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TO BRING
Light and Love to Others

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN!

How is it already February? My year as National President is starting to wind down! What is the old saying? “Time flies when you are having fun.” Well that is certainly the case for me. I have loved seeing all the ways you have taken my four challenges to heart to: 1. Incorporate your children in your JA projects; 2. Make JA a priority; 3. Create sisterhood opportunities for your Chapter; and 4. Engage in hands-on Service to your community. Thank you for embracing these challenges to make your Chapter and time with JA even better!

I also have to give a huge SHOUT OUT to all the Chapters that participated in my additional challenge of promoting National Stand Beside Her Week! It was so amazing to look on Facebook and Instagram that week and see all the amazing activities being carried out! I tried to comment on all that I could, but if I missed your Chapter's post, please know how much I appreciate you promoting this very important mission for girls and women.

During this year, I have been able to conduct a Membership 101 workshop, lead Chapter Board Trainings, attend an end of year Chapter celebration, attend Provisional Chapter meeting, and attend Board Meetings, Finance Projects, and Service Projects. Through all these different visits one thing that holds true is that we are here to serve the children in our communities and make their lives better. In all my years of serving at the National level, I have seen where Chapters lose sight of this. Instead they are focusing on who is right, what this person did to offend me, and they aren’t doing this the right way. Ladies, PLEASE remember we are about serving the children and all this other stuff is just noise that can quickly derail a Chapter from accomplishing their goals.

THAT LEADS ME TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: WHAT DO THESE WORDS AND LETTERS HAVE IN COMMON?

• ESFJ
• Orange
• S
• Golden Retriever

They are all my profiles from different personality assessments. So, why am I sharing these? I feel it is important to know who you are, what motivates and frustrates you, what you excel at, and what you need to work on. Once you know who you are and what motivates and agitates you, then you can better work with the others in your Chapter, especially if you understand who they are and what motivates them too.

In your Chapter, you are not always going to agree on everything and that is ok. What is important is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to voice their opinion, vote their conviction, and then abide by the ruling of the majority. Lastly, remember what you are in Junior Auxiliary for…to improve the lives of children by breaking the cycle of dependency.

Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do in your Chapters and communities to, “Let Your Light Shine Through Love.” It has been and will continue to be one of my greatest honors to serve you!

In Service,

NAJA PRESIDENT
Leslie James
As we begin a new year together, we face new challenges. You have been working together with the current leaders in your Chapters and on the national level for many months now. I know you have learned a lot about staying focused on our common goals and respecting one another’s individuality. We all have different gifts and different ideas to offer. As I look back over the last seven months, I have learned many things about some of you, all of your Chapters, our national leaders, our NAJA staff, and myself.

Some of you may not know that as I began my role as Executive Director, I also began my role as a first year Active member of the Junior Auxiliary of Indianola, Mississippi. Very few of you know that as our newest NAJA staff member, Brooke Bryan, began her role as Digital Media Strategist this summer, she also joined the Indianola Chapter as a Provisional. We have faced many challenges balancing these dual roles. Together, we have learned to serve our own Junior Auxiliary Chapter as well as all of your Chapters. In the challenges we faced, it is not success or failure we remember, but how we handled them and the lessons we have learned.

None of us are perfect. We will all fail at something. The important thing to remember is that failures are a part of the learning process that leads us to success. Never be afraid to try something new because you are afraid you may fail. Research new ideas thoroughly and identify your goals; designate responsibilities; formulate a plan to reach your goals; analyze your results; move forward with a new plan based on what you have learned through experience. We have such a unique organization in that we are comprised of Chapters of all sizes, members of all backgrounds, and leaders of different professions. I encourage you to take a step back and look at what each of us has to offer. Then ask yourselves a question. How can you help to build a successful future for this Association? Ladies, you can serve nationally! You are the hands of Service. Without you and your work, we as an organization would not exist. My challenge to you is to go for it! We need you!
Clint Pulver
WORLD SPEAKER AND OWNER OF CLINT PULVER ENTERTAINMENT

Known as “The Millennial Speaker,” Clint Pulver works with organizations that want to retain, engage and inspire the younger generation. As one of the most sought after Keynote Speakers, Clint travels the world every year helping educators to remember the power and significance of the teaching job and that how they choose or choose not to teach in the classroom changes lives. He has appeared on America’s Got Talent and in several different feature films with actors like Jack Black (School of Rock) and John Heder (Napoleon Dynamite). Clint was named one of Business Q Magazine’s “Top 40 Under 40” for his work in helping educators elevate their “WHY” of mentorship in the classroom and how connected and engaged educators yield loyal and long-term retention within the teaching job. For over a decade, Clint has dedicated his heart to helping schools and administrations understand the younger generation while helping the younger generation to understand themselves. Through his experience in the classroom, Clint demonstrates that to improve the quality of teaching we must be willing to improve the quality of the teaching job. With a blend of humor, unforgettable stories, and actionable takeaways that stick, Clint proves first-hand to educators and administrations that a single moment in time can truly change a child’s life.
Reneé Rongen  
AWARD WINNING SPEAKER, AUTHOR AND BUSINESS CONSULTANT

When organizations are looking to align their passion and purpose to increase productivity and profitability, they understand the value of the people on their team, and are ready to punch up what they are doing to reach WOW status … they hire Reneé Rongen.

Reneé is an award winning humorous and inspirational speaker, author and business consultant. Soulful and sassy, she is one of the most in-demand and top rated speakers in the U.S. and Canada. You will learn that her energy is contagious, her stories are priceless and her passion for living life full throttle can sometimes get her in trouble.

Recognized by her peers and clients worldwide as a brilliant comedian and master story teller, she recently finished the “Laughter is the Best Medicine” tour with Dana Carvey, Lilly Tomlin, Paula Poundstone and Paul Reiser. Media has dubbed her “The Mother of Motivation and a combination of Lily Tomlin, Oprah and Mother Teresa.” Her messages transcend age, culture and profession. Combining her hysterical stage presence, with her award winning business background, topped with her complete authenticity, she delivers an experience like no other to organizations who want to inspire and grow their culture to be the best in the industry.

From a Marketing Strategist for large corporations to motherhood, Board Trustee to celebrity host of the Polk County fair in Fertile, MN (population 834), Reneé engages all audiences with her Legacy Living Philosophy – encouraging all to take the leap and step into their unique purpose. This philosophy has been featured in numerous national publications including Entrepreneur, Fortune, Better Homes and Gardens, Female Entrepreneur, Smart Money, Minnesota Women’s Business and Parenting Magazines.

In addition to her speaking and consulting, Reneé is an award winning author. Her latest award winning work titled I’m a Girl … That’s Why! focuses on the underserved demographic of girls ages 12-18 years old, and was the second book released within the Fundamentally Female series, the original which was featured in the Oscar and Golden Globe Swag Bags for all female nominees and continues to climb the charts to bestseller status.

A champion for wearing pajamas as much as she can get away with, Reneé is the founder of the Ultimate Pajama Party, an ongoing campaign responsible for inspiring the donation of nearly 1 million pairs of pajamas to domestic violence shelters across the country, impacting the lives of women and children every day.

Reneé holds a Bachelor Degree in Business and a Minor in Recreational Socializing from the College of St. Benedict. She studied in Salzburg, Austria and has completed graduate course work at the University of Mary. She is the International Spokesperson for the Pay It Forward Foundation, a member of the National Speakers Association and Minnesota Speaker Association. She has served as Trustee on numerous corporate, healthcare, economic development, education and foundation boards, a Founder and Past President of the NW Minnesota Women’s Fund, and is a hospice volunteer. Additionally, she is the recipient of the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the Women’s Business Center and currently serves as the Chief Energy Officer for her clients across the globe.

In the moments between pajama parties and celebrity appearances, Renee can be found doing laundry…or I guess you could call it enjoying quality family time with: husband Tom Terrific, Alexander, Elizabeth and Grace. She loves the outdoors, taking risks, and a good cup of coffee with cream. When she is not chasing basketballs or feeding her four legged friends, she keeps busy kayaking, horseback riding or catching up with her many friends.

Reneé knows that she has been richly blessed with abundant gifts. Her goal at the end of her life is to say; “I come to You empty. I have nothing left. I used all of the gifts You gave me.”
On Sunday, June 5th 2016, Deshauna was crowned the first Miss USA to currently serve in the United States military. She spent her year-long reign as Miss USA partnering with and lending her voice to organizations such as the USO, Smile Train, Best Buddies, Operation Homefront and numerous others.

Deshauna has made it her life goal to encourage, inspire and strengthen the people around her. She is a survivor of child sexual abuse and wants to inspire other survivors to fight through the fears of their past. Deshauna has also overcome extreme bullying from a young age but after the recent loss of her mother to cancer, she wants to encourage people to focus on loving yourself and the people around you.

Deshauna has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from Virginia State University and then went on to complete her Master of Science degree in Computer Information Systems and Services at the University of Maryland University College. She has worked as an IT Analyst in The United States Government for over 5 years being employed by agencies such as the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, Department of The Navy and lastly the Department of Commerce. Captain Deshauna Barber is a logistics commander in the United States Army Reserve. She commissioned as a Quartermaster Officer in 2011 and has been serving her country ever since. Deshauna has a passion for our men and women in uniform and has spent much of her career focusing on advocating for soldiers suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The 29-year-old was born in Columbus, Georgia however, as the daughter of an Army Master Sergeant who served in the United States Special Forces, Deshauna relocated multiple times growing up.

JOIN US IN MEMPHIS APRIL 26 - 28
NEW YEAR, NEW AEC!

You’ve worked hard all year, and it’s time to celebrate your achievements and prepare for a new year at AEC! Join us in Memphis for a new and exciting format for this year’s conference on April 26-28. The newly renovated Memphis Hilton Hotel is hosting our stay, and we can’t wait for you to come join us for a weekend of fun! Memphis is a city with a unique spirit and lots of soul, much like all the amazing women that make up NAJA. We will be kicking off the weekend by honoring our Chapter Presidents and an inspiring Plenary Session with Renee Rongen. Afterwards, we will celebrate our sisterhood and service with a Welcome Party, which will feature music and a cash bar. After the party, we encourage Chapters to continue the fun by grabbing dinner together.

There will be a full list of fun things to do in Memphis coming your way soon! The Annual Education Conference begins again this year with a Service project that will begin during registration on Friday afternoon. We will be making knotted fleece blankets that will be donated alongside our PJs to local shelters housing women and children. The Public Relations Committee will be sending out the specific instructions and details of the blankets, and we are thrilled to offer a project in which everyone can participate!

The Education Committee has planned an exciting program of speakers and workshops applicable to members in all levels of Junior Auxiliary. Our programming will be presented inside the Hilton Hotel, which will make getting from speakers to workshops very convenient! You will also have plenty of opportunities to network with all ladies in attendance. In addition to our kick-off party Friday night, we will have our annual NAJA After Hours hosted by the NAJA Foundation. This event will feature a cash bar and will give you an opportunity to “sip and shop” the NAJA Foundation Raffle! We are excited to include in your registration a seated luncheon in addition to our closing ceremony and brunch on Sunday. We look forward to sharing your accomplishments with everyone!

We are also bringing you great shopping at the Galleria and NAJA Store. The Foundation has an impressive variety of raffle items planned as well.

Make your hotel reservations now. The reservation link for AEC’s group block at the Memphis Hilton Hotel can be found on the NAJA website under EVENTS.

SPREAD THE WORD WITHIN YOUR CHAPTER ABOUT THE UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND LET YOUR AEC CHAIRPERSON KNOW YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE!

NAJA SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT
Kelly Freeland

(Continued from Friday’s Schedule on page 7)
Region V | Director’s Row 3
Region VI | Promenade 2

11:30AM TO 12:15PM
OPEN

12:15PM TO 1:30PM
SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON/AWARDS
PART 1
TN Ballroom - A & B

1:30PM TO 2:00PM
OPEN

2:00PM TO 3:15PM
SPEAKER- CLINT PULVER
Southeast Ballroom - 450
PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE
TN CDE - Classroom- 200

3:30PM TO 5:00PM
“LEADER IN ME” PRESENTATION
Southeast Ballroom
PERSONALITY TEST/CONFICT
RESOLUTION + TEAMBUILDING
TN Ballroom - A

PRESIDENTS WORKSHOP
TN CDE - Classroom - 200

5:30PM TO 7:30PM
NAJA AFTER HOURS + RAFFLE “SIP & SHOP” | Ridgelake + Lobby Annex
Sponsored by NAJA Foundation

SUNDAY | APRIL 28

8:00AM TO 9:00AM
CASH CONCESSIONS | Lobby Annex
FOUNDATION RAFFLE WINNER PICKUP
Ridgelake

9:00AM TO 9:15AM
BUSINESS MEETING CHECK-IN
Southeast Ballroom Foyer

9:15AM TO 10:30AM
BUSINESS MEETING | Southeast Ballroom
CROWN CLUB WORKSHOP
TN Ballroom - D & E

NATIONAL FOCUS WORKSHOP
Director’s Row 6

10:45AM TO 1:00PM
GARDEN PARTY BRUNCH/AWARDS PART 2
TN Ballroom A, B, & C

CHANGING OF THE GUARD
MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS SERVING AS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR AUXILIARY OF TIPTON COUNTY, I frequently brought my daughter along with me when I participated in Service Projects with my Chapter. I didn’t think much about it at the time. I was a working mom and it made more sense to bring her along than to leave her in child care or take her all the way home. I was not alone in this. Many other Chapter members brought their children to our Service Projects. It was so much fun for me to meet the family members of my JA sisters. Our children had a blast.}

SLIDELL, LA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SPRING EVENING ON APRIL 24TH, 2018 at the home and back yard of Life member Melanie Lishman (President 2001-02) where over 100 guests gathered to celebrate JA of Slidell’s past 50 years of service to the Slidell community as a Chapter of NAJA. Twenty-three past presidents attended and were given corsages donated by Louisiana State Senator and Life Member, Sharon Hewitt. There were even three sets of mother and daughter members demonstrating the legacy of service passed on through the years. The late Nancy Wood (President 1990-91) donated stemless wine glasses designed by her daughter, Cathy Newman (Active Class of 2016), memorializing the event as party favors to be given to each guest. A delicious cake was donated by the bakery at Lishman’s Cash Saver with the JA Slidell Logo. Duia & Jean Floral and Events furnished two gorgeous flower arrangements to make the atmosphere even more festive. Husbands of some of the Life members even helped serve the refreshments. Everyone enjoyed catching up with old friends and reminiscing about their JA experience as they looked over old photos. The event was attended and covered by Times Picayune Community Events writer, Carol Wolfram. Articles honoring JA Slidell’s 50 years were also published in two local magazines, Inside Northside and Slidell Magazine, all of which gave the Chapter wonderful local publicity.

BY HEATHER CROWSON, Life member JA of Tipton County, TN

UNBEKOWNST TO ME, BRINGING MY DAUGHTER TO MY CHAPTER’S SERVICE PROJECTS YEARS AGO PLANTED A SEED OF SERVICE

Planting Seeds of Service
playing together and it made our bonding experience richer. There was also something else very special about it. Not only did our children interact with each other, they met, and on some occasions, even played with the children we were serving, their parents and their teachers.

The year that I was Service Projects Chairman, I came up with a new project called “Snack Packs.” We bought supplies, packed many bags of snacks, and delivered them to be used by children in need in our Tipton County schools. My daughter, Hannah Bell, was around five years old at the time. She watched and helped us in this effort. Hannah is now a junior at The University of Memphis. As a member of a sorority, Alpha Gamma Delta, she has brought this idea back to life almost twenty years later. This past fall, they collected items and packed almost one hundred snack pack bags and delivered them to schools in Tipton County as a project for philanthropy night during recruitment.

I am so proud of Hannah and her desire to serve! What’s more, I was asked to join them and participate in their project! That was such an honor and a joy. My story is proof that our children are watching us, even if we don’t think they are. I can’t wait to see what other paths her desire to give back will take her down. And to think, all of those years ago, unbeknownst to me, a seed of Service had been planted.
THE PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO ME – for as long as I can remember giving back just seemed to come as naturally as being right-handed. As a young child, I remember spending time with my mom, aunts, and grandma as they cooked and helped others. There was never a question about helping or even how much to help. You see, my mom was one of six siblings who grew up in an orphanage in North Carolina. During the Great Depression, my grandfather passed away. Life was hard, and the only way my Grandma could provide for her children and keep the family together was to put the five oldest in the orphanage and take a job working there. This was a faith-based organization that relied on charity to provide for the kids they took in. My mom, aunts, uncles, and grandmother would not be here today, by default neither would I, if it were not for the generosity of others who supported the orphanage with generous doses of their time, talents, and money. While my mom doesn’t talk very much about that experience, she often comments that they were blessed by the grace of God through the kindness of strangers.

In my childhood, I didn’t realize we were poor, after all, we were giving to others and we always had food on the table, clothes to wear, and shelter. We continued to help anyone who needed help. There was always room at our table for a friend to eat. As I got older, our means compared to other children at school did start to set in. There was not room for “extras” after all our needs were met. My first real job was after school at age 14 at a local fruit packing company. New clothes were mostly a result of my mother’s hard work at the sewing machine. Between my part-time jobs and making good grades, I was able to earn scholarships that were a combination of academic and need-based and went “off to college.” Once again, the generosity of strangers gave our family a hand up in the world.

With this in mind, as a young mother, I threw myself into work, parenting, and community service opportunities through our church and local organizations. I tried to take every moment I could to model to my children the importance of giving back and how fortunate they were compared to the lives of others. They helped me pick up and distribute Easter baskets to homeless children; collect and hand out coats, blankets, and food for many holiday meals; and serve meals in homeless shelters.

My Junior Auxiliary service started over 16 years ago. First, through Active service with the JA of Gulfport, MS and now with ongoing service as a Life member with the Gulfport Chapter and the Association at large. In the Fall of 2002, my aunt Deb, a Life member of JA of Gulfport, encouraged me to join JA. I knew a little about JA by attending Charity Ball at both the Cleveland Chapter and Gulfport Chapter several times. The opportunity to join and serve with other likeminded women was exciting to me! Being newer to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Junior Auxiliary also led me to meet and befriend some wonderful women who are now lifelong friends. Many join JA because their friends and family are members, and we all gain new and grow deeper friendships through JA service. My life is richer and fuller to this day because I said “yes”.

After Hurricane Katrina hit the coast in 2005, all of the Chapters along the MS and LA coast were devastated. It was during that time that my perspective changed and I truly internalized that I was part of something larger than the Gulfport zip code and the people that lived here. You see, more than two-thirds of our members had suffered total loss of their homes, their businesses or both. We could barely get our heads around where to start with a JA project. Our Chapter Board sat around the dining room table of one of the few Board members who still had a home, discussing whether to take a year off or continue to try to function as a Chapter. We did not know how we would raise funds and coordinate projects but we knew we had to press through because our community needed us more than ever. Little did we realize that we did not have to worry so much about those details, because NAJA was thinking about us. For as long as I live, I will never forget when the large tractor trailer showed up at my office and these ladies I had seen “all
dressed up on the stage” at the NAJA Annual Conference jumped out in shorts, sneakers, and caps. They smiled and sweated as they unloaded box after box of toys, supplies, books, etc.

Their outpouring of love on our communities was like balm to our souls. It didn’t stop there – Chapters throughout the NAJA footprint held fundraisers and sent money to our Chapter (as well as all Chapters in the path of this storm), for both our projects and for our neediest members. As Child Welfare Chairman in 2005-2006 and Treasurer in 2006-2007, I had a front row seat to witness how the generosity of NAJA Chapters directly benefited our community and members. Thousands of dollars poured into our Chapter to enable us to help our members and community.

God calls us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and it was during this particular period that I saw my JA sisters cross county and state lines to love through service and giving. I was reminded again of why I said, “yes.” Junior Auxiliary was something bigger than one person or one Chapter. I realized it was an organized huge hug, a long extended hand-up, and collective prayer of servant hearts saying, “Send us.” JA sisters helped my entire community on the coast in the wake of a devastating storm. At that time JA embodied over six decades of selfless giving that changed our community and my life. For this and so much more, I am eternally grateful!

In 2007 at AEC, the Gulfport Chapter received the Martha Wise Award for, “Miracle in the Park” which was a collective post-hurricane project to rebuild a playground for our community so our children had a safe place to play away from the slabs and destruction that was still evident all around us. As we walked up to accept the award, tears poured as our JA sisters gave us a standing ovation. They understood, they felt our pain and our triumph over it. It was more than an award to us, it was a sign of hope for the future. To this day, when I see that hope on the faces of JA members at AEC when their project is recognized, I am reminded of why I said, “yes.” It may not be a Hurricane that brought on the need, it could have been a family living in a car or a Chapter that rebuilt itself from four members to twenty through courage and determination.

This is why I continue to serve and give to NAJA both locally and nationally through the Foundation, New Chapter Development, and wherever and however I am able. If you are a member of JA or know someone who is, she has a call to service and giving. That call may be placed on your heart for any number of reasons, but regardless of why, it requires action. When we pray, “send us,” we are prepared to go and give.

It is so true that when you pour yourself out on others, your cup continues to be refilled and overflow. When this happens, you will make a difference in others’ lives and, in doing so, in your own. Serve – Give – Repeat.
Tip of the Crown

JUNIOR AUXILIARY OF GULFPORT WOMEN RECOGNIZED IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Congratulations to Christen Duhe’, Jenny Levens, and Velma Johnson for their success in the community. They were recognized by the SUCCESS Women’s Conference in September 2018. SUCCESS is a unique experience designed to inspire, empower, connect and recharge businesswomen in the Gulf Coast region. Out of 18 women, JA of Gulfport had three recognized as a “Top Influencer.” This award recognizes women who demonstrate leadership and commitment to improving the community’s well-being, have a sustained record of accomplishments and contributions, and who think outside the box to design and implement effective solutions. Junior Auxiliary of Gulfport, MS is proud to have these amazing women part of their Chapter.

In November 2018, the Junior Auxiliary of McComb, MS debuted “Kind Kidz,” a new Service project created to combat bullying by educating children on the importance of showing kindness to others. The ladies of JA visited third graders in local elementary schools where they conducted interactive exercises and open discussion on the lasting impact — both positive and negative — their words and actions have on others. Students were given perfectly flat paper hearts that they were told to crumple each time they heard JA members say something unkind. After JA members made mean comments to each other, all of the hearts were wrinkled or crumpled into tiny balls. The children were then instructed to...
unfold and straighten their hearts when they heard kind or uplifting words used by the JA members. As the JA members encouraged and complimented each other, the children unfolded and opened their wrinkled hearts. Although the hearts were flat again, they were not perfectly smooth like they had been before the unkind words were said. Through this visual exercise, the children could see that even though it is important to apologize when they offend others, apologizing does not completely take away the damage of harsh, unkind words. The ladies of JA provided examples of easy ways to show kindness, such as smiling, encouraging, complimenting, listening, sharing, and including others. At the end of their presentation, the JA ladies challenged all of the children to make a commitment to being kind by signing a Kind Kidz pledge card that they could keep. A poster stating, “Before you speak, think and be smart; it’s hard to fix a WRINKLED HEART!” was hung in the school hallway as a reminder that the students should always be Kind Kidz.

NEW PROJECT COMBATS BULLYING BY EDUCATING CHILDREN ON SHOWING KINDNESS TO OTHERS.

JUNIOR AUXILIARY KAT YOUNG ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED AT UAHT

The University of Arkansas Hope-Texarkana recently established the Junior Auxiliary Kat Young Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship is established in honor of Kat Young, one of the charter members of Junior Auxiliary in Hope, Arkansas. “JA has been such a meaningful part of my life, and I am deeply grateful to have the Hope JA scholarship named in my honor,” said Young. The Hope JA Chapter received its charter in 1961. The seven charter members, along with Young, included the late Cornelia Broach, Julia Ellis (1st President), Alice Mae Foster, Marilyn Graves, Hazel Page, and Claire Wright. “Being a charter member of the Hope Chapter of JA was a distinct privilege for me all those years ago, some sixty-nine years ago, but it does feel a bit odd to be the only surviving member of that group of wonderful women. That group of women came together to serve the community in a constructive, organized manner to make life better for those less fortunate than themselves.”

“Some early projects of the Hope Chapter were general welfare projects such as providing food and clothing for needy children, sponsoring designated children at the Arkansas Children’s Colony, Camp Pow Wow (a summer camp for disabled children and adults), bringing the Artmobile for school children from the Arkansas Art Center, organizing and staffing an unused elementary school library, acting as the sponsoring agency for the Arkansas Symphony to bring performances to Hope, providing tutors for students as requested by teachers, and providing scholarships to vo-tech students,” said Young. “The Hope Chapter was also instrumental in creating Hempstead County United Way and the Arts Council, providing board members in the early days of those organization.”

“Many additional projects have developed from the early years, some have grown, and some have been turned over to other groups to manage,” said Young. “But through it all, Hope JA continues to thrive, and our community is better for it. I am so proud of our Chapter today for the work it does and for the members who hold full-time jobs yet still dedicate their time to help others who are less fortunate. Dedication such as this is the key to the success of Junior Auxiliary.”
CHAPTERS AT WORK

ABBEVILLE | LA

The ladies of JA of Abbeville provided Vermilion Parish with its very own “pumpkin patch” titled “Fall Fete” on Sunday, October 7th. Held on the Farm Bureau Grounds in Abbeville, the gates opened at 10am and the grounds were filled with over 300 assorted pumpkins donated by Farm Bureau Agent Ashlynn Broussard. Fall photo props within the “patch” were hand crafted by JA Active Members Brittany Guidry and Allicie Hargrave. A donated fun jump and sponsored train rides were enjoyed by all ages. Also included for a full experience were fall plants for purchase, face painting, games and activities provided by sponsors and raffle items throughout the day. Lastly, everyone enjoyed vendor booths lining the pumpkin patch for specialty items to finish off their day.

JA is grateful for the community support for this event. Over 42 sponsorships were received to increase the success of the Fall Fete. And volunteers from across the Parish came to assist. JA is beyond appreciative of the help and professionalism of these young leaders. Due to the overwhelming support, JA profited $6,000 during the Fall Fete Event! All proceeds will be utilized to increase services to children and families in Vermilion Parish. 

ARKADELPHIA | AR

The JA of Arkadelphia held Camp Kaleidoscope July 24-26 at the Arkadelphia Parks & Recreation Center. Organizers agreed that this year’s camp was a huge success. “I love that Camp Kaleidoscope offers our members an opportunity to play and bond with the precious children of our county,” offered Mallory Stone. Kyla Batson agreed, declaring that “Camp K is a favorite event of mine! The unity it brings between our JA Sisters and the sweet kiddos is an awesome experience!” The week began with representatives from Urban Jungle who taught the children about a variety of exotic animals. They brought birds, a python, a bearded dragon, and even a lemur and the children and members got to pet some of them.

The next evening featured free play and a variety of crafts where the children were able to get in touch with their creative sides. The final evening featured a pizza and pool party at the waterpark. Each evening approximately 70 children, ages 5-12, attended and a record 75 children attended the pizza and pool party on Thursday even as temps soared to 100 degrees. In the end Camp Kaleidoscope was truly a community event according to Leslie Bohn. “This was my first time being part of Camp Kaleidoscope, and I must say it was amazing,” revealed Bohn. “The community businesses donating gifts of water and pizza—even financially—to help these kids have a memorable time makes me proud to call Arkadelphia home!”

BOONVILLE | MS

JA of Booneville hosted their first Mother-Son Carnival on Saturday, October 13 at First Baptist Church. The event was the 2018 Provisional Class Project. This free event allowed mothers and sons an opportunity to dress in their favorite costumes and come spend a few hours playing carnival games. Most importantly, it gave them a chance to enjoy some time together after several moms told us they never got to just spend time with their boys. The boys were awarded tickets at each game booth and given prizes for tickets earned. There was also a costume donated their time for the two hour camp that started at 10am. Any child 1st-5th grade could attend. Admission to attend the camp was a donated new pair of shoes which will go to children in need of Monroe County. During the camp, the children ran drills, taught/refreshed basic skills, and played soccer games. Ten children were able to attend and there was positive feedback from the children and parents.

The Provisional class of the JA of Amory, MS hosted an event called Kicks for Kids on November 10, 2018. Carson Soccer Academy
contest for each of the participants and prizes given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. This is definitely something the Chapter will continue in the future!

**BROOKHAVEN | MS**

On August 11, JA of Brookhaven’s Provisional Class partnered with the Lincoln County Public Library to kick off the new school year and encourage young students to “Fall in Love with the Library.”

In an effort to encourage younger readers to utilize all the library has to offer, a day full of activities geared toward preschool through second grade was planned. Activities included bounce houses, a rock painting station, a story time station, a book mark craft center, and a movie area. Members developed this new project to give children an opportunity to get familiar with the local library and see what it has to offer and to give parents a chance to reconnect with reading programs offered. Member Jennifer Price said “I feel that all kids who have been to the library really love going to pick out their own books. If they wanted to go to the library more than once a week (at school), the public library is a great place to start.” The Chapter has a long-standing commitment to fostering reading and currently has a reading-buddy project in place for preschool and kindergarten students. Following the kick-off event, the ten ladies of the Provisional Class host Saturday Story Time on the second Saturday of each month, where members host small-group readings centered on various themes. This project is on track to serve over 200 children throughout the school year.

**BYRAM-TERRY | MS**

JA of Byram-Terry held their annual germ-free school supply drive for local schools July 28th. The project, formally called “Stuff the Bus” was introduced as “Pack the Pickup” this year in an effort to refresh and rebrand the project for greater community support. This year’s donation drive took place at the local Walmart and Kroger stores.

The committee, led by Life Member Demetra Foster, also implemented a new component for the project, titled Germ BUSTers, which focused on donating germ-free kits to Durham Bus Company to help reduce the spread of germs among school aged children.

During “Meet the Teacher” night at Gary Road Elementary, the Chapter distributed literature to parents and children on the importance of handwashing and the proper way to do so. Teachers were especially delighted to receive the 300 “Gern Buster” bracelets JABT donated that will be used as classroom incentives.

In addition to the 34 germ-free kits donated to the school buses, JABT donated 110 germ-free kits to the intermediate and elementary schools. These schools service approximately 1,500 children in the Byram and Terry communities.

**CLARKSDALE | MS**

The ladies of JA of Clarksdale, MS have a designated fund called “Community Now” that is considered a year-round, ongoing, Service project. This fund was set up so money would be available to help meet immediate needs in the community. The most recent need was building a wheelchair ramp for a 7-year-old handicapped boy, who is permanently bound to a wheelchair. JA of Clarksdale, MS was contacted by the child’s physical therapist with an immediate need for a wheelchair ramp. The child had been abused and abandoned as a baby and was recently adopted by a lady in the community. The mother had to physically carry him from the house to the car and it was beginning to take a toll on her.

JA of Clarksdale reached out to “Dream Riders, Biking for Kids,” a nonprofit organization that specializes in the building of ramps for handicapped children. They were happy to come do the “heavy lifting” and were able to build the wheelchair ramp.

The ladies of JA were also able to provide the child with some new clothes, bibs, socks, and toys. Everyone enjoyed visiting with the family after the labor was done. JA enjoyed partnering with Dream Riders and working together to provide for this child.

The JA of Cleveland presented their Voices of Youth Service project, “A Child’s Dream,” an adaption of the “The Nutcracker” at the Bologna Performing Art Center on Friday, November 30, 2018 at 11:30 a.m. Over 200 children from Bolivar County took part in this production regardless of dance/performance experience. This performance is held to provide an opportunity for all children, regardless of socioeconomic status, to participate in the arts.

The JA of Cleveland began...
and experienced performing on a stage in front of an audience.

In addition to the stage performance, an art contest was held and children were invited to submit illustrations of “A Child’s Dream” with the winning entry used as the tee shirt design and cover for the program. This year’s winner was Shelby Stillions, a third grader at PDS Elementary School.

CLEVELAND | TN
The JA of Cleveland, TN is excited to announce the launch of a new Child Welfare Project for 2018, which they have named “Luanne’s Love.” Luanne’s Love was created in memory of Life member, Luanne Winn, whose advocacy for bettering health and wellness in local schools has become the goal of this project. They have partnered up with their local Boys and Girls Club (BGCOR) to do just that. This new project impacts over 550 students in Bradley County Tennessee. Each month, the ladies of JA participate by creating new lesson plans for elementary and middle school age students. They kicked off their first event with a “Fit for Fall” theme, where they provided students with healthy snacks, talked to them about making healthy food choices, and engaged students in various types of physical fitness activities, including relay races, balloon tennis, and yoga. Monthly themes for the project will change to focus on different areas of wellness, such as heart health, oral health, and mental health to name a few. The BGCOR’s mission is to be the hands that help shape the future of our youth, and JA of Cleveland is now a permanent extension of those hands.

COLLIERVILLE | TN
The JA of Collierville (JAC) collected and distributed school supplies for the elementary schools in their community on the weekend of July 29, 2018. “Stuff the Bus” is a project to gather school supplies for classrooms in the Collierville School System. The project was completed during the Tennessee tax free weekend. Shoppers were able to donate to the cause after they finished their own school supply shopping. All donations were collected in a school bus parked in the Walmart parking lot, boxed and taken to all the local elementary schools in Collierville. Teachers and students were excited to start the year with supplies they desperately needed for their classrooms, including but not limited to: copy paper, glue sticks, tissues and highlighters. In the future JAC hopes to partner with local businesses to sponsor supplies for multiple children as they prepare for school.

COLUMBUS | MS
Over the years, JA of Columbus constantly desired to make a bigger impact in the community that could truly benefit all of Lowndes County, beyond the service of their regular welfare and education programs. A plan was developed to earmark funds raised for such an improvement, waiting for the right opportunity to present itself. Since funds used would be the culmination of many years work, it was imperative to honor past legacies and create something that could be enjoyed for generations to come. In the summer of 2012, the vision became clear when the multi-use Burns Bottom Soccer Complex was completed. Located in Columbus, the complex spans 35 acres, can accommodate both soccer and football, has concession stands, restrooms, a referee room, and a Bark Park for dogs. Initial plans for the complex included a playground, however construction costs exceeded expectations and the playground was placed on hold. Over the next several years the need for the playground became more evident.

With the land already dedicated to a playground and funding being the only hurdle, Past President Shannon Stafford approached the Board of Supervisors on behalf of the Chapter in the fall of 2017, with an offer for the projected costs to be split equally among the county and JA of Columbus. The partnership was approved and in August of 2018, Crown Park became a reality. The 10,000 +/- square foot playground serves children 2-12 years of age with an ADA approved surface to maintain ADA accessibility, components such as a sensory spinning seat, hearing and auditory tools, a submarine talk tube, bright colors and different shapes for visual enjoy-
ment, as well as climbers, stepping stones, swings and slides. With the final costs coming in below budget, the earmarked funds were used to construct an 850+/- square foot pavilion, featuring 4 ADA accessible picnic tables, which can serve as a resting place or host parties and other community events. Without the continued support of sponsors, the active participation in our Annual Charity Ball and commitment of both Life and Active Chapter members, Crown Park would not have been possible.

CORINTH | MS
JA of Corinth hosted “Camp Hollywood”, a three day camp open to the elementary and middle school children with special needs in Corinth and Alcorn County School Districts, June 20th through June 22nd. Camp Hollywood is completely free and specifically for special needs children with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. The Chapter had the privilege of serving an average of 15 children at the camp daily. The children are provided with a wonderful and interactive summer activity that he or she will remember for years to come! Members and parents alike agree the children look forward to attending the camp each year and they feel comfortable being themselves at the camp.

The summer camp is the only one of its kind in the area and provides a safe and interactive atmosphere for the children. Both members and the children look forward to the camp year after year!

CRITTENDEN COUNTY | AR
On August 4, 2018 the JA of Crittenden County held our annual “Back to School Bash.” Through this project, our Chapter works to supply children in our community with the following supplies and services needed to equip them for the new school year: vision and hearing screenings, toothbrushes and dental information, haircuts, healthy snacks and nutrition information, yoga pamphlets, face-painting, games, and more. All of these services and activities were provided for the children for free. A total of 10 community sponsors partnered with our Chapter to help provide these services. They all played an important part in the project.

In addition to our Chapter members and community sponsors, 15 new Provisional members attended to help with the project, as well as NAJA President, Leslie James.

Each child was provided a backpack that contained the school supplies like paper, pencils, pens, erasers, crayons, rulers, folders, scissors, and notebooks. The Chapter supplied approximately 500 backpacks to children in the community who may not have had access to resources needed to properly equip them for school, otherwise. This project has grown exponentially and the Chapter is excited to continue to help the children in the community through this project for years to come.

DESOТО COUNTY | MS
The JA of DeSoto County hosted their first annual 5K, JA’s Will, on November 10th, 2018. The event’s purpose was to bring awareness of the importance of organ donation and how this generous gift can save the lives of others. It was held at the Landers Center in Southaven, MS, and had an after party including food trucks, beer from MS Ale House, music, kid’s area with emergency vehicles to sit in, Kyle Busch’s race truck, as well as multiple vendors participating in the fun. All funds raised went towards supporting a DeSoto County family that has a child either waiting for a transplant or battling a chronic illness. JA’s Will 5K was held in honor of Life Associate member Anna Beeman’s son, Will. Will was diagnosed with Biliary Atresia and liver failure shortly after birth and at the young age of 5 months was blessed with a new liver that saved his life.

EASTERN SHORE | AL
JAES recently held their 3rd annual silent auction in Fairhope, Alabama. This event is their largest fundraiser held annually in the fall. Starting out as a purse auction in a member’s home during the inaugural year, it has now grown by leaps and bounds allowing the profits to more than double. The 2018 event, The White Party, was held at a local brewery on September 21st. Over 200 were in attendance with a live band, many amazing auction items, and even a local live painter! An abundance of community support helped pull this together. Of course, this could not have been done without JAES’s phenomenal members as well. This project has grown so much in such a short time – they have officially outgrown the venue they’ve used the last 2 years. JAES cannot wait to see what 2019 holds for them and their (now not so little) project-that-could.

GREENVILLE | MS
JA of Greenville is currently in its 4th year conducting their Preschool Art Education (PART) project. PART was proposed by the 2013 Provisional class when they realized that local area children could benefit from additional art education. Originally, PART worked with two of the 4 year old classes at Fulwiler Head Start each
month, but this year has expanded to include all six classes of 4 year olds—a total of 120 students. This year there has been an emphasis placed on art from the Delta and Mississippi during each session. The first session introduced children to Walter Anderson and taught them how to paint with watercolors. Each child painted an alphabet block print and was given a watercolor set to take home. Parents have shared about the success of this project and their children’s desire to continue working with watercolor paints at home. Next, the students learned about Jim Henson and Kermit the Frog’s birthplace of Leland, MS. They studied the art of puppetry and each made their own frog puppet to take home and share their new skills and knowledge with friends and family. PART will continue through May of 2019 with lots of fun new sessions ahead.

GRENADA | MS
JA of Grenada accepted a $500 donation from Woodmen Life for the annual “Fill the Tundra” school supply drive.

GULFPORT | MS
On Friday, August 17, JA of Gulfport cut the ribbon on a $20,000 Legacy Project that provides wheelchair beach access. The Long Beach Wheel Way is the first of its kind on the Gulf Coast. The idea for a Legacy Project, submitted by the Chapter a year ago, was to provide a service to the community that would leave a lasting impression over many years. Employees of the Long Beach Public Works Department worked nonstop to make sure the Wheel Way was set up for its official opening. “It has been an honor and privilege to work on this project,” said Alina Goldin, President of JA of Gulfport. “To think this will enable someone to touch sand for the first time and to enjoy all of the beauty the Gulf Coast has to offer. This is a remarkable experience. It’s truly a blessing for our Chapter to be a part of.”

The Wheel Way is nearly 200 feet in length, stretching 90 feet from the parking lot to where the sand meets the water, and has another 106 feet along the water’s edge. Signage and all other materials for the Wheel Way were donated by the Chapter.

HARRISON | AR
JA of Harrison, AR hosted its annual “Back to School Bash” at the Boone County Library as summer came to an end. Nearly 500 children received backpacks and school supplies, haircuts by local stylists, and lunch fresh off the grill compliments of the Elks Lodge. The library offered a dinosaur exhibit where children were able to learn more about the Jurassic era, speak with a paleontologist, and take home a real fossil. Serving children through the “Back to School Bash” is one of the highlights of the year.

Autumn kicked off with an opportunity for members to serve area teenagers. The Chapter hosted the Unaltered Tour, an evening focusing on trials teens face today, from sexuality, to social media, to what living an unaltered (God-centered) life looks like. The event also provided a breakout session for parents and youth leaders. There were nearly 400 teens in attendance, 10 of which gave their lives to Christ. For the cast, JA members, sponsors, and all in attendance, this was a truly meaningful experience. The Chapter looks forward to hosting another stop in 2020.

HOUMA | LA
JA of Houma, LA hosted its 4th annual “Moonlight Masquerade” in August. The Moonlight Masquerade is the Chapter’s yearly fundraiser with all proceeds benefiting numerous service projects assisting children, families, and the elderly in the Houma area. This unique event features a “Dancing with the Stars” entertainment show with local celebrities and professional dancers competing to win a mirror ball trophy. Moonlight Masquerade has grown tremendously since it was created four years ago raising $96,000 since its inception. This year’s event brought more than 500 in attendance and raised $35,000. The local community has been a huge support of Moonlight Masquerade and the mission of Junior Auxiliary.

INDIANOLA | MS
The JA of Indianola kicked off their new Child Welfare Project
this fall, “Feed the Children,” which began as a Provisional Project last year. This project focuses on the nourishment of the minds and bodies of children in the community. In addition to providing meals to elementary and junior high children, this project educates children on topics such as safety, health, and nutrition practices. Since the conception of the project, monthly seminars have included packing healthy lunches, bike safety, trick or treating safety, hand washing, exercising, and dental hygiene. In order to keep the children engaged, the ladies of JA come up with fun creative activities, such as designing their own bike helmets and germ experiments with a black light, that are incorporated into their lesson plan for that month. The Chapter tested this project idea in several community groups. However, after just one visit to a local church, it was apparent not only that they needed us, but that we really needed them too. “These children have this fall, “Feed the Children,” which began as a Provisional Project last year. This project focuses on the nourishment of the minds and bodies of children in the community. In addition to providing meals to elementary and junior high children, this project educates children on topics such as safety, health, and nutrition practices. Since the conception of the project, monthly seminars have included packing healthy lunches, bike safety, trick or treating safety, hand washing, exercising, and dental hygiene. In order to keep the children engaged, the ladies of JA come up with fun creative activities, such as designing their own bike helmets and germ experiments with a black light, that are incorporated into their lesson plan for that month. The Chapter tested this project idea in several community groups. However, after just one visit to a local church, it was apparent not only that they needed us, but that we really needed them too. “These children have

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Arkansas focuses on the nourishment of

beautiful, and more were placed on the

mirrors. “Image and acceptance is a large focus for many adolescent girls. Our goal with this project was to encourage confidence, and raise self-esteem by providing positive messages in a place we knew the girls would see,” said President of the JA of Jackson County, Irina Reynolds.

LAUREL | MS

“Very Special Arts Festival” is a much loved Service project held in conjunction with the Lauren Rogers Museum every fall. It is a day for all special needs and special education children in Jones County and surrounding counties to get together and enjoy music, arts and crafts, and one another. On average, over 300 children are served! JA of Laurel members love the opportunity to work with these children hands-on and to see the smiles on their precious faces as they enjoy their special day.

LOUISVILLE | MS

The JA of Louisville, MS held its project “Just for Kids” on July 28, 2018. Just for Kids is their annual back-to-school supply drive. The Chapter set up outside of the local Walmart and spent roughly 10 hours collecting donations of school supplies. They took any monetary donations received that day and purchased additional items that they felt were in short supply. It was very rewarding for the Chapter to watch as people from the community came together to help them collect supplies. By the end of the day they filled five 30-gallon tubs full of school supplies. Each tub of supplies was then dropped off at one of the elementary or middle schools in the surrounding area before the start of the school year so that the teachers could be prepared to meet any needs once students reported back to school. There are five elementary and middle schools in Winston County that benefited from this drive.

MACON | MS

As the school year ended last June, 87 upcoming fifth graders from Earl Nash Elementary School in Macon and Virgil Jones, Jr. Elementary School in Brooksville, were told they had two books to read over the summer to present a report on when they returned in the fall.

When the students went to the Noxubee County Library to check the books out, they quickly realized the library did not have 87 copies of both books (174 books total). JA of Macon was notified of the shortage of books and immediately wanted to help these students. The ladies of JA believe in the future of Noxubee County and know that reading is essential for success. JA President, Hannah Martin-Bostick said, “We want Noxubee County to thrive and we know that begins with the children. It is our belief that reading is crucial part of that success. Being able to purchase these books for the students is something that JA of Macon is extremely proud of. Placing the books in the hands of each upcoming fifth grader will assist in their academic success.”

The books JA purchased for the student’s summer read are The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe and Bridge to Terabithia. JA of Macon could not have completed this project without the help and support of their Life and Associate members who continue to help serve the community.

MADISON COUNTY | FL

The JA of Madison, FL hosts a golf tournament every year as their biggest finance project. It is an extremely successful project for their Chapter with approximately

WHY I GIVE

HATTIESBURG, MS CHAPTER

THE HATTIESBURG CHAPTER CHOOSES TO ANNUALLY SUPPORT THE NAJA FOUNDATION because we believe in strengthening the mission of “Care Today - Character Tomorrow,” across not only our Chapter, but all JA Chapters. We know that through our annual donation we are supporting the foundation now, so in the future other Chapters are able to develop character in women and children in their own communities. Through the NAJA Foundation, Chapters can receive support to attend the Annual Education Conference or gain funding to support a National Focus or Child Welfare project. Investing in the NAJA Foundation ensures that Junior Auxiliary will continue to impact those in need across all the communities JA serves.

KIM L. WINGO
President - JA of Hattiesburg
22 SPRING 2019 | The Crownlet

100 golfers participating, along with several vendors who attend and donate their products and time. This tournament helps fund the majority of the Service projects throughout the year, bringing in around $24,000 annually; the largest project being holiday meal baskets that are distributed both at Thanksgiving and Christmas. These meal baskets contain everything needed to complete a holiday meal including a turkey and a ham and are dispersed to families in our community who are in need. Each of the Chapter members, including Life, Associate and Active, are able to nominate five families in the community and hand deliver these baskets the week of Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year, the JA Chapter of Madison, Florida distributed over 100 baskets during the holiday season!

MADISON COUNTY | MS
JA of Madison County, MS held its annual “Sick Free Schools Campaign” on Saturday, August 11th. The Norma Carroll Ezell Sick Free Schools Campaign is a Service project that provides teachers in rural Madison County with cleaning supplies to help maintain a healthy classroom throughout the year. The project includes soliciting donations, packaging supply bundles, and delivering to designated schools. Through the generous support of the Madison County School District and the community, eight schools received 15 bundles each, allowing JA of Madison County to supply 3,000 students with cleaning supplies for their classrooms.

MERIDIAN | MS
JA of Meridian partnered with local Girls Scouts to celebrate National Stand Beside Her Week in October by incorporating hands on activities that encouraged participants to be supportive of others, love themselves, and to stand up for each other. Each Girl Scout completed a worksheet titled “5 Things I Love About Myself” and decorated posters with encouraging words about their friends and fellow Girl Scouts. The National Stand Beside Her Movement is a call to action for women and girls to unite our voices in a divisive world and end the comparison, competition and criticism that undermine female relationships. JA of Meridian has a culture of women supporting and encouraging each other in all aspects of life. They believe that together they can propel each other forward by creating an inclusive culture of support, compassion and celebration of each other’s success.

MOUNTAIN HOME | AR
JA of Mountain Home, AR hosts quarterly “Kudos for Kids” parties at Mountain Home Kindergarten. The Kindergarten reached out to JAMH asking if there was any way they could sponsor a celebration day for students who have good attendance and behavior. Since kindergarten students do not receive a report card or similar grades, they have no true reward or incentive. JA of Mountain Home stepped in to throw the kids a “Kudos” party! Each quarter, the Chapter picks a theme, comes up with a craft and games, and provides snacks for the students who had good attendance and behavior. Their first party this year was held November 2nd, and it was a Pirate Party! The kiddos got to assemble and decorate their own eyepatches, play pirate inspired games and enjoy snacks with JA members in attendance. The Chapter really enjoys this project as it allows them to have more child interaction! They love seeing these kids get so excited that they earned a special party!

NATCHEZ | MS
The Natchez, MS Chapter has partnered with their local library, George W. Armstrong Library, to spread awareness of the free services it offers. The Chapter wishes to bring literacy awareness to the community while promoting the many resources available from the library. The JA ladies help to keep the children’s library decorated. They also host events such as “Story Time,” having a character visit and serving snacks.

PARAGOULD | AR
JA of Paragould, AR hosted its 4th annual “Cheers for Charity” event on November 3, 2018. Guests enjoyed the casual event with a great meal, live music by Drive South, a silent auction of items donated by local businesses and supporters, a raffle drawing for a beautiful jewelry set, and a split the pot raffle. Also at the event was an Angel Tree which was adorned with ornaments. Guest were able to choose a child to provide with gifts and necessities to ensure a Merry Christmas. The event was
a record-breaking success raising over $43,000, exceeding the previous year by $13,000. The money helps fund various Service projects during the year. These include game nights for the children at schools in the area, multiple food drives during the school year that support the local backpack programs, and PE in the Park, which offers a safe place for children to enjoy themselves while they’re out of school.

**PASCAGOULA-MOSS POINT | MS**
The JA of Pascagoula-Moss Point hosted its 2nd Annual Uniform Closet in July 2018. Through generous community donations and the assistance of Brass Hanger Cleaners, the ladies of JA invited the communities of Gautier, Pascagoula and Moss Point to the second annual, school-approved uniform distribution. All items were distributed free of charge, sizes available depending on donations received.

“This event is a direct response to a community call to provide assistance to families in need of school uniforms. In 2017, JA of Pascagoula-Moss Point distributed 1,000 individual uniform pieces, which benefitted 200 students, at no expense to the families! We have had a great response this year, and look forward to the event on July 26th,” said Erin Marks, RN, QuadMed, and JA Uniform Closet Chairman. This year, 1,500 pieces were collected and 450 students benefited from the program.

**RANKIN COUNTY | MS**
JA of Rankin County’s BAGSS (Boys and Girls School Supplies) project provided backpacks filled with essential school supplies to hundreds of Rankin County children this fall. JARC members collected school supplies during three “Stuff the Bus” events at local Wal-mart stores. Several community organizations and businesses, including the Outlets of Mississippi, partner with JARC to ensure that Rankin County children in need began the school year with the tools they needed to be successful.

**ROGERS-BENTONVILLE | AR**
JA of Rogers-Bentonville, AR, in conjunction with their Crown Club girls, hosts a “Literacy Night” every October to celebrate National Read for the Record Day. The event is held at Tennie Russell Primary School, which is an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) Pre-K school. ABCSS is a state grant program that targets 3 & 4-year-old children who live in families with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Research shows that children from all backgrounds who attend quality preschool programs are more likely to succeed in school, and that high-quality early learning experiences can help close the achievement gap that can exist within varying socio-economic levels. The evening consisted of crafts and activities based on the book, “Maybe Something Beautiful.” JARB members served dinner to the 240 students and their families, then the kids visited activity stations based on the story. One of the most popular activities was the Book Walk where every child, as well as their siblings, was allowed to choose a new book to take home with them. There was also a “Make Something Beautiful” painting wall where the students worked together to brighten the hallway in their school. The “Literacy Night” project is a favorite with members since it focuses on promoting literacy, which is vital to a child’s future success in school.

**RUSTON | LA**
We all know the old saying, “if you want something done, ask a busy woman to do it.” That’s essentially the advice the City of Ruston took when the idea for a parade came about with no one to make it happen. Ruston is known for its peaches and the annual Louisiana Peach Festival. Various entities and organizations had taken turns promoting and organizing the Peach Festival Parade in years past, but in early summer of 2017, the group committed to organizing the parade that year suddenly backed prior to the event.

The JA of Ruston was offered the opportunity to organize and promote the parade. They immediately recognized the benefits of being an integral part of the largest annual event in their parish. With little time to bring the project together, their hearts were ready and their wills keen to jump in and make it a success.

The Chapter pitched in doing live radio shows, hanging flyers, and recruiting parade participants. Thanks to the JA of Ruston the parade was a huge success. It was an excellent way for the JA ladies to connect further with local organizations and businesses. They had a total profit of over $2,200 that first year – not too bad for only about a month’s worth of work!

Afterwards, Finance Chair, Rose Kebe, proposed that the Chapter organize a Mardi Gras Parade. To their knowledge, Ruston had never had an official Mardi Gras parade, so they planned the very first one!

The Jazzin’ it Up Parade and Festival was born. This night time event offered other festivities in the downtown Railroad Park like live music, food vendors, and crafts activities. It was a huge success and tons of positive feedback was received. The Chapter is proud to not only have found a great new Finance project, but to have also created a fun, family-oriented event for the whole community to enjoy!

**SALINE COUNTY | AR**
JASC hosted a “Kickin’ for the Kids” kickball event on September 29th as part of the Kid Zone at the Bryant Fall Fest organized by the Chamber of Commerce. Eighteen kids participated, playing rousing games of kickball with JA members. These games gave kids an opportunity to engage with their community, learn from JA members and get some fresh air and exercise. These kids made new friends, played together, mastered the rules of kickball, and were awarded medals. JA’s Kickball was one of the only activities for kids that was completely free. The event attracted thousands of people from all over Saline County.

**SLIDELL | LA**
A “Spook”tacular Fundraiser: Costumes were in full effect Friday October 19th for the JAS 1st annual “Backpacks 4 Kids
TANEY COUNTY | MO

JA of Taney County members never realized the impact that their “Tender Critters” project would make until the day when committee members, Sue Kelly and Jeannie Horton, went to Cox Medical Center in Branson to check on supplies, finding only 2 lone stuffed animals. The committee checks on these supplies every week and for the first time they were close to running out. Four days earlier the Branson Duck Boat had capsized and the tragedy on Table Rock Lake had occurred. The families of the 17 people who died and the other survivors were still going through the shock, along with the rest of our community.

This is the reason why JA makes sure that this ER and the Police Departments of Branson and Hollister have “Tender Critters” to give to children in their times of sorrow.

These stuffed animals with little tags around their necks that say “Hope this critter helps brighten your day!” Junior Auxiliary of Taney County - are highly anticipated by the ER staff and volunteers because they give them to children who come to the ER as patients or family visitors - a small gift to help provide comfort during a stressful or traumatic experience. What started as just something a few members wanted to do, became an official project in 2009 with a small budget supplemented by donations from members. This has become one of the Chapter’s longest running projects, growing so much that they now supply over 2000 critters a year. The annual drive relies on Chapter members, friends, neighbors, and their local business partners in this project who hold their own drives and provide drop-off locations to collect donations.

The local media also gets involved with radio, TV, and newspaper publicity. Community members often tell us numerous heart touching stories about the difference these critters have made to a child. Together, our members and our community have supplied over 15,000 Tender Critters since 2009. We pray that we will never have such a huge need at one time again, but we’ll keep the Critter pen full, just in case!

TIPTON COUNTY | TN

JA of Tipton County reached an event landmark, hosting the 10th Annual Fall Shopping Frenzy, “Tipton County’s largest shopping weekend” to benefit children of Tipton County. This annual tradition featured 89 artisans and vendors, and gave shoppers the ability to check off their entire holiday shopping list while supporting the Chapter’s Service projects.

“The Fall Shopping Frenzy takes the entire Chapter to make it a success,” said Chair, Jennifer Hall. “We work hard to organize a beneficial event for our Chapter, and for our vendors, while presenting the community with a quality event.” This year’s event saw an increase in participating vendors and customers. It also serves as an effort to engage Life and Associate members who are, by special invitation, offered free admission to the two-day event. Each year the Chapter highlights the NAJA President’s theme on the event goodie bags. President Leslie James’ theme “Let Your Light Shine Through Love” was festively emblazoned on the red tote that went to the first 100 shoppers each day.

TUPELO | MS

JA of Tupelo is thrilled to host SHINE Summer Camp at Healthworks in Tupelo each summer. The week-long all girls camp is designed to help rising 7th grade girls be prepared to face the challenges of middle school by promoting positive self-esteem through devotions, drama, art, physical exercise,
The girls are divided into small groups, each led by a JA member, with questions designed to help the girls get to know each other, share their concerns about the upcoming year in a safe environment, and spend some time journaling. After time spent eating a nutritious supper, they sing devotional songs led by a JA member. Then, every evening a guest community speaker addresses a different important topic each night, such as: good habits for healthy bodies and minds; pursuing sexual purity; internet safety; personal experiences of desegregation; basic self-defense techniques; and identity, relationships and self-esteem. They end the evening with yoga, learning basic skills to help them stay physically and mentally balanced.

The last day of camp the girls receive the photos that JA has taken throughout the week and make scrapbooks. The day ends with lunch, also teaching the girls some basic manners and table etiquette. By the end of the week the girls are better informed, more confident, and mentally balanced.

The JA of Vicksburg hosted its annual Camp Silvercloud, a camp for special needs children, from July 23-24 at Warner-Tully YMCA Camp. “Camp Silvercloud is intended to give children with special needs a real camp experience,” said Rebecca Flanagan, 2018 chair. “This is our fourth year partnering with the YMCA and Warner-Tully to do just that. We also had area high school students who volunteered as counselors to help make this a very special time for our campers.”

Campers ranged in age from eight to 23 and represented a variety of local schools. They spent two days learning archery, canoeing, making crafts, testing out the latest dance crazes, and more. The camp concluded with everyone’s favorite event: The Camp Silvercloud Talent Show. From puppet shows to solos, everyone’s best moves were on display.

**VICKSBURG | MS**

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**YELL COUNTY | AR**

The ladies of the JA of Yell County have hit the ground running with making an impact on children in our local schools. They have several projects geared toward children in our community that our local schools have adopted! This summer they worked with a local daycare of special needs children during “Water Games Play Day.”

Starting this fall they implemented “Student of the Month” at many of the local schools. The administration at the schools selected the children based on criteria submitted by JA of Yell County. The child was then recognized by a yard sign and special lunch by the ladies of the Chapter along with their community sponsors. The community has really gotten behind this program and the lunches have been provided for the entire year through sponsors. These ladies also do a “Lunch Buddy” project with Kindergarten students at Dardanelle Primary and have made some great mentoring relationships with those students. The Chapter started a Crown Club at Dardanelle High School with 8 young ladies whom have a heart for service. JA is making great steps in our communities, and we are looking forward to the impact all of these ladies will make in the future.

**SCHOLARSHIP SHOUT OUT!**

**JESSICA NELSON**

I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. This work began as a middle school student when I volunteered with the children’s ministry at my church. I began babysitting before I could drive and by college worked as a regular nanny. Once I graduated, my work with children continued as I took a job as a Community Mental Health Case Manager for children ages 2-10 years with mental health and behavioral concerns. I was able to work with my clients and their parents to address these concerns through new skills and resources. I found that parents were willing to make changes for the sake of their child that they may not have been willing to make otherwise. In working with children, I was able to not only impact the future of my clients, but I was also able to shape their family. In shaping their families, I believe I was also shaping the community. To continue my community impact through children and their families, I transitioned from case manager to a school-based Student and Family Support Coordinator. In this role, I supported elementary aged students and their families through resources, emotional support and programming. I loved getting to know families and finding ways to help them access the tools in their community to promote their child’s success. As I became more invested in the Knoxville community and its resources, I began to realize there was a need for child mental health counselors. I witnessed families in need waiting months for their child’s therapy. Oftentimes these families were desperate and the wait created greater hardship on everyone. Furthermore, I had heard that many therapists in Knoxville did not want to work with children. After starting graduate school, I found this to be true. As both my practicum and internship sites, I was the only therapist who wanted to work with children.

The NAJA Graduate Scholarship Program has been such a gift to me. I graduated in December, and I am so happy to have completed the program. After a few weeks of resting, enjoying family, baking lots of tasty food and getting my office ready, I started work in January and will be working exclusively with children between the ages of three and ten to provide them child-centered play therapy. I am very excited and a bit apprehensive about getting started and building a caseload. I want to thank NAJA for sponsoring me over these past two years.
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