From Your NAJA President

ANNOUNCING A NEW NATIONAL FOCUS

The NAJA Board of Directors is excited to announce our new upcoming National Focus for 2015-2017, “Keeping it real in a virtual world”. In today’s world we are being bombarded by unrealistic images and expectations of the world around us. It’s becoming harder to separate the virtual world from the real world, especially for the children. Twitter and Facebook have replaced real social interaction and children are looking at their virtual likes and followers to determine their self-worth. Girls especially are looking at photo-shopped pictures of models and actors on magazine covers, which give them unrealistic expectations of what a healthy body is. For years cyberbullying has been a growing problem and it looks to only keep rising in the future.

As the new Junior Auxiliary year approaches, I know many of our Chapters are looking for new projects to start in the upcoming year and the purpose of the NAJA National Focus is to address specific areas of concern to children and societal trends that affect the welfare of children and families. Chapters are not required to have a National Focus project.

Don’t forget to check out NAJA’s Connect with Kids website at naja.connectwithkids.com. Connect with Kids evidence-based video resources help kids and families connect to the issue at hand. Kids and parents see themselves in the real video stories shared – and discussion questions and activities help to continue the learning. Visit the site and search for stories including Sticks and Stones, which addresses cyberbullying, and short videos on topics including Hi-Tech Cheating, Multi-Tasking, Managing Screen Time and Teens and Online Shopping. You’ll find resources, ideas and approaches for new projects.

I have attended AEC every year since 2008 (my provisional year). And each year I look forward to learning new things, making new connections, sharing great information and getting re-motivated and re-energized for the year ahead. As a community servant, I know it is critical to keep a positive balance in my emotional and educational bank account. AEC is a huge deposit for the year! Sustaining long term service to others requires continuing education, positive relationships, support, and fun!

So, what might you and your Chapter do to truly get the most from attending AEC? Here are some thoughts…

First, your Chapter needs to make it a priority. Invest in your people. Send your current and future Chapter leaders. Invest in them and they will, in turn, invest in your community.

BEFORE YOU GO…use your Bulletin (hard copy or on NAJA web site) to look up and connect with some of your counterparts in other Chapters. Having trouble with recruitment? Thinking about establishing a Crown Club? Do a little homework before you go and you can make amazing connections when you arrive. Make sure you talk openly with your Chapter members, to see if there are specific ideas and problems they would like you to address or pursue when there.

TRAVELING TO AEC…whether you fly or drive to AEC, make an effort to truly travel with your fellow Chapter members. Carpool, share your meals together, bring some games to play during travel. Use your travel time to review the AEC program and finalize who will attend what breakout sessions. Make memories.

WHEN YOU ARE AT AEC…

- Share best practices.
- Put yourself out there. Meet others and share your thoughts.
- Take good notes so you can share ideas and experiences with your Chapter members when you return.
- Have a great time in your down time. Dinners, manicures, dancing, games – whatever is fun for you.
- Find a JA member who might be attending by herself. Bring her into your group. Share your weekend. You might be making a friend for life. At the very least, you are making a connection!

AFTER AEC… Use your travel time home to debrief with your fellow Chapter members. Brainstorm some immediate and short/long term goals.

Lastly, appreciate all that JA is and the impact it has. AEC is a time to learn and to celebrate all that has been achieved and all that lies before us.

Annual Education Conference 2015

HOW TO “GET THE MOST” FROM ATTENDING AEC

DON’T FORGET TO SEND OUT NOTICES FOR DUES

If your Chapter hasn’t begun sending out dues notices to Active and Associate members, now is the time to start! Dues should be collected no later than April 15th. This is a good opportunity for Chapters to re-engage dropped Associate members. Former Associate members can rejoin any time and NAJA can provide a list of these members, along with information on dues owed.

Tips from the Treasurer

Just a friendly reminder…

AEC ANNOUNCEMENT

AEC BANQUET TABLE CENTERPIECES

Calling All Chapters! We need your help to make our banquet tables look festive for AEC! We are asking all Chapters to make a small centerpiece to bring with them to Birmingham. Create a design that would represent your Chapter, your town, and/or region. Please keep the centerpieces no more than 12 inches in diameter and 9 inches in height.

You will need to deliver them on Friday morning when you pick up your bags and t-shirts at Registration. Be sure to label it with your Chapter's name so that the ladies who enjoy it at their table will know who made it! Email Jeanne at najaexecondvp@gmail.com if you have any questions. We can't wait to see all the different centerpieces that you will create!

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Look for updates and important information MONTHLY in the Crown Points E-Newsletter!