NORMA DeLONG EDUCATION AWARD
2015-2016

CHAPTER NAME: Junior Auxiliary of Greenville

POSTMARK ON OR BEFORE:
MARCH 15, 2016

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POPULATION CATEGORY: 30,000 or above

COST OF PROJECT: $1,500

NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS INVOLVED: 11

NUMBER OF ACTIVE CHAPTER MEMBERS: 48

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED: 72

Follow outline exactly in making award presentation:

I. How was the need for the project/program determined? (100 words or less, DOUBLE SPACED; WRITTEN IN THE SEQUENCE AS LISTED BELOW) Send one digital photo per entry either email or on disc.

II. Summarize Project — 1000 words or less
   Include the following:
   1. Complete description of project and how it was carried out.
   2. Population of area
   3. Number of Active members in Chapter
   4. Number of members planning and hours spent in planning
   5. Length of actual program/seminar, etc.
   6. Number of Chapter members attending
   7. Age range of participants
   8. Utilization of NAJA Resource Center (if applicable)
   9. Number of people served.
   10. Public Relations information for project.

III. Project Evaluation — (300 words or less, DOUBLE SPACED; WRITTEN IN THE SEQUENCE AS LISTED BELOW)
   1. Feed back from participants
   2. Impact on community
   3. Applicability of program to other communities
   4. Worthiness to present to other Chapters
   5. Plans to expand into the community and/or presentation by other organization(s)
   6. Plans to repeat program/project

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SUBMIT ANY SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL.
THE AWARD WILL BE JUDGED ON THE NARRATIVE ONLY.
Eat and Play the Healthy Way

I. Childhood obesity is a serious national concern. According to the CDC, childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 30 years and Mississippi consistently ranks in the highest percentage of obese students. Obese children are likely to be obese as adults, and are more at risk for health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and several types of cancer. Schools play a critical role in educating students in practices that support healthy behaviors. Since 2011, Junior Auxiliary of Greenville has implemented “Eat and Play the Healthy Way” to address lifestyle choices including healthy eating, portion control, and exercise.

II. Eat and Play the Healthy Way (E&PHW) was first developed in 2012 as a Provisional project, when Provisionals researched child nutrition and tapped into our chapter’s most vital resource, its active and past members, to create the program from a medical standpoint. Utilizing the knowledge of nurses and dietitians within the chapter, E&PHW was created to educate students of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Since 2012, E&PHW has been implemented once a month during the school year. Now in its fourth year of implementation, the project continues to lay an important foundation for healthy lifestyle habits and behaviors in 5th grade students ages 9-11 years old.

E&PHW begins over the summer before each school year, when the project chair and the science teacher pick dates based on the school’s calendar and establish the topics for each session. E&PHW meets with the 5th grade science classes at O’Bannon Elementary once a month throughout the school year to provide eight lessons on a variety of topics, including topics such as physical activity, portion control, and personal hygiene. The goal of Eat and Play is to provide health-focused, yet engaging and fun, education that will help students understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
The monthly lessons are taught by pairs of members, in order to have more hands-on help with the handouts, activities, and snack preparation that accompanies each lesson. Having two members present per class session also provides more knowledge answering students’ questions, and increasing their overall understanding of the lesson being provided. The curriculum is produced by the chairman and co-chairman and distributed in advance to its members and the science teacher so they have the opportunity to learn the material prior to their teaching session. Each session lasts approximately 1.5 hours and serves a class of 20 nine to eleven year olds each period. The lessons are taught as a part of their regularly scheduled science class during the school day. With back to back sessions, we see 72 students each month.

In October, we introduce the program and talk with students about the importance of physical activity, and have some exercise fun with them that involves making predictions (a math curriculum connection) before completing various activities. In November, we discuss “power foods” and enjoy a power food snack with the students, including foods that may be more unusual for our students, such as Soy chocolate milk or roasted edamame. In December, we teach students how to read food nutrition labels and which nutrients should be limited and which should be eaten with moderation. We also help students to make a healthy, holiday-themed snack. In January, we inform students about the “Stop Light” eating plan, teaching them which foods we should eat more of and which foods are best enjoyed in moderation. In February, portion control is discussed and every student receives a laminated placemat they can take home as a reminder and to show their families. In March, growing foods is discussed and students plant vegetable seeds to take home with them. In April, we present two lessons, one on making healthy plates and another on personal hygiene. After going over the USDA’s MyPlate daily nutrition guides, each student receives a durable, BPA-free plastic proportioned plate to take home that makes it simple to understand how to eat healthily by
including the major food groups at meals, as well as take home workbook. We also discuss hygiene for students, as most 9-11 year olds are undergoing hormonal changes, and provide each student with a bag of travel size items including toothpaste and deodorant.

The Junior Auxiliary of Greenville (JAG) chapter serves a population of over 33,000 in the Washington County area, including two public school districts, several private schools, and many Headstart and daycare centers. E&PHW is intended to provide a continuous amount of information that builds upon itself throughout the course of the year. In order to fulfill the goals of the curriculum, the project serves the same students each month in order to increase their foundational knowledge.

This project serves 72 5th grade students on a monthly basis at the Greenville Public School, O’Bannon Elementary. Once a month, project members work from 8:00am to 2:00pm serving all 5th grade students across the four blocks of the school day. Every project member spends a minimum of 7.5 hours in the classroom serving students hands-on, with additional minimum of 5 hours involved in preparing for the monthly session including review of the lesson materials, handouts, and objectives; preparing healthy snacks; and buying gardening supplies. Last year, 12 members spent a total of 168 hours on this project. Of the 48 active members in the Greenville chapter, typically 12 members serve on E&PHW. This year, due to one member moving, the project has 11 members. This represents 25% of our chapter’s membership.

For public relations, all information regarding E&PHW is sent to the science teacher at the beginning of the year to share with the school administration. A press release featuring the year in review is submitted to local newspapers at the end of the project. Throughout the year, photo updates are provided online on the JAG Facebook page to
promote the monthly activities. No further press is needed, since the project is targeted towards specific school classes, and students do not need to sign up to participate. The project is highlighted in the JAG’s promotional brochures and at the annual Charity Ball, as well as in press releases throughout the year.

II. Members participating enjoy the Eat and Play project because it allows them to build a strong relationship with the same classroom of students throughout the year. Each lesson builds on the next, creating a strong foundation of healthy lifestyle knowledge for each student. This project has been accepted with open arms by the selected school and they are interested in expanding this to other classes in an effort to expose more students to the healthy way of living. The 5th grade teacher is especially appreciative of the focus on healthy lifestyles for her students, and 6th grade teachers in the school comment on how their students still talk about what they learned last year in the program. The school system also recognizes the need for more health-focused education programs and has been very receptive to letting JAG help them fill this need. The assistant principal told us last month “THANK YOU SO MUCH. We appreciate you and the other ladies taking the time for our students.”

This program would be beneficial for all public schools in Mississippi, as there is a drastic need to do all in our power to educate on the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, before they are victim to diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension as adults. JAG would be happy to share the curriculum we have developed with other JA chapters who are interested in developing this type of project for their local community. By meeting with students throughout the year, E&PHW is able to ensure that students are continually reminded to make healthy lifestyle decisions.
The greatest hope for this project is not only that the students learn healthier eating habits and experience an increase in fun physical activities for themselves, but also that they share this new information with their parents at home. By spreading this information around, we are promoting not just healthier lifestyles for these children, but their entire families. We strive to make E&PHW an interactive, hands-on project that shows students fun and informative ways to make healthy decisions.

The success of E&PHW and the school support is very heartening for JAG. This project allows members to have an immediate, hands-on impact on the children in our community. This project will be continued in 2016-2017, and there are future plans to expand the program to increase the number of students we serve without compromising the quality and depth of experiences we are currently having with students.