CHAPTER NAME: Indian Avenue & Taney County Jr.

CHAPTER ADDRESS:  
P.O. Box 8162
Hollister, MO 65673

POPULATION CATEGORY: Under 15,000

NAME OF PROJECT: Santa Gift House

CATEGORY: (Check One)  (A)  (B) X

TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICE GIVEN BY MEMBERS: 60

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP OF CHAPTER: 33

NUMBER OF MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: 20

PURPOSE OF PROJECT: The purpose is to build a relationship between JA members and the children of the community and help the children understand and appreciate the joy of giving.

COST OF PROJECT: Budget $200 per year

NUMBER OF PERSONS SERVED: 215

DESCRIBE THE PROJECT IN NARRATIVE FORM INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION (1000 WORDS OR LESS, DOUBLE SPACED; WRITTEN IN THE SEQUENCE AS LISTED BELOW): Send one digital photo per entry either email or on disc.

1. HOW YOUR CHAPTER DISCOVERED THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT
2. PLANNING AND PREPARATION INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING THIS PROJECT
3. HOW AND WHEN PROJECT WAS BEGUN/AMOUNT OF TIME TO COMPLETE PROJECT
4. HOW MEMBERS WERE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT
5. WHAT THE PROJECT ACHIEVED/DID IT MEET THE NEED
6. PLANS FOR FUTURE WORK WITH THIS PROJECT

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SUBMIT ANY SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL. THE AWARD WILL BE JUDGED ON THE NARRATIVE ONLY.
Junior Auxiliary of Taney County, Inc.

Martha Wise Award

Junior Auxiliary of Taney County, Inc. would like to tell you about our project, Santa's Gift House, and would like to be considered for the Martha Wise Award.

In 2010 JA members began discussing the possibility of a Santa’s Gift House. Many of the members had been involved in similar activities in the community, but noticed that they were no longer being done. This prompted them to take this on as one of the JATC projects. They felt that Santa's Gift House had a wonderful potential to build relationships between the JA members and the children of the community. They also hoped to help the community children understand and appreciate the joy of giving. We have been hosting Santa’s Gift House ever since that time. The project grows every year and we love the way it connects us to the community so much so that in 2016 we added a second Santa's Gift House in the Bradleyville Schools. We reached out to 215 children this year.

Planning and preparations for Santa's Gift House begins each May with identifying gifts, acquiring the materials, and arranging "workshop" events. We host 12 or more workshops for our members to participate in starting in May and running through November and make over 1400 gifts per year. This year 26 of our members were involved in this project. Some made gifts at home, others attended workshops, and almost all helped out on the day of Santa's Gift House logging approximately 600 service hours.

The day of Santa's Gift House is a special time for all of us here at JATC. Every year we provide 4 gifts for a small charge of 50 cents a gift. Personal shoppers (members of JATC) are provided for each child attending to help them choose a gift for mom, dad, siblings, teachers, etc. We also have members who help wrap each gift. The setting of the whole event is truly a Christmas Wonderland. Santa is there and each child can sit on his lap and tell him their Christmas list and receive a free book. Other members are on hand to take photos and parents are presented with a free photo. We also provide a craft table for the children to make their own special Christmas craft and members make special snacks for the children and their parents. Parents are almost as excited as the children when they see all the items JA members have donated to help with their Christmas needs.
We here at JATC feel that Santa’s Gift House has definitely achieved what we hoped it would achieve. We see the joy in the children’s faces as they choose each gift, and the joy in the parents and children alike as they make their crafts and have their photos taken with Santa. It is wonderful to be there watching each child as they contemplate each purchase they want to make and see them pull out their pennies and dimes to pay for their gifts. We all feel that we have achieved our goal of helping the children learn the joy of giving on this very special day.

Santa’s Gift House is a project that JATC hopes to continue for many years to come. Members are already hard at work creating new gifts for next year’s event. Every year we send out flyers to the schools, submit articles to multiple newspapers in the area, and do live radio spots to help promote this event. We hope that we can continue to reach more children in the area in the years to come. We have already expanded to two locations and may add another Santa’s Gift House location in the future to make it easier for the children to attend this function. New ideas are sure to come about as we launch this project for another year. The one thing that won’t change is the joy we feel as we see the children learn about the joy of giving.