



Birmingham Chapter

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Link Monique Gardner-Witherspoon

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Link Anne Hooks

Link Marva Owens James

Link Jewrette Yovonne Johnson

Link Gloria Kennon

Link Cheryl Anderson Kidd

Link Bobbie Knight

Link Nyya Parson-Hudson

Link Rica Lewis-Payton

Link Deveta Peoples

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Link Shandra Jackson Smith

Link Tamara Jones Travis

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Link Josie Gardner Kirby

Link Juanita O. Hixon

Link Helen Shores Lee

Link Helen M. Lewis

Link Ceola H. Montgomery

Link Danna K. Thornton Owens

Link Dorothy Rogers Porter

Link Barbara S. Shores

PO Box 12071

Birmingham, AL 35202

www.bhamlinksinc.org



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am indeed excited about our new programming year. For 56 years, members of the Birmingham Chapter have served with hearts to uplift and transform the community in which we live. It is an honor to serve as president of the oldest Links' chapter in Alabama. This chapter will continue to not only be a chain of friendship, but a chain of purposeful service.

The motto for our retreat this year was, "**Believe in Better.**" I chose this motto because time after time it has been proven that most people prefer quality over quantity. I am grateful for the quality of commitment and accountability that the dedicated officers and members have given to this volunteer organization.

We will continue to provide transformational programming through our five facets: The Arts, Services to Youth, National Trends and Services, International Trends and Services and Health and Human Services. We have reached the moment in time when the process of transforming lives in the communities we serve is the essential next step in our longstanding commitment to service.

Let us prepare ourselves to make this programming year the best ever because we, the members of the Birmingham (AL) Chapter, "**Believe In Better.**"

Sisterly,

Link Vanessa

38TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Over 3800 Links, Connecting Links and Heir-o-Links convened in Orlando, Florida for the 38th National Assembly. The Committee did a marvelous job in planning the weeklong event and carrying out their plans in magnificent fashion. The National Assembly is a time for members of the Links, Incorporated to learn from each other and examine best practices in community programming. The theme of the 38th National Assembly, Transformational Programs, Impacting Lives, gave focus on how The Links, Incorporated advances and celebrates the work of the organization and determines the future of the community service engagement. The National Assembly is also a time to alert, align and capture the elements of how The Links, Incorporated deploys its best for the organization and the organization's constituencies.



Out of 274 Chapters nationwide and the Bahamas, The Birmingham Chapter was one of 24 chapters that won an award during the Program Luncheon at the 38th National Assembly for its outstanding program through the Services to Youth Facet entitled: *Kiss the Cook- A Link To A Healthy Lifestyle*. This project focused on bringing awareness to and the prevention of childhood obesity. The members of The Birmingham (AL) Chapter recognize the fact that the obesity statistics in the state of Alabama are staggering. Due to the enormous implications of the data the Birmingham Chapter targeted an elementary school with at risk demographics for income and lack of accessibility to healthy lifestyle (nutrition and physical activity). The Services to Youth Facet along with the Health and Human Services Facet's goal was to provide the youth and their parents with ongoing information, instruction, financial assistance and resources to

L-R: Birmingham Chapter President Vanessa Falls, National Vice President Glenda Newell Harris and Southern Area Director Eneid Francis

promote a healthy lifestyle, improve health and prevent obesity.

Other Highlights from the 38th National Assembly included:



2012 Lifetime Achievement Award

This award was given to Dr. Condoleezza Rice, a native of Birmingham, AL. The Lifetime Achievement Award was established to honor those individuals who epitomize the tenets on which The Links, Incorporated was founded – friendship and service- and who have significantly improved the quality of life for those in underserved communities.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice and National President Margot James Copeland

Co-Founders Awards - Civic Luncheon

The Links, Incorporated Co-Founders Awards were established to recognize people who have rendered outstanding service in the areas represented by The Links, Incorporated five program facets. This year's recipients were: Services to Youth, Dr. Freeman Hrabowski III, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; The Arts, Judith Jamison, Artistic Director Emerita, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; National Trends and Services, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, U.S. House of Representatives; International Trends and Services, Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, Director, Smithsonian Museum of African Art; and Health and Human Services, Dr. Vivian Pinn, former Director, Office of Research on Women's Health, National Institutes of Health.

Public Issues Forum:

The Links, Incorporated convened a public issues forum, "Violence in America: It's Impact on our Children, our Community." The discussion featured, Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin, the parents of slain teen Trayvon Martin. Moderated by the Rev. Elaine M. Flake, Greater New York, (NY) Chapter and co-pastor of the Greater Allen A.M.E., Cathedral of New York, the panel featured, the Rev Al Sharpton of MSNBC; Roslyn Brock, Columbia (MD) chapter, national chair of the NAACP; and Val Demings, Orlando (FL) Chapter, the retired Orland police chief.

Community Service Project:

The focus of The Links, Incorporated's 38th National Assembly community Service Project is the basic needs of women and girls in crisis, throughout the mid-Florida area and Haiti. The initiative aims to preserve the dignity of women and girls as they rebuild their lives. One June 29, 2012, members of The Links, Incorporated worked in concert to assemble 10,000 individual survival kits, containing fundamental self-care items- toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, lotion, disposable wipes, panties, hand sanitizer, sanitary napkins, washcloths, deodorant and comb- that are too often not available to those in needs.

Among the attendees at the conference were Birmingham (AL) Chapter members Vanessa Falls, President, Ronda Bell, Carnetta Davis, Marva James, Stephanie Rayborn, and Gretel Webster. Links Ronda Bell and Gretel Webster served on the Logistics Committee for the National Assembly.



BELIEVE IN BETTER

Birmingham Chapter Retreat Recap

Effectively, Communicating Link to Link was the theme for the Saturday, August 25th retreat of the Birmingham Chapter of the Links, Inc.

The meeting got off to a lively start when President Vanessa Falls led the thirty-one (31) members present in a lively line dance to celebrate good times.

Links Mia Cowan and Erica Williams Prewitt helped new members break the ice with veteran members with two fun games. Thanks to

the “pass the ball game”, we now know how Link Janine Pearson Johnson likes her kisses. If you missed the meeting, ask her about it the next time you see her!

Before the retreat, each member was asked to take the Kiersey Temperament Sorter quiz on-line to determine temperament. The Kiersey quiz, along with a simple four question quiz given by Link Marquita Davis helped members see the four different temperaments present in the chapter. Those temperaments are Guardians, Artisans, Idealists and Rationals. In addition, Link Davis showed how this information should help members understand why we are different, learn how to embrace those differences and communicate more effectively after recognizing the differences.

We learned that to increase the chances of chapter success, we must be sensitive to the needs and concerns of all members who each communicate in their own unique way. We must listen to all ideas but realize that the consensus of the organization as a whole is what will be supported.

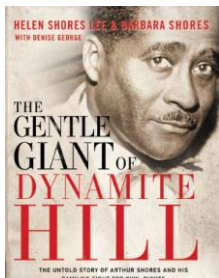
Link Josephine Dantzler, visiting from the Tuscaloosa Chapter, led us in exercises on managing and resolving conflicts. Members were divided in four teams and given hypothetical scenarios and asked if we should stand up, stand down or just let it go when a Links member does not follow protocol or exhibits behavior that is counter to what other members find acceptable. These exercises spurred lively discussion on how to diplomatically diffuse situations that may impede the progress of the organization.

The chapter’s 5 year Strategic Plan was unveiled at Saturday’s retreat. Link Brenda Adams led us through a look at upcoming projects we will work on and projected outcomes. She also encouraged members to be able to articulate our Mission statement to others outside the organization.

After a working lunch, Link Daagye Hendricks presented “Strike-a Pose” fashion show, where various styles of Links t-shirts were modeled. Orders will be placed for shirts that members can wear to various activities in the community. At the end of the retreat, Links members gathered in breakout sessions by Facets to discuss plans for future projects in the areas of Services to Youth, National Trends and Services, The Arts, International Trends and Services and Health and Human Services.



Heir-o-Link Will Travis will be performing in "The Color Purple" at the Red Mountain Theater September 27 - October 14. He will be performing with the ensemble. He would love the support of the Birmingham Links, Inc., family and friends.



Link Helen Shores Lee and Link Barbara Shores will have a book signing at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute on September 27, at 5:30 p.m. The title of their book is *The Gentle Giant of Dynamite Hill*. All are encouraged to attend.

Synopsis: During the turbulent 1960s in Birmingham, Alabama, civil rights attorney Arthur Shores and his family came under repeated attacks by the KKK. Now for the first time, in *The Gentle Giant of Dynamite Hill*, Shores’ daughters tell their story of a man determined to fight on because of his passion and belief in a God who sees all men as equal.

Heir-O-Link Erica Nicole Parker, M.D., daughter of **Link Tamara Harris Johnson**, married **Joel Lowell Parker, M.D.** on August 11, 2012, at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL. Erica’s sister, **Heir-O-Link Ashley Noelle Johnson, J.D.**, served as her Maid of Honor. The couple honeymooned in Italy, and now reside in Indiana.

