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THE JUNIOR LEAGUE LAUNCHES THIRD ANNUAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND NUTRITION INITIATIVE

League Members from Four Countries and Cartoon Network Continue Renowned Kids in the Kitchen Education Initiative, with New Activities on Family Dining and Kids Food Shopping

NEW YORK, February 4, 2008—The Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. (AJLI) will launch its third annual Junior League's *Kids in the Kitchen* education initiative on childhood obesity and nutrition this March, in conjunction with National Nutrition Month in the U.S. and Canada. The well-established initiative, which helps communities across four countries address the consequences of childhood obesity and poor nutrition, will continue to help youngsters learn about healthy eating and involve them in the preparation of their own meals and snacks. Exclusive kids media partner, Cartoon Network, will support the program with on-air public service announcements, League-wide distribution of grassroots event-activation kits and an online animated educational game tied to the network's "Get Animated" pro-social platform.

More than 230 Junior Leagues participate in this grassroots initiative to empower children to adopt healthy lifestyles. Organized in 2006, *Kids in the Kitchen* responds to the staggering statistic that nearly one-third of children and adolescents in North and South America will be overweight by 2010 and at increased risk of contracting Type II diabetes, high blood pressure, the numerous ailments related to high cholesterol and social problems that affect self-esteem.

Motivated by recent studies out of Harvard, Rutgers and the University of Minnesota indicating that family dining improves the dietary habits of children, many Leagues will promote family meal preparation activities and provide a downloadable fact sheet from the *Kids in the Kitchen* website that highlights the benefits of families eating together. Data demonstrate that family dining leads children to eat more fruits and vegetables and fewer junk foods and makes them more likely to do well in school and less likely to develop common eating disorders and develop substance abuse problems.

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"In the United States, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom, the Junior Leagues are determined to remain in the forefront of this struggle to enable children to take proper care of their bodies and control their future health," said Sandi Kemmish, President of AJLI. "This year, the Junior Leagues will continue their grassroots *Kids in the Kitchen* campaign to provide children with hands-on education activities related to nutrition and healthy meal preparation. We believe that education and hands-on involvement are the first steps toward addressing the urgent issues surrounding childhood obesity."

"*Kids in the Kitchen* is an ideal example of how Cartoon Network works with pro-social partners to support creative, effective programs that bring families together to learn to lead healthier lives," said Alice Cahn, vice president of social responsibility for Cartoon Network. "Encouraging parents with ways to include their kids in their family meal shopping and preparation is a proven way to help choose healthier options. We're delighted to play an active role in getting this message out to kids and care-givers through TV spots and the online game."

As part of their grassroots campaign, selected Leagues are beginning to increase children's knowledge of how to shop for healthy food through a *Kids in the Kitchen* pilot program, the "Healthy Shopping Challenge." League volunteers in Atlanta, Brooklyn, Chicago, Greenwich, Omaha, The Palm Beaches and Sacramento will shop with local youngsters at neighborhood food outlets in search of the ingredients for a healthy, affordable family meal. With the aid of the Food Pyramid from USDA, a guide explaining how to read nutrition labels, sample menus and an illustrated family meal planner/shopping list, the 4th to 8th graders will learn to select delicious healthy foods that meet USDA nutrition requirements and use these ingredients to prepare sample dishes. The Healthy Shopping Challenge program is likely to expand to other Leagues in the near future.

The Junior Leagues' comprehensive website supports the grassroots programs with entertaining and educational material focused on childhood health. Because children are more likely to try new foods they have helped prepare, the website features easy-to-make, tasty and nutritious recipes from chefs and celebrities. Also featured on the website are nutrition and exercise tips, quizzes, the educational game provided by Cartoon Network featuring characters and backgrounds from the hit series *Camp Lazlo*, and the USDA's MyPyramid Blast-Off game, a fun way for youngsters to learn the most current guidelines for daily food consumption and exercise, tailored to their nutrition and fitness needs. The website can be found at <http://kidsinthekitchen.ajli.org>.

During National Nutrition Month in March, and throughout the year, thousands of kids will share in the fun of learning to select and prepare delicious foods that enhance their own lives and help their families stay healthy, too.

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 293 Junior Leagues in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States. 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.