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**ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA TO PROVIDE FREE COMPUTER TRAINING TO
COMMUNITY RESIDENTS ON TEN COLLEGE CAMPUSES NATIONWIDE
Undergraduates' Signature Program Mirrors AKA's Economic Mission**

April 21, 2007 - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has unveiled a model program at colleges and universities nationwide where technological skills will be taught free of charge to residents in communities adjacent to the schools. The ambitious program is part of AKA's resolve to give African Americans high-end skill sets so they will be more competitive in the workplace and can improve their economic standing. This initiative also parallels the economic vision of International President Barbara A. McKinzie whose programmatic theme, **ESP**, represents **E**conomics, **S**ervice and **P**artnerships.

Alpha Kappa Alpha will work with higher education institutions and other student groups to develop an exemplary model undergraduate access and training program that serves the community and becomes part of the central activities of the institution.

It will be administered by undergraduates at each college/university that has an undergraduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. It is part of the Sorority's International Program and is titled, "Undergraduate Signature Program: Economic Educational Advancement through Technology." The program incorporates traditional and non-traditional approaches with technology as its cornerstone.

The official announcement was made on April 21 at North Carolina A&T, one of the eleven beta sites for the initiative. These sites, which will be in operation from 2007-2010, will be housed on the following campuses, which include five Historically Black College and Universities:

Langston University (HBCU)
University of Toledo
North Carolina A & T State University (HBCU)
Florida A & M University (HBCU)
Jackson State University (HBCU)
Northwestern University
Texas Southern University (HBCU)
Vanderbilt University
Brown University
Stanford University
University of the Virgin Islands

Attending the official ceremony marking the launch of the program was International President McKinzie and Second Vice President Ranika Sanchez, who heads Alpha Kappa Alpha's undergraduates internationally. She attends Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Also attending the rollout of this initiative were International Program Chairman Loann Honesty King; Ruby Batts Archie, Mid-Atlantic Regional Director whose territory embraces North Carolina A&T; and Dr. Lloyd "Vic" Hackley, chancellor of North Carolina A&T.

According to McKinzie, the goal is to instill the value and importance of volunteering to assist in worthwhile causes in young adults; fill an important need in underprivileged and/or underserved communities; and increase cooperation, communication, and collaboration between undergraduates, universities, businesses and surrounding communities. The overarching resolve is to enhance participants' skills and position them to obtain better paying jobs, generate more per capita earnings and imbue them with marketable skills so they can navigate their way in a high-tech world.

Each undergraduate chapter in collaboration with their respective college/university will develop a community outreach plan to attract area residents to participate. Undergraduates will fan out to the community to spread the word about this historic program.

As part of the program, members of Alpha Kappa Alpha will draw from their technological background to conduct workshops to teach community members on the use of technology in improving life quality. Emphasis will be placed on identifying youth with limited or non-existent technology skills to bridge the technology gap. Others who will be targeted are low-income community members including senior citizens. Through mastery of these skills seniors will be able to conduct much of their business online and avoid the scams and predators to which they are often prey.

This thrust's multi-faceted purposes are:

- To fill an important need in underprivileged and/or underserved communities;
- To provide a means for low income families to learn to use computers and other modern technology;
- To increase technological knowledge and use in and by community residents, organizations and businesses;
- To prepare disadvantaged persons for jobs requiring use of technology.

Another positive by-product of this effort is to instill leadership skills in undergraduates and reinforce their commitment to service—a concept that lies at the core of Alpha Kappa Alpha's mission.

Corresponding with the acronym **ESP**, this undergraduate program embraces all three elements:

- **Economics** – This program makes participants computer savvy and gives them an economic edge.
- **Service** – Undergraduates involved in this program provide an invaluable service, by donating their time, talent and resources to its success.
- **Partnership** – The participating colleges represent a potent partnership that will benefit the community.

“Technology is the gateway to success, and computer skills must be mastered if there is any hope of economic advancement,” declared McKinzie. “Through this program, we hope to strengthen our ties to the community by giving them access to a program that will positively impact their lives.”

Added Sanchez, “It is also a vehicle where undergraduates can carry out their volunteer mission while gaining the rewards that seeing community residents improve can yield.”

Sanchez said that this program will become an integral part of the community and is expected to emerge as one of AKA’s signature thrusts.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is America's first Greek-letter organization founded in 1908 by, and for, Black college women. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, it is one of the world's leading service organizations. The Sorority serves all mankind through a nucleus of more than 200,000 women in over 930 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Germany, Korea, Japan and Africa. The Sorority celebrates its Centennial in 1908 with a birthday celebration in January at its founding home—Howard University—and with its Centennial Conference in July, where more than 20,000 members are expected to converge for this 100-year milestone.

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