

Akarama Foundation supports Frontline Workers by presenting gifts during Appreciation Tour

By **Crusader Staff** September 2, 2021



MEMBERS OF THE AKARAMA Foundation's Women's Health & Wellness Committee pose with frontline workers from the University of Chicago Medicine's Emergency Room for Adults. They presented gifts to the staff as a show of their appreciation.

That was the message delivered to frontline workers from the AKARA- MA Foundation – the charitable arm of Theta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. Members, clad in their signature pink and green, devoted an entire day fanning out throughout the Woodlawn community and beyond. Their mission was to thank and gift police officers, transportation workers, nurses, doctors, and other medical staff workers with tokens of gratefulness.

Veletta Bell, President of the Foundation, charged the Women's Health & Wellness Committee with coordinating and executing this "appreciation tour." Dr. Causandra McClain-Hall is chairman of this Committee.

President Bell characterized the gesture as "noble."

"It is so important now more than ever we continue to show support for our frontline workers," declared Bell. "They perform their duties with little fanfare or acclaim. With this gesture, we are saying 'Thank you for being selfless.'"

Members made the rounds delivering Frontline Appreciation Gift Bags, which included love tokens provided by sponsors Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream, National Alliance on Mental Illness, LA Fitness – Hyde Park Location, and Howard Brown Health. The gifts included a one-week pass to the LA Fitness Hyde Park location, one free online class at the Haji Healing Salon, a \$1 off ice cream coupon at Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream location at the corner of 47th and Wabash, an Adult Coloring book, an AKARAMA Foundation stress ball, an AKARAMA dual ink pen and stylus, a meditation resource guide, a National Alliance on Mental illness (NAMI) helpline card, a listing of Howard Brown Health services and a reusable AKARAMA Foundation bag. Neighborhood Blue Door Center was also a sponsor.

The first stop was the 3rd District of the Chicago Police Department at 71st and Cottage Grove. There, members presented 150 bags to officers working the first, second, and third shifts. Officer Bennett, who was on duty, expressed gratitude. "We really appreciate the AKARAMA Foundation for thinking of us, supporting and appreciating us. It means so much!"

Because transportation workers are so central in their role transporting those in need during the pandemic, the next stop was at the Chicago Transit Authority Green Line Station at 63rd and Cottage Grove. Train workers and bus drivers were provided 20 bags.

Venturing to the University of Chicago Medicine at 5656 S. Maryland members made a stop at the Emergency Room for Adults where 150 bags were provided to nurses and ER staff working the first two shifts. Then, they pivoted to the University of Chicago Medicine Emergency Room – Children at 5721 S. Maryland where they gifted bags to 40 nurses and ER staff.

The final distribution of 15 bags was presented to individual workers from various areas citywide who cared and provided comfort in their own way.

At every stop, the workers were overwhelmed, humbled and grateful for the gesture of appreciation.

All totaled, 375 bags were passed out.

Kimberley Egonmwon, Vice President and Program Chairman of the Foundation was in attendance at all four stops and gave a personal thank you on behalf of the AKARAMA Foundation. Said Egonmwon, "We know how hard your jobs are, and the stress you encounter as you keep our community safe and taken care of. We hope that you will enjoy this small token of appreciation as our way of saying we see all that you do and we thank you!"

Bell reflected that the appreciation gesture was "a joyous show of love that is emblematic of the AKARAMA Foundation's service mission." She also credited the sponsors' generosity for making the tour a "resounding success."