THE BETTY ROBBINS VOLUNTEER-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD ENTRY
2014-2015

CHAPTER NAME _______ Junior Auxiliary of Hattiesburg _______

CHAPTER ADDRESS _______ P.O. Box 15433 ____________

Hattiesburg, MS 39404

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CHAPTER CONTACT NAME _______ Ginny Graham _________

And PHONE NUMBER _______ 601-329-9794 _______

REGION: _______ VI _______

NAME OF VOLUNTEER NOMINEE: _______ Terri Daniels _______

Send one digital photo per entry either email or on disc.
“Camp was so hard and so demanding, my first thought after being there for the first day, Monday, was this: ‘I am determined to fulfill my obligation, but I don’t think I’ll ever be back.’ By Wednesday of the same week, I said, ‘I’ll always be back.’

That 1982 memory has shaped the volunteer life of Terri Howard Daniels, Junior Auxiliary of Hattiesburg Life Member. The camp is the Abbie Rogers Civitan Camp, a summer and fall recreation camp in South Mississippi for children and adults with disabilities.

Under the mentorship of Abbie Rogers, who founded the camp in 1961, Terri became assistant director in 1986 and succeeded Abbie as a director in 2007. Now in its 55th year, the camp is operated by an all-volunteer staff and funded solely on donations. (JA has two projects at camp: providing volunteers to care for the babies during the night and conducting games for campers.)

At camp, children with disabilities experience the same activities as other children. With a teenage counselor, each camper participates in canoeing, music, swimming, fishing, art, extreme challenges, and the nightly camp party. They forge friendships and gain confidence from their accomplishments.

The volunteers come to serve, but the returns are greater than they can imagine. Along with selfless service, the volunteers get to know the campers as people, focusing on the person not the disability. Through camp, friendships are made, character is built, and lives are positively changed.

“Being part of this camp is a profound experience,” said Daniels. “When people leave camp and have gotten to know the person, and not focused on the disability, I feel the most satisfaction. I
encourage them to go out and teach their friends and families what they have learned about people with disabilities: that we are all just people!"

In JA, Terri served two years on the board as nominating chairman, five years as project chairman of Healthy Kids, as well as working with Hospice Meals, NICU Rock-a-Bye and Project Finding. As a Life Member, she has conducted leadership training for project chairs and supports Charity Ball and other chapter events and projects.

Professionally, Terri is the director of Neonatal Developmental Support and Training at the University of Southern Mississippi, but Civitan Camp is Terri’s year-round volunteer job. She meets with families to prepare for their child’s first year at camp, mentors the young staff, makes presentations to local groups to raise awareness and support, writes grants, and gathers supplies to use the camp’s resources most efficiently. And then, there is the management of camp itself.

Beginning with 18 campers in 1961, Civitan Camp now has 250 campers over three sessions. The waiting list for volunteers exceeds 100. Civitan Camp is beloved by the Hattiesburg community, thanks to the tireless efforts of first, Abbie Rogers, and now, Terri Daniels.

"My work at camp is deeply part of who I am and one of my God-given purposes. I am sure of it," she said.