



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **NJ LEGISLATURE HONORS JUNIOR LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS FOR 42 YEARS AS ADVOCATES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

The State Public Affairs Committee (SPAC) of the Junior Leagues of New Jersey has been honored by the State of New Jersey with a Joint Legislative Resolution recognizing its 42 years of advocating on behalf of women and children. The resolution, organized by Senator Barbara Buono (18) and Assemblymen Patrick Diegnan (18) and Peter Barnes (18), was delivered by Christina Zuk, Chief of Staff for Sen. Buono, during the group's annual legislative luncheon at the Hilton Short Hills. Immediately following the luncheon, Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver recognized SPAC's advocacy efforts by securing an Assembly Resolution.

Throughout the luncheon, SPAC delegates and Junior League leaders from New Jersey's eight Leagues met with Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (21), Assemblypersons Anthony R. Bucco (25), Mila Jasey (27), Nancy Muñoz (21), Valerie Vainieri Huttle (37), and Connie Wagner (38). Key legislative staff also attended, including Julie O'Brien, Director of Constituent Services (Asw. Wagner), and Chiefs of Staff Christina Zuk (Sen. Buono), Lolita Cruz (Asm. Giblin), Renee Trabert (Sen. Kean), and Andrea Katz (Asw. Vainieri Huttle). Discussion centered on issues at the forefront of SPAC's efforts statewide, including human trafficking, umbilical cord blood donations/NJ Cord Blood Bank, eliminating synthetic pesticides on school grounds, foster care, and childhood obesity.

To highlight SPAC's core issues, Beverly Deak, of the Junior League of Montclair-Newark, and Kaitlyn Keisel Stagnone, of Polaris Project, a leading organization in the global fight against human trafficking, delivered passionate addresses to luncheon guests. Ms. Deak, whose daughter's life was saved with a cord blood transplant, implored legislators to support a bill currently before the state legislature that would provide funding to operate and expand the NJ Cord Blood Bank (NJCBB). The bill allocates 20% of the fee charged for the initial certified copy of a birth certificate to support the NJCBB. SPAC has worked for several years to educate legislators and the general public about the value of a public cord blood bank not only for New Jersey residents, but for patients world-wide.

Ms. Keisel Stagnone, the New Jersey program coordinator for Polaris Project, gave a first-hand account of human trafficking victims and survivors living in our state. She noted the testimony that SPAC volunteers have given in support of comprehensive bills to levy additional fines for perpetrators of human trafficking, to support targeted survivor programs and to designate 1/11 as NJ Human Trafficking Awareness Day and January as NJ Human Trafficking Prevention Month; a sampling of the type of efforts that earned all Junior Leagues a Distinguished Leadership Award from the United Nations Association of NY. SPAC volunteers are playing a key role in the 1/11/2013 statewide Human Trafficking Awareness Day Rally at the NJ State House in Trenton. The free public event is scheduled from 11:00a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and registration is available at [www.njHumanTrafficking.org](http://www.njHumanTrafficking.org).

*Bergen County ♦ Elizabeth-Plainfield ♦ Greater Princeton ♦ Monmouth County ♦ Montclair-Newark ♦ Morristown ♦ Oranges & Short Hills ♦ Summit*

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### **About The Junior Leagues of New Jersey State Public Affairs Committee (SPAC)**

Founded in 1970, NJ SPAC ([www.jlnispac.org](http://www.jlnispac.org)) is a statewide, non-partisan committee made up of representatives from each of the eight Junior Leagues in NJ who join together to take action on select state and national public issues. NJ SPAC advocates for initiatives and legislation to improve the quality of life for women and children; improve the quality of education; and improve the environment. With a combined membership of 3,000 Junior League members in NJ and with the use of a range of advocacy tools, SPAC is able to improve the lives on women and children in the state.

### **About The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.**

Founded in 1901 by New Yorker and social activism pioneer Mary Harriman, the Junior Leagues are charitable nonprofit organizations of women, developed as civic and community leaders, creating demonstrable community impact. Today, [The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.](http://www.theajli.org) (AJLI) is comprised of more than 155,000 women in 293 Junior Leagues throughout Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Together, they constitute one of the largest, most effective volunteer organizations in the world.



State Legislators join NJ Junior Leagues State Public Affairs Committee delegates and Junior League leaders at recent SPAC Legislative Luncheon at the Hilton Short Hills. L-R front row = Guest speaker Beverly Deak, Junior League of Montclair-Newark, Inc., SPAC Assistant Chair Sue Flynn, SPAC Chair Patricia Devine Harms and Christina Zuk, Chief of Staff for Senator Barbara Buono. L-R standing = SPAC Advisor Barbara Wright, RN, Ph.D., FAAN; Lolita Cruz (Assemblyman Giblin's office), Assemblypersons Anthony Bucco, Mila Jasey, Nancy Muñoz, Connie Wagner, Senator Tom Kean, Jr. and Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle.



NJ Joint Legislative Resolution honors the Junior Leagues of NJ State Public Affairs Committee (SPAC) for 42 years of advocacy. L-R = SPAC volunteers Sharon Kress (JL of Elizabeth-Plainfield), Christianna Harvey (JL Monmouth County), Teri Di Francesco (JL of Elizabeth-Plainfield), Jess Penetar (JL of Greater Princeton), Delly Beekman (JL of Monmouth County and Association of Junior Leagues International Past President), Lauren Forbes (JL of Montclair-Newark), SPAC Assistant Chair Sue Flynn (JL of Monmouth County), SPAC Chair Patricia Devine Harms (JL of Montclair-Newark), Christina Zuk, Chief of Staff for Senator Barbara Buono, Kate Lee (JL of the Oranges & Short Hills), Melissa Tassé (JL of Summit) and Amy Vincent (JL of Morristown).