

National Initiatives

Continental Societies, Inc. is committed to providing children in our schools and communities the best quality programming in the areas of Health, Education, Employment, Recreation (HEER), plus Arts and Humanities. Within this programmatic thrust, four programs are special focus, national initiatives: Literacy Development, Asthma Awareness, Obesity Prevention and Employment Exploration and Support.

Each chapter is encouraged to implement service programs in these areas that provide information and benefit to the community. Recognizing the importance of the four national initiatives, more than 90% of Continental chapters provide service programs supporting one or more of the national initiatives.

Literacy Development

In contemporary thinking, literacy is described as the basic ability to read and write. Many formal definitions exist including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's definition as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts."

Continental Societies, Inc. supports this definition, and believes that in addition to reading and writing, literacy affords young people the ability to solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary for them to function successfully on the job, in the family, and in society. In this regard, chapters design programs including book drives, read-ins, spelling bees, poetry contests, etc. to enhance the literacy skills of our children and youth.

Asthma Awareness

The Environmental Protection Agency reported in October 2010 that the rates of asthma – a serious, life-threatening respiratory disease affecting over 20 million Americans – have risen sharply over the past thirty years, particularly among children ages 5 to 14.

Continental Societies, Inc. responds to these startling statistics by developing programs to educate and inform the communities it serves on the seriousness of this nationwide epidemic. Partnering with local agencies and initiatives like "Zap Asthma" that combine the strengths of scientific research with community action, Continental Societies, Inc. has been able to effectively facilitate asthma awareness service programs. These programs have included school assemblies, health fairs, interactive recognition of asthma triggers and others with the specific goal of reducing the occurrence of asthma among our children and youth.

Obesity Prevention

Childhood obesity is of particular importance to the Continental Societies, Inc. because the organization recognizes it as a silent killer of children and youth. The National center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent and School health, reports immediate and long-term health impacts of childhood obesity to include cardiovascular disease, including high cholesterol or high blood pressure, greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and low self esteem.

Working in tangent with First Lady Michelle Obama's May 2010 plan to reduce childhood obesity from 20% to 5% by 2030, the Continental Societies, Inc. facilitates programs such as community gardens, nutrition education, and physical fitness exercises at local schools and community centers.

Career Exploration and Support

In response to the staggering unemployment rates that exist in inner cities throughout the nation, the Continentals provide support for students in exploring and preparing for careers.

Career exploration activities are provided for elementary and lower middle school students. On the upper middle school level and for high school students, career preparation and training activities are provided. These activities include developing resumes, preparing for interviews, interviewing techniques, researching and defining job opportunities and trends, internships and career planning. Students also enjoy site visits to various industries and job shadowing experiences.

