Special to The Herald

Members of the Junior Auxiliary of Yazoo City recently attended the area meeting of the National Association of Junior Auxiliaries held in Ridgeland.
Hundreds of women heard from two outstanding contributors to the fields of health and service, which included Dr. Rick deShazo's "The Latest Statistics Give Me Panic Attacks" and Maggie Wade's "Rooted in Service."
" The question and answering session was really helpful," said Dana Rivers, Yazoo chapter president. "Maggie Wade was really exhilarating and had tons of insightful suggestions when working with children."
This is the time of year when JA chapter programs really kick into gear, as students and teachers return to the classroom after summer break. This year's area meeting focused on getting members energized and ready to rise to the challenges facing our communities and our chapters. From leadership responsibilities and chapter management to organization, training, support and more, JA members walked away with a better understanding about the business side of leadership and a chapter's financial and legal risks.
In addition, keynote speaker Dr. Rick deShazo, professor of medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the host of Mississippi Public Broadcasting's "Southern Remedy" and TV series, "Mississippi's Big Problem," motivated JA attendees to take on the growing problem of childhood obesity. Dr. deShazo shared statistics with volunteers and encouraged them to create service projects that would raise awareness about the health risks associated with this alarming trend. Afterward, motivational speaker and acclaimed TV reporter Maggie Wade lent her perspective on how to blend professional experience and insight with volunteerism to meet the needs of children, the disadvantaged, and the disabled. The embodiment of her topic "Rooted in Service," Wade inspired and challenged volunteers to guide our children to reach for the stars.
NAJA hosts area meetings across the Southeast each year to offer training and assistance to the organization's 101 chapters.
"The training events for our members and community leaders help strengthen chapters and make them more of a dynamic organization in each of the community's they serve," said Johnnie Tolleson, NAJA President. "This year, we wanted not only to inspire and motivate our volunteers, but we also wanted to inform them about serious issues that affect their communities and chapters."
The mission of the National Association of Junior Auxiliaries is to provide support, resources, and educational, leadership, cultural, and healthcare training for NAJA members in order to optimize community service by NAJA chapters. These educational meetings for members give them the resources to be better community volunteers.
In local JA news, Brittany Ketchum was selected as Member of the Month for her direction of a Reading is Fundamental book distribution at Bentonia Gibbs Elementary School.