

Junior League to host 'Kids in the Kitchen' at Wickham Park Community Center, a free public event; 'Bourbon Ball' benefit set for Rockledge, sponsor packages

By Ken Datzman

The Junior League of South Brevard Inc., whose community-impact statement centers on improving children's health through nutrition and physical activity, will be showcasing a fun, educational event on Saturday, April 13, at the Wickham Park Community Center in Melbourne.

Open to the community free of charge, the "Kids in the Kitchen" program will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The event will feature multiple hands-on cooking booths, physical activities for children and families to participate in, and much more, including raffle prizes. There will be workshops for kids and a martial arts demonstration, as well as games and things that promote physical activity.

All facets of the program are designed around healthy eating, nutrition and wellness, and exercise, as childhood obesity is still a raging epidemic in the United States.

"On the local level, this is our way of fighting childhood obesity through education and awareness," said Sarah Ellis, the 2019 committee chairwoman for Junior League of South Brevard's Kids in the Kitchen program, an annual event that has been growing with participants.

"Every Junior League has some kind of Kids in the Kitchen component. It's a nationwide Junior League initiative. The programs are basically customized to fit their respective communities."

If current trends in childhood obesity continue, more than 57 percent of today's children in America will have obesity at age 35, according to a new study from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The study also found that excess weight in childhood is predictive of adult obesity — even among young children — and that only children currently at a healthy weight have less than a 50 percent chance of having obesity as adults.

The findings were based on a "rigorous" simulation model that provides the "most accurate" predictions to date of obesity prevalence at various ages. The study was published in the "New England Journal of Medicine."

The results showed that obesity will be a significant problem for most children in the U.S. as they grow older. Of the children predicted to have obesity as adults, half will develop it as children, according to the study simulations. Excess weight gain during childhood can put children on a trajectory that is difficult to change, the authors said.

For example, the study found that three-out-of-four 2-year-olds with obesity will still have obesity at age 35. For children with severe obesity — a condition that currently affects 4.5 million youngsters in America — the risks are even greater. At age 2, these children have only a one-in-five chance of not having obesity at age 35.

Also, in a new American Academy of Pediatrics study — "Prevalence of Obesity and Severe Obesity in U.S. Children 1999–2016" — the authors deliver a grim message that despite nearly three decades of prevention efforts, the "childhood obesity epidemic continues to grow on a national scale."

In the early 2000s, the Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. took notice of the increasing prevalence and urgency of the childhood obesity epidemic in their communities, and the Kids in the Kitchen program was born.

Kids in the Kitchen not only addresses childhood



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Junior League of South Brevard members have been busy preparing for two community events. Sarah Ellis, left, is the 2019 committee chairwoman for the April 13 'Kids in the Kitchen' at Wickham Park Community Center. Jessica Cabot is the 2019 committee chairwoman for the May 4 'Bourbon Ball' at Rockledge Country Club. These fundraising programs support their organization's projects that are designed to uplift young people in Brevard. They are at Junior League's office in Melbourne.

obesity, but also its systematic root causes, while still maintaining the hands-on, interactive nature of the program.

The Junior League of South Brevard's Kids in the Kitchen event, with Health First Inc. the main sponsor, will include at least 30 vendor booths. The vendors will be promoting products that align with the health, nutrition, wellness, and exercise concept.

"Junior League of South Brevard is really passionate about helping families and kids learn more about staying healthy and living a healthy life," said Ellis. "We will be providing a lot of great tips for eating the right foods, healthy snacks, and getting the right amount of exercise."

She added, "We have been working with area businesses to support our expo. And we are really excited because this year's event is on track to be bigger than last year's, in terms of vendor participation. But we would love to have more vendors, including wellness vendors and activity vendors, such as a dance studio."

If your business or organization is interested in being a vendor at this community-minded event, visit <https://JLSB.net/KITK> or contact Ellis at KITK@JLSB.net. Families can register their children at the Junior League of South Brevard website to take part in Kids in the Kitchen. The Junior League of South Brevard also has a Facebook page promoting its events.

"We already have more than 100 people registered, so we're really upbeat about having a big turnout for this year's event," said Ellis. "The first 300 kids who come to the event will receive a goodie bag filled with goodies from our sponsors."

Ellis works in admissions at the College Internship Program in Brevard. CIP's full-year postsecondary programs offer individualized college academic, social, career, and life-skills support for young adults with autism, ADHD, and other learning differences.

Please see The Junior League of South Brevard, page 21

The Junior League of South Brevard

Continued from page 13

Junior League of South Brevard is a nonprofit entity more than 50 years old and supports community projects through fundraisers.

And the organization keeps its fundraisers fresh and fun, year after year. Four years ago, Junior League of South introduced to the community its "Bourbon Ball," a Kentucky Derby-themed benefit.

The fundraiser supports the organization's community projects serving at-risk women and children in Brevard County.

The fourth annual Bourbon Ball is set for Saturday, May 4, at Rockledge Country Club on South Fiske Boulevard. The general admission hours are 5-8 p.m. Rockledge Country Club will be "transformed into the Space Coast's very own Churchill Downs."

The event is open to the public and attendees will be celebrating the 145th running of the Kentucky Derby while helping Junior League of South Brevard raise funds.

Hats and bowties are suggested for the event. Prizes will be awarded for "Best Hat," "Most Dapper Gent," and "Best-Dressed Couple."

"We've made some changes for the fourth annual Bourbon Ball, and we are excited about them," said Jessica Cabot, the 2019 committee chairwoman for the Bourbon Ball.

"We have a new venue — Rockledge Country Club. It's going to be a good fit for our event. The Bourbon Ball committee members visited the club and they just love it, and the surroundings. The club has a really nice covered patio. And we have the ability to play lawn games. We will have the entire venue for our event, which makes it a bit more exclusive."

She said the Bourbon Ball will be hosted both indoors

and outdoors at Rockledge Country Club, which has a large indoor bar area and a ballroom.

"It will be a mix of indoor air-conditioned space and outdoor space. You never know what type of weather to expect the first week of May in Florida. So, we're well prepared to accommodate any type of weather conditions."

In addition to the new venue for the event, Cabot said the committee has expanded the program with a Bourbon Tasting. "That's a new twist. And the owners of Rockledge Country Club (Joe and Andrea Beyel) are helping us select some really good bourbons for the tasting. They know their bourbons, and we greatly appreciate their support."

The menu for this year's Bourbon Ball has been "completely revamped with Southern fare. It's going to be a fun Southern fare event, all-round," said Cabot.

General admission tickets to the Bourbon Ball are \$50 each and include entry into the event from 5-8 p.m.

"Another change we made for this year's event that we are excited about is the new VIP ticket option. The VIP tickets are \$100 per individual and include a VIP hour from 4-5 p.m." The VIP ticket includes early access to the event at 4 p.m., a Bourbon Tasting, a raffle ticket, hors d'oeuvres, VIP seating areas, "and we are working on some extra entertainment and other perks for those ticketholders," she said.

To purchase tickets for the Bourbon Ball, visit www.JLSB.net/BourbonBall. The Junior League of South Brevard is also seeking sponsors for the event.

The sponsorship levels include Exacta, Show, Place, Win, Trifecta and Triple Crown. The Win level, for example, is a cash donation of \$1,000 or more, or an in-kind donation of \$2,500 or more. There are amenities at each level of support.

The Win-level sponsor receives 10 regular tickets or six VIP tickets to attend the Bourbon Ball, their business name or logo listed in Junior Achievement of South Brevard's annual report, and other promotional opportunities for their business. For more details about sponsorships for this benefit, go to www.JLSB.net/BourbonBall.

The Bourbon Ball will also include a silent auction and people will be able to bid online for the items, said Cabot. "We are excited to be stepping into the tech-savvy world with online bidding for our silent auction. This is a big advancement for our organization. You do not have to be present at the Bourbon Ball to bid on auction items. We are going to open the silent auction about a week before the event. We will be sending emails to people on our contact list and to anybody who has signed up to attend the Bourbon Ball."

The 2018 Bourbon Ball raised roughly \$15,000, said Cabot. "We're looking to top that amount this year so we can continue funding our community projects."

The projects benefiting from the Bourbon Ball proceeds include: Fueling Kids, which provides necessities and food to local Title 1 schools; Kids in the Kitchen, which teaches the importance of healthy living to children and families; and Girl Power, which consists of a symposium designed to teach life skills that will help empower and nurture young women.

"The Junior League of South Brevard is proud of the work it does in the community, but we could not fund our projects without the businesses and individuals who support our organization through sponsorships and by attending our events. We're hoping that both Kids in the Kitchen and the Bourbon Ball are big successes," said Cabot.



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