agreed that if there is no pending legislation on an issue, we won't include it in our Legislative priorities.*
- *I also shared that another goal for this year is to find ways to engage our general memberships in SPAC work. We are here to support the work and mission of JL. In turn, we need their participation and support to make SPAC as effective and successful as possible. Issues with grassroots opportunities are perfect to achieve this goal. Please keep this in mind as task forces research more and we discuss further.*

3:15 **Making Public Affairs Public**

Kristin Calder, SPAC PR Chair, JL of Boca Raton

Kristen gave a presentation on how to engage local Junior League board members and members by working with all councils. She recommended SPAC committees begin talking with their Community Councils and PR committees about SPAC work to help spread the message within the League and into your community. Utilize opportunities to speak at GMMs, write articles in your monthly publications and include timely information in Leaguewide emails.

Again, having our SPAC work mesh with JL work will make this easier.

Right now, she suggested using the Get Out the Vote (GOTV) information from Elise to engage your members. I've also included in the attachments a simple 'ad' used in the JLBR monthly publication to GOTV.

There will more specific training on this at the Fall Conference.

4pm Adjourn

Next meeting: Fall Conference
6pm Friday, October 10th – Noon Sunday October 12th
Jacksonville, FL
PLEASE MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS NOW!
Training important for the success of our
Tallahassee Winter Conference will occur at this conference.
Don't miss it!
SEE ATTACHED FLYER