



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
HUNTINGTON**

Women building better communities

October 14, 2009

The Junior League of Huntington (JLH) and our Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen*® program is writing this letter in support of the afterschool education program developed by the West Virginia State University Extension Service and the Huntington Community Gardens.

The JLH and the Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen* committee co-chairs, Katina Haught, Amanda Perdue and Andrea Vanderwarker, are specifically interested in the successful funding of this community project by the CYFAR Grant. The positive impacts these programs have created in the Huntington community thus far are invaluable. The CYFAR Grant will allow many more children and families to be impacted by these grassroots level healthy lifestyle initiatives.

Junior Leagues' Kids In the Kitchen is an Association-wide initiative of The Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) designed to help communities address the urgent issues surrounding childhood obesity and poor nutrition. Launched in 2006 by Junior Leagues in over 240 communities in four countries; the program is now in its fourth year. Junior Leagues are committed to improving the health of today's youth by empowering them to make choices that lead to healthy lifestyles. The initiative illustrates the power of voluntarism to address community needs on both the grassroots and international levels.

Educating both children and their families is the key to reversing the trend toward increased levels of childhood obesity, poor nutrition and future illnesses. The **Junior Leagues' Kids In the Kitchen** initiative aims to make an impact in this area by educating the public at the grassroots level regarding solutions that they might adopt. Junior Leagues across the Association provide lessons and demonstrations related to preparation of healthy meals and snacks that are both tasty and affordable. The Association of Junior Leagues International provide materials to support the success of these activities and also continues to distribute recipes and tips about nutrition on a website, which is <http://www.kidsinthekitchen.org>

Successful funding of this project would allow the JLH to expand our Kids in the Kitchen program by helping families bring their harvest to the table. Our grassroots program helps to educate the community about healthy meal preparation, healthy meal choices, the importance of fresh food sources, and empowering children and their caregivers to make smarter decisions when

choosing what foods they use to fuel their bodies. Since our program kick off in September our successful program has educated over 250 children and their family/caregivers.

The JLH and the Junior Leagues' Kids in the Kitchen program has committed to seeing this partnership with the WVSU Extension Service and Huntington Community Gardens project to fruition. Currently, we are already working in tandem with an event on Saturday, November 7, 2009 at the Marcum Terrace Community Garden project. We have also committed to an event in conjunction with Earth Day in April 2010.

Currently the epidemic of obesity is at the forefront of conversation in regard to our community. The JLH believes the successes of these community programs are vital to the success of fostering healthy lifestyle changes in the Huntington community.