



Contact: Melody M. McDowell – Chief Information Officer – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority 773-660-2001 – Office – 312-371-8917 – Cell – e-mail: melodyaka@aol.com

ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA TO UPHOLD DR. KING'S LEGACY THROUGH
GLOBAL DIALOGUE, DINNER AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES
Two-Days of Service Support Signature Grant from HandsOn Network

Chicago, Illinois – December 30, 2011 - In the spirit of promoting peace, inspiring community service, and upholding Dr. Martin Luther King's Jr.'s legacy, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will lead two signature events. They will take place on January 15, the eve of the holiday in King's honor, and on January 16, the national day set aside to celebrate King's birthday.

The events -- America's Sunday Supper and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service -- are aimed at providing a forum to engage the community in promoting dialogue to grapple with challenges that represent barriers to progress. The overarching goal is to effect change in the spirit of unity.

According to Alpha Kappa Alpha's international president, Attorney Carolyn House Stewart, the Sunday Supper provides a forum where the Sorority can work jointly with those it serves to find solutions to challenges that impact them. Similarly, by working together during the Martin Luther King Jr., Day of Service, Alpha Kappa Alpha will fortify its already strong bonds to the community.

More than 20,000 members worldwide are expected to host the dinner and dialogues and participate in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service activities. The initiative is being planned and implemented under the Sorority's International Program Committee, whose chairman is Attorney Sharon Bridges. Wanda King is the Project Manager.

The King-inspired initiatives are being made possible through a \$15,000 signature grant from the Points of Light Institute affiliate HandsOn Network, a Corporation for National & Community Service intermediary grantee. The goals of the award are to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; mobilize volunteers to serve; generate civic dialogue; and inspire continued community service. Through the six sub-grants awarded – including Alpha Kappa Alpha – the HandsOn Network is expected to mobilize more than 185,000 volunteers and impact more than 500,000 people.

Stewart said the Sorority's 260,000 members in 975 chapters worldwide have always used the occasion of King's Birthday to lift up the civil rights hero's

memory through service and the grant directly parallels its King Day service mission.

Stewart added that it is fitting that the events coincide with the Sorority's 104-year anniversary, whose mission is rooted in the same commitment to service that the HandsOn network embraces.

America's Sunday Suppers will be patterned after the suppers King hosted during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. At these spiritual-based events, King gathered the community to seek solutions to challenges facing society. With these Suppers as a model, AKA will engage the participants in the topics expected to cross the conversational spectrum including homelessness, poverty, healthcare, the economy, racism, politics, leadership, and more. The Suppers and the Day of Service are expected to attract a range of citizens including the military, educators, healthcare professionals, the homeless and others who make up the fabric of society. The initiative will also draw from all ages and all backgrounds.

In addition to a spirited discussion, the Sorority will show a movie whose message is aimed at sparking dialogue, provoking ideas and galvanizing everyone around a common mission: to tackle the problems that provide barriers to progress.

On January 16, the holiday in King's honor, members will fan out to the community to engage in community service activities that address many of the issues raised at the Sunday Supper. They will be joined by community partners and others committed to positive progress. Some of the activities they will embark on include mentoring to children, feeding the homeless, visiting the sick, delivering meals, collecting and donating clothes, supporting veterans, giving blood and participating in other ventures that the Sorority engages in year round.

Central to the success of the program is the involvement of young people from the Emerging Young Leaders program. This signature program impacts the lives of 10,000 girls in grades six through eight by providing leadership development, civic engagement, enhanced academic preparation and character building. Input from the young people in this initiative will enhance their understanding of the life and legacy of Dr. King and his commitment to human rights, community service and equal opportunities for all Americans.

President Stewart will preside over a Sunday Supper in Tampa, Florida. Area chapters have invited military personnel from MacDill Air Force Base to the dinner as part of the Sorority's mission to benefit military families. Following the Supper, the chapters will convene a panel discussion to engage in a spirited dialogue on how to address challenges the community faces.

Project Manager Wanda King provided a sampling of activities in which chapters will engage and noted that the initiatives support the Sorority's long-time commitment to service:

- In Washington, DC chapters will focus on hunger by hosting a canned food and grocery store gift card drive.
- In California, chapter members will host a blood drive and bone marrow registry

“MLK Day is the perfect opportunity to kick-off a new service year by joining your community to offer your time, talent, voice and resources to community service,” said Michelle Nunn, CEO of Points of Light. “By spending time volunteering, Alpha Kappa Alpha is bringing to life Dr. King’s goal of a ‘beloved community’.”

Reflecting on the importance of the series of events, President Stewart said, “We hope that the two days working in King’s memory will yield a model that will keep us united and proactive long after the events are over. This would be the ultimate tribute to his mission and message.”

She added that the spirit of the events support the spirit of Sorority’s programmatic theme: “Global Leadership through Timeless Service.”

- ##### -

About the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, and leads President Barack Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov

About Points of Light

Points of Light is the world's leading volunteer organization, with more than 20 years of history and a bipartisan presidential legacy. Its mission is to inspire, equip and mobilize people to take action that changes the world. Points of Light connects people to their power to make a meaningful difference, by providing access to tools, resources and opportunities to help volunteers use their time, talent, voice and money to meet the critical needs of America’s communities. The agency is organized to innovate, incubate and activate new ideas through action networks, including: HandsOn Network, the largest network of 250 local volunteer centers across the country and around the world; generationOn, the youth service movement that ignites the power of kids to make their mark on the world; AmeriCorps Alums, the national service alumni network that activates the next generation of service leaders; and Points of Light Corporate Institute, which enables companies to engage their employees and customers in service. For more information, visit www.PointsofLight.org.

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA) is an international service organization that was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African-American college-educated women. It is comprised of 260,000 members in 958 graduate and undergraduate chapters in the United States, the U. S. Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Canada, Japan, Germany, South Korea and on the continent of Africa. Its membership includes distinguished women who boast excellent academic records, proven leadership skills, and are involved in the global community through advocacy and service. Alpha Kappa Alpha has dedicated itself to improving the quality of life for citizens worldwide and promoting peace. The organization is led by its 28th International President Carolyn House Stewart of Tampa, Florida whose administration's programmatic theme is "Global Leadership Through Timeless Service." For more information, log on to www.aka1908.com.

- ##### -