

## Links Inc. program guides youth to community service

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The Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated (The Links) this week launched Links to Success...an African American Leadership Experience, a new program providing innovative and engaging leadership development and college preparation curriculum, mentoring, and exposure to academically high performing girls. The new initiative follows last year's suspension of the Links' Debutante Cotillion Program for the 2011-12 school year. According to The Links President, Marcia Norman Murray, when the Debutant Cotillion was suspended, the organization "committed to come back with a new youth program to recognize high achievers. We believe Links to Success will be that program."

Murray said "We're optimistically expecting this new program to engage 20-30 high school juniors and seniors. We're looking for teens who are able to demonstrate commitment to community engagement and service. Applications were available September 4th from the Counselors Offices in the high schools in the Twin Cities School Districts and are due back by October 5th."

Murray reached out to families and community organizations to help counselors identify candidates for Links to Success. "Please help us spread the word," she said. "We're confident that Links to Success...An African Leadership Experience" is an experience that our youth will find extremely valuable."

The Links to Success program culminating celebration will be an outstanding awards recognition and scholarship luncheon showcasing the outstanding talents and accomplishments of the participants. "No black-tie gala with debutantes in their white ball gowns. Some may be disappointed," Murray said. But the new program would be a "more realistic and inclusive reflection on where we need to be in 2012 and beyond!"

She said The Links will continue partnering with community nonprofits and individuals. "In May 2012, we held our Young Woman's Issues Forum where over 150 girls ages 13-18 participated in a day-long forum at MCTC in workshops covering peer relations and entertainment. In June and July, The Links had Voter Registration and Information Booths at Juneteenth and Rondo Days, respectively. As we approach our 40th anniversary on December 10, 2012, we look forward to celebrating with our Minneapolis-Saint Paul community throughout 2013 with more outstanding programs and events."

We, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated are grateful for your support. We are committed to continued service and programs that support the needs of the community and fulfill our mission.

For more information about Links to Success...you may email [linkstosuccess@mpls-stpaullinks.org](mailto:linkstosuccess@mpls-stpaullinks.org)

Again, thank you for your years of support and we look forward to what the future holds.