COVENTRY PAYNE
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NATIONAL LEAGUE OF JUNIOR COTILLIONS · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Voices of Our Families

When families describe what changed, the same themes appear again and again.

These reflections have been organized by the educational outcomes parents most often observe. Every testimonial is included, allowing the families themselves to tell the full story.

REFLECTIONS ARE LIGHTLY EDITED FOR CLARITY. CHILDREN'S SURNAMES AND PRIVATE CONTACT DETAILS ARE NOT DISPLAYED.

CONFIDENCE · CHARACTER & RESPECT · COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL EASE · FRIENDSHIP & BELONGING · PREPARING FOR LIFE
LEADERSHIP, SERVICE & PURPOSE · EXPERIENCES & MEMORIES · FAMILY & COMMUNITY

A FAMILY STORY · 2016

One Invitation Can Change a Life

Like many boys, Stephen was hesitant, unsure, and very nervous about joining Cotillion. With butterflies in his stomach and sweaty palms, he accepted a generous invitation to become a student. Those reservations quickly disappeared, and he grew to love his time learning, growing, and dancing. What a blessing. Sweet, sweet memories.

BONNIE · PARENT OF STEPHEN · 2016

Today, Stephen is married and has a child of his own. His story reminds us that an opportunity shared by one family may continue shaping another family many years later.

One invitation. One child. One family. A story that continues.

01 Confidence

Confidence grows when young people discover that they can enter unfamiliar situations, meet new people, and participate successfully.

“ NLJC has taught our daughter valuable skills that have resulted in an inner confidence she can bring to any social situation and share with others around her with a smile.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ This program has enhanced our daughter's poise and confidence. She has become more sure of herself socially and intellectually.

PARENT · CAPE CORAL · CLASS OF 2024

“ Cotillion has reiterated what we try to teach our four children at home. We believe they are more confident and comfortable in different social situations than they would have been without their Cotillion education.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ It has been a joy watching our daughter blossom into a young woman who feels more confident navigating social settings that take most teens beyond their comfort zones. Her class is full of wonderful young people and parents, and we are blessed to have forged friendships and made memories we will always cherish.

PARENT · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2024

“ Our daughter is incredibly introverted and can struggle in large social situations. Three years of Cotillion have been instrumental in her social development. She now uses her skills at school and throughout the community.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ Our daughter has become much more confident and better able to express her emotions.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ Our daughter has learned to navigate awkward situations and present herself with confidence. She has made friends she cherishes and is poised to take on leadership roles as she enters high school.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ It has been wonderful to see our son grow from a boy certain he wanted nothing to do with suits, ties, or Cotillion into a young man confident enough to work a room, dance with a young lady, and even do the worm before a crowd. He has developed lasting friendships and memories.

PARENT · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2024

“ Cotillion offers three wonderful seasons of culture and social enrichment. It teaches fundamental social skills that instill confidence and support positive relationships.

PARENT · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion helped our daughter overcome shyness. She became proactive when greeting adults, learned a proper handshake and confident speech, and can now enter a room with grace. These benefits will remain with her for life.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion has been a great experience—watching our daughter's comfort level grow as she grows into a beautiful, confident young lady.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has really helped our daughter stretch beyond her comfort zone and become more comfortable in any setting or situation. Our family has been blessed by the life lessons she has learned, and we have all enjoyed meeting new people.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ I am grateful Cotillion enhanced her confidence and helped her know her value during a difficult time for our family. The standards reinforced through Cotillion kept her resilience strong and helped build character and integrity.

SCHOOL ASSISTANT · CAPE CORAL · CLASS OF 2019

“ Our son has learned so much—from social interactions and confidence to making many new friends. The program has brought culture and taught etiquette that will stay with him as he becomes an adult.

HEALTH & FITNESS · PORT CHARLOTTE · CLASS OF 2019

02 Character & Respect

Character is strengthened when kindness, courtesy, responsibility, and respect are practiced until they become habits.

“ It has been a delight to see the fun of learning social dancing and the importance of proper manners and etiquette.

PARENT · NAPLES · CLASS OF 2024

“ Our son has learned respect, manners, conversation, and perspective, among many other things. We highly recommend this program to other parents.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ All of our children have learned excellent manners that will help them throughout life.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ First impressions are important, and good manners always make a good impression.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ We are grateful for the lessons and skills our daughter learned. Cotillion emphasized respect, kindness, and grace while allowing her to practice social skills in a fun, relaxed setting. She also learned table etiquette and several types of dance.

PARENT · HOLLYWOOD · CLASS OF 2024

“ The program helped our son mature into a young man with confidence and manners. We have seen him become more comfortable with who he is and how to interact respectfully with those around him—a skill that will help him throughout life.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ Cotillion reinforced our family values while teaching our son to be a true gentleman. It exposed him to formal settings and events that will prepare him as he grows and matures.

PARENT · PORT CHARLOTTE · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion has been a tremendous community resource for giving young men an opportunity to learn courtesies and gentlemanly behavior. Engaging with people beyond one's immediate circle is extremely important, and our son gained skills for dining, conversation, and dancing.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ With smartphones in the hands of most children, the effect on social interaction is enormous. Cotillion teaches age-old manners and simple kindness as a foundation for success in every part of life.

PARENT · PORT CHARLOTTE · CLASS OF 2022

“ Although the dancing component is not always a favorite part of the program for my boys, I hope they take away the manners and respect the program has helped instill in them during their time here.

NURSE · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has been a remarkable experience for our son. He understands the importance of greeting others with respect, eating properly at tables, responding professionally, introducing himself, and treating his date with consideration. He is a more mannerly and respectful child because of you.

TEACHER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has been so important to our family as we hope to raise our children to be polite, considerate, gracious, and respectful. Although we do our best at home, it is instrumental for them to receive the instruction alongside peers and other adults in the community.

HOMEMAKER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has enhanced our daughter's manners and taught her dances she will use in the future. It has reinforced respect for herself as well as others—and shown her that she can have fun at a social event while still minding her manners.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has helped create an enriched environment in an ever-changing technological world. It has helped instill values and manners that are not taught or emphasized in today’s fast-paced society.

NURSE PRACTITIONER · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has helped our boys grow from sweet little boys into respectable young men.

REALTOR · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ At first we thought, ‘We taught our daughter manners; she doesn’t need this.’ In reality, she built friendships, learned how to interact respectfully, and learned far more etiquette than we anticipated—all while having fun.

MEDICAL ASSISTANT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ For us as parents, Cotillion has helped teach our daughter the expectations of being escorted by a young man and how to be treated with respect. It has taught her confidence in social settings, formal dining, dancing, and conversation. Above all, manners never go out of style.

HOMEMAKER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ It is a great program that shows pre-teens and teens there is more than social media. There is a whole world out there, and Cotillion teaches what should be acceptable in society and how to behave—with kindness, respect, and a little laughter along the way.

BUSINESS OWNER · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Our primary goal as parents has always been to raise good people with good hearts. Cotillion, with its emphasis on a culture of kindness, reinforces the behaviors that make up good people while also building confidence in many different social situations.

INVESTMENTS · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ The emphasis on kindness and treating others respectfully speaks to our family. Cotillion has provided a foundational map for helping our son navigate the world of social interaction—one he will draw from throughout his life.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ We love that Cotillion has taught our daughter to make new friends in a setting beyond school and sports. Dressing appropriately and using good manners are lessons she can carry throughout her life.

ACCOUNTANT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

03

Communication & Social Ease

The ability to introduce oneself, listen well, sustain a conversation, and make another person feel comfortable is a lifelong advantage.

“ Cotillion provides a unique opportunity in our community for children to learn important social skills, including appropriate dress for an occasion, table manners, conversational skills, and a variety of dances. It also allows them to meet like-minded peers outside their normal school or church community. Cotillion provides a place to dress up and meaningfully interact with others in an overly casual world distracted by screens.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2025

“ I know my son can enter a situation with new people, introduce himself, and engage in conversation. Knowing how to dance is always a benefit, too.

PARENT · CAPE CORAL · CLASS OF 2024

“ We love it and have learned so much. We especially appreciate that students have no access to phones and can focus on communicating and connecting with others.

PARENT · ESTERO · CLASS OF 2024

“ Our daughter has struggled with social situations, and Cotillion has helped guide her in a structured setting.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ The program has made both of our sons comfortable in a variety of social settings, and we regularly receive compliments on their behavior at all types of events.

PARENT · LEHIGH ACRES · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion gave our daughter an education in elocution, seating, dining etiquette, being a gracious guest, introductions, sincere compliments, toasts, meaningful conversation, and several dances. These are lifelong skills.

PARENT · NAPLES · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion has taught my child how to communicate properly with others and how to conduct herself at gatherings. We are so grateful for this opportunity—and so is she.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Having been part of Cotillion as a child myself, I was glad to find a chapter in Fort Myers to teach my children skills that elevate an individual’s ability to navigate social interactions gracefully.

HEALTH & FITNESS · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

04

Friendship & Belonging

Young people grow when they feel welcomed, connected, and able to form friendships beyond the familiar circles of school, sports, and technology.

“ Cotillion has been a wonderful addition to our daughter’s upbringing. It has reinforced the social etiquette training we provide at home while teaching forms of social dance encountered throughout history. Our daughter has made many friends from varied backgrounds and looks forward to seeing them at Cotillion events and spending time with them beyond the program.

PARENT · CAPE CORAL · CLASS OF 2025

“ Our children greatly enjoyed Cotillion. They loved meeting new friends, learning new skills, and growing into the young people God intends them to be.

PARENT · CAPE CORAL · CLASS OF 2024

“ Cotillion has been a special time. Each experience has been wonderful and has had a positive influence in our daughter’s life. She has met wonderful friends—friends she will keep for the rest of her life.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Our son has valued the friendships he created throughout his time in Cotillion and hopes to remain close to those he has had the privilege to meet.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

05

Preparing for Life

Cotillion prepares students for the rooms, relationships, responsibilities, and opportunities they will encounter as adults.

“ Cotillion has helped our daughter grow socially and understand the importance of etiquette both personally and professionally.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ Three of our children have been fortunate enough to be part of the Cotillion experience. The instruction they received is priceless. Learning how to prepare for social situations has become a lifelong skill, enabling them to feel confident dressing appropriately, dancing, dining, and engaging in conversation at work and socially.

PARENT · PORT CHARLOTTE · CLASS OF 2024

“ Our son has learned confidence and manners while growing into a young adult.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

“ There is no other experience we would have chosen for our daughter. She will remember Cotillion as she enters the workforce and adult social settings. Continuing through the pandemic also taught commitment and perseverance. Chaperoning was very rewarding for us as parents.

PARENT · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2022

“ We are grateful to the family that invited our daughter to join. This life-enriching experience introduced her to dancing, poise, and the feeling of growing up. It is a graceful rite of passage for young ladies and gentlemen.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion has provided opportunities that would be difficult to find elsewhere, especially at this age. It helps students interact with others and prepares them to navigate society smoothly.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion was special to my son because he met friends who may last a lifetime. He enjoyed learning the dances and understanding how to act in social settings. He will remember these lessons as he grows into adulthood.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion has reinforced what we try to teach at home: treating everyone with dignity and respect. It teaches this in a peer setting, which is invaluable for young adults, and has also given our children the opportunity to volunteer and share those lessons with younger students.

ECOLOGIST · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ This program comes at exactly the right time for a young person leaving childhood and beginning young adulthood. There are many programs for children but so few for those in middle school. Cotillion teaches practical lessons and how to have fun at the same time.

GRANDPARENT · ST. JAMES CITY · CLASS OF 2019

06

Leadership, Service & Purpose

Students begin to understand that leadership is not status; it is the ability to serve, encourage, include, and contribute responsibly.

“ Both of our children learned social skills, how to greet someone new, converse with people of all ages, show empathy, appreciate volunteering, and understand how their words and actions can benefit others. They also look very good on the dance floor.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2024

07

Experiences & Memories

Some lessons endure because they are not merely discussed. They are lived through meaningful ceremonies, shared meals, dances, and milestones.

“ Children learn nothing but good lessons during Cotillion—from understanding how hard it is for a boy to ask a girl to dance to learning how a lady should sit. My children did not always want to attend beforehand, but after every event they said they had fun.

PARENT · NAPLES · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion gave my son a place to show others his personality. He enjoys meeting people and making friends, and the opportunity to socialize in fun, non-technical activities while learning etiquette and dance has been unforgettable.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ It was a great experience that will be remembered forever.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Those who commit to Cotillion will treasure the lessons, skills, and etiquette for years to come. Watching a teen grow, mature, and develop previously unseen talents is among the most rewarding experiences a parent can have.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Cotillion has been a blessing for myself and my family. My child has experienced so many incredible new things, from attending exquisite restaurants and learning proper etiquette to learning how to dance properly. Overall, Cotillion has truly benefited my son and our family in remarkable ways. We would definitely recommend Cotillion to others.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has been a fun learning experience for our daughter. We feel the etiquette and dances she learned through the program will carry with her for years to come.

HOMEMAKER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has been a wonderful experience. Manners, dining etiquette, social dancing, and the art of conversation are skills that are so necessary and are becoming a lost art form. Each season only gets better and more enjoyable for the students.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has helped our son grow into a nice young man.

PHYSICIAN · SANIBEL · CLASS OF 2019

“ Cotillion has meant so much!

REALTOR · ESTERO · CLASS OF 2019

“ It’s absolutely essential.

BROKER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ So blessed that we had the opportunity to have our son in the program.

BUSINESS OWNER · ESTERO · CLASS OF 2019

“ We are thankful for the experiences Cotillion has afforded our son and grateful for helping mold him into the young man he has become.

PARENT · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ We feel it is important for younger generations to learn proper etiquette.

OFFICE MANAGER · PUNTA GORDA · CLASS OF 2019

“ We have been part of Cotillion for the past six years and have loved all of it.

CLINICAL SPECIALIST · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ We have enjoyed the time our daughter has spent in Cotillion—the socialization, etiquette, and diverse venues have all been instrumental in helping her grow into the young lady she is today.

PASTOR · PORT CHARLOTTE · CLASS OF 2019

“ We love it and will enroll our younger children when the time comes.

HOMEMAKER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ We truly have seen the amazing impact it has made on our children and cherish the memories it has given them.

HOMEMAKER · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

08

Family & Community

The strongest programs are built through partnership: families reinforce the lessons, volunteers create the culture, and one family welcomes another.

“ This program has been a special part of our family. Gwyneth is the last of our three children to graduate from the program. It has given our children skills to help them through many aspects of life. We have enjoyed being a part of this community and are thankful for all who make it possible.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2025

“ Initially, neither of our sons was keen on Cotillion, but over three seasons they came to appreciate the lessons and look forward to the events. It is a lovely, graceful way to pass cultural traditions to the next generation.

PARENT · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2022

“ Our family has been part of Cotillion for six years, and we have loved every minute of it.

CLINICAL SPECIALIST · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

“ This has been a great program that has benefited all three of our children. Manners, dancing, and getting to know students across the community have been a wonderful opportunity and reinforce the lessons taught at home.

PUBLIC RELATIONS · FORT MYERS · CLASS OF 2019

MEMBERSHIP DRIVES

Help Another Family Discover Cotillion

For more than twenty years, most families have found Junior Cotillion because another parent, grandparent, friend, or neighbor simply shared the experience. During our Spring and Fall Membership Drives, your recommendation can help another child discover a place to grow.

Share your family’s story, point another parent to this page, and let these families speak for themselves.

Perhaps the next cherished story begins with your invitation.

RECOMMEND A FAMILY

RETURN TO JUNIOR COTILLION