



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
THE ORANGES AND SHORT HILLS**

Women building better communities

From: Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills

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WITH PHOTOS

Caption:

Every Second Grade Student Becomes a Littlest Volunteer

Millburn, NJ: Every second grade class in all five Millburn elementary schools participated in a volunteer project, organized by the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills (JLOSH) this week (Nov 3-5).

Students at Deerfield, Glenwood, Hartshorn, South Mountain and Wyoming elementary schools assembled hundreds of courage bracelets and personal notes of inspiration for children in the hospital, to be distributed as part of the Child Life Program at Saint Barnabas Medical Center, Livingston.

The activities followed classroom readings of *The Littlest Volunteers*, a children's book written by League member Danielle Speckhart and published by JLOSH, and discussions on the values and rewards of being a volunteer and helping others.

Tori Weinstein, Director of Operations and Grants at the Saint Barnabas Medical Center Foundation, said: "The response from these students has been amazing. Being hospitalized can be a stressful experience for children and families, and these bracelets and messages of support will certainly bring smiles to our kids' faces and help them find additional strength for recovery."

Sandy Loprete, JLOSH president, said *The Littlest Volunteers* has developed into a comprehensive program which introduces young children to the value and rewards of volunteering in a fun way they enjoy and understand. “Once they read the book, they can’t wait to get involved in giving back to the community with their own projects. Hopefully, it will inspire them to be volunteers for life.”

“We all want our children to be caring, compassionate and helpful to others. Studies show that kids who begin volunteering from an early age pick up important life skills, tend to be more interested in learning, and often continue volunteer activities as adults. That is the inspiration behind our book.”

Since it was published last year *The Littlest Volunteers* has been incorporated into the social studies curriculum for second graders and has received great reviews from teachers, parents, volunteer organizations and children alike.

With a CD read by actress/singer Raven-Symoné and a website packed with fun activities, advice and resources, the Junior League has created the basis of a whole program of voluntarism.

It also works as a stand-alone children’s story book. *The Littlest Volunteers* is one of the first children’s books geared to promoting voluntarism specifically among four to eight year-olds.

As well as selling the book locally, JLOSH is working to distribute the book and program nationwide by encouraging other Junior Leagues as well as other volunteer organizations across the United States to set up similar initiatives.

“It would be immensely rewarding to see a program that we have created and piloted here in North New Jersey develop into something that touches the whole country,” said Loprete.

The Littlest Volunteers is available from <http://www.littlestvolunteers.org/> and Amazon.com.

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Editor’s Note

- Illustrations from the book are available in jpg format.
- Exposure to volunteering at an early age can teach important life skills, improve confidence, promote healthy lifestyle choices and can lead to a life-long commitment to volunteering, according to research published by the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service at the University of Texas.
- Founded in 1913, The Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills is committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.
- The Junior League reaches out to women of all races, religions and national origins who demonstrate an interest in and a commitment to being a volunteer. There are branches of the Junior League throughout the US, Canada, Mexico and the UK.
- More information about JLOSH is on www.jlosh.org
- The Child Life Program at Saint Barnabas Medical Center, Livingston helps minimize stress associated with pediatric illness and hospitalization by providing emotional and social support to patients and families through developmentally appropriate activities including music, art, Clown Care, and pet therapy www.saintbarnabas.com.



