



The Little Red Schoolhouse Project ~ 2010

by Vickie Hayes

The work of *the Little Red Schoolhouse project* began in June as members collected new and used clothing from the schools. The summer days were filled with washing clothing and buying school supplies to make sure we could successfully serve over 2000 children in preparation for a new school year. Before the doors opened on the big give away day, the excitement was shown in the long lines as children and families chat and smile in anticipation of 'new' school clothes, new backpacks filled with school supplies to take home. **This year we served 900 families and supplied 2879 children with school supplies and clothing!** Last year 720 families with 2343 children received our gifts of school supplies and clothing. The planning has begun for next year's event with estimations of over 3000 children needing this special help to begin another new school year.

Live Your Potential...

Thank you to over 72 Junior League members who **intentionally** planned how to use their potential by organizing summer schedules so help could be given to *The Little Red Schoolhouse Project*. But this program is more than giving school supplies and clothing to families. It is community members coming together to fulfill a vital need in our community, and at the same time, letting the children we serve know that they are important and so is school!!!

Peggy Doebel and Liz Kapust, amazing Junior League women, gladly lead the way in 'living their potential' as they spend endless hours organizing for clothing and school supplies throughout the year for this important community event.



Make a Difference...

Each single act of 'help' makes a **difference** in the success of providing for the growing needs of community families preparing for back to school supplies. In a recent news article it was stated that it costs approximately \$96 per child to pay for requested back to school supplies. Add a gently used pair of shoes, jeans, and coat to this cost and it is easy to understand why so many of our families are overwhelmed this time of year. Yes, all volunteers and community donations have made a difference for almost 3000 children.

The Little Red Schoolhouse is unique in that there are a variety of opportunities over a long period of time to give a helping hand. It is the volunteers who plan, fundraise, organize, and

carry out the work of this amazing project sending the message that our community cares for children going back to school with pride.

Thank you to all of the members who took leave from work or changed family plans when the call for more help was sent out! In addition, neighbors and family members were invited to help and learn at firsthand the impact of this experience and the difference our volunteer work does for the community.



New Junior League member, Kallie Moore, shared, *“Great job on a fabulous LRS event! My husband and I both worked on Thursday the 19th. We were only able to stay about an hour but we couldn't stop talking about what a great service this is to the families in our area that need help. It was really inspiring to see firsthand what our community can do with the resources available, and I was so happy my hubby had the opportunity to experience this as well. Thanks!”*

Community service is contagious ~ Let's spread it around!!

Feel the Impact...

The **impact** is felt as you work side by side with other community partners preparing the clothes and school supplies or from helping on Distribution Day assisting our shoppers in finding the perfect back to school outfit for their children. Elaine, a JLO friend from Dalesport, WA wrote, *“Really, really very sorry I can't make it to the "Little Red School House". I look forward to that experience each year and the wonderful help you do and all the volunteers and the look on the children's faces when they find that special outfit or pair of shoes. it is something I always remember. The darling little 5 year old showing us how to wear a great scarf she had found, the tears in the mother's eyes when telling me how much she appreciated the work you all do. What more rewarding experience could one have--outside your own family--than being able to help so many families in need. Next year I will be there regardless.”*

When family members were asked how important this program is for their families, we heard the following comments, *“It means everything. I lost my job last week. Very important, especially in this economy with people getting laid off. I would not be able to afford things without it. You have such nice clothing you are giving away.”*

President elect Heather Emery reflected, *“There is no alternative to Little Red Schoolhouse. When I asked them what they would do to prepare their children for school if Little Red Schoolhouse did not exist, most parents said they just didn't know. LRS provides their children with quality clothing and sparking new school supplies - things that will help them start the year with pride. It ensures that poverty isn't the distinguishing characteristic of the students it serves. I am so proud of JLO's role in supporting this wonderful organization!”*

As always, the Kids Count Committee invites all Junior League members to participate in all projects this year. ***Everything makes a difference when giving to others!***

We guarantee your heartstrings will be pulled and you will know that the work of Junior League makes a difference when you volunteer for JLO projects. ♥



Happily dragging at the end of the day.