ELEANOR SLAUGHTER AWARD
2015-16

CHAPTER NAME  Junior Auxiliary of Clarksville, Arkansas, Inc.

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POSTMARK ON OR BEFORE: MARCH 15, 2016

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THIS AWARD WAS ESTABLISHED TO RECOGNIZE CHAPTERS FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN THE AREAS OF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION OR REENGAGEMENT. IN NARRATIVE FORM, DESCRIBE THE MEMBERSHIP ISSUE(S) AND HOW YOUR CHAPTER SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED IT (THEM) AWARD SELECTION WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING: (1000 WORDS OR LESS, DOUBLE SPACED; WRITTEN IN THE SEQUENCE AS LISTED BELOW): Send one digital photo per entry either email or on disc.

1. History/Background of current membership challenges

2. Planning and preparation of resolutions to challenges(s) including number of members involved.

3. What challenges were addressed and how were they addressed?

4. How did overcoming this challenge benefit your Chapter now or will benefit it in the future?
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Junior Auxiliary of Clarksville, Arkansas has always been a chapter that we were very proud of, that we had a membership with a passion for the work, fostered lifetime friendships, and had good attendance at meetings, projects and fundraisers. We were chartered in 1996 so the past twenty years we have been able to keep up with our former members and encourage them to continue to be active in the events of the chapter as Associate Members or Life Members with some of them continuing to serve as officers or chairs.

The past few years with more working mothers and young mothers with babies or active children in sports, dance and classes, we have noticed a change. These members were inviting their close friends to membership and we discovered we were having more problems with attendance, commitment and getting to know one another as well. We missed that big JA family that many cherish and have fond memories of being there for one another. We seemed to be forming more small groups instead of all having the common goal and good communication in the chapter meeting was missing.

At our Board Training, we set our goals for the year with a focus on our membership and working to become a more cohesive group again, getting to know each other better, and actively engaging in our projects together. We will try to keep our meetings more organized with less chatter and have more time to visit and socialize with each other once our business has been completed. We also will work to encourage our Associates and Life members to continue to be actively involved.

Our membership chairman is an Active Life Member that has been through the ranks of officer duties and has been chair of or worked on every project we have. She has the knowledge of the way things used to be when we all were able to know each other better and work on projects together successfully, using the talents of each member and forming a team to enjoy ourselves and bond more while working together to complete the task.
Several of the members recalled the days when we were able to socialize more and visit to get to know each other better and want to attend meetings to be together. We recalled when our Membership Chair was President and invited us all to her home at Christmastime to visit, play games, and enjoy good food with no work to be done and how much we liked that. One of our newest members offered her home for a Christmas party and the planning began to have appetizers, soups, desserts and hot cocoa with these two women doing all the food preparation so no one had to do anything. Members were encouraged to come and teased with the menu to not miss what they were preparing. A game consisting of each member turning in a fun fact that most members would not know about them and dividing into teams to guess who that person was, taught us some interesting things about our members and offered conversation and competition among the group. A fun Dirty Santa ornament exchange was enjoyed by all to see what things had been brought and learn more about our individual Christmas decorating styles.

This spring another Active Life member has offered her home for a family picnic with lots of delicious food, family games and interaction among the members, spouses and children. We know this will be a great way for us to truly share more of our lives with each other and get back to the bond so many of us remember when we all shared more of our lives together and worked together with the common bond of Junior Auxiliary membership.

We are continuing to recognize our member’s birthdays, babies born, illnesses and surgeries, and providing food for a cancer patient member and sharing all of these at chapter, with cards and email blasts to have prayer when needed and praise for the good things that happen in our lives.

Our Associate and Life members are always asked to participate in our activities and are receiving our newsletter, Facebook and emails. We are noticing some beginning to come back as they are kept more informed and asked by members to come work and help. We use them specifically in our School Store project, buying gifts for our foster children in our Christmas project and our Chili Supper fundraiser because these have touched them in some way.
We are actively trying to learn more about each other and the individual lives and personalities. We feel this will play a large part in recruitment when our members know we care for each other as well and those we serve. Our members who have completed their years of active service are encouraged to continue as Active Associate or Life members and asked what projects they would be interested in. They will continue to receive our minutes, newsletters and emails and will be personally asked to reengage and come participate.

We hope to continue these events and come up with more fun, interactive ways to reconnect and have a unified group to continue the good work we do in our community and share the bonds of friendship with our fellow members. This will ultimately keep the closeness of being a part of this exceptional organization, Junior Auxiliary, and serving others in Clarksville, Arkansas.