



AFRICAN COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES

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WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TEA AT THE BRITISH CONSULATE

The British Consulate-General Boston and the United Nations Association of Greater Boston (UNAGB) hosted an afternoon tea at the British Consulate-General in Cambridge on August 25th 2010 to commemorate the convention on

the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The ACHI Chairperson, Dr. Anne Medinus was one of two speakers at the event which brought together people from all walks of life, academia, business, legal profession, advocacy groups, government, community-based and health care organizations, and human

rights groups. During the event, a Professor of International Health at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Jennifer Leaning presented the results of her research on Maternal and Child Health. Following this, Dr. Medinus gave a powerpoint presentation on the plight of women in Africa, starting with her experience growing up in Nigeria and the current status of women throughout the world; and moving on to the United Nations eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve gender equity and extend hope and access to people all over the world. Dr.

Medinus stressed the first five MDGs which apply to women but noted that none of the eight goals can be achieved without empowering women. She presented the on-going efforts towards the fulfillment of these goals, including the federal government's Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) program, which is implemented in Massachusetts through the State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA); the UNAGB's Women's Forum, which raises awareness of issues facing women in developing countries and engages others in the effort

to raise funds for programs to their benefit; the work done by community-based organiza-



Jennifer Leaning, MD and Anne Medinus, PhD, moments after they received their gifts, as the Deputy General Consul looks on.

tions like ACHI, which promotes access to culturally competent quality health and social services for people of African origin, and South Africa Partners, which facilitates partnerships between organizations and institutions in the United States and South Africa. Dr. Medinus ended her presentation with a documentary on "One Home Many Hopes", a loving home for orphaned and abandoned girls in Kenya. Both Drs. Leaning and Medinus answered questions from the participants during the discussion that ensued. The two speakers were presented gifts by the Deputy General Consul, Chris Henderson in appreciation of their efforts.

ACHI Outdoor Health Fair Event

ACHI had an outdoor health fair on August 14th at Katherine Drexel Parish in Roxbury. Eleven community-based organizations participated in it and participants received free health care services including eye care, dental services and screening for HIV, hypertension and diabetes were performed. Three organizations that could not be there sent promotional and health education materials. Participants also took part in music and dance exercise that was led by 5 Star Quality Care Center and raffle that was conducted by 2 Better Choice. The Director of the Men's Health program at Whittier Street Health Center provided refreshments.

CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE AREA 4 HEALTH FAIR

This annual event was held on July 10th in Cambridge. It brought together community-based organizations and health centers. Participants were screened for various disorders and they received promotional and health educational materials. ACHI was interviewed by a community media agent during this fair.

SPRING INTO HEALTH

ACHI held a Spring Into Health fair on April 24th at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Boston. The purpose was to provide health promotion and disease prevention information and services to participants. Several organizations joined ACHI in this venture, including Gilead Sciences, Boston Medical Center, Dotwell, WIC, Greater Boston Sickle Cell Association, United Nations Association of Greater Boston and the Boston Public Health Commission. Participants were screened for HIV and Cardiovascular diseases, and flu shots were given to those who wanted them. The event also included a workshop on men's health.



Amadou Diagne of Gilead Sciences presents information on Men's Health.

MEN'S HEALTH SUMMIT 2010

Whittier Street Health Center hosted its 2010 summit on men's health on July 10th at the YMCA of Roxbury. The aim was to continue promoting men's health through creating awareness and holding discussions on various topics concerning men's health. Various organizations, including ACHI participated in the event, which was covered by the media.

PROJECT HEALTH MOVES

On July 31st, ACHI participated in an on-going health fair, Project Health Moves, which is a collaboration of Step Rox and the Northeastern University. The project uses a mobile clinic from which people in the various communities the van visits, receive health screening and ACHI provides enrollment services and health information.



Mobile clinic van at the fair

Interview with ACHI Board Member



Tony Amoah

Q: What is your name and position at ACHI?

Anthony Amoah (Tony); Board Member.

Q: What achievements have ACHI accomplished?

Tony: *ACHI has achieved self identity and image as non-profit organization in Massachusetts, helping documented/undocumented Africans immigrants' access health, social and human services. ACHI is recognized by State, City, community and major institutions, as an organization that works with at-risk immigrants, helping them to access health and social services.*

Q: What makes ACHI unique?

Tony: *Undocumented immigrants are generally apprehensive, distrustful, and scared of all supposedly "do gooders;" they will therefore not volunteer any information even if this is in connection with their own health. Over the years, ACHI has worked tirelessly meeting Af-*

ricans in their homes, churches, picnics and community meetings, educating them about the need for health and social services, and how ACHI could help them access services.

ACHI stands tall among other organizations for the following reasons: ACHI has a broad-based working Board of Directors and volunteers most of whom have roots in Africa. The broad-base provides ACHI with linguistic abilities which make client/partners feel more trusting and comfortable in sharing their personal information; which in turn enable ACHI staffers lead clients/partners to the appropriate service.

-Ability to open doors to health/social/human services

-Partnering with various African Communities for the benefit of its members.

Q: Where do you see ACHI in 10 years? In other words, what is ACHI's future? **Given the role of ACHI within the African communities, I foresee ACHI becoming the largest non-profit social service organization, which helps new/old Africans to access health and social services in Massachusetts.**

Q: What would you like the African community to know about ACHI?

Tony: *African communities should continue to partner with ACHI; encourage them to open up to ACHI; that any information shared with ACHI would remain strictly confidential.*

Interview with ACHI Intern



Christina Bonney

1. *Can you speak a little about yourself and your background?*

I am Christina Bonney. I began my undergraduate work at the University of Cape-Coast in Ghana studying Chemistry. However, after I moved to the U.S., I became more interested in Public Health, after taking a course on International Health. I have volunteered in a number of organizations in California, where I pursued my education. I focus primarily on community health education, which aims to empower individuals to pursue health-promoting activities.

2. *When did you become an intern and how long have you been with ACHI?*

I began on February 1, 2010 and I have been with ACHI for 8 months

3. *How do you like working for ACHI?*

Working with ACHI was a rewarding period for me. As an intern, I had the opportunity to perform various administrative tasks. I was entrusted with important projects and responsibilities; this boosted my confidence in my professional abilities. I also got an interesting glimpse into the area of health advocacy such as identifying and providing health and social services for the uninsured, especially African immigrants. It was unsettling to know how easily some of our clients could lose basic health services.

From ACHI, I learned about the structure of the Massachusetts health system, the different health insurance programs that ACHI assist clients to enroll in and what makes a client eligible for the program or not. I prepared for and participated in a number of health fairs. This experience taught me the

practicality of outreach as a vital tool for Health education.

Also, by interacting with other professionals in the field during the organization and implementation of the health fairs, I improved on my presentation skills as well as how to effectively communicate ideas. The staff were welcoming and they created a comfortable and close-knit atmosphere for working. I also enjoyed my encounters with the board and community members who were very supportive. The vision of ACHI to create a healthier African community in Massachusetts is attainable and noble. After completing my internship, I decided to volunteer with ACHI. I have recommended the organization to several Africans I met in Boston, including those I met at bus stops and grocery shops.

4. *What is the most memorable experience you have had with ACHI?*

ACHI has an annual spring health fair which I had the privilege to attend. I had the opportunity to participate in the planning of the health fair was dubbed "Spring into Health". My role was to develop goals for the fair, contact ACHI collaborators by phone and email, and develop flyers for the fair. It was a great experience; I established many professional relationships even beyond ACHI and had the opportunity to play a major role in organizing a major health fair.

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BARBEQUE AT THE BEACH!!



Wil Borgella mans the grill

ACHI held its third annual cookout at Carson Beach on July 31st. It was a fun-filled day that brought together the young and old. Participants played games, ate and vied for raffle prizes, which ranged from books and clothes to African fabrics.



Some participants at the cookout

DONATION TO HAITI

On June 17th, ACHI donated durable medical supplies and light sources to the victims of the Haiti earthquake through the Haitian Coalition, Somerville. Mr. Dalembert, a representative of the Coalition received the donation near the ACHI office in Roxbury.



ACHI's Sister Elizabeth presents the donation to Mr. Dalembert