



THE ODYSSEY

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR
AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

DECEMBER 2023

Presidential Press

Vol. 4

THIS ISSUE

- **Presidential Press**
Page 1
- **Chaplain's Message & Prayer Corner**
Page 2
- **This Month's Highlights**
Page 3
- **Happy Birthday, Sorors!**
Page 16

Thus faith, hope, and love last on, these three; but in Delta Sigma Theta, the greatest of these is love. Just as Tina Turner questioned, "What's love got to do with it?" - we can confidently answer, "Everything." Love is the foundation of our sisterhood and we are reminded of this monthly during our ritualistic ceremony. As we celebrate the Christmas season, let us remember the ultimate act of love – the sacrifice made for us. This serves as a powerful reminder of the love we should strive to embody in our interactions with one another and in our service to the community.

Sorors, as we approach the end of 2023 and conclude our short sorority year, it's inspiring to see the Delta train continuing its journey with purpose and impact. International Awareness and Involvement is keeping us at the forefront of crucial conversations, particularly in collaboration with community partners on the important topic of HIV. Membership services will host our annual Jingle and Mingle immediately following chapter meeting and the White Christmas caroling later in the month. I hope you have gotten your outfit for the exclusive viewing of The Color Purple (I'm really excited).

Let's not forget our commitment to education and community impact. The scholarship fundraiser with our community partner, the Austin Delta Foundation, on Sunday, December 17, is a critical opportunity for us to make a difference. We aim to sell at least 200 more tickets, and I want to emphasize how crucial your support is. Remember, we are not just selling tickets; we are investing in the future of college students who are counting on us.

I want to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the love that binds us together continue to shine brightly in all that we do. In Delta Sigma Theta, love is not just a sentiment; it's a commitment that lasts on – a commitment that makes us stronger together.

Yours in Service,

Soror Robin J. Blackmon



REMINDER:

Our chapter meeting is in-person at **10 a.m. on Saturday, December 2 at Highland Campus, Austin Community College** (Building 2000, Room 1550). **Parking is available in the South Parking Garage:** 6018 Wilhemina Delco Drive, Austin, Texas 78752

Chaplain's Message

Shared by Soror Dedurie Kirk, Chaplain

Thankfulness

I've got so much to thank God for. So many wonderful blessings and so many open doors --- With those lyrics, Kurt Carr ushers us into moments of personal reflection and ultimately praise.

Things don't always go my way, but I've got so much to thank God for.

I'm often overlooked, but I've got so much to thank God for.

I'm not where I'd thought I'd be at this point in life, but I've got so much to thank God for.

In the 19th century (1841), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow composed a poem called The Rainy Day. The third stanza reads:

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

In our 21st century American lives, we are coerced into believing life will always be wonderful and we should never experience trouble. When trials enter our lives, we often suffer in silence. We hesitate to participate in programs on overcoming life's difficulties. Even rarer are one on one discussions. We collectively prefer to wear a mask of success rather than admit we are struggling and ask for help. We certainly won't tell friends our business.

People feel as though they are the only ones who have been through their particular pain and asking for assistance would be for naught. Some make the fatal mistake of succumbing to pride and its partner, embarrassment, refusing to ask for help because someone might think less of them.

When we take time to study the Bible, we find people who suffer difficulties in life. If we look closely, we can find our struggles. The first century Jesus tells us, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Even in the throws of trouble, in Jesus we can have peace. (John 16:33)

Our sunshiny days far outnumber those with rain. Yet when the storms come, our minds are clouded. We tend to look out at the storm instead of up to the Son. Our thoughts get stuck in the immediate. We need the fresh wind of The Holy Spirit to remind us trouble does not last forever, joy comes in the morning, and morning is on the way.

We all have problems, but we have a God who can solve them. The Lord gives us people to walk with us through this journey. We can also utilize the gifts God has given us in the

of mental, physical, spiritual, and financial health professionals to shed light on situations and help us find strength in our struggles. Assistance is available. Help is within reach. We do not have to isolate. We do not have to struggle alone. We are richly gifted beyond measure.

As we assess the ups and downs of this year, those of us who are believers have the assurance of the love of God and the gift of grace. We move forward by adding up our problems less and counting our blessings more. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 reminds us to give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. We should not have a problem doing so, because we have so much to thank God for.

Prayer Corner

Members are encouraged to send cards, visit (if allowed by the family), or telephone sorors for additional courtesies. Sorors, please continue to lift the following in fervent prayer:

- Soror Rippenkroeger and family. Her mother is in hospice care;
- Soror Hunt and family for the loss of her sister, Soror Mary Burgess;
- Soror Dorothy Wilhite is in a skilled nursing facility; Sedona Health and Wellness 8324 Cameron Rd, Austin, TX 78754 Rm #120 Visitors are welcome;
- Soror Ellen Bailey had heart surgery and is recovering; and
- Soror Carrie Swisher for the loss of her brother, Robert Organ.
- Soror Pamela Hall and family for the loss of her father.

Sorors, tap the enclosed link to submit your prayer requests and bereavement notices,

<https://dstatx.org/contact-page/pb-request-form/>

December Omega Omega Assignments

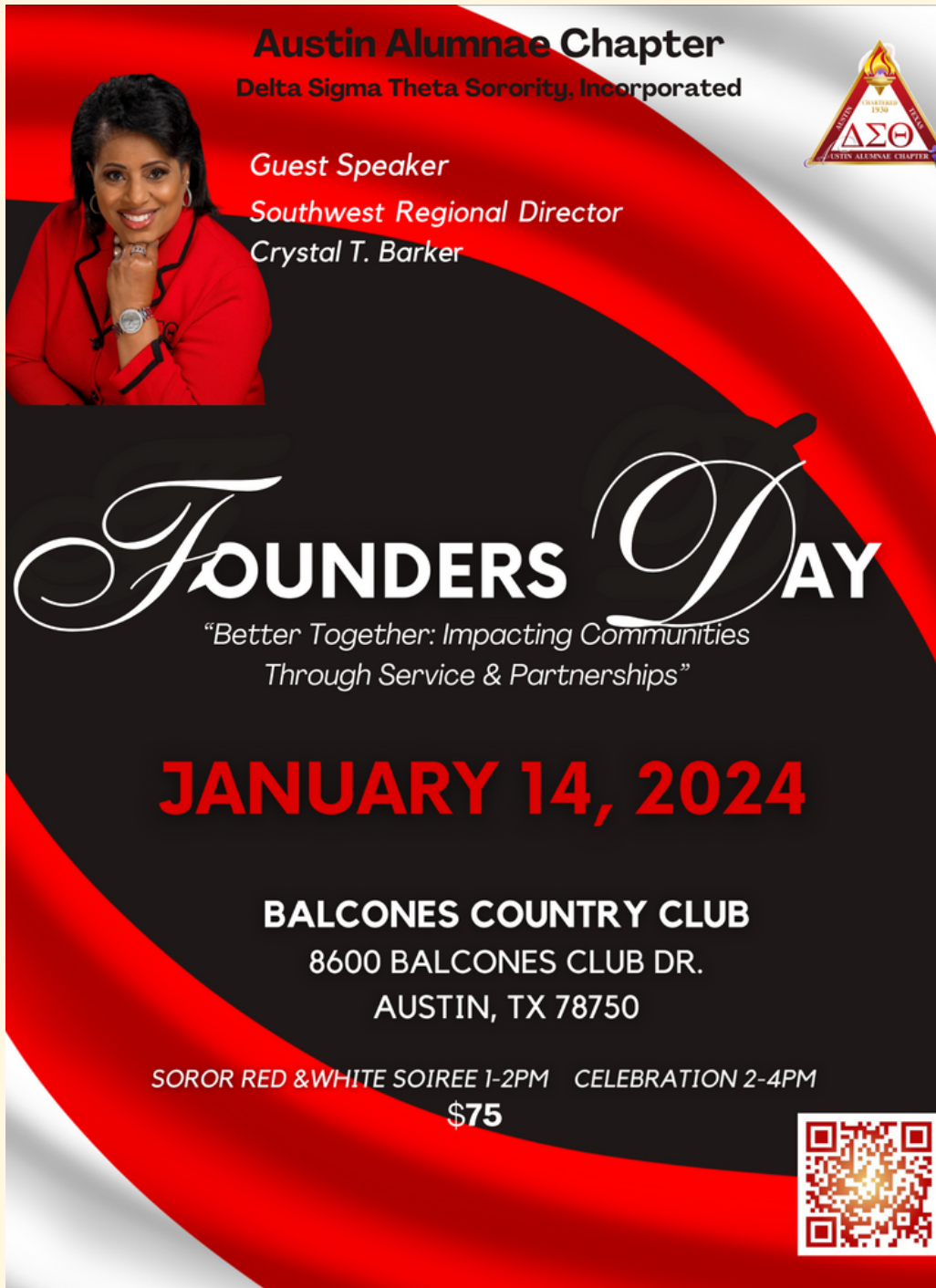
Soror Audrey Washington through
Soror Robin Zenon



This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Founders Day Celebration!



Austin Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated


Guest Speaker
Southwest Regional Director
Crystal T. Barker

FOUNDERS DAY
"Better Together: Impacting Communities
Through Service & Partnerships"

JANUARY 14, 2024

BALCONES COUNTRY CLUB
8600 BALCONES CLUB DR.
AUSTIN, TX 78750

SOROR RED & WHITE SOIREE 1-2PM CELEBRATION 2-4PM
\$75



Sorors, the **Chapter Rededication Ceremony** will be held on **Saturday, February 3, 2024, at 9 a.m.** Sorors interested in participating in the ceremony are asked to send their reply to dstatx.pt@gmail.com the deadline to receive responses is **December 15, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.**

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Policies and Procedures News!



NOTICE FROM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE Recommendations for Changes in Policies and Procedures and Rules of Order

Austin Alumnae Chapter members are invited to submit recommendations for change regarding the Chapter's Policies and Procedures. The below timeline reflects the open and closing period for recommendations as well as the review, submission, and approval of the recommendations for changes:

△ **October – November**

- **October 1, 2023:** The period to submit recommendations for changes in the Chapter's Policies and Procedures/Rules of Order using the Recommendation for Change Form opens.
- Email recommendations to dstatxpolicies@gmail.com using the Recommendation for Change Form located in the AAC member portal.
- **November 30, 2023:** The period to submit recommendations for changes in the Chapter's Policies and Procedures/Rules of Order using the Recommendation for Change Form ends.
- Email recommendations to dstatxpolicies@gmail.com using the Recommendation for Change Form located in the AAC member portal.

△ **December – January**

- Policies and Procedures Committee meets to review and evaluate all proposed recommendations.
- **January 30th:** Policies and Procedures Committee provides committee's decision on proposed recommendations at the Executive Board meeting.

△ **February – March**

- **February 3, 2024:** Policies and Procedures Committee review and discusses proposed amendments at chapter meeting.
- **February 20, 2024:** Chapter is given written prior notice for review, and then approves by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at the next chapter meeting.
- **February 27, 2024:** Policies and Procedures Committee report presented at executive board meeting.
- **March 2, 2024:** Austin Alumnae members vote on the proposed recommendations at the chapter meeting.

△ **April – May**

- President and/or Policies and Procedures Committee submits the Rules of Order Form; and
- President and/or Policies and Procedures Committee submits Policies and Procedures, if changed.

Sorors, the **Chapter Rededication Ceremony** will be held on **Saturday, February 3, 2024, at 9 a.m.** Sorors interested in participating in the ceremony are asked to send their reply to dstatx.pt@gmail.com the deadline to receive responses is **December 15, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.**

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Social Action News!

Austin Alumnae Chapter Social Action Committee is encouraging members to submit to Austin, Georgetown, Hutto, Pflugerville and Round Rock for participation in the available citizen police academy, as we look to reimagine public safety. Members who do not live in the identified cities are encouraged to look up your city's police academies offerings and apply. Your involvement ensures that a community presence is felt and communication channels within the city law enforcement community is actualized. Apply today for your seat at the table!

Citizen Academy Details Visit:

City of Austin - <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-police-academy>

City of Georgetown - <https://pd.georgetown.org/citizen-police-academy-spring-session/>

City of Hutto - <https://www.huttotx.gov/318/Citizen-Police-Academy>

City of Pflugerville - <https://police.pflugervilletx.gov/community-programs/citizens-police-academy>

City of Round Rock - <https://www.roundrocktexas.gov/news/enrollment-open-for-citizens-police-academy/>

THE AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY INC. SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE ENCOURAGES AUSTIN AREA COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMIES

**REIMAGINE PUBLIC SAFETY -
POLICE CITIZEN ACADEMY**

CITIZENS ACADEMY

CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY

CITIZENS' POLICE ACADEMY

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

To reimagine public safety, it is important for the community and law enforcement to engage. As we all can learn and obtain awareness of the role of law enforcement. Submit your application today to your local citizen police academy.

Citizen Academy Details Visit:

- ✓ **City of Austin**
<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-police-academy>
- ✓ **City of Georgetown**
<https://pd.georgetown.org/citizen-police-academy-spring-session/>
- ✓ **City of Hutto**
<https://www.huttotx.gov/318/Citizen-Police-Academy>
- ✓ **City of Pflugerville**
<https://police.pflugervilletx.gov/community-programs/citizens-police-academy>
- ✓ **City of Round Rock**
<https://www.roundrocktexas.gov/news/enrollment-open-for-citizens-police-academy/>

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

International Awareness and Involvement News!



The poster features a festive background with gold confetti, stars, and a red ribbon. The text is centered and reads:

Save the Date
World AIDS Day Event
December 1, 2023
6-9 p.m.

At the bottom, there are five logos:

- City of Austin logo
- APH Austin Public Health logo with the tagline "PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT."
- Austin HIV Planning Council logo
- WHAT'S IN THE MIRROR? Art Heals logo
- Austin Alumnae Chapter logo

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Emergency Response Team!



ERT Reminder

The Emergency Response Team reminds you to travel with your Red Envelop and Emergency Personal Data Form. Likewise, as your medical needs change, including prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, don't forget to update your form. You may download the Emergency Personal Data Form from the Members Only Section of Austin Alumnae's website.

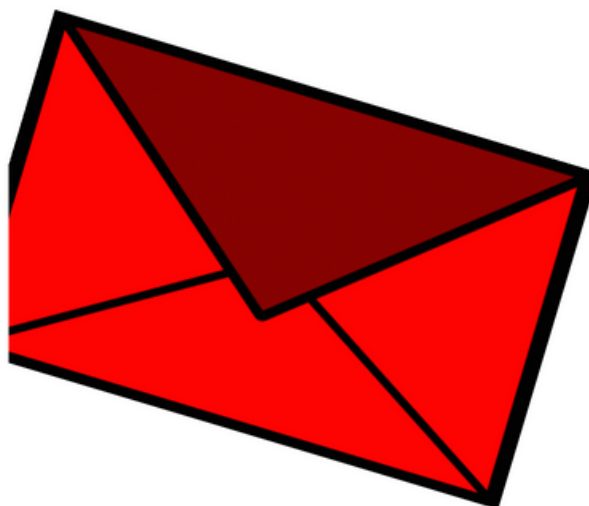
 **Austin Alumnae Chapter**
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated
Emergency Personal Data Form
Print and take a copy of this form with you in your RED ENVELOPE for all Delta Events. Also leave a copy at home with a friend or relative.

Personal Information	
Full name	
Nickname	
Home address	
Home phone	
Mobile or cellular phone	
Birthday (MM/DD/YYYY)	
SSN	
Emergency Contact's Name and Phone number (Soror traveling with You)	

Emergency and Medical Information	
In case of emergency, contact (Indicate Relationship to You)	
Emergency contact's address	
Emergency contact's phone	
Doctor's name	
Doctor's phone	
Doctor's address	
Medical insurance carrier and member number	
Known medical conditions	
Known allergies	
Current medications (list both prescribed and over the counter)	
Have you ever had surgery? (list details: type of surgery and date)	

Revised: 10/01/2019

Page 1 of 1



If you need a fresh envelope, please email dstatx.ert@gmail.com.

Members are encouraged to keep their red envelopes and completed personal data forms with them. It speaks for you when you are unable to speak for yourself.

Sisterhood, Service & Safety

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Physical & Mental Health News!

**CENTRAL TEXAS AFRICAN AMERICAN
FAMILY SUPPORT CONFERENCE 2024**

February 6, 2024

STRENGTH OVER STIGMA

KEYNOTE
SPEAKER:

**KEVIN
BERTHIA**



PALMER EVENTS CENTER | AUSTIN, TEXAS

February 6th, 2024



Central Texas African American
Family Support Conference

REGISTER TODAY



[CTAAAFSC.COM/REGISTER](https://ctaaafsc.com/register)

2024 THEME:
STRENGTH OVER STIGMA



Register here,
ctaaafsc.com/register

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Ways and Means Committee News!



Ways & Means and Austin Delta Foundation

Goal is to raise over \$30K



Alnita Foote
dstatx.wm@gmail.com



Gwen Bingham



Austin Alumnae Chapter
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

Heritage & Archive News!

Attention Sorors!

The Heritage and Archive Committee needs your help. We need Sorors to assist us with reviewing boxes of documents to determine if the materials meet the criteria for archival storage. If you are available, the committee meets at the ADF house on the following days from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

- December 5, 7, 12, 14, 16.
- January 9, 11, 20, 23, 25
- February 6, 8, 17, 20, 22
- March 5, 7, 12, 14, 30
- April 16, 18, 25, 27
- May 7, 21, 23, 25
- June 4, 6, 11, 13, 29

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Educational Development Committee News!



**AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.**

in collaboration with



GAMMA ETA LAMBDA CHAPTER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTES

ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INC.

HBCU COLLEGE TOUR

March 10 – March 15, 2024

Contact:

Latasha Robinson

dstEdDev@gmail.com

512.716.9065

\$395

ATLANTA, GA

- CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
- MOREHOUSE COLLEGE
- MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE
- SPELMAN COLLEGE

ALBANY, GA

- ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY



This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Educational Development Committee News!

Photos from the GEMS November community service project!



This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Arts & Letters Committee News!

Austin Alumnae Chapter members in support of Arts & Letters Committee attended the 2:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m., Ticketed session: Stacey Abrams in Conversation about Rogue Justice First Baptist Church (901 Trinity Street)!

We engaged in the discussion of this latest thriller by bestselling-author, entrepreneur, and political leader Stacey Abrams as protagonist Avery Keene, the powerhouse Supreme Court clerk from *While Justice Sleeps*, returned in Abrams's latest book. This was an invigorating conversation about the clever puzzles and riveting twists in the artfully-crafted *Rogue Justice*.




This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Arts & Letters Committee News!

[← ALL EVENTS](#)



Samara Joy
A Joyful Holiday
Featuring The McLendon Family

<https://texasperformingarts.org/season/samara-joy-2023-bass-concert-hall-austin-texas>

[← ALL EVENTS](#)



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

<https://texasperformingarts.org/season/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater-2024-bass-concert-hall-austin-texas>



2024
LIVE
TOUR

LONG CENTER PRESENTS

THE BLACK VIOLIN
// EXPERIENCE

BLK
MAN

FEB 19 // DELL HALL
LONGCENTER.ORG

LONG CENTER KMF895

This Month's Highlights

AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

Charitable Partners News

Sorors,

As we approach a season of giving, we ask that you support the Charitable Partners Committee by donating a toy, children's book, or activity book on behalf of Austin Alumnae to the annual Toy Drive for the Sickle Cell Association of Texas Marc Thomas Foundation.

See the details below on how to donate. Please note we are not accepting any monetary donations.

Thanks in advance for your generous support!

The Charitable Partners Committee

Sonya Harry, Chair

Pam Hall, Co-Chair



AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



TOY DRIVE
BENEFITTING YOUTH OF THE SICKLE CELL ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS MARC THOMAS FOUNDATION

PLEASE GIVE A LITTLE JOY, AND HELP US PUT SMILES ON THE FACES OF LOCAL YOUTH DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON! BRING A TOY, CHILDREN'S BOOK, OR ACTIVITY BOOK TO OUR DECEMBER 2, 2023 CHAPTER MEETING

QUESTIONS? TEXT:

- SONYA HARRY - 512-797-9624
- PAM HALL - 512-773-4804

Visit the Foundation's Amazon Wishlist



PLEASE NOTE YOU ARE DONATING ON BEHALF OF OUR CHAPTER WHEN DONATING VIA THE FOUNDATION'S AMAZON WISHLIST

This Month's Highlights

COMMUNITY NEWS



REAL TALK

VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

STORYTIME: How I Won a \$40,000 BigFuture Scholarship!

Tuesday, December 5, 8 p.m. ET

Don't let the cost of attending college scare you. Your Real Talk family is here, and we got you! Hear from \$40,000 BigFuture Scholarship winners – students just like you – about how they qualified for this award and how starting this week, you too can qualify for monthly drawings for \$500 and \$40,000 scholarships!

Let's Talk \$\$\$: Filling Out the FAFSA

Tuesday, December 12, 8 p.m. ET

Real Talk Fam, the new FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is here! Don't sleep on filling it out. Join our trusted financial aid and scholarship experts as we break down step by step how to fill out the new FAFSA and how you can minimize college debt.

What is Real Talk?

Real Talk is a career and college exploration initiative designed to connect Black students and families with Black professionals and representatives from colleges and access organizations across the country. We empower Black students to own their future their way.

Start Planning for Your Future

Real Talk is a safe space for you to learn and engage, while also getting answers to your most pressing questions about life after high school. No matter where you are on your journey, we're here for you. Family members and educators are also encouraged to participate!

Join us! Register here, bigfuture.org/RealTalk



© 2023 College Board. MAR-10346

Sorors, **Real Talk** is a national career and college exploration initiative for **Black high school students and families** created by **BigFuture** and the **College Board**! Occurring the first and second Tuesday of the month, Real Talk's Director is Soror Autumn Caviness. Please register and attend December's #RealTalkTuesday here, bigfuture.org/RealTalk.



Membership Spotlight

Happy Birthday, Sorors!

Happy Birthday to our December birthdays!

12/02: Sophia Williams
12/06: Shawna Clouser & Lora Livingston
12/10: Shannon Stephens
12/14: Kierra King
12/15: Cynthia Robinson
12/16: Lisa Newman
12/17: Jonna LaGrone-Haynes
12/19: Joella Brooks
12/18: Estelle Brooks, Doris Wilhite
12/20: Gail Maduro-Johnson & Polly Street
12/23: Erika White & Robin Zenon
12/24: Tonja Walls
12/27: Patricia Hicks
12/28: Darralyn Johnson
12/30: Cassandra Mims Ringer & Nakita Shelton

Sister II Sister Circle Outings!



Austin Alumnae Leadership Team

2023-2024 Committee Chairs

Economic Development

Sylvia Holt-Rabb & Avis Gipson

Educational Development

Paulette Walls

International Awareness & Involvement

Akeshia Johnson Smothers

Physical and Mental Health

Sherri Fleming & April Briscoe

Political Awareness and Involvement/

Social Action

Celeste Williams & Veronica Johnson

Arts and Letters

Jonna LaGrone-Haynes & Tamara Diggs-Tate

Risk Management Coordinator

Nancy Knight-Brown

Internal Audit

Sophia Williams

Rituals and Ceremonies

Michelle Scruggs

Technology

Kathryn Foster & Khaison Reed

Emergency Response

Ollie White & Tanya Rippenkroger

Founders Day

Tamela Saldana & Kelly Smith

National Pan Hellenic Representative(s)

Kim Whitlock & Darralyn Johnson

Nominating Committee

Carla Grace

Parliamentarian/Chair of Policies and Procedures

Patricia Shorter

Charitable Partners

Pamela Hall & Sonya Harry

Protocol and Traditions

Cedel Evans & Sandra Marshall

Records Management and Retention

Darralyn Johnson

Ways and Means

Alnita Foote

Communications and Public Relations

Autumn Caviness

Heritage and Archives

Nancy Thompson, Historian & Tashia Coleman

Program, Planning, and Development

Kacey Hanson

Chaplain

Dedurie Kirk

Strategic Planning

Dewi Smith

Officers

Robin T. Blackmon, President

Jacqueline Habersham, 1st Vice President

Kacey Hanson, 2nd Vice President

Deborah Shaw-Boatner, Treasurer

Kimily Johnson, Asst. Treasurer

Darralyn Johnson, Recording Secretary

La'Kisha Crenshaw, Corresponding Secretary

Courtney Nolan, Asst. Corresponding Secretary

Anita Daniels, Financial Secretary

Tennile Thomas, Asst. Financial Secretary

Laronica Moise, Sergeant at Arms

Autumn Caviness, Journalist

Immediate Past President Lisa Newman

Sorors,

**Please don't forget our Chapter meeting
is in-person at 10 a.m. on
Saturday, December 2,
Highland Campus
Austin Community College
(Building 2000, Room 1550).
Parking is available
in the South Parking Garage:
6018 Wilhemina Delco Drive,
Austin, Texas 78752**

Southwest Regional Conference Committee Signup!

Sorors,

We are excited to present this opportunity for you to be involved in the planning and the work of our upcoming **49th Southwest Regional Conference**.

Below, you will find the link to the Jotform. Please review carefully and if your schedule allows, sign up for two (2) committees.

The co-chairs will contact you for meeting information and next steps.

Tap the enclosed link to signup now,

<https://form.jotform.com/AustinAlumnaeDST/committee-registration-form>

Sorors, please remember, we have several key documents available on our **Member Only Portal**. Please review the upcoming meeting documents under **Chapter Meeting Docs**, located on our Member's Only portal..



Austin Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
P.O. BOX 143381
Austin, Texas 78714