

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**It All Started in Canada:
The Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen* Program Flourishes in More Than 200
Cities in North America and the UK**

**Program responds to the staggering statistic that childhood obesity rates in
Canada have tripled since 1981**

Toronto, Ontario, April 13, 2010—Now in its fifth successful year, one of the biggest volunteer programs addressing childhood obesity in North America owes a large debt to the pioneering work done by members of The Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues (CFJL). Started as Junior Chefs, a program developed in Calgary schools in 2001 to help children develop long-term nutritional knowledge, the [Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen*](#) program is now active in more than 200 cities in Canada, the U.S., the UK and Mexico.

“The fact that a relatively small initiative that began in Canada nearly 10 years ago has now rolled out to more than 200 communities in four countries is nothing short of remarkable,” said Deborah Maw, National Coordinator of The Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues. “It shows not only how great the need is, but also that we’ve fine-tuned the program into an approach that works, brings parents and their children together in the kitchen, and is sustainable model for generating awareness of this critical issue.”

“*Kids in the Kitchen* is a wonderful example of the power of a good idea in the hands of a great group of volunteers,” said Debbie Robinson, President of [The Association of Junior Leagues International Inc.](#) “*Kids in the Kitchen* now has its own cookbook, [Junior Leagues In The Kitchen With Kids: Everyday Recipes And Activities For Healthy Living](#), and celebrity chef-spokesman, [George Stella](#). But more importantly, it thrives as a volunteer-driven, community-based program that addresses an important social problem in four countries.”

Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen* is an ideal example of an effective program that works to combat childhood obesity locally, nationally and internationally. The program takes a grassroots approach to health education that aims to alter the behaviors of young people and gives them tools to adopt healthy lifestyles that will stay with them throughout their lives. *Kids in the Kitchen* events in Canada in 2010 include:

- [The Junior League of Halifax](#) (JLH) will present an interactive, fun and healthy cooking and nutrition workshop for teen moms at SHYM (Supportive Housing for Young Mothers), a community partner of JLH, on April 22. SHYM provides safe housing and programming for young moms who are homeless and at risk of becoming homeless and their children.
- [The Junior League of Hamilton-Burlington](#) (JLHB) will be hosting its *Kids in the Kitchen* event on April 21. In partnership with the Hamilton Spectator, JLHB will be providing a nutrition and fitness afternoon with children in Grades 5 and 6 from the Hess Street Elementary School in Hamilton. A local chef, Jason Gibson, will be on hand teaching the children about nutrition and the fun in making their own food. In the fitness area, coordination with a local hula hoop dancing group has also been coordinated. JLHB will also present their Kids on the Block Program, which will feature a skit on obesity and nutrition for the children to watch and interact with. The event will be held at the Hamilton Spectator.
- [The Junior League of Toronto's](#) (JLT) *Kids in the Kitchen* event, which will be held on April 24 at the Northern District Library, represents one of the many JLT's community programs focused on the theme of 'healthy living.' Approximately 50 children ages 5-12 will participate in stations and learn hands on snack preparation; table etiquette; and yoga among other activities.
- [The Junior League of Calgary, AB](#): On May 4, in partnership with Dr. J.K. Mulloy School, the League will take students through five interactive labs where some of their activities will include

learning about the Canadian food guide and preparing healthy snacks and meals demonstrated by guest chef, Will Kwong.

- [The Junior League of Edmonton, AB](#): On March 23, the League hosted youth from the Boys and Girls Club at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's culinary school. Students got a chance to test their knowledge by competing in Nutrition Jeopardy and engaged in yoga and karate among a host of other activities.

For more information about *Kids in the Kitchen* events in Canada, see The Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues website at www.cfjl.org.

About The Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues

The Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues is consortium of Leagues throughout the country that connects women committed to strengthening communities. Through effective leadership and passionate volunteers Canadian Junior Leagues have worked together to promote volunteerism, develop the potential of woman, and most recently improve children's health. For more information, visit the website www.cfjl.org.

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 leaders, creating demonstrable community impact.

Today, The Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. (AJLI) is comprised of more than 160,000 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.