

## INDIVIDUAL PROJECT/ PROGRAM/ EVENT 2011-2012:

**Note: Any program since last year's deadline is eligible.**

**Category: (Please circle or highlight the category for which this program is being submitted.)**

- Women – Education – Community – International – Cultural – Diversity – Public Policy

**Title:** The Schenectady County Literacy Event

Part I:

**Other community groups** involved, if any (list):(5 points) AAUW worked with Things of My Very Own, Inc. ✓

**Number of members** involved in **planning or putting on** the program (5 points) 12 ✓

**Number of nonmembers** involved in the program (5 points) 1 ✓

**Number of members who attended or benefitted** (5 points) 1 ✓

**Number of nonmembers** who attended or benefitted (5 points) over 50 Families ✓

**Number of new members** who joined (if any)(5 points) 0

Part II:

**Describe** your project/ program/ event in 75-150 **words**. Be sure to include:

how the project addressed **AAUW's mission** (15 points)

**branch goals** in doing this program (10 points)

**specific action steps** in planning this program (15 points)

steps taken for **community visibility** (Attach newsletter and newspaper articles.)(10 points)

measurable **impact on the community** (10 points)

**lessons learned** for future programs/ projects/ events (10 points)

**Attach copies** of newsletter and newspaper articles about this project/ program/ event.

(No more than 4 pages maximum)

**Mail or email** the original of your entire application with supporting materials to:

- Peggy Kelland, AAUW-NYS Program Vice President

- 13 Susan Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

smkell45@aol.com

Questions? (845)297-0507

## **Schenectady Branch AAUW Project**

### ***The Schenectady County Literacy Event***

#### **How this program addressed AAUW's mission:**

"The Schenectady County Literacy Event" provided children the opportunity to celebrate their writing skills. Each child wrote their own story, illustrated it and then submitted their story to be bound professionally into a hardcover book. After the stories were written, the children participated in games in which every child was a winner. What made this program unique was that the children who participated worked with their parents, foster parents or guardians. Most of the children were from low-income families. Things of My Very Own, Inc.(TOMVO), "provides impoverished children that are victims of abuse, and/or neglect and those in at-risk situations with the basic necessities to ensure a successful retreat to safety" organized this event. Members of our branch helped children come up with ideas for their book, provided snacks and was in charge of the games the children played after their book was written and illustrated.

#### **The branch goals met in doing this project included**

- *Focusing on women and children's issues* – Celebrating a child's writing is one way to promote the skills needed for future success. Events such as this fosters the development of a child's self-confidence and self-esteem. With these in place, according to TOMVO, the goal is the reduction in the chances of future victimization.
- *Community Outreach* – This program was held on the lower level of Proctors' Theater in downtown Schenectady. More than 50 **families** attended.  
Since this organization provides the basic necessities to children that need to be immediately removed from their homes, often without having time to pack pajamas, a toothbrush, school supplies or even diapers for infants, members of the Diverse Topics Interest Group collected donations for those children.
- *Visibility* – Our branch was recognized and thanked by Things of My Very Own, Inc. We were the only volunteers along with the director of the organization that ran the entire event.

#### **Action Steps in planning this program**

- The director of Things of My Very Own spoke at one of our interest groups.
- Members wanted to do more for this amazing organization and volunteers were recruited for this event.
- Training for our members in filling out forms that would be sent to the publishing company was done prior to the children arriving.
- Games were organized and donated prizes were collected from local stores.

#### **Action Steps taken for community visibility**

- A flyer (see attached) was sent home with children from inner-city schools.

- Phone calls were made to families associated with TOMVO.
- AAUW volunteers were requested at an interest group meeting, though an e-mail and member-to-member conversations. We weren't able to have an article in our newsletter prior to the event since we were not notified of the event until after our newsletter had been sent out. A follow-up paragraph was in the Presidents' Message of our December/January newsletter.

#### **Measureable impact on the community**

- Over 50 families participated
- The joy on the children's faces seeing their stories take shape and the pride in the parents and guardians was not statically measurable but DEFINITELY visually apparent.

#### **Lesson Learned**

Interacting with the children and their families made all the volunteers realize how worthwhile our involvement was in making this event happen. All our volunteers wanted to do more for this organization.

## Co-Presidents' Message



If Fall seems to be the AAUW busy season, it is a busy-ness filled with community service and citizenship involvement. There are many members to thank for involvement in candidate forums, promoting voting for elementary students, putting up the AAUW signs and stickers "The Power of One Vote – Your Vote Makes A Difference", and serving as poll information collection volunteers for the Capital District Election Service. Our member volunteers included Ellen Auerbach, Maxine Borom, Julie Burgess, Robin Eddy, Jeannette Gerlaugh, Ann Hicks, Helen MacDonald, Jennie Pennington, Dottie Potochnik, Mary Pritchard, Carol Reynolds, Ellie Rowland, Elise Russo, Shellie van derZee, Toni Walsh, Linda Ward, and Linda Zuckerman. Our thanks to each of you.

The approach of the holiday season brings more opportunities for community service to organizations that serve those in need, especially children. In addition to the Diversity's Group's donation of pajamas and coats to "Things of My Very Own", an organization that provides necessities to children who are removed from unsafe homes, some of our AAUW members volunteered at their Schenectady County Literacy Event for inner city children. The organization truly appreciated the help and wanted to thank Betsy Forkas, Robin Eddy, Arlene Maranville, Mary Pritchard, Lois Rowe, Shellie van der Zee, Toni Walsh and Linda Zuckerman.

Our organization will be assisting Girls, Inc. in December with presents and gift wrapping. (See page 3) and will offer donations of children's holiday items for flood relief in the Schoharie Valley and Rotterdam. If you would like to donate items, please bring them to the December luncheon. Thank you in advance for your contributions.

At the December luncheon, our AAUW Schenectady Branch will hold a silent auction to raise money for the Legal Advocacy Fund and the Educational Opportunities Fund. If you or your study group has an item to be auctioned, please let Jennie or Robin know. As you may remember from the last *Visions*, each item or a collection of items should have a value of at least \$15. Of course, remember to make your reservation for the luncheon by sending in your check for \$22 to Ellen Auerbach, 848 Beech Drive Niskayuna, NY 12309

Those of us who participated in the tour of the UAlbany Nanotechnology Facility have a much better understanding of why our area is a leader in the development and manufacture of technology. We are grateful to the facility for their hospitality. And it was fun to have lunch as a group. Since *Visions* will not be published again before the January program, we remind you that the January program will be held at Proctor's Theatre on Wednesday evening, January 18, 2012, at 7 PM. The program will include a tour of the facility and discussion of the future of Proctor's by Philip Morris, CEO of Proctor's Theatre.

As the 2011 comes to a close, consider donating to one of the AAUW funds (pg. 9 in the directory). Your support does make a difference in promotion equity for women and girls!

And as we approach the holiday season, we remain grateful for your wonderful ideas and your support as we work to make the AAUW mission relevant for our own community. It is a pleasure to be part of this organization. Best wishes to each of you for a meaningful and relaxing holiday.

Robin Eddy ([reddy5@nycap.rr.com](mailto:reddy5@nycap.rr.com)) and Jennie Pennington ([pennington2276@cs.com](mailto:pennington2276@cs.com))

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### GIRLS, INC AND HOLIDAY VOLUNTEERING

Girls, Inc., is a national organization that helps girls become healthy, educated, and independent – *strong, smart, and bold*. This organization helps girls overcome economic, social, and gender barriers by providing life-changing programs and experiences. Their award-winning, research-based programs cover a broad range of topics including, STEM, education, health, nutrition, pregnancy, and drug use prevention, media, economic literacy, career explorations, and many more.

Girls, Inc., of the Greater Capital Region is comprised of two centers: Albany and Schenectady. This group has been in operation over 75 years working to meet the developmental and emotional needs of girls ages 5-18. Over 200 girls each day are served in free after-school programs, including *Operation SMART (Science, Math, And Relevant Technology)*, at both centers.

Many local corporate, academic, and community organizations partner with Girls, Inc., to support the work they do. Wouldn't it be wonderful for members of the Schenectady Branch of AAUW to also volunteer their talents and expertise to these girls?

AAUW's mission: *AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research* is directly in line with the work of Girls, Inc. To explore renewing and strengthening Schenectady AAUW's partnership with Girls, Inc., we can begin by volunteering to help the girls this holiday season.--Elise Russo

# 2011 Schenectady County Literacy Event

## **Things of My Very Own, Inc.**

A 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation that provides immediate and ongoing services to children that have experienced extensive abuse and/or neglect and those in at-risk situations.

**Saturday November 12th**

**10am-1pm**

**Pre-Registration is Required**

Please join us in the largest literacy event in the Capital Region. On November 12th children ages 4-21 will have the opportunity to write an original story or compilation of artwork. Things of My Very Own, Inc. will have each book bound into hardcover form for the child to keep as memory of the event.

- ⇒ A parent or guardian must be in attendance during the duration of the event.
- ⇒ Snacks and beverages will be served.
- ⇒ Star Wars Characters will be onsite for photo opportunities with the children and to encourage their educational experience. Feel free to bring a camera.
- ⇒ Carnival style games and prizes !
- ⇒ Donations of \$12 per family is appreciated. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds.



**Games  
And Prizes**

**OUR SPONSORS**

**Walmart** 



**100% of proceeds will go directly to providing services  
to children that have experienced abuse and/or neglect.**

**LOCATION:**

Proctors Theater  
Hurst Education Center  
432 State Street Schenectady

**PRE REGISTRATION REQUIRED!!!**

You may pre register by calling  
630-6137

For more information please visit [www.tomvo.org](http://www.tomvo.org)