



Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service
Piedmont (NC) Chapter

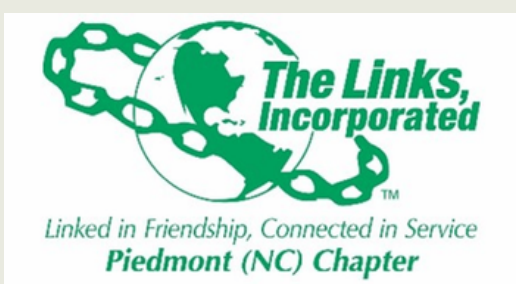
2025—2026 PROGRAM PLANNING RETREAT

April 17, 2025
UNC-Charlotte Campus



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Piedmont (NC) Chapter

AGENDA



SERVICE AREA NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2026

GASTON COUNTY

Educational Attainment & Workforce Readiness: Gaston County has identified the need to improve educational outcomes and workforce readiness. The county's strategic plan emphasizes enhancing community health, safety, and well-being, as well as promoting economic development and lifelong learning opportunities.

Gaston County Access & Equity: The county aims to prioritize access and availability for underserved communities when developing educational and enrichment programs, ensuring inclusivity and diversity. Revize

CLEVELAND COUNTY

Workforce Development: Cleveland County, through the Foothills Workforce Development Board, focuses on delivering workforce development programs, emphasizing the need for career preparation resources and support for obtaining high school equivalency credentials. Cleveland County, NC

Educational & Workforce Integration: The county recognizes the importance of aligning educational programs with workforce needs, aiming to provide students with the skills required for current and future job markets.

CATAWBA COUNTY

Economic & Workforce Growth: Catawba County's Strategic Plan 2.0 focuses on economic development and workforce growth, emphasizing the need to prepare a qualified workforce to meet current and future demands. Catawba County

K-64 Initiative: The county has implemented the K-64 initiative, which connects business and education to prepare students from kindergarten through retirement for the global economy. This initiative aims to align courses of study with workforce needs and connect students to real-world careers early on. Catawba Valley Community College+3Catawba

EDC+3Catawba County+3



Umbrella Program 2025-2027

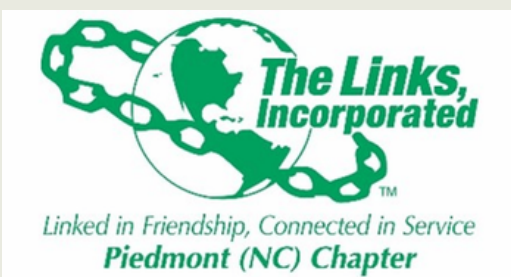
Lead Facet - INTERNATIONAL TRENDS & Services

Links launch International Foreign Affairs and Business Empowerment (LIFE) program

The program is designed to introduce minority students

Global Theme: Launching Future Leaders into International Careers

This program is designed to empower African American youth and those of African descent by instilling in them the understanding that they belong to a global community and can seize opportunities in international careers with the right preparation. I warmly invite our chapter to join us on this journey to inspire our students to think globally.



OUR MISSION & VISION

Our vision for the 2025–2026 LIFE Program is to create a vibrant, inclusive, and transformative experience for students across Gaston, Cleveland, and Catawba Counties.

We envision a program that:

- Empowers young leaders to dream beyond their local communities and see themselves as global citizens.
- Builds bridges between diverse cultures, ideas, and ambitions.
- Connects students to real-world opportunities in diplomacy, international business, and cultural leadership.
- Honors the strengths of each county we serve, creating a true regional movement for change.

Through strategic programming, passionate mentorship, and unwavering commitment to service, the Piedmont (NC) Links Chapter will nurture a new generation of leaders prepared to shape a brighter, more connected world.

Together, we will not just create programs — we will create possibilities.



Strategic Alignment of the LIFE Program

The LIFE Program's objectives align seamlessly with the strategic goals of all three counties:

Gaston County Alignment

Strategic Focus: Enhancing community health, safety, and well-being; promoting economic development; and providing lifelong learning opportunities.

LIFE Program Contribution: By offering educational enrichment and career exploration in international affairs and business, the LIFE Program supports Gaston County's goals of lifelong learning and economic development.

Cleveland County Alignment

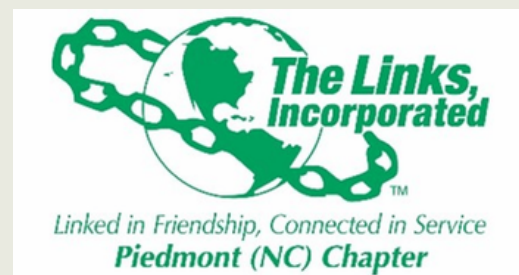
Strategic Focus: Delivering workforce development programs and aligning education with workforce needs.

LIFE Program Contribution: The program's emphasis on career preparation and global awareness equips students with skills relevant to the county's workforce development objectives.

Catawba County Alignment

Strategic Focus: Fostering economic development and workforce growth through initiatives like K-64.

LIFE Program Contribution: The LIFE Program complements the K-64 initiative by preparing students for global careers, thereby supporting the county's aim to develop a qualified workforce.



IMPLEMENTATION & IDEAS



OUR GOALS PIEDMONT (NC) CHAPTER LIFE PROGRAM PLAN 2025–2026

Program Implementation: Execute the LIFE program for 15-20 students in grades 9-12.

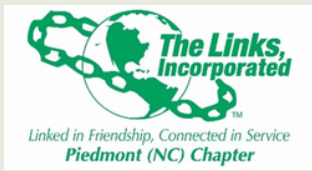
Monthly Sessions: Conduct seven sessions from October to May, with a break in December.

Umbrella Facet Programming Integration: Include five Facet elements in the curriculum.

Partnership Development: Build partnerships with local schools, colleges, and community organizations.

Fundraising Initiatives: Launch a fundraising campaign, featuring an International Food Festival and a Holiday/New Year event.

Evaluation Reporting: Assess outcomes using the Service Delivery Model evaluations.

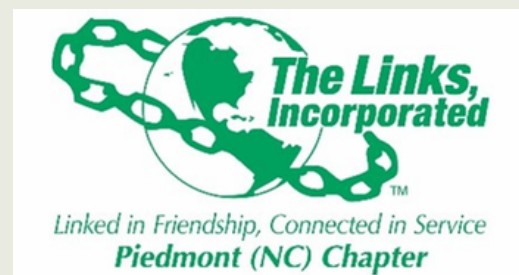


GLOBAL THEME: LAUNCHING FUTURE LEADERS INTO INTERNATIONAL CAREERS

Global Theme	SMART Goal	Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Realistic	Timely
Global Career Awareness	Goal #1	Increase awareness and pursuit of international careers among African American and African descent students in Catawba, Cleveland, and Gaston counties.	Recruit and mentor 50 students within 24 months.	Partner with at least 5 schools/organizations per county.	Utilize community partnerships and LINKS resources for outreach.	Recruit 20 students by Year 1, 50 students by Year 2.
Global Leadership & Skill Building	Goal #2	Provide mentorship and career readiness workshops focused on leadership, cultural competency, and global business skills.	Host 6 workshops per year with 75% student participation.	Engage mentors from LINKS and local professional networks.	Offer hybrid options to meet student needs and schedules.	First workshop within 90 days of enrollment; quarterly thereafter.
Global Pathway Access	Goal #3	Support students in applying for international internships, scholarships, or study abroad programs.	60% of students complete at least one international application within 2 years.	Develop a LIFE Resource Toolkit for application support.	Mentorship structure and resource access will guide students.	Toolkit ready within 6 months; applications completed by 24 months.

MONTHLY SESSION DETAILS (ALIGNING WITH FACETS)

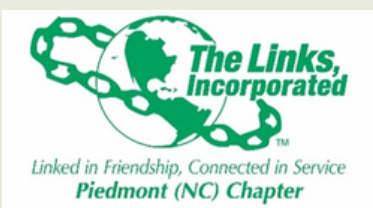
Session	Theme	Lead Facet	Supporting Facet(s)
1	Careers in International Business	ITS	NTS
2	Global Cultures & International Etiquette	The Arts	ITS
3	Leadership Skills for Global Careers	STY	ITS
4	Global Health & Travel Readiness	HHS	ITS
5	Diplomatic Service & Foreign Affairs	ITS	STY
6	Final Presentations & Graduation	All Facets	All Facets



CALENDARS & TIMELINES

TIMELINE

Month	Activity	Key Actions
May 2025	Planning Launch	Form LIFE committee; finalize high school partner; meet with principal; prepare budget and fundraising kickoff
June 2025	Recruitment	Share application flyers; select students via essay submission
July 2025	Partnerships & Sponsorships	Lock in speakers, site visits, college collaborations
August 2025	Finalize Calendar	Confirm all LIFE monthly session topics and logistics; send acceptance letters
September 2025	Orientation	Host orientation for students and parents
October 2025	Session 1	Kick-off: Careers in International Business (ITS Lead + NTS Support)
November 2025	Session 2	Understanding Global Cultures & International Etiquette (Arts Lead + ITS)
December 2025	Pause & Holiday Fundraiser	No session; Holiday Signature Fundraiser (see below)
January 2026	Session 3	Leadership Skills for Global Careers (STY Lead + ITS)
February 2026	Session 4	Global Health, Safety & Travel Prep (HHS Lead)
March 2026	Session 5	Foreign Service & Diplomacy Careers (ITS Lead + Special Speaker)
April 2026	Session 6 & Graduation	Student presentations; LIFE Graduation & awards celebration



PIEDMONT (NC) CHAPTER YEAR CALENDAR 2025–2026

Month	Activity Title	Notes
September 2025	Voter Registration Impact Day (Sept 16) Walk for Healthy Living (Sept 27)	National Impact Days
October 2025	HBCU Giving Day (TBD) International Business Careers	Impact Day + LIFE Program
November 2025	National Impact Day of Service: Forward to the Polls! (Nov 4) National Donor Sabbath (Nov 9) Global Cultures & Etiquette	Multiple Impact Days + LIFE Program
December 2025	Passport to the World Gala (Fundraiser - Highlighted)	LIFE Program - Major Event
January 2026	Leadership Skills for Global Careers	LIFE Program
February 2026	Red Dress Event (TBD) Global Health & Travel Readiness	Impact Day + LIFE Program
March 2026	Black Family Wellness Expo Impact Day (March 14) Diplomatic Service & Foreign Affairs	Impact Day + LIFE Program
April 2026	Graduation & Celebration	LIFE Program Culmination



PIEDMONT (NC) LINKS CHAPTER REGIONAL ROTATION PLAN 2025–2026

Visual Rotation Overview:

- Gaston County → October Kickoff & April Graduation
- Cleveland County → January Leadership Skills Session
- Catawba County → February Global Health & Safety Session
 - Virtual/Hybrid Options → Available for all sessions
 - Neutral Hub Locations → Used for easy access

Regional Flow (Sample):

October: Gaston (Kickoff)



January: Cleveland (Leadership)



February: Catawba (Global Health)



April: Gaston (Graduation)



FUNDRAISING



POTENTIAL ...SAVE THE DATES!

FUNDRAISING EVENTS FOR THE LIFE PROGRAM

2025–2026



🌍 Flavors of the World: Cultural Food Festival

Saturday, September 13, 2025 Join us for a celebration of global cultures, delicious international foods, live music, and family fun! A community event supporting scholarships and global leadership.



✨ Passport to the World: Holiday Gala

Saturday, December 6, 2025 An elegant evening of dining, dancing, and fundraising to launch future global leaders through the LIFE Program. Formal attire event.

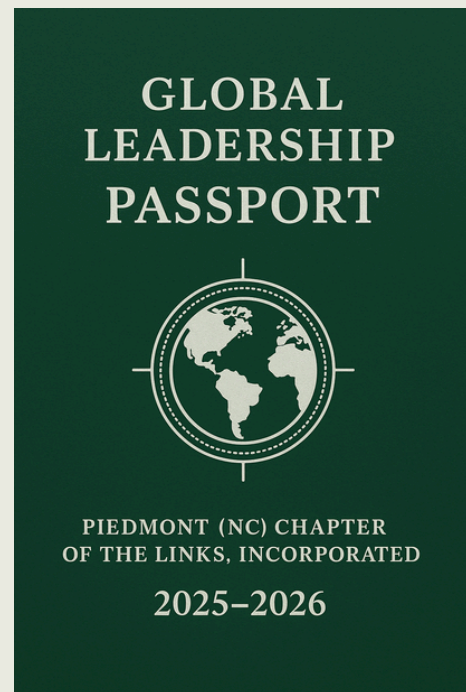


🏆 Kentucky Derby Fundraiser

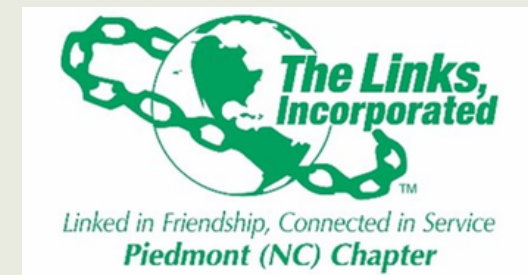
Saturday, April 5, 2026 Celebrate Derby traditions with flair! Hats, bowties, and mint juleps all for a cause—supporting leadership and educational excellence.



Month	Event Focus
September 2025	Kickoff Giving Campaign + Promote Holiday Gala
October 2025	Vendor Outreach for Food Festival
November 2025	Gala Ticket Sales Push
December 2025	Passport to the World Gala
January 2026	Launch Vendor Applications for Food Festival
February 2026	Heavy Marketing for Food Festival
March/April 2026	Flavors of the World Food Festival
May 2026	Final LIFE Program Celebration (Graduation Event)



NEW FUNDRASER EVENT



"Flavors of the World: A Cultural Food Festival" (Presented by the Piedmont (NC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated)

Event Concept:

Host a downtown outdoor or community venue event
(parking lot, farmer's market space, local park, or a closed street).

Invite local vendors, restaurants, food trucks, and caterers that represent different global cuisines
(Mexican, Indian, Jamaican, African, Thai, Italian, Southern Soul Food, etc.)
Include small business booths selling cultural art, books, teas, clothing, etc.

Entry is free, but encourage food purchases + donations to the LIFE Program.

Host a "Taste Passport" Game: guests can buy a stamp card for \$10-\$20 and get stamps at different food booths. Complete your passport = prize raffle entry!



FUNDRAISER EVENT



"Passport to the World: Holiday Gala Overview" (Presented by the Piedmont (NC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated)

Event Concept:

A formal, elegant evening celebrating international cultures, leadership, and achievement.

Designed as a high-end fundraising event to directly support scholarships, international study opportunities, and leadership development programs through LIFE.

Black tie or formal cocktail attire; immersive global theme with décor, music, and cuisine from around the world.

Guest Experience:

Passport to the World Program Booklet: featuring student success stories and global impact goals.

Cultural Cuisine Menu: curated from global influences.

Cultural Performances: live music, dance, poetry from international artists or student groups.

Global Giving Wall: opportunities for guests to sponsor scholarships or LIFE programming levels (e.g., \$100 = Travel Toolkit for a student).



GLOBAL LEADERSHIP PASSPORT



PIEDMONT (NC) CHAPTER
OF THE LINKS, INCORPORATED
2025-2026



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April 2026	Graduation & Celebration	LIFE Program

Questions???