MAG AWARD
2016-2017

CHAPTER NAME: Junior Auxiliary of Houma

POSTMARK ON OR BEFORE: MARCH 15

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POPULATION CATEGORY: 30,000

In narrative form describe the composition of your Provisional Class, (age, work status, other) and give an overview of the Provisional Class Project. Guidelines for narrative (750 words or less, DOUBLE SPACED; WRITTEN IN THE SEQUENCE AS LISTED BELOW):

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

1. Name of Project
2. Provisional Training
   - Number of Provisionals in class
   - Date(s) of provisional membership
   - Length of provisional training (timeframe from beginning to end including how often met as well as the time spent for each training session)
3. Was the project developed and implemented by Provisionals? (idea new to Chapter?)
4. How did the Provisional Class determine the need for the project?
5. What was the length of time involved to complete?
6. How was the project funded?
7. Did the entire Provisional Class participate? Any Active Members?
8. Number of hours spent on project
9. Number of people served
10. What impact did this project have on the Provisional Class?
11. Does the Chapter plan to adopt this project?

May submit updates (final data) by April 10

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SUBMIT ANY SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL. THE AWARD WILL BE JUDGED ON THE NARRATIVE ONLY.
MAG Award
JA of Houma

Thanks to the wit of an associate member, our Provisional Class Project was proudly named “Meet the Beat”. Our provisional class began with 24 ladies in May 2016 and ended in November 2016 with 18 new members. Of these 18 members, most of the women are in their 30’s and have successful careers. We met every other Monday in June, July, and August, then met once per month for general meetings. This was a total of 9 meetings with about 18 hours of meeting time.

The project was developed and implemented entirely by provisional members. The idea was unique to the chapter based on events that were occurring around our area at that time. The provisional class of 2016 began meeting on June 13 after our May social. Shortly after our first meeting, there were almost back-to-back police ambush shootings in both Baton Rouge, LA, and Dallas, TX. Because these shootings hit very close to home, we understood the importance of our community and police force working together and building relationships.

Because one of the provisional members was a school counselor at Acadian Elementary, a local school whose children live in areas where police are often looked upon as “the bad guys,” we decided to begin with the children of that school. Another provisional member was married to a Houma Police Officer, so the HPD was recruited as the “beat” in our project. The purpose of the project was to help the community, starting with the children, to build a positive relationship with the local law enforcement and see them as helpers rather than the negative light they are often seen in.
Planning took a couple of months beginning in August and then the project was completed on October 13. The project was funded by the $1000 JA of Houma budget that was set aside for the provisional class. Several provisional members also worked diligently to get donations from Cannata’s, a local grocery store, and the CCFC, Concerned Citizens for the Community.

The project itself only took one afternoon, but all provisional members participated in the preparation for that day. An estimated 90 hours were put into this project. Some of the preparation included meetings with HPD Chief Dana Coleman, ordering supplies for goody bags that would be given out to students, preparing all 130 bags, ordering refreshments from Cannata’s, and securing a photo booth and other supplies and volunteers for that day.

The afternoon ended up being perfect. Only a handful of provisional members were unable to attend the event due to previous obligations. Many police officers, including Chief Coleman, showed up and were super excited to meet and play with the students. The weather was nice with a slight breeze that felt wonderful under the shade of the oak trees behind Acadian Elementary. It can be daunting to think about keeping 130 students calm and under control, but they ended up being so appreciative of the time with the officers that we had absolutely no behavior issues with the children...or adults!

The activities of the day included a kickball tournament (students vs. law enforcement), football toss, rock painting, temporary tattoos, card making, and, of course, enjoying tasty refreshments!! Although all of these activities were great, the favorite by far was the photo
booth. The children truly enjoyed being in the presence of these positive role models, and all involved had an absolute blast.

Although the project was meant to impact the children, the adults involved received the biggest lesson of all: the importance of coming together as a community in a positive way. Because of the appreciation and the excitement the children showed, there were very few dry eyes in the crowd. Out of the 130 children that participated, two stand out the most. These two had experienced their fathers being arrested by local officers and understandably had negative feelings about this project. They were given the choice to sit out, but thankfully on the day of the project, they decided to participate and were able to build lifelong relationships with some of the officers. I would say it was a successful day!

As the Provisional Class of 2016, we plan on putting our project up for adoption. We would like it to grow bigger and eventually include our entire community with the addition of the Terrebonne Parish Sheriff’s Office and Louisiana State Police. We look forward to nurturing this project and seeing the impact it will continue to have on our community.