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SPACTION

STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUES OF CALIFORNIA

FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008 CONFERENCE HELD IN SAN FRANCISCO



New SPAC Chair, Wendy Penbera with Acting SPAC Chair, Mariaelena Welch and Nominating Chair Jackie Motley

In late October, the two day conference was held in downtown San Francisco and was hosted by the JL of San Francisco. It was a fantastic and fun setting for our delegates including several cable-car rides and a private tour of The Aquarium by the Bay.

With the unfortunate resignation of the current SPAC Chair just weeks prior to the conference, Mariaelena Welch, former SPAC Chair 2006-2007, stepped in as a temporary Chair to run the conference. Thankfully, a new SPAC Chair, Wendy Penbera of the JL of Fresno, was elected at the conclusion of the conference. Many thanks to the SPAC Nominating Committee for identifying such a great candidate! Wendy will be a fantastic SPAC leader!

Prior to the conference all delegates were asked to develop ideas for 2009 Sponsored Legislation. After much research and discussion, the delegation voted to pursue legislation that would more readily make available postpartum depression information as a part of a hospital discharge process (now AB 159). This topic was the overwhelming winner and there is a ton of enthusiasm. We look forward to making an impact in this area. *(More information about AB 159 in this newsletter).*

As the conference was held only days before the general election, the delegates also enjoyed hearing from first time candidates and their stories of how they, as just "regular" people, came to be running for public office. We also heard from local Assembly Member Fiona Ma who was an instrumental author of the exciting and environmentally ground-breaking Prop 1A: Ballot Proposition which passed and will bring a High Speed Passenger Train to California!

A MESSAGE FROM SPAC'S NEW CHAIR

"There are those that look at things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

- Robert Kennedy

As SPAC Chair for 2008-2009, the challenge that I am asking of all SPAC Delegates is "**Why not?**"

Mary Harriman in 1921 said, "Our League was organized as a means of expressing the feeling of social responsibility for the conditions which surround us. We have the responsibility and the opportunity to conscientiously act to affect our environment." Many women interpret this as volunteering hours and being directly involved in the Junior Leagues of California's community projects. What some fail to see is that this is only half of the way to affect our environments.

Why Not change the law to make lasting change well beyond the hours one spends personally dedicated to working on a league project.

Why Not educate our state officials about issues and needs in our communities.

Why Not advocate for something that is an injustice and inequality.

As women we should recognize that we are born advocates. We do it every single day without realizing it and without being intimidated. When there is something wrong in our neighborhood, we stand up for change. When there is something we think is a problem at our child's school, we advocate for change. When there is something wrong in our homes, we advocate for change. Advocacy . . . we do it every day in our daily lives and as women it comes to us naturally.

To the 2008-2009 SPAC delegates I ask you . . . "**Why Not?**"

Wendy Penbera
SPAC Chair 2008-2009

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HEALTHY MOTHER'S ACT OF 2009 (AB 159)

SPAC Sponsored Legislation Will Provide Greater Protection for Women & Families who Suffer from Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders occur during pregnancy as well as during the postpartum period. These disorders can take many forms, including depression, anxiety disorders, and psychosis. These afflictions can have potentially serious repercussions for the emotional, social, and physical health and well-being of mothers, children, and families. National studies indicate that 1 in 8 women suffer from perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and 80% of these women go undiagnosed and untreated.

Though proposed legislation sponsored by SPAC, and authored by Assembly Member Pedro Nava, SPAC hopes to provide the women of California greater and more consistent access to education and support for PMAD.

AB159, will ask the California Department of Public Health to establish a statewide prenatal mood and anxiety disorder task force consisting of healthcare professionals and their stakeholders to develop a best practices model for public awareness and standard of care for PMAD. Additionally, the task force may undertake public education activities related to the disorder to raise awareness for both healthcare professionals and for pregnant women, new mothers, and their families.

"This legislation is vital to raise awareness, create guidelines for healthcare professionals and to protect new mothers and their families," said Nava. "Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMAD) are very real for woman and their families and there needs to be standardized screening and services provided."

Said Wendy J. Penbera, Chair of SPAC, "It is with great pride that the Junior Leagues of California will be working with Assemblymember Nava in advocating for women and their families who suffer from PMAD. Our hope is to send a message which acknowledges that PMAD is not a badge of shame but, rather, a hurdle that can be overcome with support, counseling and treatment resources."

HOSTING AN "THERE OUT TO BE A LAW" IDEA DRIVE

Most of the idea's for SPAC's sponsored legislation has come from our own league members through some type of new law "idea drive". Here are some creative ways to engage your League in such a drive:

When to hold a drive. Due to the SPAC & Legislative Calendar, communicating the contest in early August with a September 30 deadline works best.

How to spread the word.

- Give away a prize such as a trip to the SPAC Day at the Capitol
- Get out to your Members
 - Meet with your Projects/Community Councils to discuss SPAC and TOTBAL
 - Get on a Fall General Meeting Agenda
 - Newsletter Article
 - E-mail to Sustainer, Active, & Provisional Members
 - Host a Cocktails and Public Policy Social
 - Ask every member of the Board to submit an idea
- Involve your Community Partners
- Include information about the Idea Drive on your internal and external web page.

After ideas come in, then what?

- Score ideas with your Sr. SPAC and Public Policy Council/ Board Member(s). Name of submitter should be kept confidential.
- Score on things like: Ties to League Focus Areas, Fiscal Impact, Likely Problem in other CA Leagues, Current Law, etc.
- Track Ideas and Scores, using a spread sheet w/ a new tab for each year. Though an idea may not resonate one year, it may resonate the next or generate new spin off ideas.
- Bring your spreadsheet to the Fall Conference to share your top 2-3 ideas.

Enjoy this process, it's can be a fun way to engage your League in a very important SPAC process!

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SHARING VITAL INFORMATION WITH HOME LEAGUES AND LEGISLATORS:

The Matrix, League Project Overview & Key Word Index

Collectively, the Junior Leagues of California accomplish amazing feats in our respective neighborhoods. With over 90 community projects covering 125 topics throughout the state, the information contained within our three primary SPAC documents deserves to be shared with your league's leadership team and with your legislators!

Remember the first time you perused the documents? It's likely that your thoughts ranged from "Wow!" "This is incredible!" "That's such a great idea." "I had no idea that the project in Southern California so closely mirrored ours. I wonder how they staff, train, fund and eventually sunset their project." "This makes me really proud to be a Junior League member."

Now imagine a legislative staffer considering SPAC as a potential co-sponsor for a piece of legislation or trying to govern your league without access to this information? As your Board of Directors prepares its annual budget, membership requirements, project research and development and potential community partner selection, SPAC has the ability to provide meaningful cross-league collaboration to facilitate best practices among our leagues. As SPAC delegates using non-profit funds, we have a responsibility and a duty to "bring SPAC home." In addition, sharing the extent of our collective reach and capabilities is an excellent opportunity to ensure that SPAC receives adequate funding from your Board. One of the easiest ways to accomplish this goal is by **sharing the information contained within the Matrix, Key Word Index and League Project Overview.**

Here are a few suggestions as to how you can begin using these documents to "Bring SPAC Home."

As you work with these documents, you'll have additional suggestions as you become much more comfortable referencing and incorporating the information. Educate and Advocate!

Matrix:

- Educate yourself as to the activities of other leagues
- Educate your Board as to the breath of SPAC's reach
- Help your league determine how to structure or refine a project, including number of volunteers needed, etc.
- Educate your community partners about our public policy efforts

Key Word Index (KWI):

Use KWI when talking with staffer or legislator:

- Communicate the breadth of our community partnerships throughout the state
- Communicate the reach among our 16 leagues
- If they ask you to support a piece of legislation dealing within specific topic area. In the event that the legislation does not fit within our focus areas, use this to support your position.

Within your own League

- When your league is soliciting ideas for new projects or topic areas (Project Research and Development)
- Describe the reach of our collective activities
- Elucidate the extent of the training SPAC delegates receive
- Recruiting tool to bring in new committee members / delegates
- Defend your budget

League Project Overview (LPO):

With Legislators and Staffers

- If curious about how we allocate our resources, this is your reference document
- Use these summary statistics in your letters, phone conversations, invitations, etc.

With your League Board of Directors

Allows for comparisons among large and small leagues

- Funds / Member –
 - Total Funds contributed into the community / Number of members
 - Budgetary implications regarding the total funds that are going back to the community / member
- Volunteers / Member –
 - Community Project Volunteers / Number of Actives
 - Resource allocation indicating the percentage of actives allocated to community projects (as opposed to development, etc.)
- Projects / Member –
 - Number of Community Projects / Actives + Provisionals
 - Placement implications - Number of projects available that require staffing

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