

Junior Service League works to enrich the lives of Beaufort residents

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Thanks to Carson Bruce of Beaufort for sharing the story of a relatively young local organization's civic achievements as it moves into its fifth year.

Carson writes:

Since its inception in September 2005, the Junior Service League of Beaufort has touched the lives of thousands of women and children throughout the Beaufort community.

In fact, our members together have devoted more than 16,000 hours of community service to Beaufort County.

We have achieved quite impressive goals: we hosted a record-breaking blood drive, organized an inaugural event that has raised more than \$100,000 for a local agency, and were nominated for the Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce's Civitas award, which honors those in the community who exemplify the best qualities of citizenship.

The 2009-10 year marks our fifth anniversary, and the league continues to attract new members. The organization's goal of uniting talented and compassionate women with a desire to give back to the community is echoed in its mission statement:

"The Junior Service League of Beaufort is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism. Membership offers an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with others who share a desire to give back to our community. Through the talents of our diverse membership we will support and enrich the lives of women, children and families in our community. Together we have a greater impact than we do individually."

Local members have worked tirelessly to support many of Beaufort's long-established nonprofit organizations. Their dedication to civic service is evidenced through continued volunteer support of United Way of the Lowcountry, Friends of Caroline Hospice, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Lowcountry, Hope Haven, YMCA of Beaufort County, Lowcountry Blood Alliance, St. Vincent's Food Pantry, AMI Kids, the Child Abuse Prevention Association and Citizens Opposed to Domestic Abuse. They also collaborate with the Little Red Dog Foundation and Thumbs Up, two other organizations that are only a few years old but have already made a significant impact in the Beaufort community.

Following are the chapter's accomplishments since 2005:

- Raised more than \$100,000 for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Lowcountry through the Beach, Boogie and BBQ event, which draws a diverse demographic.
- Raised more than \$12,000 for the Little Red Dog Foundation by hosting an annual 5K Health Run. These funds were used to purchase 12 custom-designed bikes for children with varying disabilities.
- Served thousands of Beaufort County families through United Way's Operation Holiday Heroes.
- Helped AMI Kids Beaufort (formerly the Beaufort Marine Institute) rehabilitate young men by assisting with their annual croquet tournament in May and kingfish tournament in August, raising more than \$150,000 collectively.
- Helped raise more than \$200,000 for Festival of Trees, Friends of Caroline Hospice's annual fundraising event, by chairing various committees, such as Silent Auctions, Tree Sponsorships and Gift and Gourmet.
- Helped coordinate Hope Haven's Lilies on the River, an event that brings in more than \$50,000 annually for this organization.
- Organized four blood drives for the Lowcountry Blood Alliance, the first of which had the largest number of first-time donors in Beaufort County.
- Donated more than 100 meals and food items to Thumbs Up and St. Vincent's Food Pantry.
- Served as docents for Coastal Living and Cottage Living magazines' Holiday House from October to December 2006. We distributed \$19,000 in ticket sales to CODA and CAPA.

Joining the League gives women the opportunity to pursue interests outside of their homes and careers, and the skills and training they acquire through membership prove beneficial. There is also great potential to develop lifelong friendships with like-minded women who share the desire to make a difference in their community.

Through constant evaluation and self-assessment, it is the goal of our members to provide a lasting legacy for their daughters, granddaughters and future generations.

Details: President Carson Bruce at carsonjslb@gmail.com.