CHAPTER NAME ___________Junior Auxiliary of Collierville_________ POSTMARK ON OR BEFORE: MARCH 15, 2016

CHAPTER ADDRESS ___P.O. Box 123________________________

_Collierville, TN 38017________________________

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POPULATION CATEGORY __30,000 and above________________________

NAME OF PROJECT _______Unique Boutique______________________________

CATEGORY: (Check One) (A)______ (B) X__

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP OF CHAPTER ________________32__________

NUMBER OF MEMBERS PARTICIPATING ________________16________________

TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICE GIVEN BY MEMBERS ______________98___________

COST OF PROJECT ____________$882______________________________

NUMBER OF PERSONS SERVED _34 Middle School Girls________________

YOUR ENTRY MUST BE IN ESSAY FORM (1000 WORDS OR LESS, DOUBLE SPACED)

Send one digital photo per entry either email or on disc.

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SUBMIT ANY SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL.
THE AWARD WILL BE JUDGED ON THE NARRATIVE ONLY.
Unique Boutique
"Keeping It Real in a Virtual World"

Junior Auxiliary of Collierville hosted the 5th annual Unique Boutique on January 22, 2016. Unique Boutique is morning of education and empowerment for middle school girls. Our 2016 speakers provided valuable insight into creative expression; cyberbullying; etiquette; health, beauty and fitness, all focused on this year’s Junior Auxiliary national focus area – "Keeping It Real in a Virtual World".

Expressing yourself with art presented by Leslie Ponders delivered a creative expression message for these young women. As an entrepreneur and owner of Creative Minds Art Studio, Leslie first shared her story of becoming a business owner and encouraged the girls to always follow their passion, be resilient and brave. In her second message, she challenged them to use art as a medium of expression. In our virtual world it is easier to post comments online than say them to a "real" person. This creates an environment for viral conversations that can become hurtful. We encouraged the girls to not get caught up in this "virtual" world and post something they may regret rather step back and use art to express and calm your feelings.

Officer Jay Reese for the Collierville Police Department offered insight into cyberbullying noting that most cyberbullying is committed by girls and offered valuable knowledge on what steps to take if they ever find themselves as victims of cyberbullying. Officer Jay also challenged them to live in the "real" moment by viewing life thru their own eyes not "virtually" behind the carrera on their phone; via selfies or social media.

Social etiquette presented by Avery Johnson discussed the importance of using proper etiquette as well as demonstrated appropriate and inappropriate social etiquette skills such as eye contact, proper introductions, hand shaking and cell phone usage – all "real" life skills that are slowly being lost in our "virtual" world. Additional, Avery shared with these young women her passion for etiquette and how it inspired her to start her own business, Southern Academy of Etiquette.
Laura Jump, personal fitness instructor, shared her insight into the need for balance in life – mind, body and spirit. She instructed the girls on the science of exercise and how it reduces stress and anxiety; but equally as important, she focused on the fact that everyone is uniquely and beautifully created by God. Thus, you were not created to be like everyone else. She reminded these young and impressionable young ladies that labels do not define you nor do the number of "virtual" likes.

Beauty and age appropriate make-up presented by Gipsy Nix from Gould’s Salon provided advice on age appropriate make-up for middle school girls as well as demonstrated how to apply make-up. Additionally, Gipsy shared with the girls the false expectations of beauty depicted by the media and that these expectations are not reality. She noted how the use of Photoshop and computerized make-up apps create pictures of people that are not “real” because they are created “virtually”. She concluded her session with a YouTube video highlighting the impacts of photoshopped identities. The video featured volunteers who were given a free photo shoot. When the photographers showed the volunteers their pictures with their wrinkles and freckles removed, they said “this is not me”. The photographers had photoshopped out their uniqueness.

While our virtual world is a reality and it has many benefits. Face timing with friends and family across town, states and countries keeps these relationships real. However, keeping it real within this virtual world is a fine line we all have to maintain to ensure we preserve a well-rounded society. Educating and empowering these middle school girls with this message will ensure we build a generation that will maintain this fine line.