Betty Robbins Member of the Year Award Submission

Natalie Bright, DeSoto County Chapter Nominee

In a world that puts an ever-increasing demand on women, finding time and energy to make a difference in the community can feel like a battle. However, Natalie Bright seems to have found a comfortable home right on the front lines. In fact, that is how all who have worked with her describe her: “soldier,” “trailblazer,” “spearheading the effort,” “fighting the good fight.” Natalie is a working mother with two children and has been volunteering her entire adult life. She has been recognized by numerous outlets for her work with community organizations like the YMCA, where she served on the Board of Directors, the Mississippi Wildlife Rehab Board, and Leadership DeSoto. Natalie has been a leading engineer for DeSoto Dyslexia Council where she led a summit for local parents and teachers to find resources and learn together about dyslexia education and experiences. Natalie was even awarded the Presidential Volunteer Award; but she says it was her involvement with Junior Auxiliary that gave her the vehicle she craved to truly make lasting differences.

When she joined in 2011 Natalie immediately jumped in to numerous initiatives, serving on committees and volunteering multiple hours for service projects such as JA Celebrates You, Adopt-a-School, Girls U, Jump Back to School, and Healthy Today-Healthy Tomorrow. Natalie created and began a new service project called Character Cabins. These “cabins” are small community library cabins that allow people access to children’s books in the most underserved neighborhoods. A passion project of hers, Natalie regularly visits and helps maintain these structures and takes the time to connect to people in the area. On one occasion Natalie met a woman living near a cabin who was struggling with her health in a home with no air conditioning. Natalie reached out to the chapter and was able to personally deliver a portable air conditioner to this woman in need.

In addition to pouring herself into service projects, Natalie has volunteered countless hours as a chapter officer. In only her second year with Junior Auxiliary Natalie took on the role of sponsorship chairman for the chapter’s fundraising efforts, securing $40,000+ in sponsorship donations. The following year she was chairman for the entire fundraising event, and then moved on to roles as corresponding secretary and recording secretary as she simultaneously chaired numerous committees. She also served three times on the nominations committee.

Currently Natalie is a life associate member and serves on the chapter board as life associate representative. Never one to step back when she sees a need, Natalie is currently spearheading yet another new initiative: JA’s Will, a local 5K and family fun run. This event will highlight children needing organ donation and will adopt a local family each year to benefit.

The DeSoto County chapter of Junior Auxiliary is proud of our friend and shining example of a volunteer with a servant’s heart, Natalie Bright. We eagerly ask for your consideration of her as the recipient of the Betty Roberts Volunteer of the Year Award.