

Civic Leader Profile: Ela Sulimirski Landegger



When did you join the Junior League?

1988, beginning with the Junior Leagues of Bronxville and Westchester-on-Hudson in New York state, and later with the Junior League of Toronto.

Describe some of your Junior League projects and committee work.

Initially, I worked on community projects and advocacy and then moved into more administrative roles. I worked in diversification, training, facilitation, finance, public relations, communications, membership, recruitment and administration. I served on the countywide Council of Junior Leagues of Westchester as the Diversification Chair and became President of the Junior League of Westchester-on-Hudson in 1996. When I moved to Toronto, I transferred my membership (a great benefit of membership that helps you make friends quickly). I chaired the Junior League of Toronto Showhouse 2004 fundraiser and served as JLT President in 2005-06. I was also the international coordinator for the 125 mid-sized Junior Leagues for three years.

The list of skills I learned through the Junior League is extensive. I became a volunteer with the confidence and ability to take on any role, knowing that if I have any questions, I may turn to another member who will share her knowledge and experience to help me.

How has the Junior League impacted your life?

I joined the Junior League to volunteer in my community. Little did I know that I would stay for over 25 years!

The Junior League broke my glass ceiling and encouraged me to reach for the stars by giving me the confidence and support to do so. It urged me to try new roles and ventures, some outside of my comfort zone, knowing I'd always receive encouragement and multiple training opportunities.

Through advocacy work, we have changed laws and helped

countless children. Through recruitment and training of new members, we promote voluntarism. We have initiated and supported many programs that have improved our communities. Members also apply what they learn in the Junior League to their future endeavors.

The Junior League has also resulted in an incredible network of friends who are like-minded in their commitment to civic leadership.

Tell us about some of your community work outside of the Junior League.

My Junior League experience enabled me to volunteer on committees and boards of organizations such as The May Court Club of Oakville, Sheena's Place, and American Women's Club of Oakville. It has given me the ability to see "the big picture" and connect various programs of different charities.

I am currently the founding co-chair of the Canadian Red Cross Tiffany Circle, a society of women philanthropists and leaders that asks members to donate a minimum amount each year to support the Red Cross. In less than two years, we have raised over \$3 million. I would not have had the vision or ability to ask for such donations, plan events or communicate with donors or potential donors without my training at the Junior League. Confidence gained through the Junior League has enabled me to work easily with a broad array of people, from serving the hungry at a shelter to dining with the Honorary Chair of the Canadian Red Cross Tiffany Circle, Laureen Harper.