



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS**

League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford

Rockford VOTER

March 2013

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Farewell Party for Janyce Fadden

We are sad to hear that our friend and former president Janyce Fadden is moving to Alabama. Join us to celebrate our friendship with Janyce and all that she has done for the League and the Rockford community on Saturday March 16th, 10 am for brunch at Diane Cushing's house 4849 Danforth Dr. **RSVP** before March 10th to Ann Powell Powell4040@comcast.net or 815-222-8208.

MEETINGS:

VOTER SERVICE
COMMITTEE:

LWVGR BOARD
MEETING: the
second Monday,
North Suburban
Library, 5:00.

HEALTH CARE
COMMITTEE: third
Thursday, 5:30 p.m.
P.A.Peterson

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT:
second Wednesday,
at noon, Katie's Cup

EDUCATION:
9a.m., Stockholm Inn

ENVIRONMENTAL
ISSUES: 11:30am
Katie's Cup

COMMITTEE REPORTS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LWVGR is cosponsoring these candidate forums:

Tuesday March 5th 6:30-8 pm Sullivan Center 118 North Main Street - contested races for **City Council** - cosponsored with Next Rockford, Rockford Register Star, Rockford Chamber of Commerce.

Tuesday March 19th 6:30- 8 pm Candidates for **Rockford School Board** cosponsored with Next Rockford, Rockford Register Star, Rockford Chamber of Commerce.

Wednesday March 27th 6:30- 8:30 pm North Suburban Library 6340 North Second Street in Loves Park. Contested races for Mayor and City Council in **Loves Park and Machesney Park** and candidates for **Harlem School Board**.

Tuesday April 2 Rockford College Regents Hall 7 pm **Mayoral** debate.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE is looking for volunteers to serve. Please submit your name and interest to Karen Fysh or Ann Powell powell4040@comcast.net 815-222-8208.

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS are being scheduled in March. If you are intrigued with the idea of face-to-face time with an area legislator and asking questions about issues important to the League please call Claire McIntyre. Questions are supplied by the LWVIL and answers are reported to the LWVIL.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

YOUTH GROUNDWATER FESTIVAL

The 19th annual Youth Groundwater Festival (YGF) will be held on March 13, 2013 at Rock Valley College. Over ten thousand 4th and 5th grade area students have attended this free-of-charge festival over the past 18 years. Groundwater is the source of this area's drinking water supply. The geologic sediments that receive precipitation and store it for our use are extremely vulnerable to the contamination from surface activities. We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past that resulted in multiple Superfund designation in Boone and Winnebago Counties.

Groundwater education is lacking in most schools, and without the YGF, many students would grow up without basic information on local problems that impact their drinking water source. LWVGR donates money and is part of the planning committee and activities that day. We partner with the Winnebago County Health Dept., Burpee Museum, Rock Valley College and RSVP/Lutheran Social Services. Over and above

what LWVGR can afford to donate feel free to personally donate to the YGF at: Jackie Hatfield, Winnebago County Health Dept., P.O. Box 4009, Rockford, IL 61110. Your check would be made out to YGF/Burpee Museum.

Donations were received last year from the City of Rockford Water Division, Loves Park Public Works Dept., North Park Public Water District, LWVGR, Northern IL Regional Groudwater Protection & Planning Committee, Rock Valley College Foundation, Cherry Valley Township and the Winnebago County Health Department.
Submitted by Diane Cushing (EIC chair)

LWVIL ISSUES BRIEFING

February 9, 2013

Mental Health

Elaine Pfluger, Issue Specialist

Mental Health Position in Brief-

The League supports a comprehensive and coordinated system of treatment and rehabilitation services for mentally ill adults and children. There should be adequate funding, planning, program standards and personnel training requirements for both state facilities and community programs. The League supports a broad array of adequate and accessible community services. Although primary responsibility should rest with the state, funding from local, federal, and non-governmental sources should be encouraged. A system of local boards to levy taxes, administer all funds, and to plan and coordinate services should be required throughout the state. The State should require local governments to provide in their zoning ordinances for residential programs for mentally ill persons.

Illinois has a woeful record on mental health issues. The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) gave our State a "D" in its 2009 report for its lack of funding to ensure access to community mental health services. The report says that Illinois has cut \$187 million from its mental health budget from 2009-

through 2012 budget year.

In the late 60s, some counties and townships, with League advocacy, created local mental health boards (underlined in the Mental Health Position). According to the President's New Freedom Commission Report of 2003, monumental systems change is more likely to come from grassroots efforts at the local level, underlining the critical role of local mental health authorities for providing a safety net in the current mental health system and for facilitating those system changes. In 2011, Governor Quinn signed PA 97-0439 the purpose of this amendment to the Community Mental Health Act(405 ILCS20), is to mandate counties and Cook County townships, with no local mental health authorities, to form mental health advisory committees comprised of seven community stakeholders. The mental health advisory committee is charged with identifying and assessing current mental health services, monitoring the expansion or contraction of those services, and, if necessary, recommending any additional services. There are around 50 counties and townships that do not have a local Mental Health Advisory Committee in Illinois.

In the fall of 2011 and summer of 2012 the LWVIL and local Leagues spoke out against the sudden closure of a state mental health facility in Tinley Park and Singer Mental Health Center. The closure was attributed to lack of funding but the greater concern was lack of provisions to provide alternative services for clients. The main concern is that the Department of Human Services (DHS) has announced that it does not intend to use the money appropriated in Public Act 97-0730 either to keep the nine state-operated mental health facilities open or for transitional services in the community.

League Activity Outlook: One of the jobs of the LWVIL Mental Health Issue specialist is to send Action Alerts which address the concerns based on the League's Mental Health position to grassroots advocates who wish to contact their elected officials regarding current legislation. The issue Specialist also acts as a liaison for local Leagues that have questions or need information on taking action based on the State's position at the local level. Issues of importance in the next year.

- Local funding issues- Support local Leagues, that do not have mandated voluntary mental health advisory

Committees, and help educate the public of the need for behavioral health local funding.

- State funding issues- advocating the legislators and Governor to spend the money that was appropriated and comply with the Funding Reinvestment Statute with the closing of Tinley Park and Singer Mental Health Centers.
- Support the Illinois Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 PA 93-0495. The act contains short-term and long-term recommendations for comprehensive, coordinated mental health prevention, early intervention and treatment services for children from birth to 18, and youth ages 19-21 who are transitioning out of key programs.

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LWVGR CONTACTS

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The purpose of the LWVGR shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

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