The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2021

MMSI hosted our 3rd annual
WE LEAD: Empowering Our Girls Conference

Saturday, October 16th, 2021
Via Zoom

As we celebrated the United Nations
International Day of the Girl Child
(October 11, 2021)

In Celebration of the United Nations
International Day of the Girl Child
MALIK MELODIES SISTERHOOD, INC.
In collaboration with CASITA MARIA
PRESENTS
WE LEAD
EMPOWERING OUR GIRLS 3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This event will be a fun filled day with Music, Raffles,
Performances, Motivating Messages, Inspirational Speakers,
Award Presentations, and so much more!

Saturday, October 16, 2021
Noon - 4:00pm

REGISTER NOW!  www.casita mariaartseducation.org

The Graces Staff • Pg. 17
Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.
In collaboration with: Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education hosted:

WE LEAD: Empowering Our Girls / 3rd Annual Conference
On Saturday, October 16, 2021 from 12 Noon - 4:00pm via Zoom

It was a great conference where we learned valuable information about our culture as well as techniques for self growth, entrepreneurship and financial stability. The virtual entertainment was excellent and inspiring!

Our ASL Interpreters were amazing.

The event featured Our Student Leaders:
Sophia Connellan (12th grade)    Raven Taylor (9th grade)    Quiamani Tyler (12th grade)

Our Presenters were as follows:
• Atlantis Browder, Author & Educator
• Bibi Chaterpateah, Founder, Sadhana Studio, Inc.
• Shoshana A. Brown, Social Justice Educator & Organizer
• Brianna Lilac, Founder & CEO, Lilac’s Vibe
• Alyscia Cunningham, Author, Filmmaker & Photographer
  • Girls, Inc., Monetary Management
  • Angel Johnson, Founder, ICONI
• Laisha De Leon, Shyann Ferrer & Jadili Small, Women's Leadership Kahoot

Entertainment:
• AbunDance Academy of the Arts -and- Singer, DK Dyson

Click here to view our event journal to read about our participants:
https://online.fliphtml5.com/qltdk/diak/#p=1
A very special thank you to all the workshop presenters for taking time in your busy schedules to participate in our conference. We are truly grateful for you helping us to Empower Our Girls!
ASL Interpreters

We are thankful for to all the sign language interpreters who volunteered their services to ensure our conference is accessible to the Deaf community.

Jessica Ames  
Jackie Bruce  
Jacinda Damas  
Candace Davider  
Barbara Hunt  
Cheryl Kelly  
Rhea Ummi Modeste  
Melissa Pacheco  
Kia Presley  
Miriam Rochford  
Toni Rodriguez
LISA MARIE RODRIGUEZ
2021 WE LEAD CONFERENCE CHAIR

Lisa Marie Rodriguez is a daughter of the South Bronx repping her Boricua roots. Lisa is a school social worker for the New York City Department of Education. Via the strength perspective, Lisa uses therapeutic methods for social and emotional wellness of outdoor adventure, play therapy, yoga, political & cultural awareness for student empowerment and growth.

Thank you

A very special thanks to our Sisters who served as Committee Members, Co-Hosts, technical support, and social media support. We absolutely couldn't have done this without you!

TQIMSTQIY!!!
A 17-year-old high school student from Iowa City has developed a surgical tool to detect infection

Taylor invented color-changing sutures that can detect infection. She was named among the top 300 scholars this year out of 1,760 students. Taylor entered her project into the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium in March 2020; she quickly realized she was the only Black student present.

"Being in the room knowing stereotypes were flying and to be able to prove them wrong and win first place was phenomenal. My mom and I talk about it all the time. I often find myself in white-dominated spaces. That's one for the books."

Inspiring Barbie Dolls

Mattel has come out with a new line of Barbie Dolls called "Inspiring Women". In the series, they honor Dr. Maya Angelou, Rosa Parks & Ella Fitzgerald.

**Did You Know?**

**Soleil Saint-Cyr**

*A New Jersey teen, becomes a New York Times Crossword Constructor*

When the pandemic hit, 17 year old crossword fan Soleil Saint-Cyr learned how to construct her own and has created history as the youngest female EVER to create a New York Times Crossword puzzle!

On February 15, 2021, she was interviewed by the TODAY Show!!

View her interview here:

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**More Interesting Facts...**

* **Jazz**, an African–American musical genre was born out of the blues, ragtime and marching bands, and originated in Louisiana during the turn of the 19th century.

* **Dr. Mae Jemison** became the first African American woman to go into space aboard the space shuttle Endeavor in 1992.

* **Alexa Canady** became the first female African-American neurosurgeon in the United States.

* **Cathay William** was the first and only known female Buffalo Soldier during the Civil War.
Since 1968, the United States has observed Hispanic Heritage Month; honoring roughly 60.6 million people in the country.

Celebrated annually from September 15 to October 15, Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the cultures, histories, and influences of those of Spanish, Mexican, Caribbean, and South American descent.

While most heritage months run a typical calendar month (the 1st to the 30th or 31st), Hispanic Heritage Month dates were thoughtfully selected based on the time period when five Latin American countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua) became independent of Spain and the United Kingdom.

This year will mark 202 years!

The theme for this year's celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month is Heritage, Diversity, Integrity, and Honor: The Renewed Hope of America.

It is a time to appreciate and celebrate the colorful cultures, rich histories, and honor the accomplishments and contributions of both Latino and Hispanic Americans that help shaped the United States economy, culture and society.

On April 8, 1993, Ellen Ochoa became the first Hispanic woman in the world to go into space. Ochoa traveled on the Discovery shuttle for nine days and conducted research on the Earth’s ozone layer. Since then, she has been on three space flights, for a total of 1,000 hours in space! She’s also the first Hispanic director, and second female director, of the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

Maria Elena Salinas holds the title as the longest running female news anchor in U.S. television history with more than 30 years on TV. She is the first Latina to receive a Lifetime Achievement Emmy. Currently Salinas is no longer an anchor for Univision. She is a founder of the "National Association of Hispanic Journalists” and sponsors the "Maria Elena Salinas Scholarship” for college students interested in Spanish news broadcasting.

Julia de Burgos Garcia, was born in 1914. She was a published poet & newspaper writer in Puerto Rico but struggled to gain acceptance & popularity in the United States in the 1930s. Julia’s poetry was ahead of its time. She & her poems celebrated civil rights for women & African/Afro-Caribbean writers. She was also a member of the "Puerto Rican Nationalist Party”. Julia’s contributions have influenced many Latino writers.

Did you know??

The biggest Latina crossover artists performing in both Spanish & English are: Selena, Rita Moreno, Gloria Estefan, Shakira, Christina Aguilera, Nelly Furtado, Jennifer Lopez & Thalia.

All of these performing powerhouse women have won Grammy Awards, except for Jennifer Lopez.
Hola mi gente!
Hello my people! For Latin Heritage Month, we would like to recognize some young LatinX Activists.

Here are 3 of the youngest activists making an impact on our communities.

Sophie Cruz, age 10
Immigrant Rights
Check out this little superstar:
- Little Sophie went viral at age 5 when she tried to push through the Pope’s security barricade to hand him a letter.
- Sophie wanted the Pope to help undocumented people who immigrated to the United States.
- That action has led her to become a young powerhouse & a strong voice in the immigrant rights movement. In 2017 at the age of 6 she spoke at the Women’s March on Washington!! She has also been able to sit in on Supreme court hearings & has met with President Obama & former Vice President Joe Biden!!

Ashton Mota, age 15
Defending the Transgender Community
Ashton has publicly shared his challenges as a Black and Latinx trans teenager while attending an elite private high school in Massachusetts. That has led Ashton to becoming a Youth Ambassador for the Human Rights Campaign.

He was involved with the “Yes on 3” campaign where Massachusetts voters became the first state to vote on protections for transgender people from discrimination.

Luis Hernandez, age 17
Criminal Justice Reform
Over the decades we as adults have all seen & read the stories that Luis had to endure personally. At age 14, Luis watched the false arrest & imprisonment his innocent brother Pedro. Luis fought & won! His brother was released & cleared of all charges.

Luis’s fight continued for others & he became an advocate for criminal justice reform. He worked with the Justice League of New York City and has served a youth leadership & Engagement Coordinator. Luis also helped to co-found the “Youth Over Guns” organization.

To read about more of our young activists, please check out this article: https://www.dosomething.org/us/articles/young-latinx-activists-you-should-know
Congratulations MGM, Felicia Peterson on your retirement on July 1, 2021 from Pocantico Hills Central School, Sleepy Hollow Hollow, NY. After 26 years at Pocantico Hills School and 38 years of teaching as a Special Education Teacher Pre-K to Grade 2 in the NY State School System.

Congratulations GM, Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois on your retirement on July 1, 2021. After 34 years in education as a primary teacher, principal, and elementary curriculum director, Nathalie has decided to focus on her educational consulting business, Zahara Crown, Inc. and supporting her daughter’s business, Lilac’s Vibe. She has already been approached for two new writing projects, speaking engagements, and educational proposals as well as expanded roles in the non-profit organizations to which she belongs. Nathalie is also a wedding officiant, conducting weddings across Long Island. This past summer Nathalie enjoyed some free time with her yorkipoo, Princess Piper and catching up on a few DIY home projects.
Since COVID-19, throughout the day and night we have been spending numerous hours on our computers, smartphones, or other digital screens and you probably have noticed some uncomfortable effects from staring at your screen too long. Digital-related eye strain affects people of all ages. If you spend hours a day using digital devices, you might notice your vision blurs, and your eyes feel achy and tired. You may also find your eyes become dry, and will tear or sting. This eye strain is no different from the symptoms you may have when reading, writing, or doing “close work” like sewing for long stretches of time.

What is Blue Light?

It is visible light with shorter wavelengths and more energy than light at the other end of the colour spectrum. The sun is the primary source of blue light, but blue light also comes from: computers, tablets, smartphones, fluorescent lights, LED lights and television screens. These long hours staring at digital screens leads to decreased blinking. Blinking less sometimes causes a series of temporary eye symptoms known as eye strain. The best way to avoid eye strain is to take breaks from the screen frequently.

Is Blue Light From Screens Hurting My Eyes?

The amount of light coming from a computer has never been demonstrated to cause any eye disease. A study reprinted by the National Library of Medicine found no measurable UVA or UVB radiation (the most harmful part of light) from computer screens.

There is some evidence that blue light affects the body's circadian rhythm, our natural wake and sleep cycle. The best way to avoid sleep disruption is to avoid using screens two to three hours before bed. Using "dark" or "night" mode on devices in the evening can help, too.
We all need a push sometimes to be more proactive about our health. The current health awareness months are:

**September:**
* National Ovarian and Prostate Cancer Awareness
* National Childhood Obesity Awareness

**October:**
* National Breast Cancer Awareness

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** if you have not done so yet, please make your doctor’s appointments for a physical & to follow up on your **ovarian, prostate & breast** health. In most cities you can easily find FREE cancer screening options to make sure you’re healthy.

**Our Kids:** We have to keep our kids healthy too. It’s amazing how many children are currently obese. Even though the winter months are coming & we’ll be indoors more, there are plenty of activities our kids can do at home to stay active to combat obesity. You can easily find exercise solutions via interactive computer games & dance challenges on social media. Of course, our kid’s diets are a key component in this matter. If your child is obese or if that’s a potential concern: please follow up with your pediatrician and/or nutritionist to create the best & most interesting meal plans to get on the right track.
We remember the life and accomplishments of:
MMSI’s Community Partner
Joysetta Pearse, Director of Nassau County’s
Black History Museum

By: GM Sharon Harleston

Joysetta Pearse possessed a keen intellect that drove her to investigate the "hidden" contributions of Black Americans, and to educate others about them in her role as director of Nassau County Black Museum

To read more about Mrs. Pearse, click these links:


Jan/Feb 2017 Issue of the Graces
https://4390e887-3571-4e9e-9bf4-015ee5b4e3f8.filesusr.com/ugd/218351_14d8aba81efd4018a820899ac8d641cd.pdf
Congratulations to our Melody Sister, Bibi Chaterpateah on her accomplishments!

Bibi started a new position as a medical scribe for Summit Health CityMD, an urgent care located throughout New Jersey and New York. We wish her all the best in her new position working on the frontlines!

On August 26, Bibi graduated from the Harvard Public Health Review Fellowship! Be sure to check out her blogs on: harvardpublichealthreview.org

We also congratulate Bibi on her acceptance as a Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Fellow for the MCH section of the American Public Health Association (APHA). She was also chosen as 1 of the 30 recipients (out of 100 applicants) for the APHA Student Assembly Scholarship to attend the annual APHA meeting in October.

GM, Melissa Charles and Ted Rene were married on July 30th. Wishing you both a lifetime of love and happiness!!

GM, Jhenna Zepeda and Josh Gregoire were married on October 9th. May the years ahead be filled with love and joy.
Congratulations to **Gracious Melody, Lisa Love Whittington** on her new business venture. Our artist sister has recently launched her wallpaper line called Lili WhittWhitt Designs. Check out her designs under Lili WhittWhitt on the Wall Pops website:

https://www.wallpops.com/lili-whittwhitt-designs-by-lisa-whittington?
utm_source=Wordpress&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LisaLove

Congratulations to **Gracious Melody, Nathalie Lilavois** who is a contributing author with Monique Denton-Davis for their “Sisters Inspiring Sisters” virtual book launch. The virtual book launch is part of the "Sisters Inspiring Sisters Virtual Summit" at 7:00pm, EST on November 17th and 18th.

The event will feature powerhouse women in various industries, sharing their expertise to empower women of color with life’s challenges.

Feel free to register for the event via: bit.ly/sisbooklaunch

Congratulations to **Gracious Melody, Stacey Leveille-Casseus** on the birth of her second child; baby girl Ayanna, born on Sept 6th. Congratulations to the proud parents Stacey & Achly!!
Calendar of Events

Making Strides of Long Island
Sunday, October 17 at 7:30am
JONES BEACH STATE PARK-FIELD 5
1 Ocean Parkway, Wantagh, NY
https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?pg=entry&fr_id=100837

Making Strides of Central Park
Sunday, October 17 at 7:30am
CENTRAL PARK - BANDSHELL
West 66th St & Central Park West
Manhattan, NY
https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?pg=entry&fr_id=100804

For the nearest walk in your location and to donate visit
Find Event
The Graces Newsletter

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2021

Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall...
F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Bibi Chatterpateah
Jillian Gibson
Sharon Harleston
Lisa Rodriguez
Anita Gillespie-Wallace

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MMSI MONTHLY MEETINGS:
Executive Board – 2nd Tuesday of every month at 8:00 pm
Professional Branch – 3rd Tuesday at 8:00 pm
The Graces Newsletter Staff – Last Wednesday at 8:00 pm