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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 567

Offered January 30, 2025

Commending the Greater Rappahannock (VA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.

Patrons—Cole, Herring, Keys-Gamarra, Clark, Cousins, Gardner, Maldonado, McClure, Mundon King, Price, Scott, D. and Sewell

WHEREAS, for more than 10 years, the Greater Rappahannock (VA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated has promoted education and economic empowerment while providing vital social services and cultural enrichment to members of the Black community in Fredericksburg and the surrounding counties; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Rappahannock (VA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, (GRVA) traces its deepest roots to the formation of the Greater Rappahannock Area Ladies League (GRALL) in 1999; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Beth Sinkler, GRALL realigned its mission with that of The Links, Incorporated, one of the oldest and largest volunteer service organizations in the United States, and worked diligently to meet membership criteria from 2013 to 2014; and

WHEREAS, GRVA was chartered as the 277th chapter of The Links, Incorporated, on March 22, 2014, and held a celebration titled “Chartering a Legacy of Friendship and Service” with more than 200 guests, including state and national officials, chapter members, family, and friends; and

WHEREAS, Beth Sinkler continued to serve as the first president of GRVA, setting the chapter's inaugural theme as “Serving with Grace”; she oversaw the establishment of a youth literacy program that addressed numerous challenges to promote kindergarten readiness, promoted health and wellness with the American Heart Association through the Go Red for Women campaign, and created the Hit the Links Charity Golf Classic, the largest golf tournament in the region sponsored by Black women, the proceeds of which support scholarship programs; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, Beth Sinkler also supported book drives, voter registration efforts, and community advocacy programs, both at home and abroad, including through a humanitarian mission to St. Mary's Preparatory School in Montego Bay, Jamaica; and

WHEREAS, from 2016 to 2018, Jacinta Topps served as the second president of GRVA and guided the chapter with her theme “Creating a Legacy of Friendship and Service”; she increased voter education and registration initiatives, held the inaugural Go Red Fashion Show to continue supporting heart health, enhanced scholarship programs, and created a new signature program, Linking Youth to Excellence (LYTE), a partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Rappahannock Region that provides mentoring opportunities to at-risk girls between the ages of 9 and 14; and

WHEREAS, Michelle Caldwell Thompson became the third president of GRVA from 2018 to 2020 and set the theme “Pursuing a Positive yet Powerful Community Presence”; during her tenure, the chapter and its programs earned numerous accolades, and she redoubled efforts to empower young people and enrich the lives of everyone in the community by partnering with other local organizations and launching the popular Holiday Sparkle event as a formal fellowship gathering; and

WHEREAS, as the fourth president of GRVA, Latonia Talley led the chapter through the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022 with the inspirational theme “Fostering communal relationships, continuing a legacy of friendship and service”; she created the White Rose recognition program to celebrate the achievements of members and held several programs and events in a virtual format to ensure that members of the public continued to benefit; and

WHEREAS, Kavatus Newell served as the fifth president of GRVA from 2022 to 2024, leading the chapter to re-engage with the community with the theme “Lifting Others While Climbing to New Heights”; under her leadership, the chapter expanded the LYTE program, began hosting weekly life skills workshops, established the first GRVA Line Dance, and encouraged members to volunteer in-person with charitable organizations in the region; and

WHEREAS, the current president of GRVA, Wanda G. Taylor, has inspired members with her theme of “Linking Hearts, Rebuilding Communities through Friendship and Service” and oversaw the chapter's 10th anniversary celebration “Rhapsody in White Jazz Brunch: Lifting As We Climb”; and

WHEREAS, GRVA currently serves the residents of Fredericksburg and the counties of Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, and Caroline; the organization has raised more than \$85,000 in academic scholarships over the years, and its members have been catalysts for hope and positive change by donating more than 23,000 documented hours of volunteer service; and

WHEREAS, GRVA is a beacon of friendship, compassion, and servant-leadership that embodies the highest ideals of The Links, Incorporated, and has touched countless lives, while inspiring future leaders and transforming the community for the better; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Greater Rappahannock (VA) Chapter of The Links,

2/4/25 20:18

58 Incorporated, hereby be commended on the occasion of its 10th anniversary; and, be it
59 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for
60 presentation to the Greater Rappahannock (VA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, as an expression of the
61 House of Delegates' admiration for the organization's legacy of accomplishments on behalf of the Black
62 community in the Fredericksburg area.