

THE TTA STORY



In 1964, the eight founders of Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc.'s primary objective was to help alleviate the moral and social problems engulfing the youth in our communities. This was done via a youth organization.

In 1968 while meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, the membership of Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. decided that the group should have an official name. Lady Cordelia Mackey, President of the Texarkana Twin City Chapter, suggested the name of Top Teens of America. The name was adopted.

In 1969, there was a need to form a Top Teens of America group in each chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction. A committee was appointed and resultantly, the first National Top Teens of America convention was organized.

The Houston Chapter of Top Ladies and Top Teens hosted a meeting to organize the National Top Teens. Teen representatives from all Top Teens of America chapters were in attendance. Under the guidance of the first National Director of Top Teens of America, Lady Willie Lee Glass, the first National Convention of Top Teens of America was held in Houston, Texas in 1969. Over 300 Top Teens were in attendance. Top Teen Harnell Price of the Rose City Chapter, Tyler, Texas, was elected as the first TTA National President. At this convention, the purposes of TTA were defined.

The purpose of this organization shall be to:

- a) Encourage high academic scholarship;
- b) Develop social graces, leadership and fellowship abilities;
- c) Develop pride in self, home and community;
- d) Encourage participation in workshops which address current trends;
- e) Work collaboratively with other organizations to reach mutual goals;
- f) Develop deep concerns for senior citizens, status of women, community beautification and community partnerships;
- g) Encourage appreciation for ethnic and cultural heritage.

The TTA projects have expended over the years to include:

- Participation in the NAACP
- Sickle Cell Disease Awareness
- Participation in the UNCF
- March of Dimes
- Participation in NCNW
- Mentoring Program//TLC
- Participation in the TLOD Literacy Program

In 1983, the TTA program was further expanded to include a collaborative project with the National Foundation March of Dimes. The program was known as Teens Outreach Program and Service (TOPS), a peer education program, designed to inform our teens about drugs, alcohol abuse, sexually transmitted disease and birth defects through workshops, seminars and conferences. Parents were encouraged to participate. TOPS through education has also enabled youth to make critical decisions, regarding their lives.

In 1996, the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. extended its youth peer education through a newly developed program known as Healthy Choices: Your Future and You. A TTA/MOD guide was written and circulated to all TLOD chapters to assist them with implementation of this health conference program. The major purpose of this program focuses on leadership development, critical decision making adolescent health issues and the support of Walk America.

The "Me and My Mentor" program was initiated in 1995. Every Top Lady was encouraged to personally touch the lives of Top Teens through one-on-one nurturing and the development of relationships that foster mutual trust and respect.

Since 1968, thousands of youth in secondary schools, nationally and internationally, have benefited from membership in Top Teens of America.