

Piper

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A PUBLICATION OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF PALO ALTO•MID PENINSULA, INC.



PERMISSION
TO **GO**
boldly



60 YEARS
OF WOMEN
WHO STARTED
BEFORE THEY
WERE READY



Piper

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2025–2026

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COVER: (clockwise from the top)
members at our March General
Membership Meeting (GMM); the
City of Menlo Park recognized the
JLPA•MP's 60th anniversary at our
January GMM with a certificate
presented by Vice Mayor Jennifer
Wise; volunteers supporting
our community partner Hope's
Corner; serving at the 25th Annual
Pancake Breakfast.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Dear fellow JLPA•MP
members and
community,*

As I enter into the last
month of my term as
President of the Junior

League of Palo Alto•Mid Peninsula and look
back not only on my term, but the last 60 years
of this League, I cannot believe the amazing
things that we as women have achieved for
our community and ourselves. It has been a
tremendous honor to serve as President this
past year. I am excited to see what next year's
leadership will achieve and see their leadership
usher our League into the future.

I remember last year stepping up at our May
Annual Meeting and announcing my theme
for the year, Ready For It, Rise Up! I have
been honored and amazed how this theme
was embraced and how many people truly
took that theme to heart. I hope you all
continue to do so!

There is a season in every woman's life when
she is called to bloom—not abruptly, not
perfectly, but deliberately. Leadership, for
many of us, does not arrive as a title or a
moment of recognition. It unfolds slowly,
shaped by lived experience, resilience, and the
quiet courage to keep showing up.

As women leaders, we are often taught to
equate strength with endurance—to push
forward, to carry more, to give endlessly.
But true leadership is not rooted in depletion.
It is cultivated through balance, reflection,
and an intentional commitment to our own
well-being.

At the same time, many of us step into
leadership cautiously. We play it safe. We
question whether we are ready, whether we
are qualified, whether we truly belong in the
spaces we are entering. But the truth is: we
are ready. We carry the skills, the insight, and
the lived experience needed to be successful.
And we are not stepping forward alone.
Behind each of us stands a lineage of women

who came before us—women who opened
doors, challenged norms, and created space
where there was none. Alongside us are
women who support, mentor, and remind us
of our strength when we forget it ourselves.
Leadership is not an individual journey; it is a
collective one.

Blooming into leadership requires that we
honor our pace. Growth is not linear, and
neither is leadership. There are seasons of
expansion and seasons of rest. Both are
necessary. When we allow ourselves time
for wellness—whether through stillness,
community, or self-reflection—we deepen
our capacity to lead with clarity, empathy,
and purpose. Taking time for ourselves
is not a retreat from leadership; it is an
investment in it. When we are well, we lead
better. When we are grounded, we make
space for others to rise. When we choose
to care for ourselves, we model a form of
leadership that is sustainable, human, and
deeply transformative.

And as we rise, we must reach back. We must
lift one another when we can, knowing that
at some point, we may be the ones in need of
that same support. There is power in women
uplifting women—in sharing knowledge, in
extending encouragement, and in making
room at the table. Our collective strength is
what sustains progress.

Let us redefine what it means to lead—not as
constant motion, but as intentional growth.
Let us give ourselves permission to pause, to
trust that we are ready, and to step forward
boldly. And in doing so, let us continue to
create pathways for other women to bloom in
their own time, in their own way.

This is our leadership—rooted, resilient, and
ever-growing.

With intention and strength,

Lynna Do
2025-2026 President

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members,

There's a line I keep coming back to lately:

You don't have to be ready, just willing.

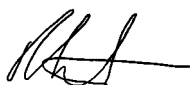
It's one of those things that sounds simple until you actually try it. Until you're the one raising your hand, or saying yes to something you're not sure you can do, or walking into a room wondering if you belong there.

This issue is full of women who did exactly that. Stepping into roles before they felt qualified. Raising their hands when their gut said wait. Building something that started 60 years ago and still isn't finished. The thread running through every page is the same: none of them were ready. All of them showed up anyway.

That's what this issue is about: becoming. Not the polished, finished version. The messy, willing, showing-up-anyway version.

Inside you'll find takeaways from the Northwest Exchange conference (on page 6) that reminded me why this work matters, a look at the women stepping into next year's leadership (page 8), a member's story about what happens when you stop waiting to feel ready (page 9), 60 years of League history that will make you proud to be part of this (page 7), and a lemon ricotta pasta (page 10) that takes 20 minutes and pairs beautifully with whatever you're sipping while you read.

Somewhere in these pages, you might recognize yourself. Whether it's who you were, who you are, or who you're becoming.



Phoebe Price

2025–2026 Communications & Events VP



JUNIOR LEAGUE
PALO ALTO•MID PENINSULA

*Advancing women's leadership
for meaningful community impact since 1965.*

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF PALO ALTO•MID PENINSULA, INC. (JLPA•MP) is a network of empowered female civic leaders working with community partners to address and solve pressing issues. We're part of an international network of 298 Leagues comprised of over 113,000 women, in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, France and Kenya, engaged in similar work in their own communities. This provides us with a unique and powerful depth of knowledge and resourcefulness to bring about the changes we strive to accomplish.

Since 1965, the Junior League of Palo Alto•Mid Peninsula has supported more than 100 community projects, awarded grants to more than 200 local nonprofits, contributed thousands of volunteer hours to our community and trained generations of peninsula women who have gone on to serve on nonprofit boards and found their own nonprofit organizations.

We've played a key role in starting several local nonprofits including:

- The Tech Interactive
- Rebuilding Together Peninsula
- Daybreak Shelter
- East Palo Alto Charter School
- The Stanford Health Library
- Rosalie Rendu Center

OUR MISSION

The Junior League of Palo Alto•Mid Peninsula is an organization of women whose mission is to advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training.

FOCUS AREA

The Junior League of Palo Alto•Mid Peninsula focuses on improving the wellbeing of its community through programs and community partnerships that address the impacts of systemic poverty on the physical and mental health of individuals and families, including the lack of sufficient housing, food, and provisions.

SERVICE AREA

We serve Silicon Valley.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

The JLPA•MP invites women over the age of 21 of all backgrounds including, but not limited to, race, national origin, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion/beliefs, ability and sexual orientation who demonstrate an interest in and commitment to voluntarism to join our League. The JLPA•MP understands that the impact and integrity of our work will thrive when our members can express their whole selves while living our mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations and communities.

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Follow us:    @JLPAMP



A PROUD MEMBER OF
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JUNIOR LEAGUES INTERNATIONAL**

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AROUND THE LEAGUE



September General Membership Meeting (GMM)



Celebrating the 25th year of the Pancake Breakfast!



Pancake Breakfast



Pancake Breakfast



November GMM



League Launch. Ready for it? Rise up!



Find the Good Day



November GMM



Sustainer Luncheon



Sustainer Luncheon



Sustainer Luncheon



FriendsGiving



Foodies: Farmhouse



Galentine's Party



Mahjong



January General Membership Meeting (GMM)



Done in a Day Project with the Princess Project



Past Presidents Panel at the January GMM



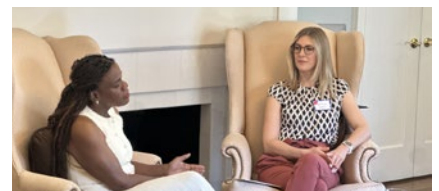
Show Up for the Gatehouse



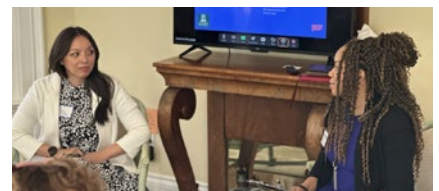
Volunteer Event with There With Care



Volunteer Event with There With Care



Executive Presence Training



Executive Presence Training



Start Bold

What Happened When We Stopped Playing It Safe

Recap by the Communications & Events Team

In February, JLP•MP partnered with incoming President **Kristy Bonham** to host Start Bold, a career and leadership development session designed to push our members beyond what feels comfortable. The idea was simple: if we're going to ask women to lead in the League, we should also be equipping them to lead everywhere else.

The session focused on building confidence in professional settings. Speaking up in rooms where you're the only woman. Understanding the difference between being "helpful" and being strategic. Attendees left with frameworks they could use immediately, not just in the League but in their careers, their families, and the conversations they'd been avoiding.

What's Next

We are planning a two-hour project management workshop this summer. The first half covers the essentials: how to scope a project, build a timeline, and manage stakeholders (yes, even volunteers are stakeholders). The second half is hands-on: bring a real project (League or personal), and build the plan. Think "I need to clean out my garage" meets structured execution.

Interested in attending or delivering a training? Fill out the training interest survey in our member portal or reach out to the Communications & Events team. We're also looking for members willing to lead a session on a topic they know well. Your expertise is a League resource! ■

Highlights from the NWX Conference

By Phoebe Price,
Communications & Events VP

I almost didn't go to this conference.

The Northwest Exchange is a two-day regional gathering of Junior League chapters across the Northwest, held this year in Eugene, Oregon. It sounded like a lot. But I went. And two days later, I had what felt like 47 pages of notes and a few share-worthy stories.

The keynote. Bev Smith is a former Olympic basketball player who now runs Kid Sports in Eugene, a 73-year-old nonprofit serving 12,000 kids a year. She told a story about going 0-for-10 in a game at 17 and her coach told her the difference between a good shooter and a great shooter is 10,000 shots. She could have let that night define her, but chose to learn from it. The next year, she shot 50% at the World Championships. Her philosophy is that sometimes you win and sometimes you learn. There are no losers, just lessons. And her message to our room was clear: willingness matters more than readiness.

Culture by design. Robyn LaVassaur runs a 600-person mortgage company and her framework for building intentional culture boils down to a formula: culture = what you tolerate + what you celebrate + what you repeat.

Joy as infrastructure. Leigh Anne Jashaway's session on laughter and play was the most energizing hour of the conference. A five-year-old laughs 300+ times a day. Adults? Just fifteen. Her point was simple: self-care isn't selfish. It's leadership infrastructure.

What I brought home was so much more. Two days with women from chapters across the Northwest and the kind of energy you only get when everyone in the room genuinely cares about the same thing. It was worth the trip. ■

60 Years of Impact

A Brief History of JLPAs

Adapted from a talk by Community Team member Charlotte Reed.

It started with a debutante who thought civic action was more interesting than a social calendar. Mary Harriman founded the Junior League in New York in 1901, during a time of rapid industrialization when overcrowded tenements and unsafe working conditions demanded more than good intentions. Her members, including a young Eleanor Roosevelt, helped shape what would eventually become the New Deal.

The League spread west. San Francisco's chapter launched in 1911. During World War II, satellite units in Palo Alto and San Mateo were created so women could serve their own communities directly. By 1965, Palo Alto had its own membership, its own newsletter (the very publication you're reading), and enough momentum to become the 208th chapter admitted to AJLI.

Then it was off to the races.

The early wins were massive. In 1965, the "Rip-Roaring Rummage Sale" (the precursor to The Shop) netted over \$20,000 (more than \$200,000 in today's dollars). Yes, that's JLPAs member Shirley Temple Black helping out at the sale. In 1966, the League launched Art in Action, which today provides curricula in 313 schools across 30 states, reaching 82,000 students.

The Gatehouse became home. The Barron-Latham-Hopkins Gate Lodge, the oldest structure in Menlo Park and one of only three buildings in the city on the National Register of Historic Places, became League headquarters in the 1970s. The mansion it once guarded was sold to Universal Studios and used as a movie set. If you've watched Psycho

or The Unsinkable Molly Brown, you've seen pieces of it.

Legacy projects kept coming. Environmental Volunteers (now serving 260,000 children). Music for Minors (25,000 children in 900 classrooms). The Tech Interactive, born from a 1978 task force of JLPAs members who raised \$175,000 in seed funding. Today The Tech welcomes 500,000 visitors per year.

The cookbooks became legendary. A Private Collection (1981) won a national Tastemaker Award. The sequel followed in 1984.

The League led on policy. Through CalSPAC (the California State Public Affairs Committee), our chapter helped pass landmark legislation on domestic violence penalties, perinatal depression, and reproductive loss leave. CalSPAC co-wrote SB 848, making job-protected reproductive loss leave available to millions of Californians.

And the numbers tell the story. A \$1 million endowment reached in 2010. A \$150,000 anniversary grant to The Tech for Girls Day. A \$255,000 initiative with Art in Action to develop STEM curriculum for 85,000 students nationally.

Sixty years in, the League isn't slowing down. We're modernizing our brand, automating our communications, reimagining how we gather, and building infrastructure for the next sixty years.

Everything you do for this League matters, whether it's raising thousands of dollars or helping break down tables at a GMM. It's part of this story. And the story is far from over. ■



Mary Harriman, founder of the first Junior League.



Ann-May Gaffney and Shirley Temple Black.



Art in Action, 1964



Gatehouse Renovation, 1996.

Meet Your 2026–2027 Leadership

As JLP•MP transitions into a new League year, here's a look at the women stepping into leadership roles on the Board and Management Team.



Kristy Bonham

Incoming President

I work in tech focused on leadership and growth, but I joined the League because I love this community and the women in it. I'm excited to step into this role because I want to help the women of our League show up in this world in an impactful way without shrinking. This

work matters to me, and I care deeply about how we support and show up for one another. If you've been thinking about joining, take this as your sign and go for it. You don't have to have it all figured out to start.



Kris Bish

Incoming President-Elect

With over 20 years of experience in the biotech industry, I've built a career in FDA-regulated environments specializing in quality, regulatory, and analytical functions. A proud UC Davis graduate, I am known for leading

cross-functional collaboration, driving process improvements, and strengthening compliance while focusing on delivering for patients.

Outside work, I'm passionate about community, connection, and service. Since joining the League in 2019, I have fully embraced the leadership experience by serving as Done in a Day Co-Chair, Fundraising Vice President, and Executive Vice President. Each role has brought new challenges, new perspectives, and most importantly, an incredible community of women I am grateful to know and call friends.

Stepping into my role as President-Elect, I am excited to continue building on that momentum alongside an inspiring board to help the League grow in meaningful and lasting ways.

If you're thinking about getting involved, consider this your sign to jump in! You don't need to have everything figured out. I didn't. This organization has a way of meeting you where you are and helping you grow from there.



Susan McCleran

Incoming Executive Vice President

I'm a New York native and mom of two with a professional background that's taken me across a range of industries, from corporate to startups to creative

work. I joined the League to get more involved locally, and it's been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had, both personally and as a leader. As incoming Executive Vice President, I'm excited to support our leadership team and help strengthen how we operate so we can continue to grow our impact. If you're considering joining, know that there's no one "right" path here. It's been one of the most meaningful things I've stepped into, and it could be for you too.



Veronica Ryan

Incoming Executive Vice President-Elect

I've spent much of my career leading teams and driving business growth, and I was drawn to the League when I was looking for a strong community of women and more purpose-driven

work. As a mom, that desire to give back and be more connected to my community only grew. I'm most excited about this next role because of the opportunity to support and connect both our board and management team, helping carry forward our strategic vision while creating a League experience that meets our members where they are and supports their growth. If joining has crossed your mind, I can't recommend it enough. The League offers not only a network of women making an impact in their communities and leading in their fields, but also a space for personal development, training, and the opportunity to expand your skill set and grow into new areas of strength. ■

If you're considering a leadership role in the League, whether as a committee lead, board member, or behind-the-scenes builder, talk to any of these women. They'll be the first to tell you: you don't have to be ready. You just have to be willing.



I Didn't Take This Role Because I Already Felt Like a Leader ...

Rochelle van der Merwe's Journey from Self-Doubt to the Stage

By Rochelle van der Merwe,
adapted from closing remarks at the January 2026 GMM

At last year's March General Membership Meeting (GMM), I was sitting in the audience listening to the call for leadership roles, quietly talking myself out of every one of them.

I thought, "You've never led anything before. You're not ready. Other people are better suited."

Then I did something I didn't expect. I counted backwards from five, pulled out my phone, and emailed the Nominating Committee before I could stop myself. The whole room kept going as if nothing had happened. But I was tingling. I'd just set something in motion.

The League has room for you. Not once you're fully formed, but while you are becoming. And in many ways, that's the whole point.

What came back from the Nominating Committee was warmth and support. The application took thirty minutes. The interview was humanizing, not intimidating. I was slated.

And then I spent the next few months mildly sick to my stomach about what I'd signed up for.

My first event as Recruitment & New Member Chair was Lunch on the Lawn, the kick-off event for the League year for New Members. I opened by asking the room, "Who's here for the very first time? Who's feeling a little nervous?" And then I admitted, "Same." Two years earlier I'd been the brand-new

member. Last year, I joined the team. Now I was leading an event for the first time in my life.

I didn't take this role because I already felt like a leader. I took it because I want to become one.

By the time I was pulling out of the Gatehouse parking lot that evening, something had shifted. I am now someone who can lead an event. It was as simple and as profound as that. Confidence didn't come before the action. It followed it. My lack of confidence wasn't a character flaw. It was a lack of evidence.

What surprised me most was what happened when I started naming my insecurities out loud. Instead of judgment, I got: "Oh, me too." Women who'd been in the League for years admitted they still check those voices. Leaders I admired told her they'd started in the same place. What I had been carrying as shame quietly turned into connection. The thing I thought disqualified me became the thing that let me in.

My message to anyone reading this who's felt that flicker of maybe I could: Leadership is not perfection. It's not having every answer or every credential or every ounce of confidence lined up first. Leadership is presence. It's willingness. It's that tiny act of courage at the moment your brain is screaming not yet.

The League has room for you. Not once you're fully formed, but while you are becoming. And in many ways, that's the whole point. ■



(Above) Our Lunch on the Lawn event. (Right) Rochelle with new Actives at the January GMM.

IN THE KITCHEN

Because the best League meetings always end up in someone's kitchen.

Easy Weeknight Pasta Recipe

This is the kind of recipe you make on a Tuesday when you want something that feels special but takes 20 minutes.

It's bright, creamy, and uses ingredients you probably already have. Bonus: it pairs beautifully with a glass of something cold.

Lemonade, sparkling water, or the wine you may or may not have opened while debating whether to RSVP to the next GMM.



The dish with the addition of fresh cherry tomatoes, red pepper flakes and fresh basil, prepared and photographed by Thu-An Hanley.

Springtime Lemon Ricotta Pasta

Recipe developed especially for Piper. Serves 4 · Prep: 5 minutes · Cook: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

12 oz rigatoni (or any short pasta; penne works great)

1 cup whole milk ricotta

Zest and juice of 2 lemons

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus more for serving

2 tablespoons good olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, but recommended)

1 cup reserved pasta water

Fresh basil or mint for garnish

Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Cook pasta in well-salted water until al dente. Before draining, scoop out 1 cup of the starchy pasta water.

While pasta cooks, warm olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and red pepper flakes, stir for about 30 seconds, until fragrant but not brown.

In a medium bowl, mix ricotta, lemon zest, lemon juice, and Parmesan until smooth. Add about ½ cup of the reserved pasta water and stir. This is what makes the sauce silky instead of clumpy.

Drain pasta and add it directly to the skillet. Pour the ricotta mixture over the top. Toss everything together over low heat, adding more pasta water a splash at a time until the sauce coats the pasta. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve immediately. Top with more Parmesan, a drizzle of olive oil, and fresh herbs.

VARIATIONS

- Add a handful of arugula or baby spinach at the end (it wilts right in)
- Toss in roasted cherry tomatoes for color
- Sub the lemon for orange zest for a sweeter take
- Goes beautifully with grilled chicken or shrimp if you want protein



IT'S YOUR TURN! Try this recipe, share photos of your creation and tag us @JLPAMP.

If you have a recipe you'd love to share in a future issue, send it our way. We're always looking for what's cooking in our members' kitchens.

The Real Answer to “So ... What Do You Actually Do?”

What It's Really Like to Be a League Member

By Phoebe Price, Communications & Events VP

If you've ever tried to explain the Junior League to someone at a dinner party, you know the struggle.

“It's a volunteer organization.”

“For women.”

“We do community work.”

“And events.”

“And training.”

“And there's a publication.”

“And the annual Bloom event.”

“It's ... a lot, actually.”

Here's the truth: being a League member doesn't look like one thing. It looks like a hundred small things that somehow add up to something that changes you.

It looks like a Tuesday night where you're on a Zoom call with your committee debating whether the GMM icebreaker is too cheesy. (and by the way, it's always a little cheesy).

It looks like a Saturday morning at the Gatehouse, setting up tables and discussing napkin placement while someone's dog (okay mine) runs laps around the room. And then the speaker arrives and says something that sits with you for weeks.

It looks like a text thread that starts with “can someone grab ice” and two minutes later someone replies with ‘got it, in the car’. No hesitation, no back-and-

forth. Just handled. And then everyone shows up, rolls up their sleeves, and pitches in like they do every time.

It looks like showing up to Hope's Corner and spending an evening prepping meals alongside women whose names you just learned, and leaving like you've known them your whole life.

It looks like learning things you didn't expect to learn. How to run a meeting. How to manage a budget that isn't yours. How to give feedback to a peer. How to ask for help. How to lead when nobody reports to you and nobody has to listen, and somehow making it work anyway.

It looks like burnout, honestly, sometimes. Volunteering on top of a career on top of a family on top of everything else. There are weeks where the League feels like one more thing on the list. And then you walk into a room and someone hugs you before you even put your bag down, and you remember that every woman here is working toward the same thing you are. That's what it is. You're not doing this alone.

It looks like friendships that don't make sense on paper. A tech exec and a stay-at-home mom and a retired attorney and a grad student, sitting around a table talking about how to make a book drive feel exciting. And it works. Because the



It's giving thoughtful feedback on grant applications and posing for a quick selfie with the Comms Team.

League has a way of stripping away the titles and leaving the humans.

It looks like becoming someone you didn't know you could be. Not because the League teaches you, but because it puts you in rooms where you have to figure it out. And you do. And then you do it again. And somewhere along the way, you realize you've been leading.

If someone asks you what the Junior League is, you'll tell them the mission statement. But what you'll really mean is, “It's where everything I do becomes part of something bigger than me and also within me.”

That's what it's actually like. ■



For information on joining the Junior League, visit www.thejuniorleague.org/join scan the QR code to the left. Or join us at a prospective member event. You can find our calendar at www.thejuniorleague.org/events. We welcome all women over the age of 21 with an interest in volunteering to join us.

Interested in supporting our work? Make a donation at www.thejuniorleague.org/donate. Or contact fundraisingvp@thejuniorleague.org to discuss sponsorship or partnership opportunities.

Nonprofit organizations wishing to partner with us may contact communityvp@thejuniorleague.org.



JUNIOR LEAGUE
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