



ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

1908 - 2008 • *Service to All Mankind*

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

In 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha was a new concept for a new era. Program efforts—then and now—were defined by the preamble to the constitution, written by 1st Supreme Basileus Nellie Quander. Through the years, efforts have been directed toward improving the quality of life for all mankind while living the Sorority motto, “by culture and by merit.”

1st 25 years

The earliest programs were cultural, and included activities such as a concert at Howard University’s Rankin Chapel. Individual sorors were identified with “service”—they were the leaders in organizations such as the YWCA and worked with the campus NAACP chapter soon after it was formed.

As chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha were replicated on other campuses, they began similar programs and activities. In 1917 and 1918, sorors **volunteered** to help new arrivals from the Deep South adjust to the nation’s capital. Sorors dressed dolls and made toys for the needy children at Freedman’s Hospital. Chapters offered **programs of African American history, literature, music and art** in order to promote and increase race consciousness during a period established as Founders’ Week. As a means of ensuring chapters exchanged news on their activities, the *Ivy Leaf* magazine—still in existence today—was published. In 1922, national programming was advanced by the call for chapters to perform annually at least “one act of Christian, social or civic service” for their community. Over time, national program became the Sorority’s most important activity. Toward the end of this period, the **Vocational Guidance Program** was launched, as was a **bond purchasing program**.

2nd 25 years

The **Mississippi Health Project** was initiated and brought to the Sorority’s attention the appalling health conditions that existed among rural Southern Blacks. Support for faster government action to eradicate lynching was organized, and the **Non-Partisan Council** was adopted as a national effort. The first nutrition clinic in 1940 was set up, and a **National Health Office** was opened in New York. The first “**grant-in-aid**” was awarded to Howard University for research in child development, and a contribution was made to its sickle cell anemia program. The **American Council on Human Rights** was also organized during this period.

3rd 25 years

One of the most significant programming projects undertaken during this time was the residential **Cleveland Job Corps Center** for women, created with a multimillion dollar contract awarded to the Sorority. The **Heritage Series** on contemporary Black women was initiated, and national support was given to the United Negro College Fund. The Sorority also purchased the **birth home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** as a shrine for posterity. The **Reading Experience** was developed and later expanded into a lifelong learning facet—the **Educational Advancement Foundation**. The **Leadership Fellows** program for undergraduates was also launched.

4th 25 years

Over the last two decades of the 20th century and into the new millennium, programs of organizational impact and collaboration, economic development and renewal were initiated. In the ‘80s, the **African Village Development Program** was launched. Creative strategies to address the crises in education, health, economics, the arts and the world community were developed. The concern for global issues was also addressed with the **International Foundation for Education & Self-Help** (IFESH) partnership, resulting in campaigns designed to aid African youth.

In an effort to grow the resources of the world’s greatest asset—its youth—several innovative programs were developed, including: **PIMS** (Partnership in Mathematics & Science); **ON TRACK** (Organizing, Nurturing, Team building, Respecting, Achieving, Counseling & Knowing); **Ivy AKAdemy**; and the **Young Authors Program**. Volunteerism—long a Sorority hallmark—was also emphasized.

As it approaches the celebration of 100 years of service, the Sorority has embraced the **E.S.P.** theme. An acronym for **Economics, Sisterhood and Partnerships**, the program encompasses non-traditional entrepreneurs, the Black family,



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technology and health resource management. Alpha Kappa Alpha programs continue to help people become the best that they can be—carrying on the Sorority's legacy of service to all mankind.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The Mississippi Health Project

An outgrowth of the desire to improve educational conditions among children in rural Mississippi, the Mississippi Health Project brought primary medical care to people who struggled to receive the most basic health care. The Alpha Kappa Alpha Mobile Clinic, invented to handle the large number of people for whom the project was designed, became the first mobile health clinic system in the U.S. The project was active for two to six weeks, each summer from 1935 to 1942, and was a model for agencies and other organizations.

The Non-Partisan Lobby

A growing sense of obligation to participate in government and share in policy level decisions affecting minorities led to the creation, in the late '30s, of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Non-Partisan Council—the first fulltime congressional lobby for minority group rights. The Council served the interests of Black women in the nation's capital and surpassed the National Association of Colored Women as the premier advocate for Black women in Washington, D.C. In existence for 10 years, it won national and international respect and led to the establishment of the American Council on Human Rights. It was also the first sorority or fraternity organization recognized as an accredited observer by the United Nations.

American Council on Human Rights

At the suggestion of Alpha Kappa Alpha's Supreme Basileus Beulah Whitby, other Greek-letter organizations were invited to cooperate in the Sorority's Non-Partisan Lobby Program. Representatives of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Phi Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Phi Beta Sigma, Sigma Gamma Rho, Zeta Phi Beta and Kappa Alpha Psi joined forces to form the American Council on Human Rights. For 15 years, the Council played a major role in bringing the combined strength of more than 100,000 college-educated women and men behind the effort to press for civil rights.

Cleveland Job Corps Center

Beginning operation in 1965, the Cleveland Job Corps Center was a programmatic mainstay of the Sorority. Young adults who attended the center represented multiracial ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The Job Corps concept was initiated under President Lyndon B. Johnson, and Alpha Kappa Alpha was the first women's organization awarded a contract to operate the center in Cleveland—the first residential training center for women. It provided residents with education, vocational training and work experience.

Leadership Fellows Program

Started in 1979, the Leadership Fellows Program was designed to help undergraduate members develop the necessary skills to assume job responsibilities in the workplace. A concentrated 3-tier initiative, objectives include training and development, student internships, job placement and mentoring. At the end of the week-long program, participants are required to formally present case studies on various business-related scenarios. Several members of the Sorority's leadership team serve as mentors, and corporate America partnerships help expose the young women to environments they will eventually have to navigate.

African Village Development Program & International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH)

Unique programs that demonstrate Alpha Kappa Alpha's bond with people of Africa include the African Village Development Program (AVDP) and the partnership with the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH). Launched jointly with Africare, AVDP allowed chapters to interact directly with a specific village. The adopted villages received support of sustainable development projects targeting African women and became a model for a comprehensive development assistance program for other Black fraternal and civic organizations. The IFESH collaborative effort resulted in the Sorority's building 10 schools in post-apartheid South Africa.



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Educational Advancement Foundation

Alpha Kappa Alpha's Educational Advancement Foundation (EAF) has a mission to promote lifelong learning. Staying true to its founding values, it provides scholarships, fellowships and community assistance awards. As one of few such organizations administered by African American women, it has a unique approach to philanthropy that allows it to meet the diverse needs of a complex society. Pooling the resources of those who share the vision of finding excellence at all stages of life, EAF has awarded more than \$1.5 million dollars in scholarships and community awards to over 1,500 individuals and community organizations. The Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2006.

Partnership in Mathematics & Science (PIMS) program

Addressing the need to prepare young people to succeed in a technological environment, the Partnership in Mathematics & Science (PIMS) program was launched. Local programs offered intensive training in a stimulating and supportive environment during a summer PIMS camp, which included classroom instruction, lectures, applied laboratories, motivational speakers, career experts and field trips.

ON TRACK

The after-school and weekend mentoring program ON TRACK—an acronym for Organizing, Nurturing, Team building, Respecting, Achieving, Counseling & Knowing—targeted at-risk elementary school students. The goal was to help them achieve academically and make the right choices early in their lives. Students were followed through sixth grade and provided with learning experiences and opportunities promoting training in communications skills, physical and emotional health, peer leadership and building relationships.

Ivy AKAdemy

An umbrella program, The Ivy AKAdemy enhanced the school experiences of children and young people. Hundreds of local programs were implemented at the chapter level, and an AKAdemy was opened in Durban, South Africa. The Ivy Reading AKAdemy focused on early learning and mastery of basic reading skills. The nationwide after-school demonstration project targeted K-3 students in low-performing, economically deprived, inner-city schools in 16 sites within the continental U.S. and was funded by a \$1.5 million U.S. Department of Education grant.

Young Authors Program

In an effort to increase reading and writing skills, the Young Authors program offered young K-3 children the opportunity to write and submit stories for local and regional competition. Each of the Sorority's Regions selected one child to have his/her story included as part of a published anthology. Those students selected were introduced to the national organization and the community through book signings at the 2004 and 2006 Boules. Two volumes of *The Spirit Within: Voices of Young Authors* anthology have been published, and the program was recognized in remarks by First Lady Laura Bush at the 2004 Boule in Nashville, TN.