

SOAAP

Newsletter

April 2001

Society of African American Professionals

Vol. 1 • No. 1

GREETINGS



*Lou Dantzer,
President/CEO*

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's (B&GCA) strategic plan calls for increased Club capacity that will allow the Boys & Girls Club Movement to outreach to more youth, while achieving high levels of operational quality. In doing so, the Report of the National Planning Commission recommended that the Movement "continue to value diversity at all board and staff levels

and should pay particular attention to, and improve, the recruitment, development, advancement and retention of women and people of color."

I'm pleased to say that the Society of African-American Professionals (SOAAP) has been formed to help in this process. SOAAP, designed to help nurture African-American professionals working in the Boys & Girls Clubs Movement, will actively promote the development and advancement of qualified African-Americans into senior and executive level positions within the Movement.

Each person brings a unique perspective, various talents and experience to what we do – inspire and

enable young people to realize their full potential. In order for the Movement to progress, all Club professionals must have the same opportunities and information needed to navigate from entry and mid-level positions to chief professional officer and beyond. In doing so, the entire Boys & Girls Club Movement benefits, as do the 3 million youth that we serve.

Outlined below are SOAAP's areas of emphasis, all of which we believe will have a positive and long-term impact on Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide:

- Mentoring and networking opportunities for African-Americans currently working at Boys & Girls Clubs
- Creating a Web site featuring job listings, networking opportunities and career-related information
- Establishing strategy for recruiting and retaining African-Americans, including development of a recruitment tool kit and targeting Historically Black Colleges and Universities

We hope that you will share information about the organization with your staff and use SOAAP as a resource in your future recruiting efforts. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Lincoln Ellis at 618/274-5437.

The members of the Society of African-American Professionals invite all National Conference delegates to join them at their Hospitality Reception. The reception will be held the evening of Wednesday April 4. Details will be available at the registration area at the Hilton Hotel. A breakfast for African-American professionals will be held on Friday morning. Please check your conference guide for information.

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A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

A Meeting Place

For many years, African-Americans have assembled informally at various national and regional Boys & Girls Clubs of America events. These meetings were often held on-site, in corners of lobbies and locations near the conference sites. While not a part of the formal B&GCA programs, the gatherings served as an opportunity for African-American professionals to express their opinions regarding various issues which were unique to them at their Clubs and in the Boys & Girls Club Movement. Colleagues were able to compare obstacles, receive mentoring and share frustrations in a constructive and non-threatening environment.

Passing It On

Over the years, the need for professionals to share and discuss issues in an environment that allowed a free-flow of information among colleagues, without retaliation, has continued but a number of new elements have evolved. Successful African-American executives who have demonstrated their knowledge, expertise and skills are partnering with newer staff to share best practices and offer counseling. The opportunity for such dialogue is a critical component to the recruitment, retention and development of the future leadership of the Boys & Girls Club Movement.


It is in this spirit that the Society of African-American Professionals (SOAAP) was formed. The inaugural meeting was held on September 17-18, 1999 in St. Louis, MO. The goal – to actively promote the development and advancement of qualified African-Americans into senior and executive level positions within the Movement. As B&GCA President Roxanne Spillett often says, “diversity is not just the right thing to do, but it is the smart thing to do.”

“I’ve been in the Boys & Girls Club Movement for 30 years and I have seen many changes during that time. From the formation of the Concerned Professional Association to the implementation of a National Diversity Plan, progress is being made,” said Lou Dantzler, president/CEO of Challengers Boys & Girls Club of Metro Los Angeles. “However, there is more work to be done and SOAAP can help,” added the Dean of Society for SOAAP.

While the Society of African-American Professionals provides and accepts assistance from any professional in the Boys & Girls Club Movement on the recruitment, retention and upward mobility of African-Americans, its general membership and some of its forums are designed specifically for African-Americans. This allows the continuation of the tradition of open dialogue, particularly to discuss the unique and critical issues that African-Americans face in their career development.

Leaving a Legacy

SOAAP hopes to leave an indelible mark on the Boys & Girls Club Movement, one that benefits all Club professionals working tirelessly to serve kids. With the right vision, support and leadership, this is possible. Hailed by Life as one of the great preachers of our time and spiritual adviser to Martin Luther King, Jr., Howard Thurman said it best:

 Keep alive in me the forward look,
the high hope,

The onward surge. Let me not be frozen
Either by the past or the present.

Grant me... Thy sense of the future.”

Officers and Founding Members

Dean of Society

Lou Dantzler, President/CEO
Challengers Boys & Girls Club of Metro L.A.

Assistant Dean

Lincoln Ellis, Executive Director
Jackie Joyner-Kersey Boys & Girls Club

Treasurer

Sanita Blake, Director of Development
Challengers Boys & Girls Club of Metro L.A.

Judith J. Carter, Senior Vice President
Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Rob Clay, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Clubs of Joplin

Gregory Coles, President/CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland

James D. Cox, Vice President of Urban Services
Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Robert Hassin, Former President/CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago

April Janney, Assistant Vice President
Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago

Carl Lavender, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast

John Miller, Regional Service Director
Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Dave Smith, President/CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City

Calvester Stanley, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Clubs of Oakland

HONORING OUR PAST...

Frank Callen: A Pioneer in the Boys & Girls Club Movement

By Nathaniel Glover and Tim Richardson

Today, Savannah, Georgia is a calm and picturesque port city on the Atlantic. Many of its buildings are ornate, historic and draped in mystical Spanish moss. A popular tourist destination that is among the New South's gems of race relations, Savannah in 1915 was quite a different story, particularly for African-Americans. This was after all, a mere fifty years after the end of the Civil War. The foundation of Savannah's commerce had been built around the labor-intensive business of farming rice and on the bustling port of Savannah. For more than a century, this port was also the entry point and auction site for enslaved Africans. The descendants of these enslaved peoples are a large portion of Savannah's population today. In 1915, segregation was the strictly enforced law of the land; it lay thick, plentiful and heavy as the moss on the Savannah trees. It was quite a different time.

The Savannah of 1915 is the world where we find Frank Callen, an African-American of tremendous vision, courage and dedication. Callen was a truant officer assigned to Savannah's poor African-American communities. He quickly recognized that the youth in these communities had little supervision or organized constructive options during the non-school hours. Not only was the only existing youth center in town not conveniently located, it was segregated. Callen decided that he wanted to help the children he worked with every day grow beyond their immediate circumstances. He wanted more than his job offered - catching young people and punishing them - and set out to help

improve the lives of those who had the least. After rallying support mostly from black professionals in the community, he organized and opened the Savannah Boys Club in 1917 and served as director. This organization became a Federated Boys' Clubs affiliate in 1922 (the FBC was the precursor to Boys & Girls Clubs of America), making it one of the oldest Clubs in the South.

Callen led the Club for decades. His tireless work to improve the lives of young people and his community didn't go unnoticed. After his death in 1954, the Club was renamed the Frank Callen Boys Club in his honor. Recently, the main building of the Frank Callen Boys & Girls Club (510 Charleston Street) underwent a major \$750,000 expansion and renovation. The organization's three facilities annually serve 1,500 of Savannah's youth from disadvantaged circumstances with a variety of quality programs and dedicated, trained staff. A restored and enlarged photo of Frank Callen is prominently displayed in the entry foyer of the main Clubhouse. People who knew Callen recognize the look in that photo. It is a look of pride, one that Callen displayed every time the daily throng of happy kids burst in from school.

Frank Callen left a legacy for us all to follow, one that demonstrates what can happen when a committed few are determined to make a difference. Those of us in the Boys & Girls Club Movement must pick up where he left off - paving new roads and creating opportunities for young people where there appear to be none. Our youth deserve it and our nation's future depends on it.

Club Executive Director Nathaniel Glover invites youth service professionals to visit if ever in Savannah. Now that's southern hospitality.

PREPARING OUR FUTURE

Lincoln D. Ellis

Lincoln D. Ellis currently serves as Executive Director of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Boys & Girls Club located in East St. Louis, Illinois. As director, Ellis oversaw a capital campaign which raised almost \$10 million to construct a state-of-the-art 42,000 square foot facility which has become the center of this urban community.

Lincoln's commitments are not just to the staff and community of East St. Louis. As a Club professional with over 20 years of experience, Ellis has served as a trainer and mentor for



dozens of young professionals. He currently serves as a National Training Associate for Boys & Girls Clubs of America, as well as a member of BGCA President Advisory Council. He recently became a mentor in the Career Assistance Network. Through his involvement with the Midwest Regional Diversity Committee, Ellis has made presentations at Administrative Conferences and Program Institutes and has worked to provide individual consultations to young professionals across the country.

With his continued dedication, Ellis is definitely preparing the future of the Boys & Girls Club Movement.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Title/Position _____ No. of Years in the B&GC Movement _____
Name of Organization _____
Name of Unit/Extension _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____ Email Address _____
Region _____

ANNUAL DUES \$100

Make your check payable to SOAAP and mail with application to:

Society of African-American Professionals

c/o Challengers Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro L.A.

P.O. Box 37189

Los Angeles, CA 90037-0189



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