

The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.



“Reminisce, Reflect & Renew”



Most Gracious Melodies Founders of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.

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Natalie Cowart	Lisa Jones	Felicia Peterson
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Donette Ferguson	Celeste Martinez	Darlene Scott
Coral Fraser	Noemi Martinez	Jill Tappan
Pamela Garrod	Bonnie McCoy	Miriam Torres

Join MMSI in 2013 as we reminisce and reflect on our past 34 years and prepare for our 35th Anniversary Celebration! Email your throwback photos to TheGracesNewsletter@gmail.com

Jan/Feb 2013

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Please send comments or ideas for articles for future newsletters to TheGracesNewsletter@gmail.com

EB President Message

Greetings Family,

Isn't it amazing how time escapes us and springs upon us yet another year! Welcome to 2013!!!!...The year of overall "Accountability." This year promises to be better and bolder than the last. There are memories and accomplishments to be cherished, lessons learned more work and progress to be made in MMSI this year. MMSI will continue to expand and be afforded new opportunities for organizational growth and partnership.

This year we aspire to strengthen the ties with our social action partners; provide our members and communities with continuing education and tools for success. I urge Sisters to continue to contribute where possible and support our ongoing initiatives such as Melody Ajupa, the Artist Networking & Mentor Initiative, etc... We also WELCOME and NEED our Melody Sisters' great energy, expertise and new ideas to the table. This is OUR organization and there is always work to be done.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our 35th Anniversary Celebration this year. I hope you enjoy this edition of *The Graces* and I bid you all, a year filled with blessings and great success.

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."- Edith Lovejoy

Ms. Sherlyn Ortiz

MMSI Executive Board President

SAVE THE DATE!!!

MMSI 35th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, October 12, 2013

Antun's Catering Hall in Queens Village, NY

Formal Invites will be sent via the U.S. Postal Service. If you have not received your 35th Anniversary Save The Date Magnet in the mail we need to confirm your current mailing address. Please forward your mailing address to malikmelodies@gmail.com to the attention of the 35th Anniversary Committee.



Melodies on the Move

“Be calm, Be strong, Be grateful, Love...”

Those powerful words are the personal mantra of Gracious Melody Michelle Taylor, Genesis Chapter, Long Island University, C.W. Post. After completing her Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Public Relations & Broadcasting, Michelle began her career as the assistant to the Promotion Director at Blue Note Records in 1985. Two years later, she became the Manager of Jazz Promotion and Black Music Marketing at EMI Records, where she worked with prominent artists like Bobby McFerrin, Najee, Diane Reeves, The O’Jays, and Natalie Cole. In 1990, Michelle became Promotion Manager for Verve Records, a Universal label, where her artist list grew to include Dr. Bill Cosby; legendary jazz vocalists, Abbey Lincoln and Betty Carter; jazz saxophonists, Maceo Parker and Stan Getz; and jazz piano great, Shirley Horn.



Michelle moved on to RCA Records in 1991 as the Director of Marketing and Promotion for their jazz division. Shortly thereafter, she became the Director of Marketing and Artist Development for the Black Music Division where she supervised the marketing efforts for such well-known musical talents as SWV, Martha Wash, and the Wu-Tang Clan. Recognizing her exceptional talent, Sylvia Rhone, an industry executive at Atlantic Records, recruited Michelle to manage the daily operations of the Atlantic Jazz Division. Once again, Michelle worked with a Gerald Albright; guitarist, vocalist, Gilberto Gil and Grammy award winning producer, conductor, and arranger, Lalo Shifrin (of Mission Impossible

fame). At Atlantic, Michelle made her mark in history by being the only woman to run a Jazz Division at a major music label as well as being the only African American to ever hold that position.

In 1996, Michelle founded her own company, NIA Entertainment, Ltd. As President and Senior Marketing Director, Michelle oversees entertainment marketing, event production, and talent management. This exceptional marketing executive continues to demonstrate her expertise in creating and executing marketing strategy using cutting-edge media tools, extensive industry knowledge, and visionary leadership. In addition to running NIA Entertainment, Michelle currently serves as Marketing Specialist for The Vitamin Shoppe. Michelle’s professional affiliations include the National Association of Female Executives, the National Association of Women Business Owners, and Girls, Inc. She also serves on the Board of Marketing Opportunities in Business and Entertainment. Her amazing journey of success in the music industry makes her one of our beloved ***MELODIES ON THE MOVE!***



If you wish to recommend a Sister or yourself for “Melodies on the Move!!!” please contact me at: nlilavois910@gmail.com

By: GM Nathalie Lilavois, ED.d

~FACING THE STORM~

By GM Lisa M. Rodriguez

During Hurricane Sandy, the Melodies checked-in with one another to see how we fared from the storm. We communicated via cell, text, Facebook postings, or word-of-mouth. The days leading to Thanksgiving, I texted Gracious Melody **Ashley McMikle**, letting her know that I heard through the Melody grapevine she was doing ok. Being the tough cookie Ashley is...I joking typed *"Did you put Sandy in her place."* She replied, *"I wish I could say I did. I stayed and it was horrible"*. I knew then it was time to pay a visit to my Sister.

During my visit it was shocking to see the devastation. TV coverage will never give visual justice to what I witnessed. The destruction that struck me the most was the once wonderful beach across the street from Ashley's apartment building. The beach was now broken, ruined and destroyed. Despite the trauma Ashley experienced during and after the storm her spirit of resiliency shines through as she lives up to her African name, Mandisa *"One that is Sweet and Precious"*.

Ashley's decision to stay was the same as many others who chose not to evacuate: New York City escaped the worst storm of the 2011, Hurricane Irene. But Hurricane Sandy was a different story as the ocean began to overtake the boardwalk, streets, property and cars. Electricity was gone and Far Rockaway, NY was completely closed off.

Ashley states this is the most traumatic event she hopes to ever experience. She became frantic that her son had not reached home after witnessing (from her balcony) an electrical transformer collapse into the flooded street. She feared her child may be electrocuted en route home. Thankfully her son, Isiah arrived home safely. She was also concerned about the safety of her family and neighbors. Additional trauma followed during the aftermath of the storm; no access to food or water for many days compounded by resulting nightmares due to looting and assaults on community members, especially women. Ashley states, *"It was not safe to be out of your home when night set in, or to ever walk alone"*.

But, in the face of the storm, Ashley summoned and maintained her strength by caring for her community and checking on her neighbors especially the elders. She shared her provisions with others, such as candles, food, water, and batteries. Ashley states, *"This storm has humbled me."* *"You can't be arrogant with Mother Nature."* *"Mother Nature is beautiful and giving but is overpowering."*



Gracious Melody Ashley McMikle
Gracious Melody Lisa Marie Rodriguez

By Kim J. Bright



What's New?!

MMSI Supports Cayuga Centers



MMSI is in the process of renovating a family visitation room at the Cayuga Centers in the Bronx, NY for young mothers to visit with their children between the ages of 1 month to 1 year who are currently in foster care. We thank Sisters Sherlyn Ortiz, Juceliz Batista, Lorraine Sanchez, Marjorie Jean-Pierre and Kim Bright for their donation of labor, furnishings or finances towards the project. If you wish to donate towards this effort with a toy chest, small book shelf, toys or books, please contact GM Sherlyn Ortiz at malikmelodies@gmail.com.

*To learn more about the Cayuga Centers go to www.cayugacenters.org
Stay tuned for information regarding a ribbon cutting ceremony!*



MMSI's HURRICANE SANDY EFFORTS

MMSI Partners with the NYC Dream Center

Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. partnered with the NY Dream Center during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy with the collection of food, clothing, and personal product donations. Currently the NY Dream Center is no longer accepting physical donations; however financial donations are being requested:

www.newyorkdreamcenter.org



Melody Ajupa Food and Coat Drive



Sisters Sharon Harleston,
Nathalie Lilavois & Maria Lopez

On Saturday, November 11, 2012 **MMSI** partnered with **The Three Village Soccer Club & Stony Brook Travel Teams** to hold a **One Warm Coat** drive to benefit the **Gerald J. Ryan Outreach Center** and support victims of the recent Hurricane Sandy. Food donations were also collected for the **LI Cares Harry Chapin Food Bank** by community member, **Leslie O'Brien**. MMSI registered the coat drive with www.onewarmcoat.org and received free resources and tips to conduct a successful drive. MMSI collected an overwhelming 42 bags and 2 large boxes of coats and clothing. Some individuals went as far to purchase new items such as socks, pajamas, scarves, and other cold weather essentials to support the many people in need in the wake of the recent devastation to coastal areas of Long Island and Far Rockaway. MMSI thanks all who donated and extends a special thanks to **Mr. Michael Malloy, Director of Environmental Health & Safety** who delivered an additional 12 bags of coats from SUNY New Paltz to Stony Brook University on Nov 30th to support the Melody Ajupa Coat Drive. We thank Sisters **Sharon Harleston, Nathalie Lilavois, & Maria Lopez** and all Melodies who aided in organizing the event.



Comité Noviembre Honors MMSI President Ortiz



Congratulations to our Executive Board President, **Sherlyn Ortiz** who was honored with the **2012 Comité Noviembre "Lo Mejor de Nuestra Comunidad" award**. The original date and location of the awards program was changed due to complications from Hurricane Sandy. President Ortiz accepted her award on November 17, 2012 at Comité Noviembre's 26th Anniversary Celebration of Puerto Rican Heritage Month at Hostos Community College. To learn more about Comité Noviembre visit <http://comitenoviembre.org>.

Children's Aid Society



On November 16th, 2012 **GM Maria Lopez** along with the Children's Aid Society successfully held their annual Family Harvest Dinner at CS 61 in the Bronx, NY. This annual community dinner provides a wonderful evening of fun, food and games to underserved communities.

Bro. Umaru Barrie Leads the Charge!

MMSI commends Brother Umaru Barrie, collegiate member for this multiple efforts in galvanizing his Collegiate Brothers, the University of Albany and its surrounding communities to provide relief effort donations to residents of the Far Rockaway



community.

Photos by Umaru Barrie

From Bro. Umaru's Facebook Album: *"The first trip for Project Sandy was very amazing, however the second trip for me was even dearer to heart. During this trip, we were able to talk even deeper with the people affected by the hurricane including one of my Sisters **Ashley McMikle** who enlightened us on issues surrounding the neighborhood and she also was able to provide us with a first look at how the Rockaways looked after the hurricane hit. During the second trip we were able to help two areas: the people in the apartments next to Ocean Bay Community Center and the people in the houses in shorefront housing who were right close to the ocean. I am proud of all of the work Project Sandy has done & to think that all of this was done by students and faculty who seek to be the change they wanted to see. I love it and I expect more upcoming."*



*I love my Malik Melodies Sisters, and today showed me the great thing about having Queens right by your side as Kings. **Sister Dawn Cotter-Jenkins** was there with us throughout the whole day and helped direct us toward the relief in Far Rockaway (Ocean Bay Community Center), which was one of the war zones in regarding Hurricane Sandy.*

*Thank you Sister,
The King In I Salutes The Queen In You
Bro. Umaru Barrie*

Welcome to the MALIK Family!!!



TAA Kingdom (Hofstra University) Fall 2012

John Lopez
Juan Medina
Sage Mullings

SHIN Kingdom (SUNY Albany) Fall 2012

Michael Adomfeh

ZAY Kingdom (Binghamton University) Fall 2012

"The **Five Pillars of Adinkrahene**" which means, the pillars who stand for greatness, charisma and leadership.



Inward...Onward...Upward!!!

Melody Stacey Leveille is living her dream! She has been accepted to New York's prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to pursue a **2nd bachelor's degree** in Fashion Merchandising Management. She will begin classes in the Spring of 2013. **Congratulations Stacey!!!**



Melody Sasha Powell will be participation in Binghamton University study abroad program during the January 2013. Sasha will study the emerging Indian business ventures and learn the rich customs & culture of India.



Wedded Bliss!

Showering our Sister ***Maria Lizette Rodriguez-Clark*** and her husband Philip Clark with wonderful wishes and lots of love!!!



Freezing For A Reason!!!

GM Lisa Marie Rodriguez was freezing for a reason once again on New Year's Day at Coney Island Beach, Brooklyn, NY, to support her annual campaign to raise funds for Camp Sunshine in conjunction with the Coney Island Polar Bear Club. Camp Sunshine provides children with life-threatening illnesses and their families from New York to a one-of-a-kind retreat in Maine. For more info check out: www.freezinforareason.com



Sister Dawn Cotter-Jenkins is leading a Facebook campaign in the Kwanzaa spirit of Ujamaa – "Cooperative Economic". She is encouraging her FB friends to share their business, blogs, FB business pages, or website with her. She plans to support as many of their missions as possible in 2013. Let's join Dawn in her efforts to support our friend's businesses and endeavors. Together We CAN!!!



Black Students United at Long Island University / CW Post Campus invited the ***Malik Melodies*** to attend their Annual Kwanzaa Ball on December 06, 2012. Black Students United is a campus organization that enlightens the minds of their student peers through weekly discussions about issues that affect the Black community. Malik Melodies purchased a table with donations from MMSI Professional Branch Members to support this event. Congrats to the Black Students United for an outstanding event and evening of empowerment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cole Family Disaster

On November 10th, 2012, Collegiate Branch Melody **Jhenna Zepeda** informed us that her family suffered a horrific tragedy when their neighbor's home exploded and significantly damaged Jhenna's family home; it is now uninhabitable. We are thankful Jhenna's Mom and Stepdad are physically unharmed except for minor injuries.



How You Can Help! The Malik Melodies has established a disaster assistance fund and is collecting monies to send to Jhenna's family to aid them with obtaining their basic needs and their rebuilding efforts. Thus far we have collected \$1,100.00.

Please Make Your Check or Money Order to: **Natasha Cole**

Mail to:

Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.
P.O. Box 92944
Washington, DC 20090

Or via www.PayPal.com

1. Select the "Send Money" Tab, and pay to malikmelodies@gmail.com
2. Select the "Personal Tab" and then select "Gift" or "Other"
3. Include "**Cole Family Disaster Assistance**" in the Message Section

To learn more about the explosion go to

<http://www.wthr.com/story/20065797/investigators-survey-damage-from-indianapolis-explosion>



In Honor of Our ANCESTORS...

*We send our love, condolences & prayers to
Sister Martha Murray and her family.
Martha's Mother **Maria Rivera** made her transition into
Ancestry on November 28th, 2012.
and to*

*The family of Honorary Melody **Kathryn "Kaye" Mealing** and to all
Melodies and MALIKs whose lives she touched.
"Mother Malik" transitioned into Ancestry on January 12, 2013.
She is our Gracious Ancestor*

We pray for their spirits to be at perfect peace



***Gracious Ancestor
Kathryn "Kaye" Mealing***

MMSI 34th Anniversary Well Wishes



December 14, 2012 marked the 34th Anniversary of our illustrious and progressive Sisterhood, the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. We thank our 24 Founders for paving the way.

Our 34-year journey has been intertwined with challenges and growing pains, but filled mostly with great work, love, fun, support and empowerment – all of which has made us stronger and wiser. Our journey led us to reorganize as the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc., a Progressive Women's Leadership Development Organization. Thank you to all who have supported us along our journey and continue to do so. **Inward...Onward...Upward!!!**

- MMSI Exec. Board

Thirty-four years ago today, 24 Gracious women founded the progressive women's organization of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. I would like to thank all the Sisters before me for their dedication and commitment to this organization. I have grown as a woman and learned to challenge myself in ways that I could have never imagined. I have so much love for my organization and I will continue to be an example to women and y Sisters.

Happy 34th Anniversary!!! Malik Malik!!!

~GM Janelle Natal~

Beautifully said from a beautiful Queen. I second that emotion. Peace TQIMSTQIY!!!

~GM Dawn Cotter-Jenkins~

"The sisters and brothers that you meet give you the materials which your character uses to build itself. It is said that some people are born great, others achieve it, some have it thrust upon them. In truth, the ways in which your character is built have to do with all three of those. Those around you, those you choose, and those who choose you." ~Maya Angelou~

Happy 34th Anniversary to my phenomenal Sisterhood, the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. Having a strong and life long bond with phenomenal, intelligent, empowering, strong, dedicated, hardworking, conscious, and all around beautiful women who constantly strive to teach and uplift is a pure blessing and honor. Thanks for helping me on my path to becoming the best version of myself. Thanks for leaving an indelible mark of love and support in my heart. I am a proud Queen. M ♥ M

~Melody Mildred Ngminebayihi~

On this day in 1978, 24 Regal Queens founded Malik Melodies. I am so Proud and thankful to be a part of this prestigious organization. Empowering women to persevere through struggle, to become leaders, elevate their community through civic and social responsibility, educating the community through cultural enrichment, and gaining knowledge and sisterhood through collaboration. 34 years and strong. Happy Founders Day my Queens!!!

~M ♥ M - Melody Sasha Powell~

It's truly is blessing to say Happy Founders to my fabulous Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. I am grateful to be surrounded by the most motivated, hardworking, empowering, intelligent, spiritual, funniest and beautiful women I've ever meet. TQIMSTQIY!!!

~Melody Stacey Leveille~

Happy Anniversary to the Regal Sisterhood known as MMSI!
May God grant many more years of fellowship and service!!!
~MALIK Cliff Brown~

Happy Founders day to Malik Melodies! We have come a long way and there are many more regal years to live!
Inward...Onward...Upward! I am a PROUND QUEEN of MMSI! We shine bright because of our Founders and
we are aligned like stars because of our Gems! I am blessed!
~GM Christine Delgado~

Wishing all my sisters a Happy Founders Day!! As we move forward to the next year, celebrating our 35th
Anniversary, we should reflect on our past. Join us in moving forward in growing our organization and
developing our leadership. I am proud to say we have accomplished many things and continue to see more work
ahead of us. Together we can accomplish our mission.
~GM Maria Lopez~

My Beautiful Wonderful Sisters, Happy Founder's Day!! Thank you for believing in our vision and for continuing
to keep our orange flame strong and burning brightly. So many great opportunities are on our horizon I look
forward to walking on this incredible journey with you My Sisters, My Queens. We ARE the shoulders of today
for tomorrow's future!! Love to you all,
~MGM Kim Bright~

Congratulations on 34 years of Service and Continued Success in ALL of Your Future Endeavors!
~SC Kyle Little~

DOING HER THING AND DOING IT WELL SINCE 1978 – MALIK **Johan S. Powell**
It seems like yesterday! Happy Anniversary to all of my beautiful Sisters! TQIMSTQIY!
~GM Vicki R. Palmer~

Happy Anniversary Queens!!!!
~GM Shirell Roebach~

Happy Birthday my Regal Sisters...love you all ♥.
~GM Martha Murray~

I am so proud to call you all Sister.
~GM Lori D. Frazier~

KUDOS FROM OUR FRIENDS

Congratulations on 34 years of Service, Leadership and Success ♥ - **Keila Ifeoma Zayas**

Happy Founders Day to you and your Sisters - **Victoria Fan**

Happy Anniversary Ladies! I have always respected the way you all represented Sisterhood - **Renee Fuller**

