

Westchester County (NY) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

May and June 2017 Program Committee Report to the Executive Committee and the Chapter

1. Overview of the Facets' Planning and Service Activities in May and June

As described below, three service program activities were held in May and two will take place in June. Our facets also continue to evaluate their service activities during the 2016-2017 program year and make initial plans for the current program year that began in May.

2. Service Activities during April, May and June

April

4/1 – NTS sponsored Linking Generations Against Alzheimer's, a symposium that was co-sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association, the Westchester County Department of Senior Services, and AARP. The event took place at Westchester Community College's Gateway Center from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A continental breakfast was followed by informative workshops and panels focusing on understanding Alzheimer's disease as well as the resources available for assisting patients and caregivers. Seventy-five members of the Westchester community attended the symposium. Many chapter members assisted with greeting attendees, helping them to register and find seating, and with set-up and clean-up of spaces used for the event.

4/1 – ITS sponsored Woodlands High School L.I.F.E. students' participation in the 2017 Edgemont High School Model UN Conference where they joined in spirited debates on topics such as Brexit, issues regarding the South China Sea, and nuclear disarmament. The event attracted approximately 200 students from 15 schools in the tri-state area.

4/4 -- HHS sponsored the Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures Dental Van's third visit to the Lois Bronz Children's Center in Greenburgh. Volunteers helped the center's staff bring the children to the van, greeted the children as they entered the van and helped make them feel comfortable. Chapter members also reinforced tooth brushing skills, using the large models of teeth and a toothbrush that are kept on the van, and helped keep the children occupied until they had had their turn to be screened.

4/8 – NTS and the Arts Facet conducted the April session of In An Art State of Mind pottery-making activity for residents of the Wartburg who have early stage Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. The session was attended by eight residents and facilitated by seven chapter members. We began at 9:00 a.m. to allow time before the residents arrived in the room at 10:00 to hear from the instructor what the session's project would be and how we might present it to the residents, and then set up the tables and materials. The residents enjoyed making pinch pots and flowers to place in them and glazing them in a variety of spring colors. Some who were particularly engaged continued to make additional pots until they had to return to their rooms at 11:00. At the end of the session, residents were delighted to see the now-fired pottery pieces they had made in previous sessions, which were given to them so they could take them to their rooms.

4/10-11 – STY and the Arts Facets took 33 members of the Young Achievers to Washington, D.C., for two days of visiting the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a guided tour of Howard University, led by one of its students, and a panel presentation by five male African American students at Georgetown University. Six staff members from New Rochelle High School -- the two administrators who are the school's liaisons to the program, a key person from the school's office staff, and three teachers – as well as five parents, four Links, and one Connecting Link participated in the trip as chaperones. Experiencing the museum was both profoundly inspiring and so very informative. The visits to the colleges generated good questions from the Achievers and lots of good information from both the student guide at Howard and the Georgetown student presenters and the University's head football coach.

4/13 – On the 13th, Links Dozene and Earlene took the **NTS/Arts** presentation on Alzheimer's disease and African Americans that they made to our chapter at our December meeting on the road at the national level through a webinar that they developed. The webinar, which was titled "It Isn't Fair: The Disproportionate Impact of Alzheimer's Disease on African Americans", discussed what Alzheimer's is, its prevalence and symptoms, its effects on individuals, and who it impacts most. The webinar will be placed on the National Links website.

Throughout April – ITS -- During April, L.I.F.E. Program students at Woodlands High School read and discussed *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot, the true story of an African American woman who died of cancer and whose remarkable cells lived on and became the foundation of research for years and years despite her never having given permission for their use, nor was her family compensated when the cells were sold for research purposes. A film on the story of Henrietta Lacks starring Oprah Winfrey was shown on HBO during April. **ITS** purchased the books and prepared a very comprehensive discussion guide. Students in Mount Vernon High School's L.I.F.E. Program read *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman and *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, whose author is Ishmael Beah. **ITS** also purchased these books for the students, and discussion guides for them were prepared by ITS members.

May

Throughout May – Members of the ITS Facet and L.I.F.E. Program faculty advisors led discussion groups for the Woodlands High School L.I.F.E. students who're reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and for L.I.F.E. students at Mount Vernon High School who're reading *Seedfolks* and *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, using the extensive discussion guides that the facet developed.

5/8 – The NTS and Arts Facets held the May session of *In An Art State of Mind* for seniors at the Wartburg who have early stage dementia or Alzheimer's. Six Wartburg residents participated in the pottery-making session and four Links assisted the instructor from the Clay Art Center.

5/12 – ITS took L.I.F.E. Program participants to the UN for the annual UN/Links Youth Conference. The focus was Transatlantic Slavery. Forty-three L.I.F.E. students from Mount Vernon and Woodlands high schools participated this year.

June

6/6 – STY will hold its annual Young Achiever's dinner honoring the program's seniors. Also part of the occasion will be a discussion led by some of the program's seniors in which they will review what they've

learned about etiquette and networking at social events, and all of the Achievers will have opportunities to practice tips about etiquette and how to be successful at networking. Awards will be presented to the Achievers for achievement in such areas as attendance and leadership. In addition to the Achievers and chapter members, the dinner will be attended by members of the staff of New Rochelle High School who've been instrumental in supporting, and helping to implement, the program. Parents of the Achievers will also be invited. The dinner will be held at Chapter members desiring to attend should contact Link Claudia.

June 10 -- The NTS and Arts Facets will hold the June session of In An Art State of Mind for seniors at the Wartburg who have early stage dementia or Alzheimer's. The session will start at 9:00 a.m. so that before the residents arrive Links and the instructor can set up the materials and talk about the pottery-making project that will be offered. Chapter members interested in volunteering to assist in the session should call Link Earlene.

3. Facet Presentations to the Chapter on our Service Programs

The first of our service program presentations took place at the December chapter meeting. **The NTS and Arts facets** presented on the program for seniors at the Wartburg, now called There's More to Life, and particularly on Alzheimer's and the In An Art State of Mind activity, the hands-on clay-making sessions for residents with early stage Alzheimer's or dementia problems that's co-sponsored by the Arts Facet. In conjunction with updating the chapter on the In An Art State of Mind activity, NTS provided valuable information on Alzheimer's as part of its efforts to inform the chapter about the prevalence and cost of this disease, as well as about both prevention-oriented activities and supports for patients and caregivers. During the presentation, NTS also introduced its plans to sponsor a symposium on aging and Alzheimer's on April 1.

At the January chapter meeting, in recognition of National Glaucoma Awareness Month, **HHS** presented a newsletter that featured articles on glaucoma, the "sneak thief of sight", where vision loss is asymptomatic and permanent; and on National Children's Dental Health Month, announcing the kick-off of HHS' partnership with the Lois Bronz Children's Center to which the Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures Dental Van would make service visits in February, March and April. The newsletter also features an article on heart disease, the leading cause of death for women. In recognition of February being American Heart Month and the national Links organization's HeartLinks to Heart Health Program, the article listed three heart health-related courses of action that chapter members could take during that month.

ITS presented in February. Its program provided an update on the Kechie's Project activity, and at 9:30, before the start of our chapter meeting, a tea tasting, workshop and conversation conducted by Monaqui Porter-Young, a woman business owner and wellness expert, in alignment with two of the UN's Sustainability Goals and in support of women entrepreneurs. Chapter members arrived at 9:20 to have an opportunity to settle in for breakfast, tea tasting and discussion with Ms. Porter-Young prior to the chapter meeting. Ms. Porter Young is the CEO and founder of MPGlobal Connect Inc. The company develops and distributes the SRINA® tea products that are organically-grown on its farm in Srilanka. A lifestyle company, MPGlobal Connect Inc. educates the consumer about the medicinal value of its products, including the eco-friendly farming benefits, and shares its stories of achievements in sustainable economic development throughout North America and abroad.

STY presented on the Young Achievers Program at the March chapter meeting. Several young men who are participants in the program spoke about their experiences since joining. Several parents also participated in the presentation and gave their reactions to the program and their sons' participation.