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JUNIOR LEAGUES FIGHT CHILDHOOD OBESITY WITH SECOND ANNUAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Women in Four Countries Organize Local Activities to Teach Kids About the Importance of Healthy Eating

NEW YORK (February 1, 2007) – Just in time for National Nutrition Month, The Association of Junior Leagues International will kick off the second year of their childhood obesity and nutrition education initiative, Junior League's *Kids in the Kitchen*.

“The annual Junior League's *Kids in the Kitchen* program is testament to our commitment to make a lasting effect in the lives of children threatened by childhood obesity,” said Sandi Kemmish, President of AJLI. “Junior League volunteers and our many partners are working at the grassroots level with children in communities throughout Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States to equip them with the knowledge and tools they need to make a lifetime of healthy eating decisions.”

With studies from the International Journal of Pediatric Obesity estimating that nearly half of the children in North and South America will be overweight by 2010, the Junior League's *Kids in the Kitchen* program aims to motivate children to learn more about healthy eating and make it a natural, lifelong habit. This will help children avoid the risks of being overweight, which include Type II diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

This year, Cartoon Network and their Get Animated program; Healthy Kids Challenge; National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's We Can! program; Share Our Strength and the Texas Department of Agriculture's Square Meals program will join ongoing Junior League's *Kids in the Kitchen* partners, United States Department of Agriculture and American Dietetic Association, to help further the initiative's goals.

As part of the *Kids in the Kitchen* initiative, Junior League volunteers host hands-on educational activities with community partners such as local chefs, grocery stores, schools and other organizations in more

than 235 locations across four countries. Programs range from cooking classes and health fairs to vegetable gardening lessons and grocery store tours to get kids involved in every stage of the preparation of their food.

The Junior League believes that education is the first step to addressing the urgent issues surrounding childhood obesity. The *Kids in the Kitchen* initiative builds upon the Junior League legacy of helping children with nutrition issues, which has been one of many focuses of the Junior League volunteers since the first League was founded in 1901.

To learn more about the Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen* program and to access recipes, tips, quizzes and other resources provided by *Kids in the Kitchen* partners, Junior Leagues and celebrities, please visit the Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen* website, <http://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 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.

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