



Coalition of African Communities in Philadelphia  
A Non-Profit Organization Registered in Pennsylvania

# One Voice

1st Quarter, March 2012

## AFRICOM Launches Newsletter

This is AFRICOM's first newsletter to inform members and supporters of our organizations regular progress.

AFRICOM is committed to serving members of the African and Caribbean community

through empowering organizations, distributing information that can help bring services to the community, and collaborating with individuals/organizations/institutions that subscribe to mission of AFRICOM.

The newsletter will keep those interested in AFRICOM abreast of all of the great accomplishments and events that our members and member organizations have.

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AFRICOM meets with FEMA and the SBA

## Greetings from the President

As AFRICOM's first female president, I am pleased to state that despite limited resources, AFRICOM can still be proud of the work we do here in Philadelphia and beyond. Let me thank our committed sponsors and dear friends who have continued to support us

and have stood by us. With the brilliant ideas from our secretary, Antoinette Gharthey, this newsletter has become a reality and I want to congratulate her for the work she does.

As we are aware, countless African and Caribbean immigrants and their children face a

series of roadblocks and other difficulties when trying to navigate the American system. We have tried to bridge the gaps in access to health care, jobs, adjustment of immigration status; and can only hope that we will someday close those gaps. *Article continued on page 3.*



*“... our beloved organization, is showing signs of renewal and progress with the launching of its first newsletter.”*



## Board of Directors Welcome Letter

From the Office of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Africom-Philly,

Dear all,

The first quarter of the year 2012 just ended and already Africom-Philly, our beloved organization, is showing signs of renewal and progress with the launching of its first newsletter. This is a milestone that needs to be applauded. The newsletter will be our newer space to discuss the challenges of

our communities and to inform our partners of the great work we have undertaken for the past decade.

On behalf of the board of directors, I congratulate the Executive Officers for establishing the tradition of the newsletter within Africom-Philly. Their effort sufficiently demonstrates our unalterable commitment to move forward despite the budgetary difficulties.

I invite all the members of the Board of Directors to fully support the newsletter team and promote it in their respective organizations and communities and networks.

Once again congratulations.

May God Bless Africom-Philly.

Dr. Eric Edi

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Africom-Philly.

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## Board of Directors Update

AFRICOM’s Board of Directors revamped the 2011-2012 fiscal year with the election and re-election of board members, Mr. Alou Traoré, Mr. Giordani Jean-Baptiste, and Mrs. Zemoria Brandon.

The board has been meeting the 3rd Thursday of every month since December and have developed 5 committees:

Finance/501(c)3, Public Relations/Media/Membership, Economic Development & Business Relationships, Conflict Resolution & Internal Policies, and a Building Committee.

They have also elected Mr. Traoré as Treasurer, and have started an account to help AFRICOM continue to flourish.

A resolution for the restructuring of the Mayor’s Commission of African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs is being developed to improve the MCACIA’s collaboration with African and Caribbean organizations and the communities which they serve.

Invitations for at-large board members are being distributed for 2012.

## Greetings from the President (cont.)

Let me also take this time to welcome our brothers and sisters of the African and Caribbean and beyond to partner with us. As Africa and the world take on different shapes and forms both politically and economically, let us here in Philadelphia renew our commitment to the cause. We must strive to reshape the health and economic status of the immigrant community here in the Delaware valley. As I have said before, I would also try to reintegrate: the community needs you and will continue to depend

on you for your time and resources, both finically and emotionally. I cannot promise you that this would be easy, but I can assure you that you can make a difference when you realize that selflessness is a virtue.

To those who have never left our side despite the struggles, those that decided to join the struggle and those that left the struggle and are on their way back to help us to the finish line, I say thank you.

Finally, I wish God's Blessings on you and may the hopes and dreams of AFRICOM one day come to full realization.

Vera Tolbert, MS, PhD  
President, AFRICOM



***“To those who have never left our side despite the struggles, those that decided to join the struggle and those that left the struggle and are on their way back to help us to the finish line, I say thank you.”***

## AFRICOM’s Progress for 2010-2011 Fiscal Year

### Membership/ Supporters

The leadership of AFRICOM was able to attend several events in 2011, approximately 40 in all. Leaders of AFRICOM regularly attended CCTC Board & Tema topical event and the monthly meetings of the Mayor’s Commission on African & Caribbean Immigrant Affairs. There were two so-

licitations (Malian and Angolan community) for conflict resolutions and both situations have not been resolved. There was interested expressed in AFRICOM overseeing the Malian elections, but not written request was submitted.

### Fundraising

The one fundraising effort made by the fundraising committee and the Chair

of the Health Fair Committee was towards the health fair. The pre-health fair dinner was a success and the organization thanks Mr. Chima Orji, the proprietor of the African Cultural Center, for allowing AFRICOM to use the his space and for his contribution to AFRICOM. *Article continued on page 4.*



## AFRICOM's Progress for 2010-2011 Fiscal Year (cont.)

### Social Welfare Programs

The food bank program was a success. Thirty families were linked to welfare and CCIS services.

Twenty proof of residency letter were completed to assist



community members who were seeking medical care at the health centers.

### Echoes of Africa

The President, Vera B. Tolbert, PhD was the keynote speaker. AFRICOM helped publicize the event to other organizations, and it was well attended. AFRICOM worked in close collaboration with the Mayor's Commission under the leadership of Chairman Stanley Straughter and Vice Chair Delores Mohammed, who attended the event as dignitaries.

### 2011 Annual Health Fair

On August 7, 2011 the Annual African and Caribbean Health and Wellness Fair took place at Kingsessing Recreation Center under the leadership of Raphia Noubissi, Chair of the Health and Social Welfare Committee. Over \$7,000 was raised for the

event. The health fair was made possible by the clinical leadership of Dr. Helena Kwakwa with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and Stanley Straughter, Chairman of the MCACIA attended and welcomed guests at the event.

Physicians were able to provide free health and private health screenings. Free glucose testing, HIV testing and blood pressure screenings were provided. AFRICOM was able to provide surveys to health participants to more accurately assess the needs of the community.

### Collaborations

A Founders' dinner was planned to brainstorm ideas in order to gain new membership (organizations and individuals) for AFRICOM and to encourage former members to return. Many innovative ideas were mentioned and the Board of Directors, as well as the Executive Council, will work through 2012 to implement those ideas.

### Workshop and Training Programs

We did not participate in

many workshops for 2011, but we anticipate having monthly trainings/workshops in 2012.

### Marketing and Promotions

AFRICOM has co-sponsored and participated in various events throughout the city of Philadelphia. By attending African organizations' events and others, we were able to introduce AFRICOM to various organizations and individuals. The organization did promote itself through Radio Xalaat, PECO, local news stations, the website, and mass emails.

### Social Events

There was a fiscal year social at the home of President, a Thank You Dinner for volunteers of the health fair, and an officers' retreat to plan for the next fiscal year..

*Information gathered from AFRICOM's 2010-2011 Annual Report.*

**“AFRICOM has co-sponsored and participated in various events throughout the city of Philadelphia.”**



## Penn Museum's *Imagine Africa*

On Saturday, February 18th, a beautiful day greeted over 1,000 people who attended the Penn Museum's Community Day for its *Imagine Africa* exhibit. The Penn Museum in collaboration with AFRICOM had members of the African Diaspora exhibit their talents, business and areas of expertise surrounding the many ethnicities that make up such rich and historic cultures.

Our very own members came and displayed their wonderful work. Mr. Alou Traoré displayed his vast selection of African

videos, music and more for museum-goers. Mr.



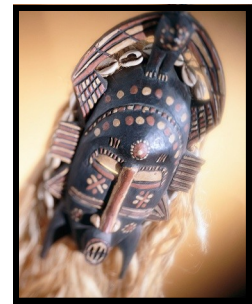
**AFRICOM at the Penn Museum**

Lanfia Waritay, of the Children's Crisis Treatment Center, Project Temaa, also had a table informing the community of the important work his organization does for refugee and immigrant communities in

Philadelphia.

AFRICOM would like to say thank you to Dr. Mary Johnson Osirim for exhibiting her book *Global Philadelphia: Immigrant Communities Old and New*, Ms.

Wayétu Moore, for presenting culturally rich children's books she wrote and published under One Moore Book, Mrs. Rashida Watson, for selling her African-inspired jewelry and accessories from *The Silk Tent* and all members of AFRICOM who came and participated in such a wonderful day.



***“The Penn Museum in collaboration with AFRICOM had members of the African Diaspora exhibit their talents, business and areas of expertise surrounding the many ethnicities that make up such rich and historic cultures.”***

## Social Welfare

Our social welfare programs are well under way the food bank is still available for those who know members of their communities who are in need of food.

The 12th Annual African and Caribbean Health and Wellness fair will be on May 20th this year. Planning is already under way.

Under the leadership of Raphia Noubissi, this year fair will include free medical consultation, HIV testing, blood glucose and blood pressure screening, a talent show and much more for the whole family.

Additional programs are under way. Please see Ms. Noubissi to find out ways you can help service

our communities.



## AFRICOM

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*The Coalition of African Communities - Philadelphia (AFRICOM) is an umbrella non-profit, 501(c)3 tax-exempt, organization that brings together various African, American and Caribbean community organizations and individuals, who subscribe to the mission and ideals of AFRICOM. The mission of AFRICOM is to improve the welfare of its community members*



### Upcoming Events



**Dr. Alston Meade  
and  
Mr. Andrew Batchelor,  
President of  
Coalition for Jamaica**

4th Annual Dancing with the  
Philadelphia Stars  
Sickle Cell Disease  
Association of America,  
PDVC  
Sunday, April 22, 2012  
5pm-10pm  
The Crystal Tea Room  
100 Penn Square  
Philadelphia, PA  
[www.DancingWithThePhilad  
elphiaStars.com](http://www.DancingWithThePhilad<br/>elphiaStars.com)  
(215)471-8686

The 12th Annual African and  
Caribbean Health and  
Wellness Fair.  
Sunday, May 20th, 2012  
11am-8pm  
Kingsessing Recreation  
Center  
4901 Kingsessing Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA  
Contact:  
Ms. Raphia Noubissi  
(267)242-8233  
[raphiatou@yahoo.com](mailto:raphiatou@yahoo.com)