



Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service

Central Area

Excellence ~ Elegance ~ Ethics

Link-Up! e-magazine

Special Holiday Edition

Volume 6, Issue 4

Gifts of Friendship
From the
'Heart of Linkdom'



Celebrate!



We wish you a joyous holiday season shared with family, friends and neighbors. When you need a pick-me-up full of friendship and cheer, please take a moment with our Sisters from the 'Heart of Linkdom'. Just click the tree and Enjoy!



Table of Contents

Letter from the Central Area Director.....	4
Link Glenda Membership Moment: Precious Gift of Friendship	5
Chapter Gifts From Programming	7
Social Media Matters	13
In The Spotlight.....	14
Upcoming Events	16



The Central Area Communications Committee keeps you 'linked-up' in the Heart of Linkdom through print, electronic, social, on-line communications, just one click away. Questions, Information or Suggestions contact us at centralareacpr@yahoo.com. The committee, above, left to right:

- Link Kathy Wade, Cincinnati (OH) Chapter, Chair: IN, KY, WV Liaison
- Link Regina Daily, Cincinnati (OH) Chapter, Vice-Chair: OH Liaison
- Link Ivie Clay, St. Louis (MO) Chapter: MO, OK Liaison
- Link Bonita Cornute, Archway (MO) Chapter: MI Liaison
- Link Michelle Fifer, Shelby County (TN) Chapter: TN Liaison
- Link Tasha Ransom, Hoffman Estates (IL) Chapter: IL Liaison
- Link Donna Terrell, Little Rock (AR) Chapter: AR, IA, KS Liaison
- Link Felicia Thomas-Lynn, Cream City (WI) Chapter: MN, NE, WI Liaison
- Link Genma Holmes, Parthenon (TN) Chapter, Social Media



Happy Holidays My Link Sisters,

We wish you a joyous holiday season and all the best in the New Year! This year we share a special Link Up! Holiday Edition highlighting two 2014 national multi-award winning chapters from the Central Area, Shelby County (TN) Chapter and South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter; Dayton (OH) Chapter's 65 for 65 leaving an indelible gift on the Greater Dayton community; a holiday gift discovered through our beloved sisterhood and service; and merging new partnerships for transformational programs in 2015 through social media.

Please enjoy this special issue celebrating the boundless gifts we share through the true meaning of the word friendship as embodied in the name Links. Thank you for all you do in Linkdom. We look forward to seeing you in Cincinnati.

Sisterly,

Link Alice



Precious Gift of Friendship

There are many definitions of friendship. Individuals use the term as it has a connection to them. Some friendships are of a spiritual nature, others more fleeting and situational. Like friendships there are also acts of friendship that can be so kind, some humane that the beauty of them are breathtaking. This is a story of one such act.

Our last chapter meeting of the year is always fun filled. It is not only about the business of the chapter but the recognition and thanks for what we gave, endured as a chapter and as individuals. Our sister who provides thought provoking Linkspirations shared with us an inspiring piece of what we can all do in such trying times. It was interesting to notice the reactions around the room. There was even a member softly humming the 1969 anthem by Sly and the Family Stone, “Stand” lyrics that are a call for its listeners to “stand” up for themselves, their communities, and what they believe. All and all a good meeting, reports, sharing Secret Sister tokens of affection and then we came to the portion of announcements, good news, and unfinished business.

One of our sisters piped up with a twinkle in her eyes and said I have good news to share. Of course all eyes went to her ring finger to which she immediately said that was NOT her news. She shared with us that while participating in our Relay for Life walk, she struck up a conversation with a woman that she had met only recently, about her involvement in The Links and Health and Human Services activities. Link Rhonda, a passionate Link raising money for Cancer research and awareness, has volunteered on the local AIDS and Suicide and Rape Hotlines. She is the type of sister that always asks how you are doing although for the last several years she has fought valiantly against the insidious foe of African American women - Lupus. She shares with her fellow walker that she was on the list for a kidney transplant. As Link Rhonda shared, the woman listened intently and told her that she would take this information to her husband because they were always looking for ways to be of service to others. Link Rhonda of course smiled graciously and continued the walk because she has heard a lot of people promise things and not come through. Plus she had not known this fellow walker for very long.

Several months later, Rhonda received a call from the transplant center where she is on the transplant list and was told that the woman who had gone in for testing was not a match, but there was another volunteer donor who appeared to be a match. Since she did not know the person and he wanted to meet her they agreed to meet at the local Starbucks. Each describing what they would be wearing. Link Rhonda told us that when she walked in she saw this man with a huge bouquet of flowers (which she loves more than anything) coming towards her with a big smile and saying, “Hi, I am Connecting Link Chris”. He also

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told her at this time, that he was not only a match but a “spot on” match. I pause here because when I was sharing this story with my best friend she asked me the ethnicity of the person. I could honestly say, as Link Rhonda was telling the story, she did not mention the ethnicity but we were all “assuming”. She announced that the woman she had been talking to was a new member of our chapter, Link Elaine, an RN and the spot on donor was her husband and a new Connecting Link in our chapter.

Chill bumps were all around the room, eyes misting over and without hesitation we all stood. We stood because of all the negative images that that we are bombarded with regarding our husbands, sons, fathers, uncles – here in the flesh was a Connecting Link, new to the chapter, that believed so strongly in his wife’s passion re: organ donation and the health of our community, stood to make a difference.

After 12 years of declining health but never a declining attitude, our sister was being given a chance to continue her life, passion and service to others. In this holy season of materialism and at times dismay, our small chapter had a star in the East that shone bright with unconditional love. This was our Christmas gift to each other.

Happy 2015.

Link Glenda

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenda Masingale Manson". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Glenda Masingale Manson
Central Area Vice Director



CHAPTER GIFTS

Shelby County (TN) Links Offer Pathways to Success for Young Black Males & Women

By Link Michelle Fifer, Shelby County (TN) Chapter, Central Area Communications Committee

NOTE: The Shelby County (TN) Chapter is honored to have received awards at the 39th National Assembly in the categories of Services to Youth and National Trends and Services. The Chapter's greatest pride is being able to help improve the quality of life for African-American women and children.

The mother's simple words were a cry for help. "I want to save my son's life," she said choking back tears. "I must do something." Hearing that the Shelby County (TN) Links had successfully navigated hundreds of young Black males through their challenging teen years via the "Leadership Academy," this concerned mother enrolled her son in the program. The experience opened his eyes to pathways to a safer, more purposeful life.

As part of the Links' Services to Youth facet, the Leadership Academy is addressing issues facing Black males head-on by focusing on life-skills, community service projects, one-on-one mentoring, health and fitness, work habits, cultural activities, and the Orita Rites of Passage ceremony. For several months, these high school juniors and seniors, known as "Fellows," are taught and mentored by successful men who've "walked the walk" and are well qualified to help young African-American men succeed in life. At the end of an in-depth eight-month preparatory program, an Orita Rites of Passage ceremony is held where the Shelby County Links, parents, and members of the community come together to celebrate this milestone event in the lives of young African-American Fellows. Since its inception, more than 400 young men have participated in the program and have gone on to become distinguished leaders in various fields throughout the nation. They also give back to the community by supporting the Leadership Academy as mentors and sponsors.

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Young men in the Shelby County Links' award-winning Leadership Academy assist at the Memphis Food Bank as part of their community outreach project.



Following several months of life-skills training, young men take part in the Links' Orita Rites of Passage ceremony - a formal initiation into adulthood based on an African tradition.

The Shelby County (TN) Chapter also understands that empowered women are a phenomenal resource when it comes to building strong families and communities. The Chapter's intensive Institute of Women's Empowerment (IWE) was launched in 2007 to assist single female-headed households in moving from poverty to economic stability. As part of the National Trends and Services facet, the

“I am the mother of nine children and with help from the IWE program partners, I was able to obtain employment and stable housing,”

IWE experience includes the mother and her children as well as their case managers. The Links host three-hour sessions with the women on Saturday mornings for eight consecutive months. Program participants are required to complete either a five-year Individual Business Plan or Family Business Plan to successfully complete the program. The plans are then integrated into the participant's existing case management plan. The curriculum modules include: Self-Concept/Self Image; Career Assessment; Health Awareness; Financial Literacy, and Personal/Professional Educational Activities. “I

am the mother of nine children and with help from the IWE program partners, I was able to obtain employment and stable housing,” said Vanchez Branch, a IWE program participant. “I am truly thankful.”



The Links' Leadership Academy includes months of highly-interactive workshops focusing on such areas as financial literacy, goal-setting, time-management, and relationships.



To help break the cycle of poverty among single family households, the Links provide life-skills training to Memphis-area women through the award-winning Institute for Women's Empowerment program.



South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated Gifts Through Programming

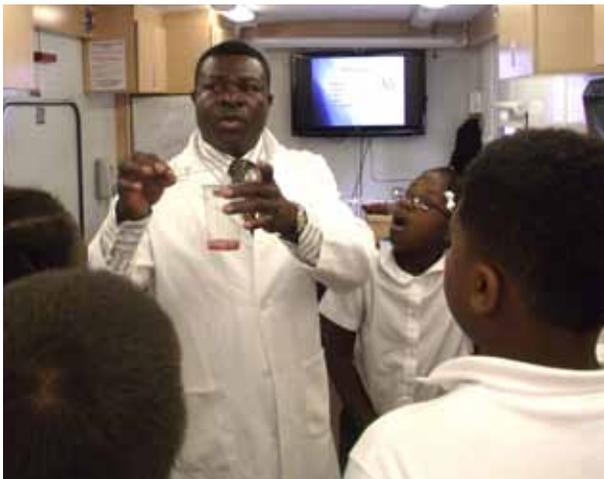
By Link Tasha E. Ransom, Hoffman Estates (IL) Chapter, Central Area Communications Committee

In July, at the National Assembly in National Harbor, MD, Link chapters were recognized for their stellar programs.

The South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter is one that continues to produce innovative and award winning programs that have a tremendous impact on the communities they serve. In July, they were



Washington School Stem Career Fair- April 2013



Mobile Science Lab with Dr. Oye

awarded 1st place in the category of Services to Youth Facet for their S.T.E.M. program, S.T.E.M.ulation: Washington Eagles and Rosa Parks Cougars Soar and Explore Left-Brain/Right Brain and 2nd place in the Arts Facet for their Arts Enrichment at the Jones Center.

Armed with the knowledge that the Harvey/ Dixmoor communities were overwhelmed with multiple at-risk indicators and that the school districts have become increasingly focused on reading and mathematics due to proficiency testing priorities, the South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter focused on the Washington Elementary School. The school lacked the budget for educational field trips, science equipment, outside resources and supplementary enrichment materials to augment the science textbooks. Considering the educational challenges and realizing that 19 of the 25 highest-paying jobs are in S.T.E.M. related fields, the chapter undertook the challenge to increase students' interests and skills through exposure and enhanced S.T.E.M. Education and instruction.

With the support of a two-year grant from Chevron and NASA S.T.E.M., the chapter developed a S.T.E.M. education program to be implemented with the 4th and 5th grade students at Washington Elementary School. The

curriculum was aligned with district, state, and national science and mathematical standards, including extensive sessions covering Aviation, Meteorology, and Robotics.

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As a result of their efforts, Link Marcia Taylor, the South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter Chair said, “Students demonstrated significant improvement in Science Assessments and overall interest in Science.”

The Chicago Height’s School District 170 has a low mean household income, low test scores, low graduation rates, and a lack of access to cultural activities and program opportunities. Arts programs have been systematically eliminated due to public school budget costs in many elementary schools. To address the problem, the South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter implemented an Arts enrichment program at the Jones Community Center.



Student Art Center

Program participants learn oratory skills, emphasizing articulation, stage presence and presentation, and the production side of managing theatrical performances. Students gained additional knowledge and an expressed appreciation for the arts as a result of the program.

Link Joyce Carter, South Suburban Chicago (IL) Chapter President says “Once the population and need is determined, individual members come together as a team, take on the responsibility, chart the goals, activities, expectations and execute. Committees embrace the inclusion of external qualified resources. Those resources make the difference. Then, with heartfelt passion and internal expertise, the committee implements the project plan.”



Jones Center



Sixty-Five for Sixty-Five: A Gift to Remember

By Link Regina Daily, Cincinnati (OH) Chapter, Co-Chair, Central Area Communications Committee

The Dayton (OH) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated celebrated 65 years of service in the Dayton community by gifting \$65,000 to several organizations with whom they have collaborated to align



Link Alice Strong-Simmons, Central Area Director, participates in Dayton (OH) Chapter Day of Service at Madison Park Elementary Read Aloud.



Link Carolyn Mack, Dayton (OH) Vice President of Programs and Curious George work with students at Madison Park Elementary

their programs with the transformational programming vision of the chapter. These alliances were established in the past and several will continue into the future. Vice President of Programs, Link Carolyn Mack said, "Our goal was to provide these recipients with resources and extended funding so they could continue to sustain their outstanding programs."

"Our theme for our Community Partner Reception, Inspired By The Past ...Transforming The Future, speaks volumes about our Chapter's legacy and our ongoing work and long term commitment in our community", said Link Belinda Matthews-Stenson, President of the Dayton (OH) Chapter. At the Boonshoft Museum, Legacy Awards were presented to recognize the continuous commitment of the following organizations:

The Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, who named their newly built dance studio for children in honor of the Dayton (OH) Chapter; The Dayton Art Institute, who digitized for iPads the information regarding five works of African American Art the Dayton (OH) Chapter commissioned for the museum, and built a new stairway to the exhibit; and the Louise Troy Elementary School, where the Dayton (OH) Chapter seamlessly integrated the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, the Dayton Art

Institute, and Books Alive for Kids® into their programming, providing books, resources, and training for children and teachers at the school.

The Dayton (OH) Chapter continued partnering with the community with a Day of Service, where a Read Aloud was presented at Madison Park Elementary School, in the Trotwood-Madison School

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District. "Children who love to read, will live happily ever after." A diverse group of fifty-five volunteers, including Links, university presidents, political leaders, clergy, and others, read to the children, encouraged them to interact with Curious George who made a surprise appearance, and gave each child the special book that was read to them.

In addition to these gifts, each facet acknowledged an agency or organization with a donation to continue their work in the community. Central Area Director, Link Alice Strong-Simmons, accepted a significant contribution to the Central Area of The Links, Incorporated for their HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) initiative.

With their \$65,000 for 65 years, the Dayton (OH) Chapter left an indelible legacy as a chapter to the Dayton community.



(L-R) Curious George shares greetings with Dayton (OH) Links Ro Nita Hawes-Suanders, Eloise Broner, and Beverly Martin.



(L-R) Read Aloud Readers Dr. Cynthia Jackson-Hammond, President, Central State University, Link Alice Strong-Simmons, Central Area Director and Link Belinda Matthews-Stenson, President, Dayton (OH) Chapter.



Link Helen Jones-Kelley, Dayton (OH) Chapter receives warm hug of gratitude from Monica Whitlow, Louise Troy Elementary in acceptance of the \$25,000 grant to continue their work on closing the achievement gap at the school.



Link Belinda Matthews-Stenson, President, makes HBCU presentation to guest speaker Link Alice Strong-Simmons.

Social Media Matters:

Using Social Media to Attract Funders



Link Genma Holmes, Parthenon (TN) Chapter, Central Area Communications Committee

Social media has become integrated into communications for large and small corporations to help brand their products, goods, services, and philanthropic endeavors. What was once a few novice tweets or a Facebook status update once a day by an intern in the marketing department, has become a team of individuals who monitors corporate brands, online reputation, and how a corporation interacts with individuals on social media. What is said on social media can boost sales astronomically or ban a product or an individual. It is worth noting, corporate messages are delivered via tweets or Facebook updates, first, and then a media release follows. And most news reporting, locally and nationally, includes nightly news broken on social media first.

With social media being a dominant source in news, marketing, and communications, non-profits can no longer ignore social media while trying to remain relevant in the community, with donors, funders, and advocates. A few years ago, most non-profits raised funds through ticket sales to an event or corporate sponsorship. With the use of social media, we have seen successes like the ALS Association's Ice Bucket Challenge that raised 97 million in one month with Facebook posts that garnered worldwide acclamation. According to the ALS Association, many who gave because of being challenged were not familiar with ALS Association prior to seeing it on the Facebook. The call to action challenging others to pour a bucket of ice water on their heads or donate to the organization, lead millions to post videos on YouTube, another social media site, and sent millions to the ALS Association's website to learn more about the devastating disease. The Ice Bucket Challenge

raised funds that would have taken years for ALS to raise. The amount of positive press the challenge received is undeniable.

As corporations look for more ways to communicate their positive social responsibility messages and philanthropic outreach in the communities they serve, corporations and their foundations look closely at community partnerships with volunteers who are sharing their community service endeavors in the press and on social media. As non-profits see traditional fundraising becoming more taxing and generating less funds, those who are active on social media are seeing sharp increases in donations from new funding and new volunteers.

Just like employers are checking new hires for their social media activity as part of their background checks for consideration of employment, corporate foundations are adapting the same policy with nonprofits. A nonprofit's positive social media engagements can help foundations determine if a nonprofit will be a great brand ambassador for the company and it helps others see how a nonprofit serves its community.

African American women use social media more than their counterparts socially and for services. But not as often when it comes to raising funds for our organizations. As we embrace the New Year, let us rethink how we use social media to advocate for our service programs, connecting with younger members, and sharing compelling content that will attract new funders and deepen our relationship with those who have supported us for many years.

When we insert social media throughout our communications, it will allow us to be the best brand ambassadors for our mission, our community, and our supporters.

In The Spotlight



Alice Strong-Simmons, Oklahoma City (OK) Chapter, has been appointed as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Langston University, Oklahoma City campus. Coming from a long line of teaching professionals, Strong-Simmons describes herself as an “educator at heart.” As a trained educator, she was Director of Child Development and Adjunct Professor at Langston University. She currently serves as Central Area Director of The Links, Incorporated and holds life memberships in the Langston University National Alumni Association and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Strong-Simmons prides herself on being a “Country Girl” who God has endowed with an extraordinary passion for Langston University, its students, and working to assure the best education possible for the youth and children of the Great State of Oklahoma. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Langston University and a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma.

CincyQ Welcomes You To 2015 Central Area Conference of The Links, Incorporated, **Cincinnati, OH, June 17-20, 2015**

We look forward to you joining us in Cincinnati for a 'stompin' good time' at the 2015 Central Area Conference hosted by CincyQ, comprised of members from the Cincinnati (OH) and Queen City (OH) Chapters of The Links, Incorporated.



Seated (L-R): Marcia Anderson, Conference Co-Chair; Rose Pickrum, President, Queen City (OH) Chapter; Glenda Masingale Manson, Area Vice Director; Alice Strong Simmons, Area Director; Jackie Schoats Morson, Area Treasurer; Winona McNeil, President, Cincinnati (OH) Chapter; Shelley Jefferson Hamler, Conference Co-Chair.

Row 1 Standing (L-R): Links Reynell Frazier; Debra Merchant; Kathy Wade, Area Communications Chair; Veronica Chapman, Area IT Chair; Roberta Cheatham Settles, Area Awards/Ritual/Recognitions Chair; Francine Gilmer, Area Transportation Chair; Rochelle Calhoun, Area Protocol Chair; Gladys Hankins, Area Organizational Effectiveness Chair; Monica Allen, Area Program Co-Chair; Corelia 'Cokie' Diggs, Area Assembly, Conference and Event Planning Chair and Crystal Kendrick, Vendors and Exhibits Chair.

Row 2 Standing (L-R) Links Gloria Riley; Ruby Bond; Karlyn Wade-Richardson; Carolyn Glosby; Pamela McClain, Edna Keown; Guinette Kirk; Erica White; Lauren Kirk; Paulette Keys; Laura Ford-Harris, Nita Walker; Lillian Hawkins and Helen Buford.

Row 3 Standing (L-R): Links Jessica White Hall, Doris Hall; Megan McNeil Wallace; Debbye Williams; Kristi Clement Williams; Sherry Hughes; Ruby Crawford-Hemphill; Agnes Godwin Hall; Gail King; Tysha Wilder; Monica Newby and Patrice Baughman Borders.



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THE CENTRAL AREA

Excellence ~ Elegance ~ Ethics

Link-Up! e-Mag Deadline

February 15, 2015

April 14, 2105

Central Area Communications Webinar Series

7:30 pm CST; 8:30 pm EST

1/14/14 SOCIAL MATTERS:

Social Media to Websites, Link
Michelle Fifer, Link Genma
Holmes and Link Veronica
Chapman

2/11/15 AMASS YOUR MEDIA: Electronic To Print

3/11/15 INTERNAL CHAT:

Communication Tools To
Improve Sisterhood In Your
Chapter

Upcoming Conferences

Mark your calendars for
upcoming Assemblies, Area
Conferences and Leadership
Summits.

National Assembly:

2016 Las Vegas, NV

2018 Nashville, TN

Central Area Conference:

June 17-20, 2015

Cincinnati, OH

Host Hotels: Westin Cincinnati,
Hilton Cincinnati Netherland
Plaza and Renaissance Hotel

2017 Minneapolis, Minnesota

2019 Indianapolis, Indiana

2021 Louisville, Kentucky

2023 Cleveland, Ohio

2025 Memphis, Tennessee

2027 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Central Area Leadership Summit:

2016 Wichita, Kansas

2018 Dayton, Ohio

2020 Omaha, Nebraska

2022 Chattanooga, Tennessee

2024 Central Illinois/
Bloomington, Illinois

2026 Tulsa, Oklahoma

2028 Lansing-East Lansing,
Michigan (Flint and Tri-
City as Partners)

The Links, Incorporated, founded in 1946, is a women's volunteer service organization committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the cultural and economic survival of African-Americans and other persons of African-American ancestry.

A premier international service organization with more than 12,000 members in 280 chapters located in 41 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, continues its legacy of friends providing service that changes lives, established by the original circle of nine friends in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<http://www.centralarealinks.org>
<http://www.linksinc.org>