Seize the Moment ... Strengthen the Chain

Western Area Executive Committee Report
2011-2013

Committee: Legislative Issues and Public Affairs  Chairperson: Theresa B. Lyons, J.D.

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I appreciate the opportunity to serve as the Chair of Legislative Issues and Public Affairs Committee of the Western Area of The Links, Incorporated and to work closely with our esteemed Western Area Director, Constance Fitzpatrick Smith, and the members of the Executive Committee in furtherance of strengthening our chain of friendship.

The goals, accomplishments and recommendations of our committee are to:

GOALS


Goal No. 2.  Participate in the development and dissemination of the Get Out The Vote Tool Kit for The Links, Incorporated.

Goal No. 3.  Assist in the development and dissemination of a “Links Day at the Capitol” Tool Kit for the Western Area of The Links, Incorporated.

Goal No. 4.  Assist in the development of national and state Legislative Black Caucus Programs.

Goal No. 5.  Provide timely information regarding Legislative Issues and Public Affairs to the members of The Western Area of The Links, Incorporated.
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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal No. 1. Participated in the development of the “Transformational Advocacy” workshop for the National Assembly in Orlando, Florida.

A panel discussion regarding voter suppression and the importance of getting out the vote was facilitated by national committee co-chairs Links Karen J. Morrison, J.D. and Pam Freeman Fobbs, J.D. Panelists included Link Marguerite Hawkins, Legislative Issues and Public Affairs Chair, Southern Area; Link Shaunise Washington, Chair, Congressional Black Caucus; Reverend Nelson Rivers, V.P. Stakeholder Relations, NAACP; Roslyn Brock, Chair, NAACP Board of Directors; and, Dierdre McNab, President, Florida League of Women Voters. The workshop was well attended and very informative.

Goal No. 2. Participated in the development and dissemination of GET OUT THE VOTE Tool Kit and developed and disseminated Western Area specific information regarding voter registration deadlines for the Western Area of the Links, Incorporated. Worked with the Legislative Issues and Public Affairs Committee to develop partnerships with the NAACP and The League Of Women Voters.

Information regarding: voter registration deadlines for the Western Area states; on-line registration via www.ThisIsMyVote.org (NAACP) and www.Vote411.org (League of Women Voters); the GetOutTheVote Tool Kit, which included a power point presentation and voter registration deadline guide, was distributed to all chapter presidents. Each chapter was encouraged to have a voter registration activity.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Presidents of The Links, Incorporated and the NAACP.

Goal No. 3. Developed state specific contact information and dates of the Western Area states Legislative Black Caucuses and distributed the information packet to all Western Area Presidents. The packet included: a listing of the contact persons for the Western Area State Legislative Black Caucuses; a sample Advocacy Manual; and, a sample Legislative Score Card that could be used to facilitate meetings between individual Links and their State Representative and Senator.

Goal No. 4. Assisted in the planning of the Congressional Black Caucus activity and the Texas Legislative Black Causus Meetings.

The Links, Incorporated, Sigma Pi Phi (the Boulé) and The Executive Leadership Council, Inc. hosted a Networking Reception during the Congressional Black Caucus 42nd Annual Legislative Conference. The Legislative Conference was held in Washington, D.C. on September 19-22, 2012.

Appointed Chair of Links Day at the Capitol by the Presidents of the North Texas Cluster. Links Day at the Capitol was held on February 24-26, 2013. Members of the Texas Chapters of the Links attended a Cluster Meeting on February 24, 2013 where they held an International Trend and Services Fundraiser and raised $700.00 for the Bead Girls of South Africa. On February 25 and 26, 2013, Links attended activities sponsored by the Texas Legislative Black Caucus including a plenary session, panel discussions, lunch and an awards dinner and breakfast. The Links, Incorporated received resolutions from both the Texas House and Senate.
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Fourteenth Area Director Sandra Dorsey Malone and I were appointed to a task force to assist Senator Royce West in identifying African-Americans to serve on Texas commissions.

Goal No. 5. Disiminated information regarding Legislative Issues and Public Affairs to the Presidents and Members of the Western Area Chapters of The Links, Incorporated.

Participated in scheduled Legislative Issues and Public Affairs conference calls, reviewed legislation which may impact members of The Links, Incorporated and their respective communities, and wrote articles for The Chain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No. 1. Continue to develop relationships with elected officials in each of the Western Area states and other civic and women’s organizations to enhance The Links’ brand and to ensure our participation and input in the drafting and enactment of programs and legislation which impacts our members, their chapters and our communities.

Recommendation No. 2. Explore opportunities to raise funds for The Western Area during the Links Day at the Capitol activity.

Recommendation No. 3. Develop a web based tool for Link members to contact their elected officials to voice their concerns regarding upcoming legislation.

Recommendation No. 4. Develop a data base for the Western Area for Links desiring to serve on state commissions and provide the names to the commission when openings become available.

Recommendation No. 5. Expand the representation on the Legislative Issues and Public Affairs Committee to include a representative from each Western Area State.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa B. Lyons