



A Sigma Servant's Brief...

Notes From the Desk of the 22nd International Grand Basileus

November 2011

Greetings Sorors and Affiliates:

In our efforts to ensure that you are knowledgeable at all times of what Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority is up to and how you can take a part, we have created this A Sigma Servant's Brief which will be distributed as needed to keep you up-to-date. We hope that you will find it to be useful. Copies will also be posted to the Sorority Website. **Be sure to print for chapter members and affiliates who do not have electronic access.**

- **HAPPY 89th BIRTHDAY OF OUR BELOVED SIGMA GAMMA RHO SORORITY INC.**

It is my hope that every chapter of our Circle of Sisters will take this period to recommit to the values, principles and service that our seven illustrious founders created Sigma Gamma Rho to uphold and epitomize. Our founding month should also be a period for us to showcase at the highest height who we are, what we do and the impact we make. Chapters that do not take the time to highlight this most sacred period of our sorority year are doing a true disservice to our Seven Jewels and the sacrifices they made to establish our sisterhood. If your chapter falls in this category, use the rest of this month to make the necessary plans to ensure that will not be the case for our 90th observance.

May we also take time during this observance to seriously search our hearts and souls to determine if our representation of our sisterhood as members, and especially as community leaders, is indeed in keeping with the spirit of our founding and founders. This officer is increasingly concerned about the rise in actions and words from members and leaders which breed divisiveness and turmoil within. It is our hope that as we move forward toward achieving nine decades of Greater Service, Greater Progress, that members and especially leaders will refrain from driving wedges between our bonds of sisterhood simply due to selfish motives and the inability to adequately adhere to the current framework and policies that are in place. This officer would be the first to agree, that there's a lot of change that's needed, but sustainable change does not occur over night and must follow approved methodologies and processes to be successful. Let us all pull "ourselves" out of the equation and work together in unity and truth to move Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. ever forward for the honor of our Founders, the evidence of what we truly stand for and the love of our sorors and our sisterhood.

- **Your Grand Basileus Has Relocated to the West Coast**

After 12 months of unemployment and as a result of thousands of prayers, well wishes, job referrals and even financial blessings from my beloved Circle of Sisters, a job offer was received from Southern California Edison that this officer could not refuse. Glenn and I relocated to Southern California in August and have spent the last few months trying to determine where we will live. By God's grace and mercy we are currently set to close on and move into a beautiful home in Vista, CA in mid-December. Please know that we will be forever grateful for all the Sigma strength, love and generosity we received during a very trying period. You were the angels sent by God to keep our spirits up and our faith strong.

This officer and our sisterhood owes a debt of appreciation to International First Grand Anti-Basileus Bonita Herring for taking on the leadership of our sisterhood while also carrying out the responsibilities of her own role during your grand basileus' 10-week formal leave to transition into a new job and

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company as well the move to the west coast. And she in continuing to graciously bear a large part of the load while this officer completes transitioning.

- **Reclamation Campaign 1922 is in It's 2nd Year**

International First Grand Anti-Basileus Bonita Herring and the Membership Committee are again leading the efforts to bring back into the fold sorors disconnected from our circle. **The special Campaign 1922 package is available to all members who have been inactive for at least one year.** The package reactivation fee is \$368, which covers national, regional and NEF assessments. (NOTE: This does not include any local fees.) Returning members will also receive a welcome back package which will be sent from the International Corporate Headquarters. That package will include a welcome letter from the Grand Basileus, a Constitution-Bylaws and SOP Manual, TORCH Manual, and information about upcoming regional conferences. Use this Founders Day to reach out to our sisters who have been away and encourage them to come back home to Sigma.

- **Please Join Us in Welcoming One of Our Newest Members ...**

Atty. Ugoji Adanma Eze was inducted into our Circle of Sisters on Saturday, Sept. 24 in Washington, D.C. Soror Eze is a native of London, England and has extensive political and legal counsel experience and interface in England, Nigeria and the United Nations. She specializes in criminal and family law and election petitions. Soror Eze is also president and CEO of the Eng Aja Eze Foundation.

- **Sigma Gamma Rho Partners with the National STEM Program & the Girl Scouts for the 2012 Youth Symposiums**

The primary focus of the 2012 Youth Symposiums will be encouraging youth to excel in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Through the efforts of National Programs Coordinator Brenda Smith, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. is entering partnerships with the National STEM Program and the Girl Scouts for the 2012 round of Youth Symposiums. Be sure to contact the national or your regional program coordinator or visit the Sorority website if your chapter does not have a copy of the 2011/2012 International Program Update packet that includes all the information you will need for the Youth Symposium and all other primary programs for this sorority year. National Program Coordinator Brenda Smith and each of the regional program coordinators are owed a debt of gratitude for putting together a thorough and comprehensive roadmap for chapters to follow.

- **Introducing Project CRADLE CARE ...**

Over the last three years, your leadership has been working to rally our chapters and members around support of our signature program, Project Reassurance. A primary segment of that has been our renewed partnership with the March of Dimes. Under the leadership of SGR March of Dimes Coordinator Alice Cryer-Sumler, Ph.D. and National Programs Coordinator Brenda Smith, we are rolling out the inaugural year of Project CRADLE CARE. The program will consist of:

- ✓ Annual Prenatal Education Fair
- ✓ Annual March of Dimes March for Babies
- ✓ Annual Prematurity Awareness Observance

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✓ National Birth Defects Awareness Month Observance

✓ Project \$1922 Fundraiser

Be sure to get a copy of the 2011-2012 National Programs Packet for more information or contact your regional programs coordinator. The brochures for Project CRADLE Care are being designed and printed by the March of Dimes

- **2011 Officer Essentials Training Recap**

Soror Chloe Jones and the Leadership Academy along with the 2011 OET Planning Committee presented a class act for the 208 attendees of the second segment of the Officers Essentials Training. VIP guests and attendees voiced their pleasure at the quality of the workshops and overall camaraderie of the group. The highlight of the trip was certainly the tour of our International Corporate Headquarters. The historical timeline created by Soror Elaina Hamilton, who is also our HQ Membership Services Coordinator, and Executive Assistant Amy Mbaye; and the seamstress touches by Soror Effie Sanders, a frequent and long-time HQ volunteer; all under the leadership of Executive Director Morris, brought tears of joy and appreciation to many who toured.

- **Join us in New Orleans July 12-17, 2012 for the 54th Biennial Boule**

If you thought you had a blast in Palm Springs, you're REALLY in for a treat for the 2012 Boule. This year's theme is United4Service: Eliminating Barriers to Worldwide Positive Change. Our outreach focus for New Orleans will be HIV/AIDS education and testing.

The Hyatt Regency New Orleans is the conference hotel. The conference rate is \$115 per night for single, double, triple or quadruple occupancy. Reservations can be made by calling: 1.888.421.1442. When making your reservation, notify the receptionist that your reservation is for Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. or use the hyperlink on the Sorority website. **All reservations will require a one-night non-refundable deposit.**

We are working to get all registration information to you within the next few weeks. **Expect a fairly significant increase in registration costs.** As you should be aware, at the 2010 Boule, the Grand Chapter voted to add the SPEAR function to the basic registration package, which automatically resulted in an increase in registration costs by the inclusion of an additional meal. Also, New Orleans costs for a conference the size of ours is driving up the cost a bit, but your international financial officers and leadership are still crunching numbers to keep the cost as low as we can while ensuring that you have a Top Notch Boule.

- **REMINDER!!!! Chapter Email Addresses ... If you don't have one, GET ONE!!!!**

As earlier communicated, effective July 1, 2011, we ceased sending bulk mailings to chapters and the membership. General communication will be made via email, eBlasts and the sorority website.

For our more seasoned members and affiliates, we will continue to send you hard copies of information for individual sorors, BUT only by your specific request, which can be sent as a listing

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by your chapter basileus. Check the Sorority website to access the new **Hard Copy Mailings Request Form**.

- **National Sigma Gamma Rho Day on Capitol Hill to be Held in Conjunction with the Northeast Regional Conference ...**

Last year, at the annual Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference, the Council of Presidents for NPHC participated in a panel discussion on current affairs moderated by Roland Martin. Roland challenged all organizations that did not already do so to consider hosting a national day on Capitol Hill. We participated in a similar panel discussion again this year and Roland asked for a status check on his request from the previous year. Your grand basileus was proud to announce our plans for the last weekend in April 2012. You will hear more details immediately following the Christmas holidays.

- **Remember, 2012 is a Primary Election Year ... All Positions Are Open for Nomination**

Be sure to refer to the Sorority Website to secure a copy of the newly revised nomination forms. International Nominations Chair Sequoyah Jones and her committee have done a wonderful job in revamping the form and refining the details to remove ambiguity and help candidates and nominators easily navigate the process. **Nomination forms must be received by the Nominating Committee chair by Dec. 30, 2011.**

STATUS OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS

- **CDC AAALI Honors Sigma Gamma Rho by Funding a Second Year of HIV/AIDS Programming**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative (CDC AAALI) has awarded Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. nearly \$120K for 2012 to continue our efforts in HIV/AIDS awareness, education and testing. Project Coordinator Deborah Catching-Smith and her committee are to be commended for their hard work in executing the plan and providing the level of reporting -- in conjunction with the financial oversight of International Grand Grammateus Chantay Canty -- for the first year of funding that enabled our sisterhood to be granted funding for a second year.

- **Thank You to All Chapters That Achieved Their March of Dimes \$1922 Goal ... We're Gonna Do it Again**

All chapters that adhered to the request to raise \$1922 for the 2011 March for Babies campaign will receive a special commendation from the international grand basileus at the 2012 round of regional conferences and will be acknowledged in all of our communications vehicles. **Copies of your donations/collections report must be submitted to your regional programs chair with copy to your regional syntaktes by no later than January 1, 2012 to be acknowledged.**

SGR March of Dimes Partnership Coordinator Alice Cryer-Sumler along with International First Grand Anti-Basileus Bonita Herring, National Programs Coordinator Brenda Smith and Executive Director Rachel Morris attended the 2011 March of Dimes Volunteer Leadership Conference (all expenses paid by the MOD) in October where it was report that Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. members, affiliates,

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chapters and regions donated a total of \$84,000 for 2011. We are appreciative of the progress, but we want to have an even larger showing for 2012. **The goal will remain the same for our 2011/2012 sorority year -- \$1922 per chapter.**

- **Proposal to be Submitted for 2nd Year of Funding from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy**

National Campaign ... Project Coordinator Delia Harris and her committee are working tirelessly to complete and submit a proposal by Dec. 1, 2011 for a second round of funding at an even higher level in support of our signature program, Project Reassurance. In this second and more extensive phase of our partnership, we are being asked to incorporate training for all new members. Look for more information on this during the 2012 round of regional conferences and the 2012 Boule.

- **United Negro College Fund Still in Need of Our Support ... A Few Weeks Left in This Year's Campaign**

Each of the organizations of the National Pan Hellenic Council have again partnered with the United Negro College Fund to support the education of our youth. Again, each of the nine presidents were invited to attend this year's Evening of Stars and this time were introduced onstage. **The show aired on September 25. The report from UNCF as of the end of October showed the total giving for Sigma Gamma Rho to be \$80! As an organization founded by seven educators, we must step up to this call to show our dedication to this cause.**

Donations will be accepted through Dec. 31. To be counted in the NPHC campaign, you must either:

- Use your cell phone to text UNCF SGR (all caps) to phone number 50555 which will add an automatic one-time \$10 donation to your phone bill. NOTE: Each time you text 50555 it will add an additional \$10.
- Send a check to UNCF for \$10 or more. Include in the MEMO Section: NPHC UNCF SGR Send Checks to:
Christal M. Cherry
National Director, Alumni, Groups & Faith Partnership
UNCF
229 Peachtree Street, NE Suite 2350
Atlanta, GA 30303

NEWS FROM OUR 501C3 ORGANIZATIONS

Working TOGETHER to ensure we all succeed!

- **National Education Fund Hosts Historic Congressional Black Caucus Reception**

As part of the 41st Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Convention, NEF hosted a reception highlighting the importance of mentoring with special emphasis on excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) as well as safe dating for the prevention of teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDs.

The reception also recognized and celebrated members of the Congressional Black Caucus and others who

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are proponents of mentoring and who have made great strides in these areas as ambassadors, mentors or grass root supporters. The reception was hosted to also highlight the mentoring efforts of our own soror, Congresswoman Corrine Brown. The event kicked off Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.'s partnership with the National Cares Mentoring Movement led by Susan Taylor who was on hand to set the tone for the reception. More than 400 attendees were there to witness the honoring of Congresswomen Corrine Brown and Yvette Clark and Congressmen Elijah Cummings, Chaka Fattah and John Lewis. Attendees were entertained by the sultry sounds of Grammy Award Nominated Soror Kelly Price and Godfather of Go-Go, Chuck Brown. Tremendous thanks go out to Soror Debra Hughes, who served as MC and the members of Lambda Delta Sigma Chapter for providing phenomenal on-the-ground support for the event.

- **Chapters Nationwide Support SPEAR Souls for Little Souls Campaign**

Shoes were collected and donated to needy children across the U.S. on Aug. 13 in support of SPEAR's inaugural nationwide Soles for Little Souls Campaign. **A million thanks to all who participated.** Through this event, SPEAR hopes to continue to address the challenge our youth often face -- returning to school each year without shoes. By our donations and collaborations with partner organizations in our communities, we will work to eradicate this problem. **If your chapter participated and has not turned in a report to SPEAR, please do so immediately. All data is needed before Dec. 31, 2011.**

- **Seven Pearls Foundation Joint Fundraising Gala was a Tremendous Success**

The organization's first national external fundraiser event was attended by sorors, supporters, VIPs and members of Iota Phi Theta from across the country. Utilizing the theme "Pearls and Stars Making a Difference: Partners for the Cure" the joint Seven Pearls Foundation and Iota Phi Theta Foundation fundraiser was held at the Washington (DC) Marriott Wardman Park. Soror Gwendolyn Briley-Strand, event chair, served as the mistress of ceremonies. Recipient of the evening's Hattie McDaniel Health Award, Dr. Deepa Subramaniam, Interim Chief of the Center of Thoracic Medical Oncology at the Lombardi Cancer Center, Georgetown University Medical Center, provided the keynote address. The award was presented in honor of Dr. Subramaniam's efforts in cancer research, and in memory of the late Soror Hattie McDaniel, who died from breast cancer.

Each year for Founders Day, your 22nd International Grand Basileus has provided a bit of poetry to mark the day. This year, my heart and soul are moved to simply leave you with a critical principle that it is our hope you will use in "everything Sigma" that you do today and always ...

Work as ONE ... Speak as ONE ... Represent as ONE ... BE as ONE! Have a very blessed Founders Day weekend and joyous Thanksgiving and Christmas season!

Always in Your Service,

Joann Loveless

22nd International Grand Basileus