Chapter Name
Junior Auxiliary of Russellville

Submitted by Name and Email Address
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Chapter Address
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Education Chairman
Child Welfare Chairs: Brandie Griffin & Cara Knight

Population Category
15,000-29,999

Name of Project
CASA Teen Life Skills

Cost of Project
100.00

Number of Active Members Involved
25

Number of Active Chapter Members
Number of People Served
40

Description of Need for Project
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Project Summary
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Sent from National Association of Junior Auxiliaries, Inc.
Description of Need for Project:

This project was submitted to us by the local Department of Human Services (DHS) Office and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), dubbed Project Life Skills. These organizations reached out to partner with JA of Russellville because they realized the need for the project was more than they could provide.
Project Summary:

This project involves not only DHS and CASA, but we have enlisted members of chapter, as well as the local community to provide monthly classes to educate teens in foster care about life skills they will need when they age out of foster care. Each month, between 10-20 teens’ ages 13-18 attend classes on a rotating basis. There are approximately 40 teens total who have attended classes, based on their availability, as well as logistics, such as rides. These classes started in September and have covered topics DHS wanted their teens to receive information about to prepare them for life after they age out of foster care. We started with plans after high school, such a college, trade school, military, etc, led by two members who work in higher education. In October, we had a class on alcohol education and safety taught by a police officer, along with personal safety taught by a local martial arts instructor. In November, we did a cooking demonstration and gave them a cookbook of inexpensive, easy, nutritious recipes, along with a talk from a nutritionist about eating well. The January class was dedicated to working, from taxes and W2’s, to resume workshops, and a talk from a local career advisor about students can market themselves for jobs and a job interview simulation. In February, we covered banking taught by a life member who is a VP of a local bank, then played a budget game, where the winners got a payday candy bar for ending up with a positive balance and those that ended up in the negative balance ended up in a “crunch”. The March class is going to be about the teens taking care of themselves, from a demonstration from a yoga instructor, skincare and haircare tips, relaxation and meditation, and general well-being. Topics to be covered the rest of the year, as determined by the social worker from DHS include sex trafficking, reproductive health, dental health, resources available to the teens after they graduate, such as housing assistance and the
local support organizations, capped off in June with a “graduation” party, where we will take the teens shopping for a professional outfit and finish with dinner at an adjoining pizza place.

The students participating in the courses are from four area counties served by the teen liaison with which we coordinate this project. The number of Active Chapter members participating in this project varies, but we have had success with involving the entire Child Welfare Committee, as well as chapter members outside of this committee. Because we are such diverse group of women, we have been able to include spouses, friends, colleagues, and life members to assist with the classes. Each month, the hours spent developing the classes varies due to the content, but a large majority is spent contacting speakers and ensuring the content delivered is precisely what the DHS coordinator has in mind. This project is in its pilot year, with 12 sessions, starting in September, running through August. Meeting the third Monday every month, this class lasts two hours. Though the number of people served is small, we are looking at lasting impact. We hope the intensive skills each teen learns will be beneficial for these students when they leave foster care and go out on their own. Because many of these teens have been in group homes for a majority of their time in foster care, we hope teaching them basic personal safety, financial literacy, and start encouraging them to think about life after high school, will allow these students to reach their full potential, regardless of what that looks like for each of them.