

MIT Women's League



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Mission Statement

The MIT Women's League, founded in 1913, strives to connect women in the MIT community through activities, interest groups, and volunteer opportunities, enriching their lives and the broader MIT Community.

Annual Meeting

Due to the evolving COVID-19 crisis, the Women's League board cancelled our 2020 Annual Meeting. We look forward to welcoming our community back when it is safe to do so!

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As I write this Annual Report letter, I honestly don't know where to begin. It is a time in our lives like we've never seen before – being asked to stay at home, stay 6' away from one another, and yet knowing we'll all get through this. After all we are the strength of home fronts, families, committees, employees, leaders but overall, we are caring, compassionate women who find strength together. Therefore, I hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy during this difficult time. The WL's hearts go out to those who are ill or have lost family or friends, as well as to the brave medical professionals and first responders on the front lines, and all those whose jobs or financial situation has been impacted by this global pandemic. As you know all WL events and meetings are canceled or postponed for the remainder of this academic year.

With this let me provide a brief summary of what the WL accomplished in a few short months from September 2019 – February 2020.

Fall Fashion Free for All:

This past October's event was a huge success! First, none of it would be possible without the army of volunteers who work all year long to collect, sort by size and type of clothing, bag, store the clothes, and so on and so on. Then, these dedicated volunteers make all the arrangements to move it from storage to set-up for the few hours of mass excitement for those students

who need anything from jeans to winter coats. You all are extraordinary and thank you for this vital service you provide to our disadvantaged students.

Tea:

The 2019 Spring Tea at Gray House was as delightful as a story book tea from *Alice in Wonderland*. The most intricate of details from candied fruits, to scrumptious tea sandwiches all enjoyed in the delightful water-scape gardens. Thank you to Honorary Chair, and First Lady Chris Reif for sponsoring this event. It was disheartening to see such a small group of attendees but those who filled the event with their fascinators were filled with smiles and delightful conversations.

WL Open House:

Our open house was as busy as a new real estate listing! Women from across the Institute came by for many lovely conversations, learning about Cityside Dining, reading, English Conversations, and the FX, along with many more opportunities. There were no formal presentations and the delicious sandwiches and deserts made yet another successful connection with the MIT community.

Wreath Making:

Fun, diverse, exciting, teaching, laughter, and overall happiness are a few of the things that

made this event so successful. Women new to the MIT community who had never smelled Christmas greens before, had no idea what a Christmas wreath was participated, and others that have helped before joined in this traditional event. Thanks to Kirsty for the delightful holiday music, coffee, and donuts to add additional cheer to the festivities.

We also hosted a table in Lobby 10 for International Women's Day in March. Students and members of the community came by to learn more about the WL, what we offer and take part in a trivia game. Many visitors to the table picked up free pens and bookmarks, and enjoyed delicious cupcakes decorated with the WL logo. We hope to hold this event again next year!

I want to extend my gratitude to the many magnificent contributions that were made to the MIT Women's League Annual Appeal this year. I understand with the current economic crisis that times are tough, but the goal of the MIT Women's League is to be supportive as best we can during this pandemic. During the academic winter break, the WL provided funding to twenty-five CASE students, by way of Tech Cash cards, at thirty dollars each. This was a huge and welcome gift to our students with food insecurities.

I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to extend a huge and heartfelt thank you to

Renie Pavilon who so graciously covered the WL office while Kirsty was out on maternity leave. We excitedly will welcome Kirsty back (virtually) in March, but Renie was just such a delight to work with and appreciate her wisdom, guidance, and unending help – thank you!

As we have witnessed communities coming together already to support each other, I am confident in humanity's ability to overcome this significant global challenge and come out of it even stronger.

With my warmest regards,

Cheryl Vossmer, *Chair*
MIT Women's League

SCHOLARS AND AWARDS

PKG Women's League Scholars Summer 2019

The Betty Johnson Fellow

Devora Najjar (PhD, Media Arts and Sciences)

This summer, Devora worked with the Mahia Maori Committee of Mahia, New Zealand to implement the first iteration of a community-led marine sensor system within their mātaītai, a protected area of ocean which grants the Committee control of all non-commercial fishing. Together with Paul Ratapu, President of the Mahia Maori Council, Devora led wānanga, cultural workshops, together with the community that combined hands-on water sensor education together with māori values and monitoring strategies, as well as workshops that focused on how these two knowledge sets work together to give the community a more robust picture of their changing marine environment. After returning from the trip, Devora documented the successes and failures of the wānanga by meetings with community members who participated as well as compile additional materials and documentation needed for the community to implement the sensors autonomously for the upcoming summer season.

The Becky Vest Fellow

Ellie Simonson (Master's, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science)

Ellie worked alongside the nonprofit Invisible Innocence in Bismarck, North Dakota. Data have shown that on average, survivors of sex trafficking return to the life of sex trafficking seven times before they fully leave the lifestyle. Belonging to a community where survivors feel safe may reduce the chances of returning to the life of sex trafficking. However, survivors may experience safety risks when they utilize social media or digital messaging tools. Ellie spent the summer beginning the development of a safer messaging application for survivors.

IAP 2020

Daniela Cocco Beltrame (Master's Degree in City Planning, '20)

Daniela worked with the Zimbabwe Homeless People Federation and Dialogue on Shelter, who support low-income urban communities as they plan and implement their own solutions to the challenges of land tenure security, adequate housing, and infrastructure provision. In summer 2019, as part of their Anti-Eviction Strategy, she analyzed spatial and socio-economic data for 37 Settlements, including their eviction experiences. Over January 2020, she developed a participatory communication process to present the gathered information to the Communities. She also contributed to the organizations' reports and fundraising documents and shared her previous professional experience in Latin America to advocate for the end of forced evictions in Zimbabwe and beyond.

Laya Weisner Awards

The 2020 Laya Wiesner Community Award was awarded to:

Jennifer Recklet Tassi

Our warmest congratulations to all of our awardees!

PROGRAMS 2019–2020

**Luncheon for Interest
Group Chairs**

September 11

**Fall Reception for
New Women at MIT**

September 26

**Storytelling Lunch with
the ICEO**

October 7

**Honorary League
Fall Luncheon**

October 17

Fall Fashion Free For All

October 18

Breakfast Series

October 23

Morning Coffee Mingle

October 30

Tour of MIT Nano

November 19

Wreath-Making

November 20

**English Conversation Class
Holiday Brunch**

December 5

Chorale Holiday Concerts

December 1 & 8

Holiday Community Craft Fair

December 11–12

Brown Bag Lunch – Alaska

January 16

Ask the Chef

January 29

**International Women’s
Day – Cupcakes in Lobby 10**

March 6

Breakfast Series

March 11

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2019–2020

Christine Reif Honorary Chair
Cheryl Vossmer Chair
Elise Perkins-Noel &
Mary Linan Officers for Programs
Danielle T. Reddy Officer for Service Projects
Jennifer Fleming Officer for Social Activities
Pamela Schickling-Buckley Treasurer
Ellen Stordy Nominating Chair

Sandra Boynton
Paula Cronin
Mary DesPrez
Jane Howard
Alison Hynd
Deborah Liverman
Chris Santos
Laurie Scott
Zahida Taher

WOMEN'S LEAGUE OFFICERS 2020–2022

The nominating committee is pleased to announce that the following slate of officers were elected during special meeting on April 27th 2020:

The Board continues the League's tradition of nurturing the growth of new ideas, which, in turn, supports the needs of MIT's community of women.

For two (2) years:

Officer for Service Projects

Danielle Reddy

Treasurer

Pamela Schickling-Buckley

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

With a year under my belt as Officer for Social Activities, I enjoyed a bit more experience in this round of planning the League's Annual Meeting in spring 2019 and our kickoff Open House in the fall.

On May 21, 2019, we hosted our Annual Meeting in the Emma Rogers room to report on League business from the year past and engage in elections for the new academic year. While enjoying a delicious plated luncheon, Debbie Douglas, Director of Collections and Curator of Science and Technology at the MIT Museum, educated and entertained us as our honored speaker. Debbie oversees the MIT Museum's extensive science and technology collections. She shared museum history, graciously answered questions, and offered us a hands-on experience by bringing some special pieces from the museum collection. Attendees received a detailed sneak peek into the plans for the new MIT Museum location in the heart of Kendall Square, projected to open in early spring 2022.

On September 26, 2019, we welcomed returning and prospective members to our MIT Women's League Open House. In 2018, in an effort to reach more of the campus community, the former fall

reception event was w and relocated to our League "home" in the Emma Rogers Room, to great success. This new, flexible timing and more relaxed format was well received and the 2019 Open House continued in this fashion.

The afternoon encouraged a flow of attendees to browse informational displays on League programs, interest groups, and the Furniture Exchange, and to mingle with members. Representatives from campus partners such as Human Resources, MITAC, MIT Spouses & Partners Connect, and the MIT Work-Life Center were available to share information about their services. After a brief welcome by Women's League Chair, Cheryl Vossmer, attendees were free to enjoy the space and company, chatting and asking questions while enjoying specialty treats from our kitchen. This is an event that helps the Women's League grow – our programs and groups were able to capture the interest of new participants via sign-up sheets and attendees hopefully walked away with new information and opportunities to get involved.

I'd like to express a big thank you to Chef Tim Healey, David, and all of their team for continuing to provide us with unique and quality catering specially designed for each event.

The success of our programs and events are owed to all those who volunteer their time, actively participate in person, as well as those who support us with donations from afar — thank you so much! A hearty thank you to Kirsty Bennett and League Chair Cheryl Vossmer, and the entire board for their continued guidance and support.

Jennifer Fleming

PROGRAMS

In the fall, we hosted a tour of the new MIT.nano building, which proved very popular. It had a limited capacity, but allowed a group of 20 women to explore the state-of-the-art building and learn more about the work that happens there.

We also launched a new regular event, Morning Coffee Mingle, designed to bring together our long-time members with women who had connected with the League at our Annual Open House. This popular event helped maintain contact with new members and encourage networking.

In January we hosted a 'Brown Bag' Lunch event about recent board member's trips to Alaska, showing their photographic work from their trips. We also held Ask the Chef, hosted by Chef Tim Healey. This annual occasion always brings together members eager to learn from Tim's expertise.

Our final event before MIT closed for on campus activities was for International Women's Day, where we staffed a table in Lobby 10 and distributed cupcakes and shared information about the League.

Elise Perkins-Noel
Mary K. Linan

Breakfast Series

Twice a year, we invite members to join us for breakfast, prepared by Chef Tim Healey, in the Emma Rogers Room to hear a woman from the Institute describe her career path and work at MIT.

Our October event speaker, Vivienne Sze, leads the Energy Efficient Multimedia Systems Group within MIT's Research Lab of Electronics. Prior to joining MIT, she was a member of technical staff in the R&D Center at Texas Instruments (TI), where she designed low-power algorithms and architectures for video coding. Her work at MIT and TI contributed to a new video compression standard that received a Primetime Emmy Engineering Award in November 2017.

In the Spring, we were fortunate to hear from Deborah Blum, a Pulitzer Prize winning American science journalist, columnist and the director of the Knight Science Journalism program at MIT. She won the Pulitzer Prize for her series, "The Monkey Wars," which explored the complex ethical and moral questions surrounding primate research. She has written six books including *The Poison Squad* (2018) and launched the award-winning science magazine *Undark*.

Both events were well attended and garnered rave reviews that the speakers were authentic, engaging, and inspiring.

Zahida Taher, *Chair*

SERVICE PROJECTS

Service to the MIT community has been, and continues to be of primary importance to the League for over 100 years. This year, our volunteers were engaged in the following League service projects. We are proud and incredibly grateful to have had their support, dedication, energy, and enthusiasm. These are remarkable women who have made significant contributions to our community.

Danielle T. Reddy, *Officer for Service Projects*

CASE Partnership

Class Awareness Support and Equality (CASE) at MIT is a student-run-organization founded in 2016, dedicated to improving MIT's community awareness of class disparities and knowledge of the social class system.

During IAP in January 2020, the Women's League partnered with Student Support Services and increased their donation from prior year by \$100.00 for a total donation of \$600.00 for Tech cards of \$25.00 apiece. The donations supported 24 CASE students so they could buy groceries during IAP, as MIT dining halls operate on a limited schedule.

Many MIT students relocated to home or other locations in March due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Knowing that low-income students might be at a disadvantage in taking classes from another location, the WL's support of the organization is more important than ever. My sincere well wishes to you and yours.

Ellen Stordy, *Outreach*

<https://class-awareness.mit.edu>

English Conversation Classes

The Women's League English Conversation Classes provide international community members the opportunity to improve their English, learn about the US, and make friends for life. The program is open to anyone with an MIT connection, whether students or visiting scholars or their family members. Once open only to women, we now welcome men in our classes. We offer basic, intermediate, and advanced levels.

In the Fall 2019 term, we had 59 students, including four men, from 19 countries. We were on par with the previous fall, when we had 60 students, even though we did not offer babysitting this term as we did in Fall 2018. We again enjoyed an end-of-term catered brunch, and several classes enjoyed free tours of the MFA during class time.

Spring 2020 got off to a good start, with 52 students, including six men, from 15 countries. Our last in-person classes met March 12, in pursuance of MIT's response to Covid-19. The following week, we refunded full tuition for all of our students, as a measure of goodwill, not only in light of the cancellation of classes, but the exceptionally difficult position our students face as visitors in the U.S. The son of one of our students graciously refused the refund and instead donated the money to the Women's League. The Women's League sent its heartfelt thanks.

The cancellation of on-campus meetings has not stopped our classes, though. All five classes continue to meet, using Zoom to stay in touch, continuing regular lesson plans and conversation, and sharing observations and tips on dealing with the new normal. Both premier Zoom and MIT's Zoom applications allow us to use screen sharing and whiteboards, and even online we can break into smaller groups, just as we did in our regular classes. Our students are an immeasurable help in getting all the technology in place.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated teachers, who are going way beyond their job descriptions this term: Srirupa Mitra, Fran Hutchinson, Laura Mali-Astrue, Nancy Guttman, Vanitha Singh, Mariana Castro, Ellen Stordy, and Liz Cabot. A special welcome to our new teachers this year, Nancy and Vanitha! We especially appreciate our wonderful substitutes, Sandy Boynton, Mary DesPrez, and Joanne Cohn.

Finally, the highlight for many of our students is the English Conversation Partner program, under the incredible leadership of Kara Cunningham. A huge thank you to her, and to the many conversation partners who make our students' time with us so special.

Respectfully,
Laurie Scott, *Coordinator*

English Partners Program

The English Partner Program (EPP) matched 43 English language students with volunteer English conversation partners in the fall semester. The majority of the conversation partners were new volunteers. Community Giving promoted the program through its communications to the MIT community and a number of returning volunteers advertised the EPP within their department/offices. Both methods worked well to expand the number of interested volunteers. Volunteers are asked to complete a short Google form to indicate their preferred meeting time and location as well as the level of English proficiency they are comfortable working with. Students and volunteers were paired based off their availability. Volunteers and students worked one-on-one to practice conversational English and learn about each other's cultures. The feedback that I received from volunteers and students at the end of the term showed both had positive experiences. Volunteers who returned for the spring semester all requested to continue working with the same student, if possible.

The spring semester began similarly to the fall, with volunteer recruitment efforts through Community Giving and current and former volunteers. A matching session was held in early March and 44 English language students were matched with 32 volunteers. However, out of concern for volunteer and student safety in

the uncertain Covid-19 landscape, the EPP was suspended in mid-March. Several volunteers were going to try to continue with virtual meetings, either through Zoom or another videoconferencing program, but the majority of volunteers ended their meetings.

Looking forward to the upcoming academic year, there are a number of unknown variables. If meetings are once again permitted in person, would volunteers feel comfortable and safe meeting in person? If in person meetings are still not permitted, would volunteers be willing to meet with an English language student in a virtual format? As MIT determines how it will address safety on campus I will try to adapt the program to best support the volunteers and students while still facilitating the language and cultural exchange that both volunteers and students value.

Kara Cunningham
Volunteer Coordinator

Furniture Exchange

The mission of the Furniture Exchange (FX) continues to be serving the communities we encompass — MIT, Harvard, Boston University, Suffolk, and Emerson - while promoting sustainability and raising funds through our sales to support the MIT Women's League Scholarship Fund to which we donated \$20,000 in the summer of 2019. We temporarily closed our doors in March 2020 following MIT's guidance for social distancing relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before the shutdown, we'd had a great start to the 2019–2020 academic year. We continued to feature one-of-a-kind pieces on our website and social media channels, and our Facebook page is now at 3,104 likes, up over 800 likes from last year.

We also continued to run sewing workshops at the MIT FX. These events have been very well-attended and to date we have made tote bags, aprons, quilted potholders, tunics, leggings, and filled toiletry bags for On the Rise women's shelter. During the shutdown the work continues. Many of our attendees have been sewing masks for local hospital and shelters during the Coronavirus pandemic.

This year the FX launched a wonderful, sleek new website and promotional brochure thanks to

Wing Ngan and Kirsty Bennett. We are looking forward to distributing the brochures to a busy campus when we can all return. Check us out online at mit.edu/womensleague/fx and facebook.com/MITFX.

We are always grateful to the crew at Your Move, our movers extraordinaire. Donators often write in to say how great the movers are.

The success of the Furniture Exchange stems largely from the support of our wonderful volunteers who keep the FX running smoothly, organize and clean the many pieces of inventory, wait on customers, and work on rehabbing furniture: Bette Johnson, Carolyn Truant, Fran Miles, Gloria Pless, Jay Piper, Joe Rios, Keiko Kanda, Lisa Paltseva, Liz Torres-Rios, Natasha Paltseva, Reiko Miyagawa, and Zarrin Foster. We miss the presence of Noreen Hagerty-Ford who so friendly and helpful with customers. She returns occasionally from her new home in Naperville, IL to help out.

A special thank you to Kirsty Bennett, an incredible human who has brought great insight and kindness to the FX and the whole Women's League, and to Renie Pavilon who steered the ship while Kirsty was away on maternity leave. Thanks too to Cheryl Vossmer for her wise counsel and

support and to all the members of the Women's League for their help in another successful year at the FX!

We are of course very grateful to our loyal customers and generous donors.

Warm regards,
Julie Parker, *Manager*

Fall-Fashion-Free-For-All (FFFFA)

The FFFFA had another great year in 2019! Our annual event was on October 17th and 18th, with set-up on the first day and the actual event on the 18th. We had a fantastic turnout, with over 150 students joining us in our large, giveaway boutique.

For the second year, the event was held in the Mezzanine Lounge in the Student Center to accommodate an ever-growing group of participants. The layout and lighting conditions in the Mezzanine Lounge enhanced set-up and flow of volunteer organizers and participants. The Campus Activities Center made available numerous pieces of equipment, i.e. clothing racks and movable partitions, which were greatly appreciated. In addition to international, Pell Grant, Questbridge, and CASE students, students from the First Generation Program in the Office of First Year joined us as well.

The annual October event is the culmination of many hours of work by approximately 60 dedicated volunteers. The annual cycle begins in early June when several tons of clothing are collected from the dorms by the Trash to Treasures program, a student-run volunteer program. MIT's Recycling department transports the clothing to Mail Services. From there, bags and boxes are emptied and sorted in the FFFFA space in the FX.

Additional items are solicited from the MIT community. Over the summer, clothing for the event is separated and prepped. Remaining items are donated to a variety of clothing resource centers. This year, bags were distributed to MIT's Reduce to Reuse, Solutions at Work, the Goodwill, the Friend's Meeting in Cambridge, a church mission to Haiti, and an immigrant center in Somerville.

Another exciting expansion of the program was the creation of the Clothing Cube in the offices of the Women's League. The Cube is a small, seasonally edited inventory available throughout the year to referred students. We are delighted to expand the mission to become a year-round resource center.

Plans for the FFFFA 2020 are currently under review due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you would like to assist with the program in the future, please contact Mary Casey Linan at mkcasey@mit.edu or Elise Perkins-Noel at eliseper@mit.edu. When MIT reopens, we will accept clothing donations at the Women's League office (10-340), and in drop boxes adjacent to the FFFFA space in the FX.

Elise Perkins-Noel and Mary K. Linan

INTEREST GROUPS 2019–2020

Interest Groups and Activities

Many of the wonderful ways to get involved with the Women's League are through joining our Interest Groups, or by attending other activities sponsored by the League. Each year, interests are shared and friendships are made (newcomers are always welcome!). The annual Interest Group Chair Luncheon was held on September 11 in the McLaurin Room. All were invited to participate in the Women's League Open House to inform newcomers of the many Women's League activities and opportunities for participation.

I want to thank the group chairs and representatives, who are responsible for leading the weekly groups (such as the Women's Chorale and Fiber Crafts Group), the monthly meetings (such as the Book Group and the Japanese Wives Group), and the once yearly activities which bring much joy to the Institute (the Holiday Craft Fair and wreathmaking in December.) Cityside Dining is up and running and MITell Storytelling has been continuing and growing. In addition, The Honorary League brings retirees together for wonderful twice annual speakers and luncheons. Please let us know if you have an idea for a new interest group.

Unfortunately, by late winter 2020, we all knew that this would be an unusual Spring as news of the Covid-19 virus spread around the world. Happily, in some cases, Women's League contact was continued and maintained. Two examples are the MIT Book Group and the Women's Chorale that were able to schedule Zoom meetings beginning in March so that all members could attend virtually.

Please continue below and read the detailed reports of these groups and activities that we sponsor.

Sandra Boynton, *Chair*

Book Discussion Group

The Book Discussion meets nine times over the academic year. Sometimes, we also gather in the summer when an author is speaking elsewhere or when we wish to visit a site related to a book we have read. We choose the books for discussion in the year ahead as a group, and participants volunteer to lead each discussion.

We greatly enjoy the occasions when we have authors present to talk about books we have read. It's a special opportunity to learn about their technique, constructions, and research.

Some members who have moved away stay in touch, read the books on our list, and sometimes send us their opinions. All are welcome — as onetime visitors or to join us as regulars.

Nancy Holloman

MIT Women's Chorale

Our fall season began with great hope that we had done well in choosing a new Music Director to replace Kevin Galiè who, after 11 happy years with us, moved to Germany. Very quickly it became apparent that we indeed had made an excellent choice. Daniel Mahoney has brought to us considerable musical talent, excellent conducting skills, a fine aesthetic sense, energy, and a fine sense of humor. A professional singer himself, he immediately began working with us to improve our vocal and choral ensemble skills. We were also blessed by another season with pianist Leona Cheung, a young woman working on her Master of Arts degree at the New England Conservatory in Collaborative Piano.

In December, the Chorale's concert repertoire featured a choral classic, *A Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten, performed with harp played by a gifted young Boston area professional. We also premiered a piece written for the Chorale by Joseph Kaz, a friend and colleague of Daniel's. Our first performance in early December was an "open rehearsal" in the MIT Chapel, followed by our main concert at the Harvard Epworth United Methodist Church in Harvard Square. We had a large and enthusiastic audience which then joined us for our traditional post-concert reception.

After a pot-luck dinner at the home of one of our singers in mid-January, we began rehearsals on what was to be our Spring 2020 concert program. Daniel had chosen the theme of “Songs and Sonnets,” music set to poetry. Our performance of choral works such as “Five Hebrew Love Songs” was to be graced by independent solos from several of our singers and poetry recitations, as well as a duet written by one of our members, MIT alumna Sonya Huang. Our last rehearsal together for the spring was held on March 4 in the Emma Rogers Room. At that point, we put further rehearsals on hold until we could reassess the situation. Cancellation of our main concert by MIT, followed by other shut-down policies from the Women’s League and MIT helped the Chorale administration make the final pronouncement that our rehearsals were to be suspended for the remainder of the spring semester.

During subsequent weeks in March and April, our Administrative Director sent out periodic messages through our e mail list with information on resources for singers and for keeping oneself safe, and links to sources of entertainment and amusement. On April 1, the Chorale held a social meeting via Zoom. About two dozen members joined the meeting. Unfortunately, because of the time delay, it isn’t possible to sing together,

although we did try a ragged singing of Happy Birthday to one of our oldest members. Conversation with such a large group is also awkward, but by “going around the room,” we gave everyone a chance to report in on how things were going in the early stages of our isolation. There are hopes of repeating this event as time goes on.

Sally de Fazio

CitySide Dining

Another year, another quote:

"Drinking good wine with good food in good company is one of life's most civilized pleasures."

— Michael Broadbent

The CitySide Dining group mission is to encourage folks to come together for lively socializing and networking over delicious food and beverages – some discovering new places, others enjoying familiar tastes, and everyone leaving satisfied. Our criteria for choosing a destination remains constant: the price should be modest, the cuisine unique, and the location within a reasonable distance from the MIT campus or a T-stop. With a vast email list of interested members, the number of participants on any given CitySide outing routinely lands between 5 to 10, with a slightly different grouping each time. This provides the chance for intimate conversation with people you may know or with those you may be meeting for the first time.

Now in its 14th year, outings have traditionally been weeknight dinners, but CitySide Dining continues to evolve to accommodate the busy schedules of the League's membership. We've added lunch hour meet ups, local food-related events, and hope to continue to offer varied opportunities that are convenient to campus to encourage wider participation.

This season included visits to:

- A Slice of Kendall with Brothers Marketplace Event — Kendall Square — showcase of the new Brothers Marketplace grocery and catering
- The 2019 Winter Market at The Canal District Kendall — boutique market featuring local artists and artisanal food makers
- Whole Heart Provisions — Mass Ave/Central Square — hearty vegetarian bowls
- Henrietta's Table — Harvard Square — serving farm-to-table dining for 20 years

It has been a pleasure getting to know all who've attended our outings this year. If you'd like to be added to our email list, please visit the MIT Women's League website for information or feel free to email me directly to be included. You can always find our sign-up sheet at the Fall Open House in September as well. If you have an idea or destination to share, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

With unprecedented changes coming for the restaurant industry and the way the world views dining out, I look forward to CitySide Dining finding ways to continue to support local businesses, and one another.

Jennifer Fleming
jfsousa@mit.edu

Honorary League

On October 17, 2019, Dr. Jason S. Ku, Lecturer in EECS and Faculty Advisor of OrigamiMIT, held the luncheon audience transfixed with his presentation, “OrigamiMIT: Paper Folding at MIT.” Everyone lingered long after dessert to hear him talk about his work. He shared stories about origami, slides that demonstrated highly complex designs, and displayed models that could be inspected.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the spring luncheon that was planned for April 16, 2020 was cancelled. It was to have featured speaker Ritu Raman, Postdoctoral Fellow in the Langer Lab. Should circumstances and Ritu’s schedule allow, Ritu will speak on “How I Learned to Build with Biology” at the October 2020 luncheon.

Thanks to Honorary League Committee members, Diana Garcia-Martinez and Nancy Mims, plus Kirsty Bennett and Renie Paviion, planning this year went very smoothly. And deepest gratitude is extended to the MIT President’s Office for its support of the Honorary League.

Chris Santos, *Chair*

Fiber Crafts Group

The group met on the second Wednesday of each month from September through February. Emails are sent each month to people who attend meetings as well as people requesting to be informed of meetings. Our monthly meeting counts remain low, but we have welcomed new people to our meetings in addition to our regular attendees. At the WL’s Fall Open House I spoke with quite a few women who expressed interest in the group.

While there is no formal instruction, there is a wealth of “know-how” in our group that is generously shared. Past and present fiber crafts that group members have worked on include knitting, crocheting, cross stitching, embroidery, and quilting.

Co-chair Carol Clark retired from MIT last fall was not able to attend any of the meetings. When we reconvene in person again, I hope to discuss finding a co-chair.

A Zoom meeting was held in May and emails will be sent to the email list members over the next few months to check in and see how we are all doing.

Respectfully submitted,
Claudia LaBollita-James, *Chair*

Wreath Making

On Wednesday, November 20, more than 30 volunteers, along with MIT staff and the League's president, Cheryl Vossmer, met in the Student Center to make the holiday wreaths that were later hung above the doors at MIT's main entrance at 77 Massachusetts Avenue. Attendees enjoyed coffee, doughnuts, and holiday music as they worked. Three gorgeous wreaths were created and looked stunning over the entrance to MIT.

Brenda Blais, *Chair*

Community Craft Fair

The Holiday Craft Fair was held on December 11 and 12 in Lobby 10. A variety of vendors participated, and shoppers found a wide selection of gift items including jewelry, soaps, hand-made cards, and knitted and crocheted items, just to name a few. The fees collected from vendors went to offset the expenses associated with planning for the fair and to support the MIT Women's League Scholarship Fund. The Holiday Craft Fair has always been a popular event, bringing people from across the campus to Lobby 10 for an interlude of very convenient holiday shopping!

Brenda Blais, *Chair*

MIT Japanese Wives Group

This year, we organized eight group events including meetings, parties, and other activities. Our main activity is the Friendship Partner Program. This program arranges introductory meetings for our members to exchange their culture with that of their partners. Partners who established cultural links were: Sofia Caloggero with Michiko Yoshida, Sharon Lin with Misao Tanaka, Bette Johnson with Norie Takada, Roksi Freeman with Saho Nakajima, and Kimie Shirasaki with Tseh-Hwan Yong. We truly appreciate our partners' great hospitality and kindness. We also had a special appreciation party for our Friendship Partners in December. Our members prepared wonderful food in addition to fostering friendships through cultural exchange. Next year, as with past years, we plan to enjoy sharing our passion and love of cooking with each other under the guidance of our great teachers, Kate Baty, Mary Desprez, Frances Hutchinson, Dee Ippen, and Kristin Griffin. As an upcoming activity, we'd also like to start having cake making classes, taught by Kristin Griffin. Classes will be held in one of the teachers' homes and attendees will experience the wonderful atmosphere there. We highly appreciate our teachers' enthusiasm for the classes.

The group also continued its activities in Japan. Two members, Megumi Enokido and Chizu Ikeda, carried out activities there, including luncheon

meetings. OWe had a wonderful time talking about future activities for the group and sharing unforgettable experiences from our time at MIT. We reminisced about attending the English Conversation Classes sponsored by the Women's League, and how much we miss the teachers of the class. Our experiences at MIT were extremely meaningful, and it is our pleasure to continue The MIT Japanese Wives Group activities in Japan.

As spring approached, we had several activities planned in both Cambridge and Japan that unfortunately had to be postponed or canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. These activities included a cherry blossom viewing party (OHANAMI) in Tokyo, our annual farewell party at MIT, and an appreciation meeting for Michiko Yoshida in Tokyo. We sincerely miss those opportunities to celebrate our members, and extend our deepest gratitude to all who have supported our group this year.

Fortunately, we do have a number of activities that we are able to continue, in keeping with our social distancing responsibilities. We have launched a Pen Pal Program between members both here at MIT and in Japan. Our members exchange emails and share experiences from their different environments, and we hope they can build meaningful friendships through this program. Our current Pen Pal members are: Chizu

Ikeda, Megumi Enokido, Sofia Caloggero, Sharon Lin, Bette Johnson, Kristin Griffin, Kirsty Bennett, Crystal Chang, Wei Tung Chen, Yuko Asano, Asuka Yasutomi, Clare Lee, Tseh- Hwan Yong, and Kimi Shirasaki. We learn that it is important to be close to people's feelings though this program. We hope this will give our members many opportunities to help build lasting international friendships. While some people prefer email as a method of communication, others tend to prefer speaking over the telephone or via Skype. For that reason, we have also established the Tancho Link program, which will facilitate cultural and experience exchanges via phone or Skype.

In addition to MIT Japanese Wives Group specific activities, we also enjoy contributing to MIT activities throughout the year. Megumi Enokido, Chizu Ikeda and Kimi Shirasaki donated origami for crane card making. Members in Japan are very happy to continue supporting their MIT counterparts and look forward to continuing to foster international friendships.

I wish to express my thanks to Sofia Caloggero, Sharon Lin, Megumi Enokido, Chizu Ikeda, Michiko Yoshida, Etsuko Hasegawa, Ritsuko Koide, Toshiko Hamuro, Asuka Yasutomi, and Kimi Shirasaki for all of their help during the year. Finally, I want to extend my special thanks to Kate Baty, Sandra Boynton, Keiko Kanda,

Fran Elliott, Dee Ippen, Sis de Bordenave, Ellen Shapiro, Jan Kirtley, Srirupa Mitra, Julie Parker, Jennifer Recklet Tassi, Kristin Griffin, Bette Johnson, Tseh-Hwan Yang, and Kirsty Bennett for their advice and counseling.

Kimie Shirasaki, *Chair*

MITell — Storytelling

MITell had a short year due to my maternity leave and the campus shutdown, but the first few months of the year were busy! We continue to offer a twice-per-semester collaboration with the Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO), offering Storytelling Lunches. These are always well attended by 20–30 people. Lunch is provided, and we offer an informal and friendly space for people to share stories from their own lives.

During the Fall semester I offered workshops with SHASS, the PKG Center, and the School of Architecture and Planning. I also consulted with the Teaching and Learning Lab on their Resilience project, and MIT Radius, advising a student on a storytelling project.

All Spring programs were cancelled, but I'm hoping to offer programs through Zoom over the summer and the fall.

Kirsty Bennett, *Coordinator*

ENDOWMENT AND OPERATING FUNDS

The MIT Women's League is administratively a division of the Office of the President, which pays the League's salaries and some office expenses. The League meets other expenses with income from its seven endowed funds, gifts to the annual appeal, and fees for programs and events throughout the year.

ENDOWED FUNDS

Emma Moore Fund

In 1916, Emma Moore, an Institute friend and board member of the Emma Rogers Association of Technology Matrons (the original name of the MIT Women's League), established the "Matrons Tea Fund" to underwrite teas offered to all women in the MIT community, regardless of their ability to pay. Later she offered the income from the fund for "any use, social or otherwise" to be at the discretion of the League Executive Board. Today, that income supports many League activities including the English Classes and the two League fellowships in the Priscilla King Gray (PKG) Public Service Center.

- Rebecca M. Vest PKG Public Service Center Fellowship
- Elizabeth W. Johnson PKG Public Service Center Fellowship

Margaret Compton Fund

The Margaret Compton Fund was established in 1949 to honor Margaret Hutchinson Compton, whose husband, Karl Taylor Compton, retired that year as President of MIT. During her lifetime, Mrs. Compton allocated the fund's income to such activities as the Westgate Nursery School and the Technology Children's Center. MIT has since taken over the management of the Institute's childcare facilities. Today income of The Compton Fund provides unrestricted resources for League activities at the discretion of the League Executive Board. The fund has provided financial support for our Fall Reception for New Women at MIT, the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, Wreath Making, and the Student Clothing Program.

Laya W. Wiesner Fund

Laya W. Wiesner, wife of Jerome Wiesner, thirteenth president of MIT, was an ardent supporter of women at MIT and of the League. Laya wanted to recognize the contributions of individuals who helped shape the Institute's quality of life. Upon Mrs. Wiesner's retirement as First Lady of MIT in 1980, the League established this fund to show its esteem for her. To express appreciation for her leadership and her many years of service to MIT, the fund's income supports two individual awards.

The Laya W. Wiesner Award is given annually to an undergraduate woman "who has most enhanced

MIT community life, while at the same time maintaining a good academic record." As students had to vacate campus very quickly due to the pandemic, there were no eligible nominations for this award this year

The Laya Wiesner Community Award was established by the League in 1999 to honor Laya's legacy at MIT. This award recognizes "a member or friend of the MIT community for conspicuously effective service that reflects Laya's concerns for enhancing life at the Institute and in the world at large." This year, Jennifer Recklet Tassi, Program Manager of MIT Spouses & Partners Connect, was honored with the award.

Lucille M. Ravven Memorial Music Fund

Dr. Robert Ravven established this fund in 1988 in memory of his wife Lucille, who conducted the MIT Women's Chorale from 1968 until 1980. It supports the Chorale including the purchase of its music.

Catherine N. Stratton Lecture Fund

The Women's League established this fund in 1994 to honor Kay Stratton's fifty years of commitment to the Institute and her tireless work to establish and sustain the Stratton Lecture on Critical Issues (no longer held), and the Stratton Lecture on Aging Successfully, typically held each spring. Mrs. Stratton, the widow of Julius Adams Stratton, the eleventh president of MIT, was an active member of the lecture committees and of the League as well as the MIT Council for the Arts (another of her initiatives). The fund has received generous donations from current and retired MIT faculty members, the Green Foundation, the Exxon Foundation, and the MIT Women's League itself. Income from the endowment supports the lectures, which are free and open to the public. Funds in excess of the amount required for the lectures may be used for other League activities as voted by the League Executive Board.

Women’s League Discretionary Fund

The Women’s League Discretionary Fund was established in 1999 by Cleo and Paul Schimmel to support activities of the MIT Women’s League at the recommendation of the chair. A former chair of the League Executive Board, Cleo’s fondest dream has been to strengthen the “ties that bind” among League members and with the rest of the MIT community.

The Priscilla King Gray Fund

The Priscilla King Gray Fund, established in 2013 by the League on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, honors Priscilla, wife of Paul E. Gray, MIT’s eighteenth president. Priscilla was honorary chair of the League at the time of this anniversary. Income from this fund has been used to supplement the two League fellowships in the Public Service Center. Priscilla, a co-founder of the Public Service Center, remains an active advocate for its work. The PSC was recently renamed the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

MIT Women’s League Scholarship Fund

Established in 1960 as the Technology Matrons’ Student Aid Fund and later known as the MIT Student Loan Fund, this endowment is now the MIT Women’s League Scholarship Fund. The interest from the fund provides scholarship aid annually for undergraduate women. The fund benefits from the proceeds of the Furniture Exchange and the Community Holiday Craft Fair. The League Scholarship Fund now exceeds \$1 million and in 2020 it supported four undergraduate women.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The annual budget for the MIT Women's League in FY 2020, less personnel related expenses, and totaled \$60,410. Sources of funds included an MIT allocation of \$8,500, allocations of \$42,410 from expendable balances in League endowed fund accounts, and \$9,500 from the League Programs and Activities Fund. This year at the end of the third quarter, the annual appeal had raised \$12,635 in gifts for the Women's League. The League is extremely grateful to all of its donors for their continued support and confidence in the League's programs and services to the MIT community.

Through these funds the League provides many benefits to the Institute, including a contribution of \$8,800 to the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center for the Rebecca M. Vest and Elizabeth W. Johnson Fellowships, and the awarding of the annual Laya Wiesner Awards of \$1,500 each to an MIT undergraduate student and a long-time staff member. Other League services in FY2020 included English Conversation Classes, the English Partner Program, MIT Women's Chorale concerts, our annual Open House, a fall and spring Breakfast Series, and a number of other events, receptions, and tours open to the MIT community.

During this academic year, four undergraduate women students benefited from the Women's League Scholarship Fund, which distributed \$122,078 in aid. The scholarship's endowment now totals \$1,083,105.

At the end of the third quarter of FY2020, the combined fund value of the League's seven endowed funds was \$375,279. This includes \$80,399 in the Priscilla King Gray Fund. Expendable income from these funds supports the Stratton Lecture Series, the Wiesner Awards, the Vest and Johnson PSC Fellowships, the MIT Women's Chorale, and League annual operations.

All these data reflect third quarter results for FY2020. The final Women's League Treasurer's Report will be available in the Women's League Office, 10-342, soon after the June 30 closing of the MIT fiscal year.

Pamela Schickling Buckley, *Treasurer*



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