



**The Links, Incorporated advances its programmatic thrust through four facets: The Arts, Services to Youth, National Trends & Services, and International Trends & Services.**

***The Arts***

The Arts Facet has come a long way, since its introduction in 1964. Throughout the nation, Links chapters have partnered with their local museums, symphonies, arts councils, educational institutions and corporations in order to support art programs, especially, where it focused on the presentation of artists of color such as, pianist Awadagin Pratt and the Boys Choir of Harlem.

The Center for Black Literature, at Medgar Evers College, honored The Links, Incorporated and New York Times best-selling author Walter Mosley, for outstanding contributions to the arts at the New-York Historical Society on November 20, 2006. It speaks beautifully, to our legacy in The Arts, which we have already built and will continue to build upon.

As an organization, The Links, Incorporated has honored many African American artists over the years. Distinguished honorees have included Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence, Brock Peters, Wes Uhliman, James Washington, Jr., Roger Dickenson, Rodney Ward Silas, Venette Carrol, Leontyne Price, Cicely Tyson, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Katherine Dunham, Walter Turnbull, Alvia Wardlow, John Biggers, David Driskell, Daphne and Tim Reid and most recently, Shirley Verrett.

The current Arts programming, can be encapsulated in three words: simplified, unified and focused. The three programs are as follows: **The Arts On The Move: Link Sisters in Cinema, Poster Art Contest – Project Walking Fete: Make Health a Habit! and Signature Arts Program: Classics Through the Ages.** The Links, Incorporated will also sponsor a Link authors table at the 2008 National Black Writers Conference at Medgar Evers College in NY. It is the largest gathering of its kind in North America, clearly focused on literary excellence in the Black Diaspora.



#### **PROGRAM ONE**

**The Arts on the Move:** Link Sisters in Cinema program creates dialogue, which sparks action for upward mobility among all people of color, and dispels existing myths about people of color. It introduces emerging and veteran filmmakers of all age groups to the communities that sister Links pledge to serve. Finally, it allows collaboration and partnership with museums, educational institutions, private and community organizations that are supportive of this initiative. Films produced by Links will be screened at the 2008 Roxbury Film Festival, which is the largest festival in New England, dedicated to films celebrating people of color. Their mission, is to support diverse filmmakers, and provide an opportunity for audiences to view their works, and experience stories, often overlooked in mainstream media. The Links DVD Showcase, featured at the 36th National Assembly in Seattle, is an idea whose time has come.

#### **Some Chapter Highlights**

**Women of African Descent Film Festival.** *Brooklyn (NY) Chapter.* Filmmakers of African descent are the documenters and storytellers of the past, present and future. High schools students already enrolled in film programs get an opportunity to screen the films. Films that are selected tell stories of empowerment, sisterhood, leadership, and positive relationships.

**The Gift of Life.** *Metro-Manhattan (NY) Chapter.* The chapter produced the video "Gift of Life", and supported the Arts through hiring a young, black filmmaker – Andrea Williams – to create this documentary that gives viewers a look at the increasingly important issue of organ and tissue donation. One of the most compelling stories in the film is about a member of the chapter, Denise Perry, who is the recipient of two kidney transplants.

**Celebrating the Legacy of the Black Filmmaker and Support of Future Filmmakers Through Traditional Theatre, Music, Dramatic and Electronic Media.** *Long Island (NY) Chapter.* The chapter designed a three-prong community outreach program that spanned over a 18 month time period that featured "An Afternoon of Music and Fashion" with soprano Daryl Jordan and accompanist Noel Hart; "A Vintage Film Festival" with Robert Carter, visual artist and researcher; and "Celebrating Black Hollywood...Then and Now" as told by Dr. Donald Bogle, professor and author.



**PROGRAM TWO**

**Project Walking Fete: Make Health a Habit!** Poster Art Contest has encouraged teaching the importance of lifetime physical activity, particularly walking to children, youth and adults of color since 1995. Its objective is to reach populations of people of color with accurate and consistent health and wellness messages. The 2006 Poster Art Contest involved 144 Links chapters sharing the importance of exercise, eating healthy and watching their weight with over 6,000 students. The 2006 National Exhibition took place at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA where 17 students received scholarships totaling \$20,000.

Christian Jordan, Pine Bluff (AR) Chapter won first place in Category I - Grades 1-3. Theodore Fuller, Metro-Manhattan (NY) Chapter won first place in Category II - Grades 4-6. Desirea Williams, Northern Indiana (IN) Chapter won first place in Category III - Grades 7-9. Dina Rodriguez, Ft. Lauderdale (FL) Chapter won first place in Category IV - Grades 10-12. The theme for the 2008 Poster Art Contest is *Stepping Out!* The targeted goal is 10,000 students.

### PROGRAM THREE

The Signature Arts Program: Classics Through the Ages focuses on classical arts education in the performing arts, visual arts, film, literature, and theatre for youth of color through programming, hands-on learning, and mentoring. It speaks to the artistic development of promising young artists of color and utilizing their talents to promote art education.

### Some Chapter Highlights

**Sounds for the Soul:** featuring the Ritz Chamber Players. Erie County (NY) Chapter. The chapter partnered with Buffalo State College in an unparalleled event with five days of music – concerts, music instruction, a fireside chat with area musicians, professors of music and music students as well as master classes.

**Arts in Education. Houston (TX) Chapter.** The chapter partnered with the NAACP local branch's ACT-SO (Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological, Scientific Olympics) Program. More than 100 students from the Houston Independent School District and the WALIPP Charter School for Boys took part in a special week of dance classes with the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

**Links Keep The Music Playing. Pontchartrain (LA) Chapter.** The chapter worked with the Pontchartrain Boys Choir, acquired donations of musical instruments to public school bands, and received support from artists of color who perform in the New Orleans area. The youths performed excerpts from classic operas and the chapter provide their attire.

**A.C.E. Project: A Classical Education. Greenville (SC) Chapter.** Young aspiring artists, once selected to participate in the program, are mentored, attend workshops, receive scholarships and media coverage. A student artist agreement delineates the responsibilities of the student and the chapter.



### Services to Youth

Services to Youth is focusing on providing a range of innovative, substantive and sustainable Pre-K-16 programming which contribute proven results to key educational or social/community issues. Our Mission is "Links seizing the opportunity to help our youth achieve." These opportunities may vary some from Chapter to Chapter, but all programs will be able to show a positive impact on the children we serve. We are excited to announce that Services to Youth and Education Linkage have joined forces in order to create and sustain synergy of youth-related programming. The areas of concentration are:

- Area I: Pre-K-3
  - Primary Focus: *Literacy*
  - Spotlight Program: Links to Success: *Children Achieving Excellence*
- Area II: Grades 4-8
  - Primary Focus: *Health & Wellness Education, After-School Programming, Drug Awareness*
  - Spotlight Program: Project LEAD: *High Expectations*
- Area III: Grades 9-12
  - Primary Focus: *College Readiness, HIV/AIDS Awareness, Etiquette, Mentoring*
  - Spotlight Program: *Achievers Program*
- Area IV: Grades 12-16
  - Primary Focus: *Scholarships, HBCUS*
  - Spotlight Program: *TBD*

The Links, Incorporated maintains a strong leadership role in addressing the critical issues of public education with respect to the digital divide, reduced enrollment of African American males in post secondary education, and leveraging the *No Child Left Behind* legislation to improve student performance. We are committed to partnering with community education projects that include health education, mentoring, reading, tutoring, after-school programming, providing computer hardware and software, computer assisted instruction, SAT preparation, test-taking skill development and career awareness workshops to ensure the futures of students within our communities.

**Some Program Highlights**  
**Established Endowment Trust at Historically Black Colleges & Universities.** Presented six \$10,000 scholarships to Bennett College, Bethune-Cookman College, Edward Waters College, Florida A & M University, Florida Memorial University and Spelman College. Southern Area recently raised \$300,000 to support endowment.

**Financial Literacy.** The What's Up With Money Program sponsored by the Greater New York (NY) Chapter targeted children and youth (10-18) in a family oriented event. In collaboration with other community organizations, schools and financial institutions, the conference was held at Fordham University. What's Up With Money sessions were presented to children, youth and adults in separate groups by specially selected presenters. Six topics, intended to explore basic principles in financial matters, included stock analysis, entrepreneurship and fundraising. The program will be repeated next year with a \$25,000 grant from JPMorgan Chase.



**PETALS** (*Parents Enriching, Teaching, Achieving Life-long Learning Success*). Piedmont (NC) Chapter Links partnered with the local school system to sponsor the state recommended parent-training program PETALS which is a year-long parent training program. The program fostered the increased academic success necessary to close achievement gaps between parents and students in the schools. Chapter members facilitated and/or served as trainers for the informational seminars and interactive workshops which helped parents understand current educational trends and policies.

**Project Lead: High Expectations** is a program designed to increase levels of awareness regarding drug and alcohol abuse as well as promote self-concept development. Chapters partnered with other community groups to disseminate these programs. Program was funded by a grant received from the National Institute of Drug Abuse. Workshops were conducted to train youth on drug and alcohol abuse prevention.



### National Trends and Services

The programmatic thrust of this facet has been to provide community programs that increase awareness of issues that affect the quality of life of African Americans. During this biennium, the National Trends and Services facet will address the significant economic and social inequalities that continue to persist amongst African Americans in the United States. These disparities significantly affect African Americans in the areas of education, income, health, employment, and other social indicators of wellbeing. As the leadership and chapters of The Links, Incorporated examine "national trends" to plan "services" that will make an impact on our communities, it is clear that racial and ethnic disparities are the underlying factors that lead to those issues of concern identified and addressed by our programming.

The **VISION** of the National Trends and Services Facet is to eliminate disparities so as to reduce barriers to services through leadership, education, and service. Our **MISSION** is to empower our membership so that we can effectively empower the communities in which we work. Our goals include increasing the number of sustainable, measurable programming; increasing collaboratives, partnerships, and program funding; and extend our existing initiatives to include those that most affect African Americans.

Currently, *National Trends and Services encompasses the following linkages, signature programs, and committees, each committed to the overall vision and mission of the facet:*

- Health Linkage
- Linkages to Life Signature Program
- Walk for Health and Hunger Signature Program
- Women's Issues and Empowerment Committee

#### **National Trends and Services Program Highlights:**

**General Motors and Safe Kids Partnership:** The Links partnered with GM and Safe Kids to donate \$50 million to provide car seats for needy families and help families practice vehicle safety.

**Linkages to Life:** 2006 marks the fifth anniversary of *Linkages to Life™*, The Links' Organ, Tissue and Bone Marrow Donation program which encourages more African Americans to become donors. *Linkages to Life™* has reached tens of thousands of people through the *Sunday at Church Program*.

**The Gift of Life:** What African Americans Need to Know About Organ Donations. A film created by the Metro-Manhattan Chapter and sponsored by HBO during the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival received national attention.

**Hurricane Katrina:** Response to this tragedy included a Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund to assist displaced evacuees. The Links, Incorporated also partnered with the Children's Defense Fund, Women of the Storm, and The Links Foundation to respond to the needs of displaced victims and support of Universities in the area.

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Renewal of the “Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments of 2006.” Links across the country worked with Congress and other interest groups to achieve this important piece of legislation.

**No Child Left Behind Act:** Links work with schools to support children. A public information and education campaign about the No Child Left Behind Act will kick off on February 27, 2007 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The Links, Incorporated will present a public issues forum entitled *The No Child Left Behind Act: Is it on the Right Path or Path to Nowhere?* The forum will examine the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act and its impact on the drop out crisis and the increasing rates of incarceration for young people of color generally and young men of color in particular.

**The Doris Miller Signature Campaign to obtain the Medal of Honor for Heroism in World War II:** Links are in the process of obtaining 1 million signatures to encourage Congress and the President to award the Congressional Medal of Honor to World War II hero sailor Doris Miller.

**Rosa Parks Stature to be placed in Statuary Hall, U. S. Capitol:** Links attend signing of historic bill H.R. 4145 authorizing a stature of civil rights icon to be placed in ceremony.

**Heart Truth Campaign:** As a partner in the National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s “Heart Truth Campaign,” The Links, Incorporated, has integrated “Heart Truth” activities at all levels of our organizational infrastructure to include National, Area, and local Chapter foci, including “National Wear Red Day,” at our National Assembly and conducting workshops to educate the membership of over 10,000 Links on the importance of heart disease awareness. Currently, NHLBI is funding four chapters to implement cardiovascular education activities.

**Cardiovascular Disease Grant:** In partnership with the University of California, Davis, 10 Links Chapters were funded to implement a four phase cardiovascular education and behavioral change intervention.

**Walk for Health and Hunger Walk-A-Thon:** Each September, Links Chapters participate in the “Walk for Health and Hunger” a Signature Program that calls attention to health issues of the day. Chapters may partner with organizations, and proceeds go to Links programming.

**Childhood Obesity Initiative:** In keeping with our National Resolution, The Links will receive funding and implement a childhood obesity awareness program targeted to families in an effort to raise awareness about and reduce childhood obesity.



### **International Trends and Services**

*“You do not have to travel internationally to make an impact globally”*

The Global Trilogy of International Trends and Services, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and the Signature Program, “Education Across the Miles” mission is to expand the global platform for programs designed and developed to service the educational, health and cultural needs of people of African descent throughout the world.

All components of the Global Trilogy will execute a measurable delivery model created to reach women and their families through long-term programs committed to economic empowerment, education for youth, health initiatives and public policy leadership in advocating for social justice. The programs are enhanced through partnership, mentorship and advocacy. It is imperative that programs are accessible to the chapter’s membership as well as those in the Diaspora.

#### **International Trends and Services Initiatives**

**Safe Motherhood:** To develop programs that address the issues of Family Planning, Antennal Care, Clean and Safe Delivery, and Essential Obstetric Care Preventable death and disability among mothers and expectant mothers are all-encompassing tragedies for families, for communities, for societies, and most of all, for children.

Safe Motherhood supports basic maternity, primary health care initiatives and equity for women.

- **Clean and Safe Delivery:** “Mama Kits” were developed by the Uganda Ministry in Health in 1997. In 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO), Ministry of Health, and The Links revitalized the program.
  - **Action:** Expand the program and partnerships to include broader territory in Africa and the Caribbean.
- **Primary Health Care:** Water Wells, Electricity and other related needs.
  - **Action:** Continue Chapter support. Expand the program initiative to cover more African countries and look at aboveground wells for safety/purity (Mozambique, Kenya, other African nations and Haiti).
- **Family Planning/Primary Health Care:** HIV/AIDS Projects– New to agenda, but critical globally.
- **Essential Obstetric:** Fistula Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by prolonged labor without prompt medical intervention, usually a Caesarean section. The woman is left with chronic incontinence and, in most cases, a stillborn baby.
- **Basic Maternity:** Education and Nutrition
- **Equity for Women:** Mentoring program for African and Caribbean Women interested in nursing and other programs that promote equity in women. This includes initiatives that provide for safe heaven for mother and child(ren).



*International Trends & Services*

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

Exploring Women Empowerment

**Program:** Economic Empowerment for Women (Mentoring) Program  
**Objective:** Support programs that provide economic empowerment for African women and their families. Offer Link Chapters the option to work with one of three programs endorsed by The Links ITS Committee, such as:

- **Public Policy Issues: The Links Care**  
**Objective:** The Links would take an impartial position on issues affecting the Good of Mankind. Example: Genocides in Rwanda and Darfur.
  - **Darfur**
    - Chapters can start a letter writing campaign to the Congressional Chair of the International Committee.
    - The Links, Incorporated ITS would draft a generic letter for Chapters to use and provide buttons with “The Links Care” on them.
    - ITS would arrange for the National President to meet with Congressman Gregory Meeks of New York, African-American Congressman on the International Committee.
    - “The Links Care”—create a symbol and button to support the position taken: Darfur, AIDS, Orphans or Women issues of inequality.  
**Action:** Darfur letter, special “The Links Care” button or ribbon, meeting with Congressman Gregory Meeks and National President of The Links, Incorporated.

- **The Model UN**  
**Objective:** Chapters will work with historically Black colleges and universities as well as middle and secondary schools to encourage and inspire students to become interested in international and world affairs through the work of the UN.

“**Education Across the Miles**” ITS Signature Program (Mentoring, Partnership, Advocacy) “*Education Across the Miles*” will focus on the commitment to support and refurbish schools in Africa to make a direct difference in the lives of African families.  
**Program:** Continue to focus on the commitment to support and refurbish schools in Africa to make a difference in the lives of African families.

- **Program Objective:** Provide sponsoring Chapters with status reports on schools
- **Program Objective:** Include schools developed by Chapters in other countries under the EATM umbrella
- **Program Objective:** Develop strategies to maintain and support schools
- **Program Objective:** Develop additional partnership to assist in supporting the initiative

JKB/aa (International Trends & Services 2007)

