The Louise Eskrigge Crump Child Welfare Award form on the National Association of Junior Auxiliaries, Inc. website has been submitted. The form contained the following data:

Chapter Name: Junior Auxiliary of Clarksville
Chapter Address: 1436 CR 3411

   City: Clarksville
   State: AR
   Zip Code: 72830
Project Name: Adopt a Family
Total Membership of Chapter:
Number of Members Participating: 24
   Number of Children Served: 3
   Total Hours Served by Members: 48
   Amount of Money Spent: 734.85

Essay: LOUISE ESKRIGGE CRUMP CHILD WELFARE AWARD
Junior Auxiliary of Clarksville, Arkansas, identified a family for our Adopt A Family project in October, 2015, when we learned of a struggling, single mother with three children. We mothers know to what lengths we are willing to go, to ensure that our children have all of the basic necessities in life, but women in general have a respect for mothers who are hardworking and put their children's needs above their own. This woman is like that and had become a mother at the age of sixteen. Her children are now twenty-two, sixteen and thirteen. One member interviewed this mother to get a basic understanding of the family's needs and what concerns she had for her children. With many tears, she began relating that her youngest son didn't have clothes or shoes. Her daughter was having issues with her shoulder that could possibly require surgery. She feared that with time off for the surgery, she would lose her job. Her older son would be going back to college, and she was worried about his feeling responsible for them. It was evident that she had a lot of stressors. She was given information about Junior Auxiliary, our chapter's projects, and how these projects help children in the community. She was asked if she would be willing to let us help her with some of her children's needs. She was reluctant at first, but eventually agreed. She expressed that she hopes to get her GED one day. She wants so desperately to support her family on her own and wants her children to be proud of her. JA gave her information for night classes at our local GED office to help her meet this goal.
Our chapter assisted her with groceries for the Thanksgiving holiday, including a food basket
from a local church. We gathered clothing for her son and daughter and purchased shoes for her youngest son. We were informed that the youngest son needed a bed. A bedroom suite was donated by a member’s family and delivered. Mom was extremely thankful, tearful, but excited to introduce her children to the JA ladies. We have also taken her oldest son to get his driver’s license.

On one particular visit, a JA member was met by Mom announcing that since JA had helped her family realize the importance of helping others, she had her children up at 8am going through all of their outgrown clothing as they too could help someone else. What a blessing to see the confidence begin to grow in this family over the past year! We focus on what we can do to promote confidence, stability, and well-being to the family as a whole. Our entire membership has opportunities to assist with this project as needs arise.

We provided birthday gifts, Christmas gifts, groceries, clothing and shoes. This year, we helped plan Thanksgiving meals, but Mom managed to do the entire holiday herself and was very proud of her accomplishment - as were we! In addition, we also delivered items to the hospital when the daughter was hospitalized. The chapter collected non-perishable food items to help fill in the gap from missing work. Valentine goodies were taken to the family to enjoy over the long four day weekend and a local factory donated two turkeys for the family.

Mother kept us informed about the daughter’s status and the shoulder surgery she would need. We had a recliner donated and delivered by a member for her to use after surgery. We also had another collection for needed food items. Mom told us that she was very grateful for everything we have done. One night after making a delivery of needed items, she asked the member to be sure to thank the ladies and tell them that with their help I feel like I can take on the world. We even had the daughter and a friend to help with our JA Jewels Project, which is our mentoring project for young girls, but she got too sick to participate, so we delivered a goody bag to her from the event to help her feel special.

We chose to adopt this family again this year as we had only worked with them for six months and could see that although there were still needs, we were making a difference.

As we feared, because of her daughter’s health, Mom’s finances were strained. During these times, we helped with food, school supplies, cleaning supplies, gas cards and phone minutes. Because of paperwork reporting with the job change, she lost her food stamps, and we restocked the pantry and a member donated a freezer to help them purchase sale items and bulk items to stretch the food dollars. Fortunately, through her perseverance, Mom was able to get a better job, receive a raise, and a promotion, and received a reward for perfect attendance.

The daughter struggled with three shoulder surgeries with several set-backs, therapy delays and stomach problems due to the pain medicines. She missed so much school, we were concerned she possibly would have to attend summer school. We helped the family with the information needed at the school to get the daughter back on track and now she is back to school full time.

Additionally, we assisted the younger son with requirements for basketball, so that he could continue to participate and be able to have shoes like the other children playing on the team. The older son is in school and is happily married now.

3/16/2017
We feel we have made a difference for them and helped them break the cycle of dependency. Other circumstances may arise, but with faith, prayer, hard work and team work, they will be able to get through trials and adapt with the needs as they arise. This family has learned invaluable skills from the Ladies of JA as they are better able to deal with the circumstances that life sends their way in a positive, healthy manner.