By Gwendolyn Lindsay

Since 1955, members of the Baltimore Chapter of Continental Societies, Inc. have dedicated their time, talent and resources to help empower children and youth in the Baltimore Metropolitan area.

On Sunday, December 27, 2015 the Baltimore Chapter of Continental Societies Inc. celebrated 60 years of service to children at its annual Christmas Gala at Martin’s West with elegance and festivity. Over 800 families, friends and community supporters from across the United States attended the elegant black tie affair enjoying the celebration and festivities with live entertainment, dinner and dancing while offering much deserved holiday support right after Christmas for the organization’s charitable programs.

Continental Societies, Inc. was founded by a small group of African American women. Members of the Baltimore Chapter have maintained the long standing principles of the organization, under the current leadership of Chapter President Ann Taylor Ross, and National President Edna Lee Moffitt. National President Edna Lee Moffitt who is also a member of the Washington, D.C. Chapter said, “I am extremely proud of the innovative and creative programs which have become the trademark of the Baltimore Chapter as they continue to serve our children and youth. We are acutely aware of the many challenges facing our children and youth. We must assume the responsibility to foster in the best visions for health, education, employment, recreation, and arts and humanities. Together we will provide hope and secure a place in an inclusive society for all children and youth.”

Each year the chapter presents an award to an outstanding community volunteer who has unselfishly volunteered countless hours to help children and youth in the community. This year’s Memorial Award was presented to Baltimore attorney and Baltimore City Orphan’s Court Judge Lewyn Scott Garrett who has volunteered weekly as a karate instructor for over 19 years at the John Eager Howard Recreation Center located in Reservoir Hills.

Under the leadership of Gala Chair Lynetta Parker, Co-Chairs Angela Humphrey and Tasha Franklin-Johnson worked closely with committee members Lynda Brown; Lorna Byers; Frenzela Credle; Sonya Davis; Yvonne Woods Howard; Vivian Jackson; Jill Johnston; Barbara Lee; Stephanie Lee; Lynn Lawings; Gwendolyn Lindsay; Doris Smith; Gail Tucker; and Kathy Wyatt to ensure an “exciting festive” evening to remember for their guests.

Continental Chapters are located in the United States, District of Columbia and Bermuda.

Members of the Baltimore chapter work primarily with elementary, middle and high school students in Baltimore City, Baltimore and Harford Counties. Continental members reach children and youth through H.E.E.R., which is their five-point programmatic thrust—Health, Education, Employment, Recreation plus Arts & Humanities. In the Baltimore Chapter, the health component addresses total health and fitness through a variety of programs including the Red Ribbon Campaign-Just Say NO to Drugs during the month of October and free dental screenings offered through a Dental Van called Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Future.

Members of the chapter encourage the joy of learning through the education component from October to April by reading to students monthly and distributing books through the Book Buddies Program at The Empowerment Academy. Realizing the importance of the future of our youth, members explore with students through the employment component, college and future careers with students at City Springs Elementary/Middle School.

Through the recreation component children and youth are offered various activities to improve their physical skills including such activities as yoga, hula-hoop, and Zumba.

The arts and humanities component The arts and humanities component exposes children and youth to all aspects of the arts including concerts, plays, dance performances and the theater.

Scholarships are also given each year to deserving students through the chapter’s scholarship program.

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