

15 Pearls And A Promise
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.®- Theta Chi Omega

2023-2024
Fashionetta® Honors
Debutante Handbook



July 9th, 2023

Historical Perspective: What is a Debutante?

Historically, a debutante was a young lady of marriageable age who was officially presented to “society”. In the African-American community, debutante presentations have been held for more than a century. Instead of presenting young ladies for the purpose of marriage, these presentations were celebrations of achievement and often raised funds for scholarships or community service.

Today, becoming a debutante is a way to officially recognize and honor the achievements of young women who have completed a significant phase of their life and are ready to move on to the next.

The Fashionetta® Honors Debutante Program takes the evolution of the debutante idea a step further. The young ladies honored in this program come from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. It's not about social position or affluence. It is about celebrating the dynamic and intelligent young women in our community who have aspired to excellence in their academic, leadership, and/or community service endeavors. We honor young women who have exhibited perseverance and the ability to overcome challenges on their way to success. The prospective debutante must be single, never married, and not a parent. As a Fashionetta® debutante you are honored and presented to your community as a role model, a success story, and a leader.

What is Fashionetta® ?

Fashionetta® is a trademarked program pioneered by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc® . Chapters all over the world hold Fashionetta® programs in various forms - fashion shows, pageants, debutante presentations, etc. However, its purpose is always to showcase the exceptional young women in each community. Our Fashionetta® program debuted in 1971 as fashion show and scholarship fund-raiser. Today, Theta Chi Omega chapter's Fashionetta® Honors program is an eight month personal development program which culminates in a debutante presentation at our grand gala.

Expectations of Participants

We expect our debutantes to represent their family, school, community and this program in a positive way. A way that says you are worthy of honor. We expect our debutantes and their escorts to practice and display their best manners, behavior, and attitude at all times.



The Fashionetta® Experience

Community Service

Fashionetta® debutantes are expected to continue their outside community service activities. These hours may be recorded and turned in for additional points.

Workshops

Monthly sessions are planned to give the debutantes information and opportunities to practice life/career, social, and academic skills.

Session Topics:

- Financial Literacy
- College Life
- Social Justice
- Social and Dining Etiquette
- Health and Wellness
- Ladies Retreat



Special Events

- Etiquette Luncheon (with Peer Escorts)
- Mother/Mother-Figure and Daughter event
- Ladies Retreat

Dance Rehearsals

The dance presentations are one of the most anticipated highlights of our debutante gala. The debs perform three dances: 1) Deb group dance, 2) Deb and peer escort dance, and 3) Deb and Father/Father-Figure dance.

Mrs. Ronda Inman is the choreographer for this year's program. She will provide you with a dance rehearsal schedule.

It is extremely important that you select your peer escort prior to the start of the dance rehearsals.



Peer Escorts

Choosing an escort is an important task! He has to do more than just show up for the ball. He has to be available for dance rehearsals and other events, rent a tuxedo for the ball, be reliable, and be supportive of your participation in this event!

Your escort does not have to be your “boyfriend”. In fact, sometimes it works out better if he isn't! Your escort could be your brother, cousin, or friend.

Here are some important facts to keep in mind when making your choice.

- Is my escort willing to participate in the program and fulfill all of his duties?
- Will his schedule allow him to make it to rehearsals and other events?
- Will I be comfortable/ at ease with this person as my escort?
- Is my escort reliable and punctual?
- Is he willing to rent and wear a tuxedo?



Program Protocol

R.S.V.P

R.S.V.P means “please respond”. Anytime you see this term your host is asking you to tell them if you will be attending their event. It is simply good manners for you to give them an answer. It helps the host/hostess make accurate plans for food, seating, and other amenities. When you receive an invitation from the Debutante committee you will be expected to R.S.V.P in a timely manner. **You also earn points for RSVPing!**

If you are unable to attend a session or if you will be late for a session please call, text, etc. to let us know. Doing so will help you earn points!

Attire

Knowing how to dress for any occasion is an important life skill, especially when you enter the workforce. The debutante season will give you a chance to develop and practice this skill. Each event will have a stated dress code on the invitation. We will expect you to follow the dress code. Just like in real life - some events will be t-shirt and jeans casual, some will be business wear, and some may be semi-formal, dressy, after-five or formal. If you're not sure about what these different clothing categories look like—don't worry! You'll learn all about it during your workshops.

Behavior

- Respect yourself and others
- Be supportive and encouraging of your debutante sisters
- Be considerate of others— please be on time for activities and rehearsals
- Always strive to make a good impression
- Be sisterly, we hope that you will build friendships with the other “debs”
- Remember to have **fun**, we want you to enjoy your “season”



The 2024 Fashionetta® Debutante Gala

This year's event will be a dinner and dance in honor of our debutantes. The gala will take place on **Sunday March 24, 2024 at Venue3Two**
3232 Shaffer Ave, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49512 .

Tickets

Tickets to the 2024 Debutante Gala are **\$75.00 for guests**. Anyone attending the gala must have a ticket. Tickets may be purchased with cash, money orders, checks or by PayPal on the Eventbrite website or in person.

Checks and money orders should be made payable to: 15 Pearls and a Promise.

Theta Chi Omega Chapter /15 Pearls and a Promise will provide a complimentary ticket for both the debutante and her peer escort.

All ticket payments must be turned in no later than
TBD

Photographs

We are asking parents to submit 3-4 photos of their debutante from childhood to present day for use in the opening of the program. These may be submitted digitally or a hard copy of the picture may be given for scanning, (pictures will be returned as soon as they are scanned). If you are submitting the pictures digitally please send them to:
tco.fashionetta@gmail.com

The debutantes will also be photographed for the event's printed program. Information about the photography packages will be distributed in TBD.



Proper Attire for the Gala

Fathers/ Father-figures and Peer Escorts - Tuxedo

Full dress tuxedo, as chosen by the committee.

Mothers/Mother-figures—Dressy/After five/Formal dress or outfit

There is no specific color requirement for mothers, However, we ask that you please **avoid wearing white, cream, ivory, etc..** Simply wear an ensemble that makes you feel beautiful! We encourage all who attend to dress with the theme in mind.

Debutantes

This is your night to shine! You are the guest of honor, and all eyes will be on you. You should be able to look back at your photos from this event and smile with pride. The look we are striving for is elegant and timeless. We want you to be radiant!

Traditionally, debutantes wear white ball gowns, with no train, and minimal decorations. You don't have to spend a lot of money to find the dress of your dreams. In the past Debs have borrowed dresses, rented them, had them made, purchased dresses at Goodwill, or purchased dresses during sales and seasonal closeouts. However, there are a lot of other options.

The detailed dress requirements for Debutantes are found on the following pages.

If you are having trouble finding a dress let a committee member know immediately! They or another member of Theta Chi Omega may be able to help you!



The Dress Rules!

The debutante's dress must be approved by the committee. Fashionetta® Honors debutantes wear white, floor length, gowns that meet the following criteria.

Silhouette

Ball gowns or A-line dresses are acceptable. **Immodestly tight, slinky, low-cut, straight/sheath, cleavage revealing or short dresses are NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

Color

The dress must be white.

Off white, ivory, cream, candlelight etc. are not acceptable.

Neckline

The neckline should be modest. Sabrina, off-the-shoulder, modest sweetheart, modest halters, portrait, modest strapless, or jewel necklines are o.k. You will be dancing and performing an elaborate bow/curtsy in this dress, a modest neckline will help you to avoid an embarrassing "wardrobe malfunction".

Plunging or low-cut necklines are not o.k.

Sleeves

This is a spring event and we prefer that you choose a dress with short sleeves or no sleeves and white opera length gloves*. Gloves will be purchased for you.

Length

Your dress should be floor length and should not have a visible train. (Dresses purchased with trains can be bustled for the evening of the ball.)



Jewelry

Jewelry should be kept to a minimum – small earrings, simple necklace – depending on dress neckline, and possibly a simple bracelet.

Hair

Choose a hairstyle that you feel is flattering and is neutral or natural in color. It should also be able to accommodate the decorative headpiece provided by the Debutante program. Hair can be worn either “up” or “down”.

Shoes and Hosiery

Your shoes should be formal and white. The height of the heel is up to you. Please keep in mind that you will have to dance, walk, stand, and curtsy gracefully throughout this 3-4 hour event. Choose shoes that will be comfortable and manageable.

Hosiery is **OPTIONAL**. However, please select the appropriate hosiery in either white or your skin tone.

No Knee-highs! No Black or other colored hosiery!

You will be asked to bring the shoes you will wear the night of the ball to dance rehearsals.



Awards

Miss Fashionetta—awarded to the debutante who earns the highest point total during the debutante season.

The Lynden Lewis Smith Award—given to the debutante with the highest G.P.A. This award is named after Charter member Lynden Lewis Smith, the first president of Theta Chi Omega Chapter and the moving force behind its chartering in 1969.

The Shirley Daniels Pearl of Promise Award— give to the debutante who has exhibited the most growth during her debutante season. This award is named after Shirley Daniels a charter member and past president of Theta Chi Omega chapter. She was a dynamic and passionate advocate for education and for her community.

The Mary Hardin Community Service Award— given to the debutante who completes and documents the most community service during the debutante season. This award is named after Charter member and past chapter president Mary Hardin, a gifted educator and a 50+ year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. who continues to serve the Grand Rapids

The Mary Edmond Rising Star Award –given to the debutante who earns the most points during the talent presentation. This award is named after Charter member and past chapter president Mary Ann Edmond. A brilliant educator, historian and musician who lends her talents to various programs and projects throughout West Michigan.

Emerald of Excellence Award—given to the debutante who exhibits dignity and grace while presenting herself and earns the most points during the impromptu interview.

Miss Cordiality—awarded to the debutante who has the most ticketed guests.

Miss Congeniality—elected by her debutante sisters. The debutante who was most sisterly and personable during the debutante season.



Contact Information:

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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.®,—Theta Chi Omega Chapter

The 2023-2024 Fashionetta ® Honors Committee

Ms. Samara Johnson (Program Chairman)

Mrs. Robbie McCollum

Mrs. Sharon Satterfield

Mrs. Donna Clinton– Sanders

Mrs. Ronda Inman

Mrs. Felicia Love

Mrs. Laura Guyton

Ms. Kenisha Dorsey— President, Theta Chi Omega Chapter

