

AKA Centennial event

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global issues that affect our community and encouraged us to bring our perspective to the table to find solutions. She told us about some of the issues black women face and about her camp related to math and science, "Johnson said. With the sorority's more than 200,00 members in over 975 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan and Africa, it is likely that there will be a huge pool of talent that can be tapped.

On the business side, President McKinzie estimated a \$105 million infusion into the D.C. economy. She based that figure on the 25,000 registered guests and an additional 10,000 who will be in the city to be a part of the festivities. Aside from their members and guests staying in DC hotels, the sorority contracted with a number of DC-based minority businesses "thereby spreading the wealth to local entrepreneurs," said McKinzie.

The group's Unity March closed part of Pennsylvania Avenue as thousands of AKA wearing their signature pink and green colors and representatives from the other sororities (Delta Sigma Theta, Sigma Gamma Rho, Zeta Phi Beta) and fraternities (Alpha Phi

Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Iota Phi Theta, and Phi Beta Sigma) joined them. Together they marched from the National Council of Negro Women's headquarters to the U.S. Capitol.

Although a few people needed medical attention due to the oppressive heat, the AKA's were off to a fantastic start that morning as they heard from Dr. Dorothy Height and DC Councilman Vincent Gray, among others. After arriving at the U.S. Capitol, the group heard from top Congressional leaders like Carolyn Kilpatrick, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Diane Watson, Sheila Jackson Lee, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and Majority Whip James Clyburn. Senator Mary Landrieu spoke to the group, as did House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Speaker Pelosi paid tribute to the AKA's for all of their accomplishments and wished them much more success in the coming years. Congresswoman Sheila

Jackson Lee promised that they would pass legislation too, to honor the 100 years of AKA's service to others. Attendees heard from various fraternity leaders committed to increasing civic action and improving the health,

education, and welfare of all citizens as well as the Unity Day Resolution developed by a Council of Greek organization Presidents.

The AKA's closed their convention in grand style with the largest sit-down dinner ever held at the Washington Convention Center. The group estimated that

about 17,600 guests attended the dinner. The formal banquet included music by the Duke Ellington Orchestra, a tribute to former Presidents of the national organization and other special presentations.

For more information about the AKA and the Centennial Barbie doll, visit the website, www.aka1908.com.

School assessment scores

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for all children."

The results can be seen in MSA Reading and Math scores, both of which reached their highest points at every grade level since the MSA was first administered in 2003.

Overall fifth-graders made the most dramatic gains in reading to 77-percent proficient or advanced in 2008 from 62 percent in 2007. Seventh-graders scoring proficient or advanced rose to 70 percent this year compared to 58 percent last year. Eighty percent of fourth-graders are reading at a proficient or advanced level.

In math, 81 percent of fourth-

graders scored proficient or advanced, up from 77 percent last year. Seventh-graders raised their math scores by eight percentage points to 54-percent proficient or advanced in 2008.

More than 50 schools had 80 percent or more students scoring proficient or advanced in reading in 2008, compared with just over 20 schools at that level in 2007. Nearly 40 schools performed at the 80 percent or higher level in math this year, compared with just over 20 schools at that level in 2007.

William W. Hall ES students made the greatest gains in reading, jumping 22.8 points to 77.8 percent proficient or advanced.

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Top, Dr. Barbara McKinzie, AKA Centennial President and Dr. Dorothy Height. Above, AKA member Congresswoman Diane Watson, at the podium, poses with President McKinzie and some Congressional leaders at the U.S. Capitol. - Photo by Val Campbell



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Complimentary

Obama abroad

By Ron Walters - NNPA

Barack Obama embarks on a serious foreign policy initiative with his trip to Europe and the Middle East, to bolster his foreign policy credentials.

To that end, he gave a major speech on his global view recently and was criticized by John McCain who said that he should have visited the scene of the problem first and then proposed policy recommendations. However, John McCain's speech on Education policy at the recent NAACP convention was given before he has spent virtually any serious time in the black community in order to determine what works educating black children.

Instead, he presented a canned conservative proposal for charter schools and vouchers for private schools that seeks to dissemble public education where most black children are educated.

I believe that for Obama to give his speech before he went abroad created substance for the foreign press to feed on, as he repeats his themes before huge audiences that give him an 85 percent favorable rating. And for those who are concerned about a shift in his position on ending the war in Iraq, this speech would appear to lock-in his anti-war views and the proposal that if he becomes president, he would seek to restore a collaborative method of working with European allies and develop a real consensus among allies in the Middle East that may lead to

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Thousands of AKA sorority sisters and representatives from other sororities staged a Unity March from the National Council of Negro Women's headquarters to the U.S. Capitol during the organization's Centennial International Convention, in Washington, DC, July 11-18.

- Photo by Valencia Campbell

County students post gains on assessment exams

Student MSA scores show improvement in every category

UPPER MARLBORO, MD -

Prince George's County public school students performed at higher levels of achievement on the Maryland State Assessments (MSA) according to 2008 MSA results released recently by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

According to school officials, scores rose at every grade level, in every subject, and in every subgroup year over year, throughout the county. Aggregate elementary school improvement in all subjects outpaced the state improvement rate.

"Our students have much to be

proud of, as do parents and all employees who have focused their work to improve teaching and learning in all of our schools," said Verjeana M. Jacobs, Esq., Chair of the Prince George's County Board of Education. "A historic rise such as this in student performance across all of our schools does not happen by accident. Our policies on equity are delivering results, and we will continue to make decisions and target resources in ways that improve student achievement for all children."

A preliminary review by officials of the data in advance of Special Education appeals seems to indicate that when official

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results are announced, more than a dozen PGCPs elementary and middle schools could exit the state's School Improvement List, topping last year's previous total of 11 elementary schools exiting School Improvement status.

"These results are astounding. Prince George's County public school students are showing how smart they are," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. John E. Deasy. "We are so proud of how far they have come in a short time. We will continue to improve teaching and opportunities for learning in all our schools

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AKA's celebrate 100 years of sisterhood and service

By Valencia Campbell

According to Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority's chief Information Officer, more than 20,000 AKA members came to the Washington, DC Convention Center for its Centennial International Convention that took place from July 11-18, 2008. The group is America's first Greek-letter organization founded in 1908 by African American college women on the campus of Howard University. Eleven host graduate chapters and three undergraduate chapters helped ensure that their members and the nation would remember the group's activities in the nation's capitol. The group's activities included: seminars and forums designed to promote leadership development, voter education, health and a host of other topics.

Centennial President Barbara McKinzie maintained, "We will use the occasion to celebrate our illustrious commitment to our mission and chart the journey toward our second Centennial." Aside from the serious business of the day, the group enjoyed luncheons, parties throughout the city hosted in their honor, a performance by Patti Labelle, and evening fireworks. Mattel Toys even created the AKA Centennial Barbie Doll to honor the sorority.

Amada Johnson, a young lady who was past President of Alpha Chapter of Howard University said she especially enjoyed hearing Mae Jemison speak during the convention. "She spoke on

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