

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Media Contact:**

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## **THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF OAKLAND-EAST BAY, INC. ANNOUNCES 2006 CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND NUTRITION INITIATIVE AND WEBSITE**

*Top Chefs and Nutrition Experts Serve Up Kid-Friendly Recipes and Tips to Educate Children on Importance of Eating Well and Staying Healthy*

**LAFAYETTE, Calif.** – March 22, 2006 –The Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. (JLOEB) announced today that they are joining more than 225 Junior Leagues across four countries to participate in an education initiative on childhood obesity and nutrition entitled **Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen**. This initiative is in response to the alarming statistic that nearly one-third of children and adolescents in the United States are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. (*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA*) Even more alarming is the fact that childhood obesity has been shown to be the leading cause of pediatric hypertension, is associated with Type II diabetes, increases the risk of coronary heart disease, increases stress on the weight-bearing joints, lowers self-esteem, and affects relationships with peers. (*Source: American Obesity Association, Washington, DC.*)

With the goal to raise awareness and attempt to reverse the growth of childhood obesity and its associated health issues, the JLOEB’s program supports the **Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen** national initiative which will educate children and families about childhood obesity and nutrition and give thousands of children and their families the opportunity to enrich their lives and palates with recipes, tips and activities.

“It is extremely rewarding to be a part of an national organization determined to put a ‘stake’ in the ground on this issue and mobilize our vast rank of volunteers - more than 170,000 strong - to work for positive change in our communities,” said Leslie Bates, President 2005-2006, JLOEB. “Delivering information and tools to children to make better decisions about their nutrition, exercise and health is one of the most lasting and important legacies we can hope to leave.”

### **Top Chefs and Nutrition Professionals Join JLOEB Members to Support the Campaign**

The art of cooking and sharing recipes has long been a part of Junior League heritage. In the East Bay Area of Northern California, the JLOEB is working together with experts in the culinary, nutrition and medical fields to share information with children and parents, and the community at large, about the basics of healthy cooking, snacking and nutrition.

The local initiative features well-known chefs, including Victor Scargle, Executive Chef of Julia’s Kitchen at COPIA (Napa, CA), and Robert Lam, Executive Chef/Owner Butterfly Restaurant (San Francisco, CA), as well as nutrition expert Nicole Britvan and many others who, along with the League, hope to make a powerful, change-affecting, long-term difference for all kids. The site, <http://www.jloeb.org/kidsinthekitchen.htm>, features favorite kid-friendly recipes, cooking and nutrition tips, as well as biographical information.

### **National Launch of Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen Website**

Among the many aspects of this grassroots campaign, the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI), the umbrella organization of the Junior Leagues, this week unveiled a virtual recipe collection featuring kid-friendly, nutritious recipes that are grouped into five categories: breakfast, lunchbox, dinner, snacks, and party treats. The website, which includes contributions from celebrities such as actresses Fran Drescher and Emmy Rossum and Top Chefs George Stella and Daniel Boulud, features tips and recipes of the day, as well as quizzes and polls to test kids on their nutrition knowledge. Recipes can be printed out and pasted onto index cards to share with friends. The virtual recipe collection is accessible at <http://kidsinthekitchen.ajli.org/>.

### **JLOEB to Serve Up Nutrition Lesson at Hoover Elementary School**

On April 19 in support of the **Junior Leagues’ Kids in the Kitchen** campaign and the JLOEB’s award-winning *Super Stars Literacy Program (SSLP)*, Michelle Stern, founder of What’s Cooking

(<http://www.whatscooking.info/>), and several JLOEB members, including registered dietician Megan Thomas, will be leading children in various hands-on and healthy activities. The goal is to help the *SSLP* families better understand the links among physical activity, healthy lifestyle, good nutrition, and success in school. *SSLP*, the JLOEB's signature project, is a comprehensive after school literacy program for kindergartners, 1st and 2nd graders designed to make reading fun and exciting. What's Cooking, named as one of the East Bay's best cooking class providers, offers interactive and educational cooking workshops for children, ages 2-1/2 through 19. To learn more about *SSLP* visit: <http://www.jloeb.org/projects/Sigproject.htm>.

"I am thrilled that the issue of childhood obesity is being championed by the Junior League," said Diane Stevenson, President-Elect 2006-2007, JLOEB. "The statistics of this epidemic are frightening, and while the present data most certainly demands action now, we must not forget to look toward the future and see the looming health catastrophe when these children become adults, if nothing is done."

**Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. - *Women Building Better Communities***

Founded in 1935, the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. The JLOEB offers women the opportunity to implement change in the community in three major ways: projects, grants, and outreach. The common thread in the JLOEB community work is the League's dedicated mission focusing on *Children at Risk*. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. To learn more, support League projects or become a member, please visit our website at [www.jloeb.org](http://www.jloeb.org).