

INVEST

Volunteering to Make a Difference: Top Ladies of Distinction Lending a Distinctive Touch to Workplace Fundraising



TOP LADIES OF DISTINCTION, INC., IS PROUD TO WORK WITH UNCF ON ITS WORKPLACE INITIATIVE.

When two graduates of UNCF-member HBCU Texas College joined forces to begin a service organization for African American women that wanted to make a difference in their local communities, they never thought their impact would spread so far and wide. Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., (TLOD), founded in 1964 by eight women to help alleviate many of the problems confronting youth in communities of color in Texas, has grown to more than 7,000 members spread across the globe, acting as an organizational volunteer powerhouse. TLOD's volunteers fuel many causes, including its marquis offering, the Top Teens of America, a program

that encourages young women to find volunteer projects and causes to get behind and share their time with—causes like UNCF, the March of Dimes and St. Jude Children’s Hospital.

Having its roots grounded in the soil of an UNCF HBCU, however, brought TLOD leadership knocking on UNCF’s door to renew its commitment to the organization in 2017. Former President Lady Drema Woldman was approached by UNCF’s national development director for workplace initiatives, Mya Dyson and out of that meeting was born a new service option that truly matters: help UNCF throughout the United States carry out its workplace fundraising campaigns.

“Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., is proud to work with UNCF on its workplace initiative,” said Woldman. “Education is the key to success, but it costs. More often than not funds are not there or readily available for our children. Most of us did not have the opportunities that are afforded today.”

Workplace fundraising campaigns are on-the-ground operations which require UNCF to be present at local employers’ offices, talk to prospective donors that may be able to support UNCF financially through gifts that are made through their paychecks, and convince the employees that UNCF is worthy of their donation. This seems simple enough, but it’s time consuming and is often only possible with the help of volunteer arms and legs. The solution? More volunteers.



And, that’s where a powerful, well-organized partner like TLOD makes a difference. Volunteers are always needed and helpful but having volunteers that hit the ground running who are knowledgeable and highly organized makes their support of UNCF, well, distinct.

Dyson explained how the partnership works: “We began the workplace volunteer partnership in 2017 assisting us with rallies, fairs and kick-offs. As it has grown, the TLOD workplace volunteer partnership has provided a tremendous boost to UNCF. In an industry that requires us to attend multiple and simultaneous events, their support on the ground helps us to get in front of more employees to educate them on our mission than we could ever do alone. It also helps us to keep administrative costs low by utilizing volunteers to help us with this important work of raising funds to get students to and through college.”

And, while this may sound like a lot of work, Woldman wanted the job. “For TLOD to be given the opportunity to go into places of employment and enlighten others about UNCF’s mission and the need to raise funds to assist our future leaders is something that we wanted to be a part of. I think we are a great match for each other because part of our service plan focuses on youth and academic excellence,” she explained.

Dyson added that the help of TLOD is more than just a few volunteers added to her ranks. “They are just amazing. We couldn’t be as successful as we are without the Top Ladies of Distinction.”

The pay-off? Woldman has high praise for the volunteer work TLOD is doing because, “It is important for our children to know their culture and be taught by and learn alongside others just like them. Attending a UNCF college or university is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and the workplace initiative helps make that a reality.”