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THE JUNIOR LEAGUES ANNOUNCE 2006 CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND NUTRITION INITIATIVE

League Members to Educate Children on Importance of Eating Well and Staying Healthy

New York, NY (February 2, 2006) – The Junior Leagues announced today that more than 200 Junior Leagues across four countries will participate in an education initiative on childhood obesity and nutrition entitled **Junior Leagues' Kids in the Kitchen**. This initiative is a response to the alarming statistic that nearly one-third of children and adolescents in the United States are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.¹ Even more alarming is that childhood obesity has been shown to be the leading cause of pediatric hypertension, is associated with Type II diabetes, increases the risk of coronary heart disease, increases stress on the weight-bearing joints, lowers self-esteem and affects relationships with peers.² With the goal to raise awareness and attempt to reverse the growth of childhood obesity and its associated health issues, the League-wide program will educate children and families about childhood obesity and nutrition, culminating in Junior League Volunteer Day, taking place during National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, 2006.

Among the many aspects of this grassroots campaign, the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI), the umbrella organization of the Junior Leagues, will launch a virtual cookbook featuring kid-friendly, nutritious recipes that are grouped into five categories: breakfast, lunchbox, dinner, snacks and party treats. The website will also feature tips and recipes of the day, as well as quizzes and polls to test kids on their nutrition knowledge. To encourage their peers to join in on the fun, recipes and tips can be emailed to friends or printed out and pasted on index cards. The virtual cookbook will launch in mid-March and will be accessible at <http://kidsinthekitchen.ajli.org>.

“Our Junior League members have always prided themselves on promoting healthy lifestyles within their communities, and we are dedicated to addressing the growing issue of childhood obesity,” Pam Newby, president of AJLI, said. “The art of cooking and sharing recipes has long been part of the Junior League heritage, so it felt natural for us to design a proactive opportunity to provide our children with the tools they need to make nutritious eating choices. Their education is the first step in making a lasting change in our children’s futures.”

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Ga.

² American Obesity Association, Washington, DC.

On Junior League Volunteer Day in April, more than 200 Leagues in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom will engage children and their families in their communities with activities designed to promote healthy eating choices. League members will visit local schools to educate on the importance of balanced lunches, give cooking classes to youth groups and sponsor trips to grocery stores to show kids and their parents how to make healthy food choices.

“Care and concern for our communities are the keystones to our Leagues’ volunteer initiatives, including the **Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen** program,” Newby said. “Our mission of voluntarism is rewarding. It gives our members opportunities to make lasting changes in their communities.”

Millions of children will have the opportunity to enrich their lives and palates with recipes, tips and activities from Junior League members through the **Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen** initiative.

To learn more about the **Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen** program, please visit www.kidsinthekitchen.ajli.org.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF JUNIOR LEAGUES INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1901 by New Yorker, Mary Harriman, the Junior Leagues are organizations of women committed to voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. The Association of Junior Leagues International is made up of 292 Junior Leagues in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom. Together, they are one of the largest international volunteer organizations for women interested in making a positive impact in their communities. For more information, visit the website www.ajli.org.

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