



Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service
Aiken (SC) Chapter

2025–2026 | Issue 2

The Emerald Connection

From the President's Desk



Greetings Members and Community Sponsors,

This newsletter reflects the impact we continue to make together. Our chapter has served the community for 37 years and this year contributed over 2,000 hours of intentional community service.

We extend sincere gratitude to our community sponsors. Your support made our 19th Annual Senior Recognition Program a success—recognizing 69 students and awarding scholarships to 19 seniors. Your partnership truly transforms lives.

Friendship remains the heart of our work. As summer begins, let us stay intentional about nurturing our bonds—reaching out, uplifting one another, and living our motto: Friends, “Linked in Service and Connected in Friendship.

Stephanie Franklin

As we welcome new members and remember those who are no longer with us may we continue strengthening our friendship chain and celebrating the accomplishments shared in this issue.

May you be inspired by the following words:

The Power of Community and Friendship Through Collaboration

When a community unites and collaborates,
They begin to grow.
Friendship fuels our purpose,
And shared service lights the way.

Together we lift,
Together we build,
Together we transform—
For nothing is stronger
Than a community creating change
Together linked in Friendship & Service.

Friendship Month

November is Friendship Month and the Aiken (SC) Chapter embraced the true spirit of sisterhood, self-care, and service through meaningful activities that uplifted both our members and our community: Promoted Self-Love & wellness as a foundation for strong friendships, honored our Platinum and Alumna members with a special dinner and heartfelt gifts of love, celebrating their legacy and dedication, and paid it forward to a group of CNAs, unsung heroes, by delivering sweet treats to them at a local assisted living facility. During National Donor Sabbath Weekend, gifted the Aiken County Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc copies of "My Daddy Needs a Gift," supporting education and awareness around organ donation.

Each initiative reflected our commitment to friendship, compassion, and service, strengthening bonds within our chapter while making a meaningful impact throughout the community.



In Loving Memory of Beverly Dozier Clyburn



The Aiken (SC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated mourned the passing of Charter President and Platinum Alumna Beverly Dozier Clyburn, who transitioned on January 30, 2026. A devoted member for 37 years, she held numerous leadership roles and helped lead initiatives such as the Ebony Fashion Fair Shows, Golf Scholarship Tournaments, Festivals of Trees and Wreaths, and the Senior Recognition Program, which continues to provide scholarships to local high school seniors.

She served the Aiken community for over 50 years as a distinguished civic and education leader and was the first recipient of the City of Aiken Award in 2018. Her legacy lives on through the Beverly D. Clyburn Generations Park.

She is survived by her husband, the Honorable William Clyburn, Sr.; her sons, William Clyburn, Jr. and Wilson Anthony Clyburn; and her daughter, the Honorable Courtney Clyburn Pope.

Envisioning Art Through Music

The ACPSD Youth Strings Academy, supported by the Aiken (SC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, visited Shadow Oaks Assisted Living Facility Saturday, December 6, 2025 to share some holiday cheer.

Aligned with our National Signature Program, Classics Through the Ages, students at North Aiken Elementary receive weekly violin instruction from orchestra instructor David Larenas, helping to nurture and ignite their musical talents.





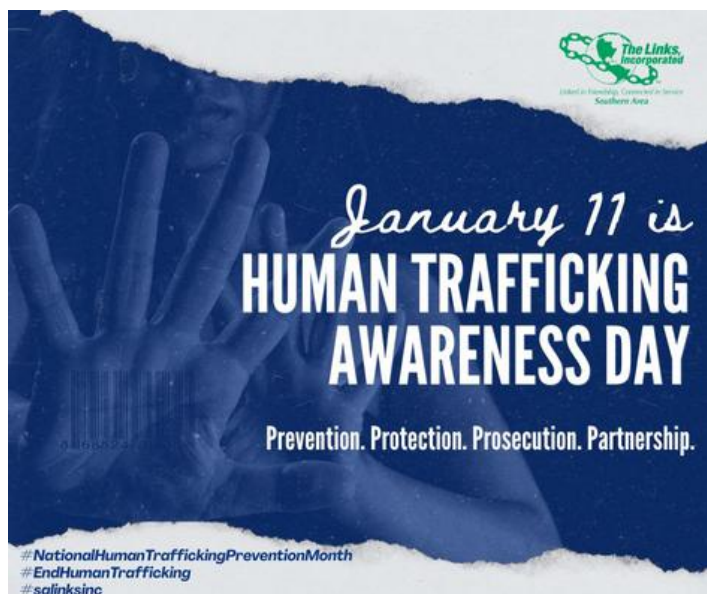
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Standing Against Human Trafficking

The Aiken (SC) Chapter proudly stands against Human Trafficking. We are committed to raising awareness, supporting prevention efforts, and advocating for the safety and dignity of every individual. Human trafficking impacts communities everywhere, including ours, and together we can help shine a light, educate others, and stand up for those whose voices are often unheard.

Together, we can make a difference.



Healthy Heart, Healthy Life.

On February 21, 2026, the Aiken (SC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, together with the Aiken Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., presented "Healthy Heart, Healthy Life", a special Go Red virtual event focused on heart health and wellness. Sixty community members attended.

Featured speakers:

- Dr. Monique Oye, Cardiologist, Charlotte, NC
- Akaycha Robinson, APRN, Aiken Physicians Alliance
- Gloria Hamilton, Certified Personal Trainer & Wellness Coach

The program offered expert insights on cardiovascular prevention, management, and lifestyle strategies to promote long-term heart health.

FREE **HEALTHY HEART**
HEALTHY LIFE
A Go Red for Women Event

Saturday, February 21, 2026 10am-11:30am
Virtual Experience via Zoom
Expert Presentations Questions & Answers

AKAYCHA ROBINSON
APRN, MSN, AGACNP, RNFA

DR. MONIQUE OYE
Cardiovascular Medicine

GLORIA HAMILTON
Certified Personal Trainer and Wellness Coach

Register at www.aikendst.org under the events tab
In Memory of BELVIA P. PAYNE

Black Family Wellness Expo

The Aiken (SC) and Augusta (GA) Chapters of The Links, Incorporated proudly hosted a successful Black Family Wellness Expo, bringing together families, community partners, and wellness advocates committed to healthier living and stronger communities on March 21, 2026. From valuable health resources and screenings to engaging conversations and wellness education, the day reflected the true spirit of service and friendship that defines The Links, Incorporated.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated members, sponsors, volunteers, vendors, and every attendee who helped make this event impactful and inspiring. Because of you, we continue to empower families to prioritize wellness and build a healthier future together.





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Links Day at The Capital

Members of the Aiken (SC) Chapter attended Links Day at the Capitol in Columbia, SC, on March 4, 2026, joining sisters from across the state to advocate for key community priorities. The day included legislative briefings, meetings with state leaders, and opportunities to highlight the organization's work in education, health equity, and civic engagement.

The chapter's presence reinforced its commitment to elevating the needs of the communities it serves and strengthening partnerships with policymakers. Links Day at the Capitol continues to be an important platform for ensuring that the voices of women dedicated to service and leadership are heard at the state level.



Healthy Homestead Seminar

The Aiken (SC) Chapter held its free Healthy Homestead Seminar on March 28, 2026 in collaboration with the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group, and L&D Consulting, LLC. The session equipped community members with practical guidance on heirs' property rights, homeownership readiness, and sustainable financial planning. Presenters also covered essential topics such as wills, estate planning, and retirement planning, helping families protect generational assets and strengthen long-term financial stability.

37th Anniversary

The Aiken (SC) Chapter celebrated our 37th Anniversary with a beautiful anniversary dinner, bringing together both charter and alumna members, honoring the legacy of those who laid the foundation and the continued commitment of those who carry it forward. Chartered on April 22, 1989, our chapter has spent decades uplifting the community, fostering friendship, and making a lasting impact through service and friendship.



From then to now, our legacy continues to inspire and empower. Here's to 37 years of sisterhood, dedication, and purpose and many more years of meaningful work ahead!

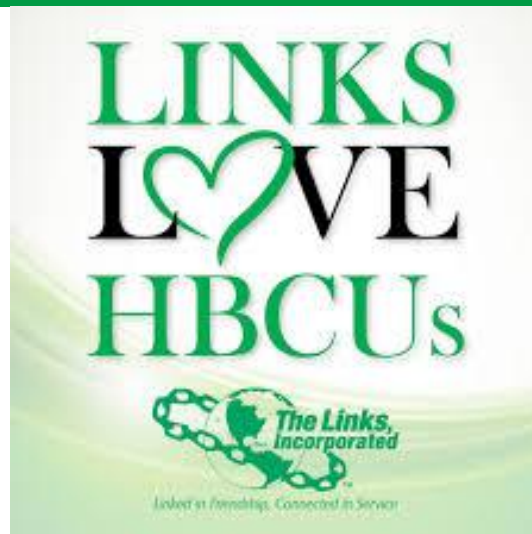


Student Spotlight: Excellence in Action

Celebration of Character First

On May 9, 2026, the Aiken (SC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated along with several other women's clubs and organizations of Aiken celebrated the good character of Aiken County students during the 27th annual Celebration of Character event. More than 200 students from public, private and charter schools were honored by Mayor Terry Milner, Dr. Corey Murphy, Superintendent of Aiken County Schools and Betty Ryberg, who is known for her enthusiastic community involvement. Students were called one by one to the stage where they received warm handshakes from VIPs, a certificate honoring their character, a magnet and a copy of the newspaper insert which was included in the Aiken Standard newspaper earlier that morning. The highlight of the celebration was seeing the LaToya, daughter of member Sabrina Robinson being recognized for good character along with Karis, granddaughter of member Dr. Teresa Pope.

To support the National HBCU Initiative of The Links, Incorporated, The Aiken (SC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, has dedicated several years to providing scholarships to students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across South Carolina. To date, the Aiken (SC) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated has awarded scholarships to students at South Carolina State University, Claflin University, Benedict College, Voorhees University, Morris College, and Denmark Technical College. Most recently, on April 23, 2026, a \$500 scholarship was awarded to Andrea Morton, a sophomore at Allen University majoring in Sports Management. Selected by the university's financial aid office, Ms. Morton shared her enthusiasm during a presentation attended by Tamisha Martin, Director of Financial Aid; Marilyn Eason, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management; and Dr. Felicia Pontoo, Chair of the HBCU Affairs Committee.



Congratulations to our chapter members whose children graduated from high school and college this academic year. We celebrate their hard work, achievements, and bright futures ahead.



Christopher "CJ" Peterson
Son of Dr. Charlene Moore-Peterson
Anderson University, B.A. Theatrical Design
with a Concentration in Scenic Design



Jasmine Duncan
Daughter of Sandra Duncan
Eastern University, Masters of Social Work



Hannah Branch
Daughter of Dr. Tywana Hemby
Barnwell High School
Attending University of SC Aiken



Lauren Grace Pope
Daughter of Judge Courtney Pope and
Granddaughter of Dr. Teresa Pope
South Aiken High School
Attending University of SC Columbia

Senior Recognition

Each year the Chapter, through its Services to Youth facet, recognizes outstanding Aiken County graduating seniors and awards them scholarships and/or certificates marking their achievement. This event is funded by the generous donations and support of Aiken businesses and community leaders. On May 17th, 19 \$500 scholarships were awarded to students in the areas of Academics, Arts, Athletics, Character, and Service. This event, now in its 19th year, also honored the legacy of its creator, the late Beverly Clyburn by renaming the scholarship the **Aiken (SC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated Beverly D. Clyburn Scholarship**. SC Representative William "Bill" Clyburn encouraged the graduates as the program's guest speaker.



Thank you Scholarship Sponsors

Rev. Dr. Alvin Larke, Jr & Dr. Patricia Larke
ARE, LLC

Chandler Law Firm

Collette Ball- State Farm Insurance Agency

Eliza Husser Cave & Mrs. Sanquinett Cave-Riley

Erma Wakefield Jenkins (In Memory)

Esther Gordy Bullock Edwards Foundation

The Honorable William (Bill) Clyburn, Sr.

Mr. Willar & Councilwoman P. K. Hightower

Ms. Zelda Taylor

Marie S. Johnson (In Memory)

Old Macedonia Baptist Church

Security Federal Bank

Celebrating Our Members



Debra Crockett

Recognized as Teacher of the Year
Performance Learning Center
Richmond County School System



Seneca Johnson

Elected to the SRP Credit Union
Board of Directors



Regina Pyles

Received her Project Management Professional
(PMP)® certification
Project Management Institute



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Welcome to Our New Members



Dr. Alicia Butler-Williams

Sandra Duncan

Denise McCray

On May 16, 2026, we welcomed three new members into our chain of friendship. We are excited to have these outstanding women join our chapter as we continue our commitment to friendship and service to the communities of Aiken, Edgefield and Newberry counties. Together, we will continue making a lasting impact and strengthening the bond that connects us all





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Calendar of Events



**The Links, Incorporated
45th National Assembly
June 24-28, 2026
Detroit, Michigan**



**Walk for Healthy Living
31st Annual Walk-A-Thon
September 2026
Location: TBA**