Louise Eskridge Crump Child Welfare Award Narrative

Submitted by Junior Auxiliary of Tipton County

As a chapter you never know when one phone call can change the lives of an entire group of women. That is exactly what happened to us one day in Tipton County, TN. The phone call came in as it had so many times for a request for one time emergency assistance for a family being referred in by the local school social worker. Yet as the information came in, we soon realized this would not be just any family, and it certainly would not be one time. An unusual situation in so many ways, as the social worker described and intact family, mother, father, and four children all homeless, recently placed into a motel room by a local church. The Social Worker was calling to request financial assistance for another week in the motel and emergency food. However, once the situation was presented to the members, the larger need and opportunity to make a long term difference in this family’s life became crystal clear. This was our Adopt a Family brought directly to our door.

The family had traveled here from out of state and literally stepped off a bus onto the street. The children ages 8, 10, 11, and 13 were not in school. The family had only 5 backpacks and a box to their name. While in their home state they were receiving resources, yet their sudden move to our county left them without access to any of it. Our chapter superheroes went to work. Starting in October of 2015, utilizing all of our community resources and personal connections, our chapter came alive to help this family stabilize and get back to living on their own in the community by February.

Our members knew right away this would take all hands on deck. Members worked with local social workers and agencies to locate the information the family would need to get their previous financial resources transferred here and to get the children enrolled into school. Members located available housing options and worked with the parents to get into stable housing. The chapter voted to assist the
family with utility and rental deposits for the first month for their new home. The family had already
told our members a place to live was their dream come true even if there was not a stitch of furniture in
it, however, our chapter knew that we wanted them to not just walk into a house, we wanted them to
start their journey here in a home. Our members called upon any resource, friend, family, and thrift
shop that could be found, and three days, a U-Haul, and a pile of home cooked meals later, our
members picked up mom, dad, and the four children from the motel and gave them the keys to their
new home, fully furnished by community resources, dishes and all.

Our chapter continued to work with the family for the next few months mentoring the children and
ensuring they attended afterschool tutoring, linking the family to local providers for medical services,
meeting with the parents to teach them about local resources such as the food pantry and part time
employment options for dad. The members continued bringing home-cooked meals, even providing
home décor and decorations for the holidays. One member realized mom was often calling asking for
phone numbers she needed, so that member dropped off a phone book and the mother responded to
this simple thing with huge smiles and a hug. Another member remembered the dad asking about a
rake, so she took him an extra rake she had lying around. The next day dad had hand raked his entire
one acre wooded yard, and showed every person who visited his rake and all he had accomplished with
it. It wasn’t just a yard anymore, now it was his yard.

By February, this family of six was back to where they had started before so many things in their life had
gone awry. Our chapter heard from them less and less, and soon we noticed they were getting to
appointments, school, and the store without help. They were connected with all of the local resources
they needed. After several visits with the parents, they let our chapter know they were ready to
continue on by themselves. They were thankful for the resources, support, prayers, and reassurance
our chapter had provided and we watched as they went from a family broken to a family whole. We
watched a family spread their own wings with just a little lift, and fly in the direction their own life was
taking them. Most of all, we watched a chapter of individual women come together as one, using every
talent, every personal connection, every bit of knowledge of our community, all while each finding their
own super power by helping someone down for a moment, but leaving us all in the end to rise to the
very top. This project not only broke the cycle of dependency for a mom, a dad, a son, and three
daughters, it also broke the cycle of dependency in each of us. We were no longer a chapter of single
members relying on our own plans to lead us through this year, no longer walking monotonously though
our duties and tasks. In our time with this family, we learned how to become a not a chapter broken,
but a chapter whole, each of us with amazing gifts, that when put together for one purpose made an
unimaginable difference.