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Jack and Jill Foundation, Inc. Partners with Birmingham (AL) Chapter of The Links, Inc.'s (JAMS) Program

Aug 22, 2013 Birmingham Times Lifestyle 0

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The Birmingham (AL) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated was awarded a 2013 Independent Grant of \$5,000 for the funding of their Joining Artists and Music in the Schools (JAMS) program by Jack and Jill of America Foundation, Inc.

Music education is more than just introducing students to beats, notes and songs. Instead, it completely transforms a child's mind and opens up endless possibilities to their learning potential. Committee members for this Chapter Signature Project, met with the Director of Music for the Birmingham City School District in 2011-12 to brainstorm on ways the Birmingham (AL) Chapter could develop a program that would provide the following: Increase music education and appreciation in the schools; make instruments available to the students and provide peer mentors to assist with instruction; prepare students to make meaningful contributions in the world as performers, teachers and scholars; enrich and engage the broader community through performances and education; improve academic performance; and increase scholarships in higher education. Upon recommendation of the Signature committee, members of the Chapter made a five (5) year commitment to the Birmingham City School District for implementation of the program. The program includes:

- Instructional enhancement, provides external support needed to increase the number of eligible students qualifying for state and local musical competition. This includes solicitation of volunteers or paid assistants to advance the preparation of students.
- The interactive workshops expose students to non-traditional musical experiences. This includes facilitating hands on activities designed to express the many positive ways music helps with individual development.
- Expressive Musical Extravaganza, provides students the opportunity to experience a collaboration of various musical genres which includes short performances by local musical talents.
- During this first pilot year, Summer Scholarships for camps were offered to enhance the school year training and offer more opportunity for personalized instruction; also to encourage non-band students' interest in JAMS.
- The Finale Assembly showcased the culmination of the academic year and celebrated the progression of the band's mastery of musical instruments and performance. Recognition of participants and a reception were part of the first finale event.

The members of the core committee for the JAMS program are: Vanessa Falls, President; Cathy Bradford, Chair; Kim Hitchens, Diann Jackson, Carol Kirby McElderry, Demetrus Taylor, and Tamara Travis.

The Jack and Jill of America Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. which consists of over 200 chapters throughout the United States. Since the Foundation's inception in 1968, chapters have been instrumental in supporting community based organizations that help children and families. The foundation, which is based in Washington, D.C. has distributed millions of dollars to nonprofit organizations all across America, and continues to deepen its vision with Jack and Jill of America, Inc., as the needs of families and children become more complex in the 21st century.

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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