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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Village Group Board of Directors,
Volunteers, Sponsors, and Supporters

FROM: Ray C. Funnye, CEO 

SUBJECT: 2007 Annual Report

DATE: January 4, 2008

Below is a list of activities and programs that were initiated and completed by The Village Group. Through your continued support we were successful in meeting our strategic goals for fiscal year 2007. We look forward to another enjoyable and blessed year for 2008.

- **Back to School Rally :** This rally, attended by parents, students, and school officials provided each participating student supplies such as a book bag, pencils, notebooks, a novel and journal. Planned hands on activities and scrumptious refreshments were provided as an incentive for participating and also served as a “jump start” for community and parental involvement. Parent’s supplies included additional reading resources, guides to reading through everyday activities, book marks, calendars and door prizes were also provided.
- **Literacy Enrichment Program with Local Elementary School:** This project, funded through the IP Foundation, focused primarily on fifth grade students from Plantersville Elementary School; however some of our initiatives benefited the entire school population. Our aim was to form a partnership with the principal and faculty along with parents in our community to encourage students to understand the value of reading and writing and to help students perform better on standardized testing. Each quarter students received new books to read and to develop writing skills. Book selections were made through a joint partnership with The Village Group and school staff.
- **Third Annual Plantersville Community Heritage Festival:** This event provided programs and services to improve the community awareness with an emphasis on youth development. The free (no admission fee) festival showcased local artists, musicians, and other cultural experiences. Activities such as doll making, African Drumming, horseback riding, games, rides, storytelling, and local cuisine, were integral parts of the event. The

evening prior to the festival we also sponsored a community softball game. The festival brought diverse cultures together while at the same time helped to enlighten youth about their rich history, and give seniors companionship. With over 1225 in attendance, this event brought the community together as a whole, which was the main objective of the project. This project was funded in part by Cultural Council of Georgetown County and Corporate and Individual Sponsors.

- **Educational Enrichment Tour:** We sponsored the Penn Center Heritage Days Celebration Enrichment Tour to St Helena Island, Beaufort, SC. The Penn Center is designated as a National Historic Landmark District and the Penn School was the first school in the South for formerly enslaved Africans. In this event, the participants partake in a down home celebration showcasing the rich cultural legacy of the Gullah People of the Sea Islands. Under the guidance of Evette E. Small, we chartered two buses which allowed over 80 participants to enjoy this overnight experience to broaden their perspective on the Gullah People.
- **Web Site:** After several months of working with our webmaster we launched our web site (**thevillagegroup.org**). This tool will help present our mission and goals, disseminate information and share past accomplishments. We will also use the site to build revenue for the organization. Special acknowledgement goes out to our Webmaster, Celise McLaughlin.
- **Toys for Tots:** We partnered with the US Marine Corps and coordinated with local community churches to secure bicycles, toys, games and other gifts for our youth during this Christmas Season.
- **2007 Bereavement Committee:** This is certainly one committee we rather not have, but it has proven to be an acceptable practice in our community. Bereavement is always a painful experience and the loss of a loved one is a powerful stressor in one's life, so we try to comfort the family as best we can to minimize symptoms of anxiety and depression. Under the leadership of Lucinda D. Milton, this year we served numerous families by giving them comfort during the loss of a loved one and also catered dinner to family and friends.
- **2007 City of Georgetown and St Paul-Plantersville Christmas Parades :** This year is our inaugural for participating in Christmas parades. We were awarded the 2007 Christmas Spirit Award for our gutsy participation in the City of Georgetown parade. We also participated in the annual Christmas Day celebration in St. Paul with other local organizations, churches and businesses. While I want to thank everyone who contributed time, energy and resources, special recognition is noted to our float designer, Queen D. Funnye, and the float builder, Vernon Walwyn, for our award winning entry.
- **Volunteer Appreciation Pre-Holiday Dinner and Social:** The occasion was designed to give our volunteers a moment to let their hair down. Alberta C. Dease accepted the charge to plan the event and invited other organizations that partnered with us during the year. We enjoyed a delectable dinner and also took some time to fellowship with old and new acquaintances.

Again, thank you for your continued support and the opportunity to serve our community.