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Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., an African-American professional business sorority, held a luncheon and auction to benefit area teens in need of college funding assistance.

The luncheon and silent auction took place Oct. 27 at the Airport Hilton Hotel. The goal of the event was to raise funds for scholarships for deserving area high school students.

"Every year we give away between $2,000 and $3,000 in scholarships," said Gamma Tau chapter president, Dorwatha Woods. "We try to impact the community in a positive way."

Woods said the Gamma Tau chapter, which is based in the Twin Cities, also works with women in crisis situations, on issues of health care and other issues concerning and affecting the African-American community.

"We're dedicated to bettering the lives of young people," said Stephanie Dilworth, national president elect of Iota Phi Lambda. "We want to train young people, young women, to be career-minded individuals."

Dilworth said the organization's signature program is Toys "U" Can't Give Back, a program dedicated to preventing teen pregnancy. In addition, she said the organization, which has 16 local members and about 9,000 nationally, is a participant in the Black Woman's Agenda, efforts to cure breast cancer and student achievement in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.

Items up for auction included fine crystal, designer luggage, a children's bicycle, several pieces of art, sports memorabilia items, a Jimmy Choo purse and more.

Iota Phi Lambda was founded by Chicago businesswoman, Lola Mercedes Parker in 1929. Since its inception, the sorority has embraced other professions; however, the main focus remains on the field of business. There are now more than 100 chapters with membership in 85 cities, Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Gamma Tau chapter of the sorority was founded in 1967. Dilworth said the sorority's national conference will take place in Minneapolis in July of 2013.

More information on Iota Phi Lambda can be found by visiting the sorority's national website at www.iota1929.org
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