Chapter Name
Junior Auxiliary of Abbeville, LA

Submitted by Name and Email Address
Megan Landry-Lalande meganangelle1@yahoo.com

Address
PO Box 1404
Abbeville, LA
70510

Name of project
Giving Grace

Total membership of Chapter
58

Number of members participating
35

Number of children served
3

Total hours served by members
65

Essay
Teachers have fulfilling occupations as they touch the lives of children; some of these children need an adult as many feel neglect, abuse or loneliness. They give time, energy, love, sacrifice and even at times, money out of their pockets to assist the children whom they care for each year. In our community, our teachers give a lot to their pupils and in one situation, a teacher gave a home.

Our Chapter annually receives applications for a Child Welfare family that needs a "hand up" in our community and this year our family was in need of not just materialistic requirements but more so, coping assistance and emotional support. An educator with one child and tireless efforts to conceive more, was provided an opportunity to take in a set of siblings.

Back story of our sweet family: Our adopted Mom (let’s call her Glory), has an Aunt who babysits two adorable children; when their mom could not get a ride to pick them up in the afternoons, Glory would take in those children and have “sleepovers”. After many sleepovers, Glory offered to keep the children if they were too much trouble for the mother...and the mother agreed without a second thought.

With uncertainty of how to provide all the essentials, a family of three quickly became a family of five and consequently, JA of Abbeville quickly stepped in and stepped up to fill the void where needed and soon realized that our better efforts could be utilized to give our new friends a little grace. Each month our generous Chapter members team up to provide a meal to our family so that they can continue to build their bond as a new family. All classes of membership are encouraged to provide either gift cards for the family to have a night out or a home-cooked meal for the family to enjoy a night in. Additionally, members provide inspirational cards, family games, activities and more for enjoyment. Along with the meals and gifts, the Giving Grace Committee personally delivers the meal and spends time with
the family checking in, doing activities with the children, giving mom and dad some quiet
time, having one-on-one with Mom when she needs to deflate and seek advice and ensuring
all is well. Every second Monday of the month, the children answer the door and screech
“It's our JA Family!” which is a heartwarming feeling to our members. Our grateful “Giving
Grace” family returns the love by sending drawings, thank you cards and home videos to
showcase their love and gratitude to our Chapter.
Upon Glory taking in these two rambunctious children, she learned that neither had ever
been enrolled in school. She soon enrolled both children into the school in which she
taught and soon noticed they were immensely behind on their communication and life
skills. To assist with this deficiency, our members became “pen pals” with the children. By
giving additional communication and love, our members assist all three children with
developing writing skills, communication skills and unknowingly it has becoming a
building block for a mutually beneficial bond. These efforts have ensured that all members
feel connected to our family and this project which has enhanced its success.
Additional efforts within the year have been:

- Tickets to Acadian Village to view the Christmas lights as a family and take pictures
  with Santa. (this was their first outing as a family and the memories made were
  beyond our dreams.)
- Clothing and shoes to assist with the growing children as they were taken in with
  only the clothes on their backs.
- Provided resources and referred a trained/certified counselor to work with the
  family at no cost.
- Provided Christmas gift assistance for all three (3) children through our Chapter’s
  Children’s Treasures service project.
As we keep this year’s NAJA theme in mind, we are truly “Letting our Light Shine through Love” with our Giving Grace family. This family, who had their world surprisingly turned upside down with two new children in Pre-K and Kindergarten, are breathing a little easier these days thanks to our compassionate members. Glory repetitively expresses her appreciation to our Chapter as it has helped ease the transition of her sweet family and bridges a gap when needs arise throughout the year. Because of JA and their desire to give grace, our sweet family is able to breathe a little easier and enjoy the growth in their hearts and home.