Chapter Name
Junior Auxiliary of Slidell

Submitted by Name and Email Address
Karen Durany Gould; rwkdgould@gmail.com

Chapter Address
P.O. Box 1486
Slidell, LA
70459

Education Chairman
Hilary Toups

Population Category
15,000-29,999

Name of Project
Spelling Bee

Cost of Project
1400.00

Number of Active Members Involved
15

Number of Active Chapter Members
33
Number of People Served
48

Description of Need for Project
Norma-DeLong-I.docx

Digital Photo
spelling-bee-photo.jpg

Project Summary
Norma-DeLong-II-1.docx

Project Evaluation
Norma-DeLong-III.docx

Sent from National Association of Junior Auxiliaries, Inc.
The Spelling Bee Project debuted because a few ladies love children and love spelling. It embodies the Junior Auxiliary mission of helping children and supporting our community. Students take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen their vocabulary and their use of the English language. Confidence builds as they compete in front of a large audience of family, friends, and community leaders. The attendees enjoy watching many of our talented students rise to the competition to be the spelling bee champ!
Junior Auxiliary of Slidell sponsors two schools for the Scripps’ National Spelling bee. The spelling bee project begins in August and culminates at the competition in April. Each school has a representative who assists the Junior Auxiliary chairperson set dates for the spelling bee activities and acquire the parent’s permission to participate. After the dates are set and permission slips received, the chairperson meets with the school principals to review the flow of the event and the school’s responsibility for organizing the facility. The chairperson then registers and pays for the cost for each school to participate. During a committee meeting, details are agreed upon and tasks are assigned. These tasks include purchasing awards, making certificates, emailing invitations to local political and school board officials, obtaining judges and an emcee, and designing a publicity campaign. Publicity outlets include local newspapers, local cable school broadcasting channel, social media, and flyers and programs. Creating “buzz” for the Bee ultimately decides the number of attendees, which makes publicity a critical task. Purchasing refreshments for the After-Bee Reception is the final task.

Showing the movie *Akeelah and the Bee* during a pizza party (Get Your Buzz On at the Bee) at each school launches the flurry of activities surrounding the Spelling Bee. This movie allows the students to gain insight into the workings of a spelling bee and it introduces the participants to the preparation required for the bee. Junior Auxiliary members meet the students and initiate the relationships that will develop during the project.

The first practice at each school during October orientates the students to the rules and to helpful study habits. Students then break into groups with Junior Auxiliary
members to practice spelling words. During the second practice, which occurs approximately two weeks later, the study groups train prior to participating in a mock practice bee.

After much preparation, the Junior Auxiliary hosts spelling bees at each of the two schools. Two former school educators volunteer as our judges, and Doug Mouton, a local newscaster, has been our celebrity pronouncer for the last 7 years. The pinnacle of each event occurs when nine finalists and one champion from each school are selected to attend the regional spelling bee held in New Orleans in March.

After Christmas break, Junior Auxiliary of Slidell hosts a parent meeting. During the meeting, dates and location of the regional bee are discussed, parents' questions are answered, and important finalist information is gathered. Junior Auxiliary of Slidell hosts two combined spelling bee practices prior to the regional spelling bee.

In March, the Junior Auxiliary of Slidell spelling bee chair, as well as active and life and associate members, attend the regional spelling bee. At the bee, the chairperson coordinates with the students as they enter the preliminary rounds. Any students who successfully complete the preliminary rounds advance to the finals. Our commitment is to stay with the students until the last one either spells a word incorrectly or wins.

Junior Auxiliary of Slidell is located in Slidell, Louisiana, which has a population of approximately 28,000 people. Our organization and the community reap the benefits of the 35 women who serve on behalf of our chapter. Nine active members, who served approximately 185 hours to date, comprise the Spelling Bee committee. The spelling bees last approximately two hours and practices and meetings require
about one hour. Fifteen members attend the event. Fifty-two students, ranging in age from 11 – 14, participate in the spelling bee and approximately 500 observers attend the events. The Junior Auxiliary of Slidell member(s) responsible for public relations for the spelling bee committee collects photos and finalist information to submit to the aforementioned outlets.
The students provide positive feedback about the event. Their experiences progress from nervousness to excitement to enjoyment. Junior Auxiliary of Slidell heightens the community impact of this event by inviting all local school board members, local politicians, JAS members, the students' families, and teachers and students of the schools represented. Everyone is welcomed. The participants are proud to represent their schools. The Spelling Bee project also gives the public a glimpse of the talents and abilities of some of our outstanding students in the Slidell community.

This project can easily be implemented in other communities. Volunteers, a small amount of financial funding, and commitment from the schools are the three prongs needed to support this event. Junior Auxiliary of Slidell enjoys the branding that this event creates. More importantly, the Spelling Bee Project provides an outlet in which our students can demonstrate their talents, represent their schools, and develop their skills. When students progress to the regional level of the spelling bee, and possibly to the national level, they proudly represent Slidell. Providing a platform on which the students learn study concepts, develop poise, have fun, and cultivate relationships allows their confidence to blossom.

Because of the systematization of the project, expansion is our focus. Another school has shown interest in participating and we will reach out to them in the spring. Ultimately, we hope to develop in the schools a level of interest that will compel the school sponsors or PTA’s to carry on the tradition of the spelling bees.

The Spelling Bee Project remains an approved project for the 2019-2020 year.