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African IMMIGRANT



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ROSITA HALL



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JANET BRAKOHAPA



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PRISCILLA BIRAGO



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MAKING A DIFFER-
ENCE
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YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
JOSIE DE LEON



MEDICINE
DR. ANNA BANERJI

2014 WINNERS - WOMEN'S COURAGE AWARD

SPECIAL AWARDS EDITION

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YINKA AYEFELE: The Incredible Life of An Entertainer

| ENTERTAINMENT |

YINKA AYEFELE: The Incredible Life of an Entertainer

Sensational singer and entertainer, Yinka Ayefele needs no introduction to many Nigerians, especially, to those in the western part of the country. Ayefele is considered to be one of the best Juju singers in the West, even though he became handicapped due to a fatal motor accident. He hails from Ekiti state, south western part of Nigeria. He is the first born of his parents, born in 1968. Ayefele completed his primary and secondary education at Ipoti-Ekiti in Ondo state. He went further to Ondo state College of arts from where he got a diploma. Ayefele worked as a broadcast journalist before venturing into music.

He began his career as a freelance journalist with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria {FRCN}, Ibadan, Nigeria and later joined Radio Nigeria in 1990 or thereabout. His music career did not begin until he suffered the fatal accident that nearly claimed his life in 1997. Although Ayefele has been confined to a wheel chair after a spinal cord injury, it didn't stop him from developing his music talents and went ahead to become a household name. Yinka Ayefele's songs are dynamic in nature. His songs are a blend of Gospel, Juju, Fuji and sometimes Makosa. His his first album was titled *Bitter experience*. The album, *Bitter experience*, was said to have motivated his second album – *Sweet experience*. He turned his ordeals to success within a few



years and soared higher as the years went by. He remains the most sought-after entertainer at parties. And he charges as much as N5-6m per event depending on the location. He charges 2.5 million naira for events in Lagos and the environs and five to six million naira for events in Abuja, depending on the time of the year. Ayefele is booked all round the year and has more than eight events per month. He charges about \$10,000 for events abroad.

Properties:

The sensational singer has a huge office complex, *Yinka Ayefele's Music House*, which houses his office, studio, and other businesses. The Music House cost him roughly N150m to complete. He has another magnificent Penthouse building which caught fire only this August, but was put out before any damage could be done. The Penthouse is his second house in Ibadan apart from his Music House. The Penthouse is worth over 150 million naira. Ayefele has a magnificent 32-room hotel in Ibadan called "the Downtown hotel." He also has a world class house in his home town. He has succeeded in building a befitting apartment for his dad and another one for his mum which cost millions of naira.

Foundation:

Ayefele has a foundation for spinal cord injuries. He has helped a lot of people get access to treatment and provided wheel chairs as well. He also has a scholarship scheme as he is sending a lot of impoverished children to school. In his own village, he has built and set up a computer school in his Alma Mater. His workers and band members are not left out on his charitable lifestyle as he has succeeded in empowering them to the extent that more than 50% of his workers have built their own houses. He shares the money 'sprayed' on him during his shows with his band members at the ratio of 2-8, taking the lesser part.

Cars, clothes and perfumes

Yinka Ayefele is a car freak. He has a lot of cars in his garage mostly SUVs. He has a black Ford Explorer, 2014, worth 14 million naira. He also has a Land Cruiser worth 12 million naira and other cars too numerous to mention. Ayefele spends a lot of money on clothes and expensive perfumes. (Vanguard)



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Nigeria's Entertainment Industry, the Unsung Hero of Youth Employment

Nigeria's entertainment industry has become a key cog in creating youth employment and cultivating culture at a minimal cost to government. The Nigerian Creative and Entertainment Industry Stimulation Loan Scheme, launched in 2011 by President Goodluck Jonathan, saw entertainers accessing \$200 million to finance their operations. The industry is creating perceptive entrepreneurs, cultural ambassadors, and global brands.

Three years later, Nollywood, Nigeria's budding film industry, has become second in the global film markets in terms of volume of production, and third, behind India's Bollywood and America's Hollywood in revenue. The entertainment sector is now reputed to be the second highest employer in Nigeria after agriculture – employing more than one million people – particularly the youth.

Current estimates put Nollywood's annual revenue at \$590 million, with Nigerian musicians and comedians selling out arenas from London to Los Angeles. One example of such success is Nigerian comedian, Basket Mouth's February 2014 tour of the United Kingdom, which sold out in various venues a week before the concert date. A growing number of young people are finding their niche in the budding industry, as they straddle a broad range of economic activities, contributing to the country's economy.

Perceptive entrepreneurs:

Nigerian entertainment entrepreneur Jason Njoku, created Iroko, Nigeria's equivalent of Netflix, and he has been listed by Forbes as one of top 10 young African millionaires. While Nigeria's shortcomings in youth management are by no means resolved, the entertainment industry has seen young Nigerian artistes emerge from disadvantaged backgrounds and working themselves into higher income brackets. The opportunities created by the entertainment sector are good news for the government, as it somewhat reduces the difficulty of catering for Nigeria's large youth population, with more than 100 million people aged below 45.

The industry is creating perceptive entrepreneurs, cultural ambassadors, and global brands, whose exploits have internationalized Nigeria's entertainment sector. Nigerian actress Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde is currently a Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations, while pop star D'banj is currently the African Union Summit Ambassador for ONE Campaign, an advocacy initiative that calls on African governments to commit at least 10 per cent of national budgets to agricultural investment. The sector has also flourished as a result of investors – both local and international – devising strategies to circumnavigate piracy, with little help from government. One such example is an M-Net-THEMA TV distribution deal in 2011 that allowed M-Net to sub-license the rights of its AfricaMagic content, African drama series, documentaries and soaps, to THEMA TV for international distribution.

Erstwhile actress Genevieve Nnaji, who has been a guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show, talking Nigeria, culture, and entertainment, serves as proof that the West African country provides a lucrative consumer market for private and corporate investors seeking a piece of the pie the entertainment sector has to offer. With more attention from government, in terms of regulation and investments, Nigeria's entertainment industry could drive the youth employment effort, not only in distribution but also in domestic and regional tourism.

Continued from p. 13

being born stateless in Canada and the uncertainty of their status may outweigh the benefits linked to limiting citizenship by birth on soil," said the government report, which also suggested that the number of anchor babies could be underestimated. "Discussions with CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency) have indicated that limiting citizenship by birth on soil would likely impact the removals program. It could be more challenging to remove families which have a child born in Canada in terms of getting access to travel documents for that child, regardless of whether or not the child is stateless."

With input from the Department of Justice, Passport Canada, Foreign Affairs, CBSA and Public Safety, the report suggested Ottawa could issue proof of citizenship to persons born in Canada or have provinces modify birth certificates to indicate citizenship status. Nevertheless, it recommended the removal of the birth rights by suggesting "there may be some support for a restrictive policy" despite the "significant operational and cost implication" for Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

In the 1990s, the then Liberal government also toyed with the idea of removing citizenship as a birth right but was met with public opposition, and a letter campaign to then immigration minister Lucienne Robillard opposing the plan was launched.

"Canada has signed international conventions that commit us not to make people stateless. There is a very real risk that some children will be stateless as a result of this proposed change," said the letter signed on by more than 230 national organizations.

"A move to end automatic citizenship for babies sends xenophobic messages to the public," the letter said. (Courtesy: The Star)

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Africans and the Lessons of Ebola

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Ebola virus that is ravaging through three West African countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. This is very unfortunate and a result of bad leadership that is endemic across the continent. It was clear that at the outbreak of the virus, these three countries were clueless and unaware of what steps and

measures to adopt to contain the fast spreading disease. This is quite disheartening that at this age with millions of dollars in foreign aid, these countries lacked the capacity to protect their citizens from the disease. This is the outcome of systemic corruption that have come to define many African countries. And the sad aspect of these developments is the fact that it may get

worse before it gets better. It is time for Africans to look inward for the solutions to their problems. They cannot be seeking help every time there is a tragedy in their midst. Most of the countries that assist African countries in times of trouble are not necessarily richer, but have better management and discipline with their resources. Africans should rise to the occasion and take control of their affairs.

- Lucas Michael Lungu (Waterloo, ON)

TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — EMAIL: PUBLISHER@AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA

BOOK AWARD

Kenyan Writer, Okwiri Oduor, Wins 15th Caine Prize for African Writers

Kenya's Okwiri Oduor has won the 2014 Caine Prize for African Writing, described as Africa's leading literary award, for her short story entitled 'My Father's Head' from *Feast, Famine and Potluck* (Short Story Day Africa, South Africa, 2013). The Chair of Judges, Jackie May MBE, announced Okwiri Oduor as the winner of the £10,000 prize at a dinner held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. 'My Father's Head' explores the narrator's difficulty in dealing with the loss of her father and looks at the themes of memory, loss and loneliness. The narrator works in an old people's home and comes into contact with a priest, giving her the courage to recall her buried memories of her father. Jackie Kay praised the story, saying, "Okwiri Oduor is a writer we are all really excited to have discovered. 'My Father's Head' is an uplifting story about mourning. She exercises an extraordinary amount of



control yet the story is subtle, tender and moving. It is a story you want to return to the minute you finish it." Okwiri Oduor directed the inaugural *Writivism* Literary Festival in Kampala, Uganda in August 2013. Her novella, *The Dream Chasers* was highly commended in the Commonwealth Book Prize, 2012. She is a 2014 MacDowell Colony fellow and is currently at work on her debut novel.



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Prof. Phil Tam-AI Alalibo

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African Immigrant Magazine (AIM)
P.O. Box 7686, Station D
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Phone: 289-800-2575
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| IMMIGRATION |

Introducing the "Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration" (AVRR) Pilot Program

Individuals whose refugee claim applications have been denied may qualify for help returning to their home country through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) pilot program. The program is being carried out as a partnership between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and is run in and around the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Participation in the AVRR pilot program is strictly voluntary and is based on eligibility criteria established by the CBSA. After the CBSA determines that individuals are eligible, they are referred to the IOM for assistance.

Return and reintegration support from the IOM may include:

- Travel arrangements (including plane tickets; travel documents; and assistance at the airport upon departure, transit and reception);
- Finalizing a reintegration plan; and
- Disbursement of in-kind reintegration assistance (up to CAN\$2,000) to eligible participants upon arrival in their home country.

Individuals may be eligible to participate in the AVRR program if they:

- Are an unsuccessful refugee claimant who made a claim in or around the GTA.
- Comply with all terms and conditions set by the Government of Canada during the refugee claim process.
- Complete an application for a new travel document if they do not have one.

How to apply:

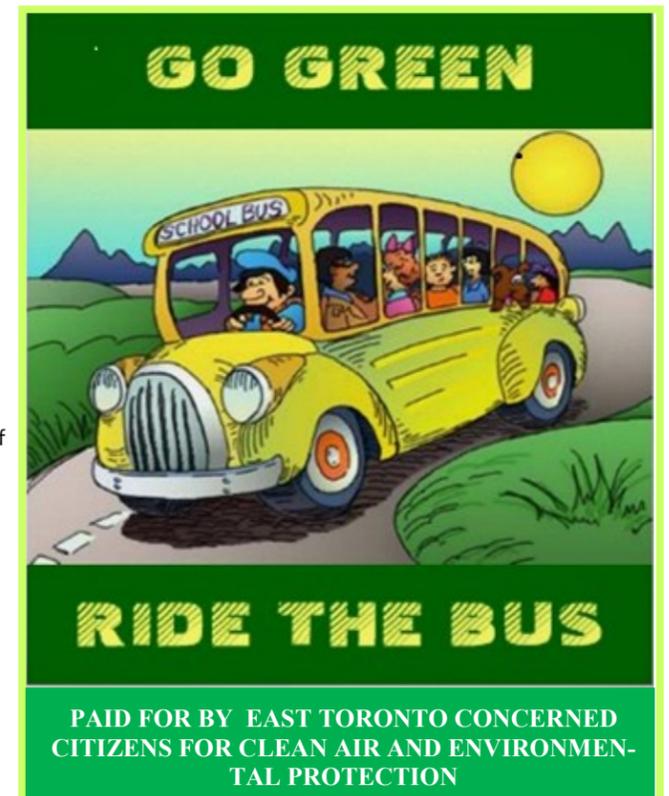
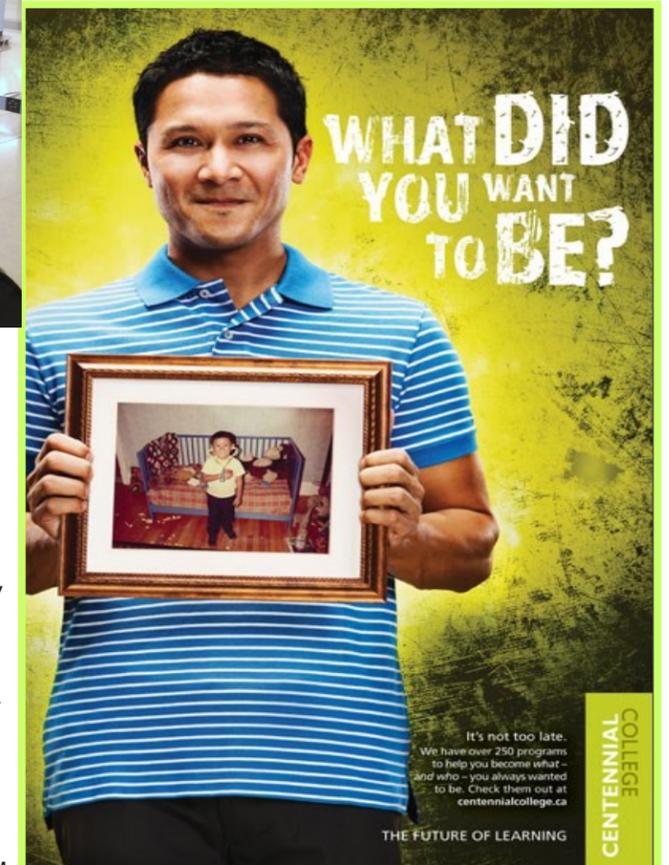
- Apply in person at the CBSA office located at 6900 Airport Road, Entrance 93, Mississauga, Ontario (no appointment is needed).

E-mail AVRR-ARVR@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca.

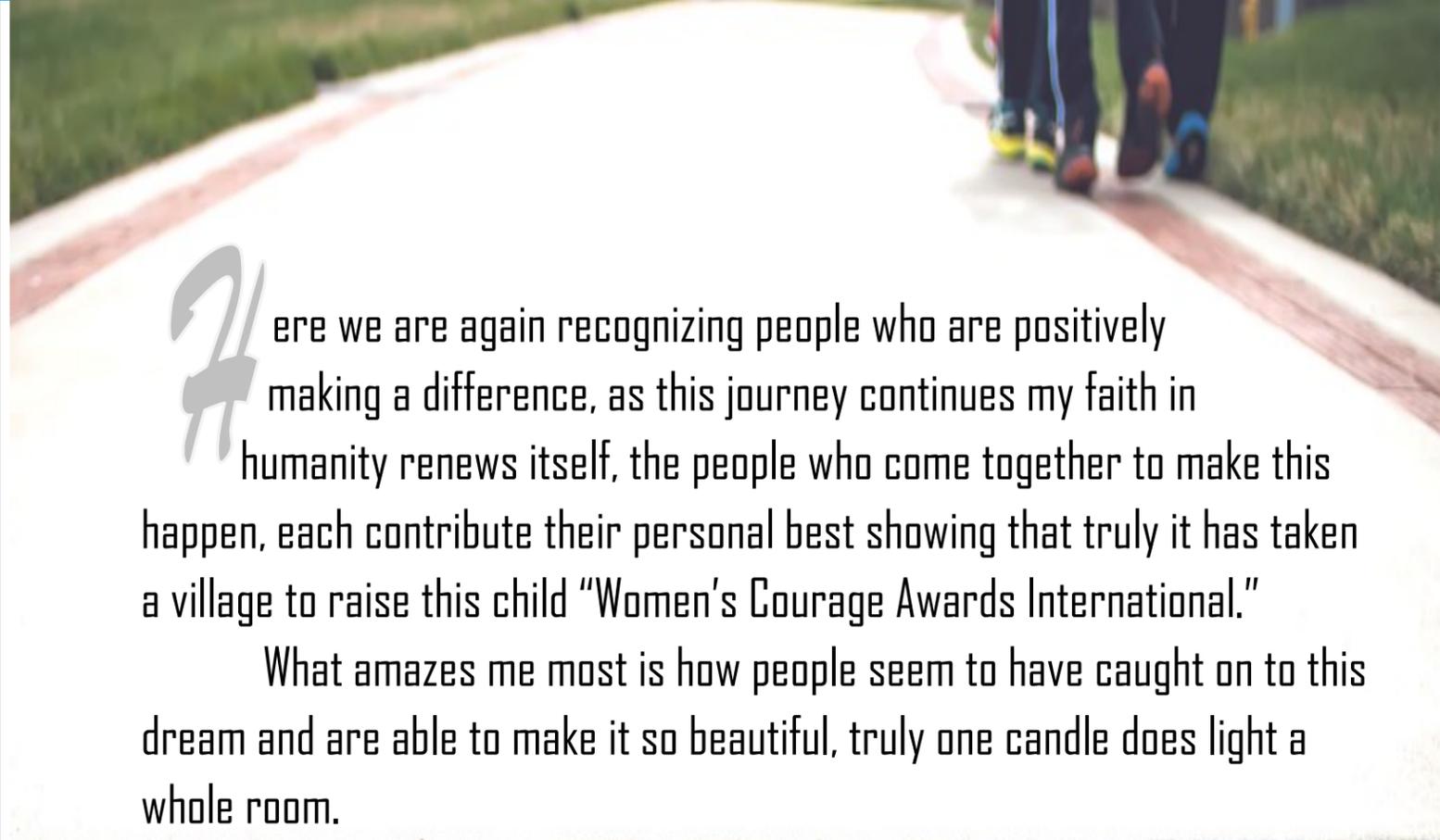
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For more information about the eligibility criteria and the types of assistance that are available as part of the AVRR program, visit www.cbsa.gc.ca and www.iomtoronto.ca.

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Here we are again recognizing people who are positively making a difference, as this journey continues my faith in humanity renews itself, the people who come together to make this happen, each contribute their personal best showing that truly it has taken a village to raise this child "Women's Courage Awards International."

What amazes me most is how people seem to have caught on to this dream and are able to make it so beautiful, truly one candle does light a whole room.

WOMEN OF COURAGE

Our team in Ghana put on a splendid awards show with each person bringing their best to the table, we have gone international and by God's grace we can now begin impacting lives even more with your support!

This was one person's dream, everyone is here because they see the good in that dream, what are you doing about yours, we want to be part of it, let's share, enjoy this evening! Stay blessed and Be Encouraged! Be Inspired.—Anna Aidoo, Founder, Women's Courage Award International. For more information about the Women's Courage Award, visit <http://www.annaaidoo.com/190167705>



Rosita Hall
Women Development

WOMEN OF COURAGE

Described as a motivator with a big heart, Rosita graduated from the University of Windsor with a Bachelor in Social Work, she is a publisher of two books and runs her own speaking company. She has received many awards for working tirelessly to improve the lives of women.

Overseeing the development of the second stage housing in Ontario for women and children fleeing domestic abuse, she always emphasizes the importance of taking control of one's mental, physical and emotional health. She went back to school to become a fitness instructor and teaches fitness and good health maintenance at an all-women's facility. She mentors students at McMaster University and Mohawk College.

As a member of Zonta International for seven years, Rosita is passionate about two projects in Africa: the Obstetric Fistula programme in Liberia and the Paediatric HIV Prevention programme in Rwanda. On a local level, she supports several initiatives in Hamilton. She is also a founding member of the Blossom Club, a unique non-profit organization that supports women with disability. Recently, her organization held a conference to raise funds for the Native Women's Centre in Hamilton.

Rosita was recently accepted into the Masters Programme at Brock University. She enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons.

Janet Brakohiapa
Community Development

Born in Germany and raised in Ghana, Janet Brakohiapa is a successful lawyer and a mother of two, with a heart that keeps on giving. It hasn't been easy, but she continues to shine and bring hope to the hopeless both in her profession and community.

A few years ago, tragedy struck in Janet's life with the loss of her husband to cancer. In spite of this tragedy compounded by the need to care for their children alone, she persevered and remained focused and dedicated to her family.

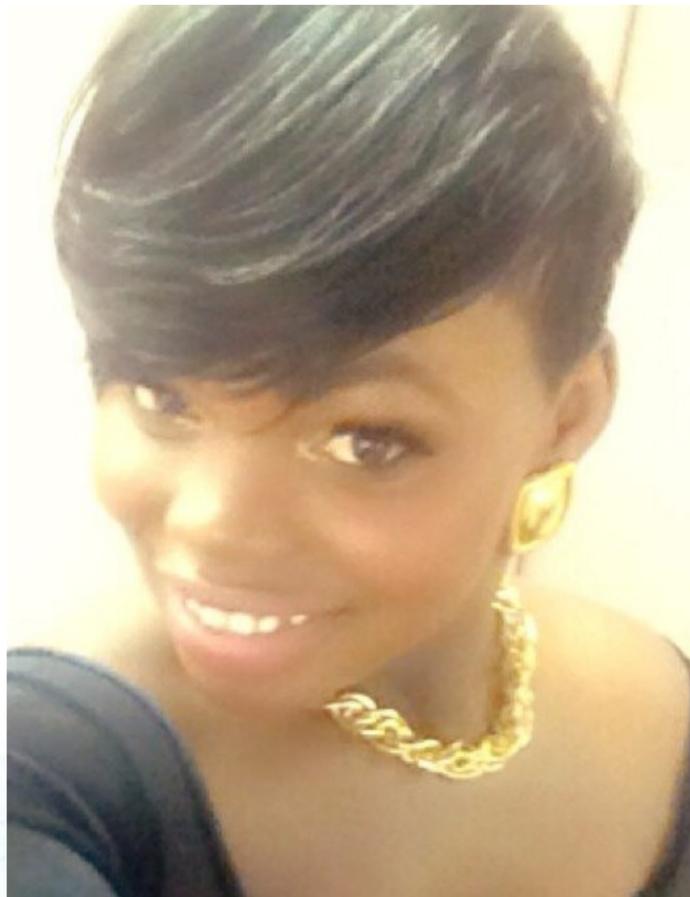
However, within two years, she was also diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer. But with aggressive treatment and the support of her family, friends, former classmates from her high school and church members with their prayers and love, today, she is cancer free.

Realizing that it is because of early detection that she is still alive, Janet has partnered with her brother, a radiologist to start a cancer prevention centre in Ghana called Safe Haven Cancer Support Centre. It is designed to provide information and resources to support women. Many, in Ghana, don't survive breast cancer due to late diagnosis and fear of cancer, it is therefore the aim of the organization to be the bridge between diagnoses and beating cancer.

Janet's story is endearing and an inspiration to all women who face numerous challenges in their daily lives. It's a reminder that with determination and purpose, one can overcome challenges in life no matter how insurmountable they may seem. Janet your COURAGE and thoughtfulness gives us hope and a reason to forge ahead! Thank You



WOMEN OF COURAGE



Priscilla Birago

Youth Leader

Priscilla is the epitome of a young ambitious woman, who is goal oriented, determined to make a mark in the world. She is the founder and president of Hands of a Hero foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the underprivileged both in Canada and Ghana. With a degree in social work, Priscilla lives what she studied, to become a voice for the voiceless, a protector of the weak and a force to reckon with on behalf of humanity.

Since high school, Priscilla has shown her leadership skills through volunteering, mentoring, serving on boards and starting the organization Hands of a Hero. This organization has run several car washes to raise funds to support children in Ghana. Priscilla and her organization have also held Fashion for Poverty, a fashion show that has raised funds for the same initiatives.

For two years, Priscilla served as a volunteer for African Youth Diasporan Conference and did several presentations. With her love of writing she writes for Balance Living Magazine where she is able to express her passions, love of life and joy for humanity, it is her strong desire to impact women's lives positively.

With Priscilla's passion, dedication and drive she is a typical example and leader for her peers. The next generation is lucky to have her as a leader.

Sheridan

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IMMIGRATION UPDATE

Move to Remove Citizenship By Birth on Canadian Soil Intensifies

BY NICHOLAS KEUNG

Immigration officials have recommended that Ottawa remove citizenship rights to babies born in Canada to non-citizens and non-residents even though the small number of cases doesn't justify the costs. The proposal, marked "secret" and with inputs from various federal departments, found fewer than 500 cases of children being born to foreign nationals

in Canada each year, amounting to just 0.14 per cent of the 360,000 total births per year in the country. The issue of citizenship by birth on Canadian soil once again raises concerns among critics over the current government's policy considerations being based on ideologies rather than evidence and objective cost-benefit analyses. "An

impartial observer would conclude that the evidence supports no need for change, given the small number of cases. Yet the recommendation supports the government's public rhetoric and anecdotes on the need for change," said Andrew Griffith, a former director general for citizenship and multiculturalism at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and author of *Policy Arrogance or Innocent Bias*.

The Conservative government overhauled the Canadian Citizenship Act earlier this year by further restricting eligibility. However, the "birth on soil" provision was left intact and required further studies. "Eliminating birth on soil in order to ensure that everyone who obtains citizenship at birth has a strong connection to Canada would have significant cost implications," said the 17-page report prepared for former immigration minister Jason Kenney, obtained under an access to information request.

"The challenge of communicating this change would be convincing the public that restricting the acquisition of Canadian citizenship is worth that cost, particularly in a climate of deficit reduction." The office of Chris Alexander, Kenney's successor, confirmed that the government is still reviewing citizenship policy with regard to the issue of "birth tourism" — a term referring to foreigners

travelling to give birth in Canada so the baby can claim automatic citizenship. Dubbed "anchor babies," these children are eligible to sponsor their foreign parents to Canada once they turn 18. It is unknown how many of them actually return to their birth country with their parents, but it's believed the number is low.

"As provinces and territories are responsible for birth registration, consultation and co-ordination with the provinces is required," said Alexis Pavlich, a spokesperson for Alexander. "Canadian citizenship is an honour and a privilege, and our Conservative government is committed to increasing its value. Birth tourism undermines the integrity of our citizenship program and takes advantage of Canadian generosity."

Currently, Canada and the United States are the only countries to have birth on soil provisions. The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and most European countries restrict citizenship by birth on soil to children born to parents who are either citizens or permanent residents.

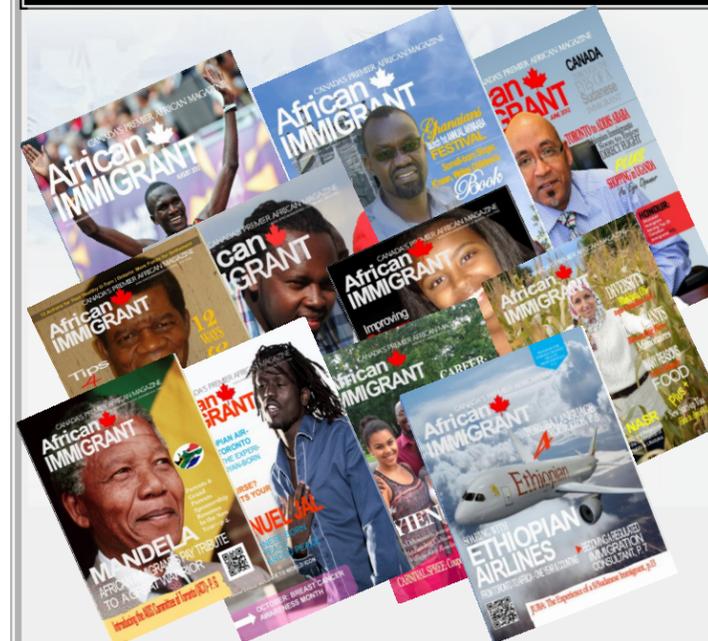
"The potential costs of enforcing this provision, the potential challenges with children ...

Continued on p.26



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RELATIONSHIPS

BY NKEIRUKA

Life is Beautiful

To my greatest surprise, I spent Canada Day at the Hospital. It was a typical case of man proposes and God disposes. My sweetheart and I had planned to go away that week, we had everything arranged, we would spend a few days in Coburg and to Thousand Islands to visit some friends. Everything was set and we were looking forward to it. I soon found out that was not to be. The day before Canada Day started like a normal day but by the middle of the day everything had changed, completely and somehow I ended up at the emergency. It was an interesting evening.

I decided that even though this is definitely not my plan I would make the best of my time there and observe my environment. The Doctors and Nurses work so hard, it was busy all through the night it did not seem like night time. Different people came in, young and old, small and big, light and dark, different ethnics groups; English, Indian, Chinese, African, everyone walked in. It was interesting to watch two families beside me. One family was an elderly couple in their eighties, the husband was ill and the elderly wife was helping him. He was a very cranky old man, while his wife

was so sweet and caring. He was rude to her and very ungrateful. Their two children came to visit, they were just like their father, rude and unkind even screaming at their mum. They spent only about an hour and left for the night. Even when the mum tried to kiss the daughter good night, she shrugged then walked up to the nurse and said to her 'please bear with my dad he is very difficult to manage'. I was really shocked to hear what she said and also how badly she and her brother treated their parents. The other family on the other hand was completely different.

The lady was very elderly in her 90s her grandson brought her to the hospital, stayed to keep her company, engaged her in meaningless conversations and generally served her. Later, his mum came with a friend, they were all so happy with each other, talking and laughing. At some point, the mum puts her head on his shoulder, he smiles lovingly and holds her hand. This son is not a little boy, but a grown man in his 30s obviously a hard working family man. All through, they all lovingly paid attention to their elderly grand mum. At about 2 a.m. the mum leaves son to continue

to look after the grand ma, she was confident in his ability. This young man stood on his feet for the next 18 hours caring for his grand ma

What a contrast!!

I said to myself what could be responsible for this difference in attitude between the two families? The root must be from the way their relationships have been from the past. I wondered how they grew up and the family dynamics within which they were raised. I have no intention to judge, I have no right to do so, I just asked myself what can I learn from these interactions? These two families were obviously above average in terms of income, but at this time in the lives of the two elderly sick people their money means very little they are both very old and fragile and completely at the mercy of others. Both were already not very coherent saying a lot of unreasonable stuffs. I guess it's a part of aging. They can hardly enjoy anything at this point.

For the first family it's obvious they are not close they saw their aging parents as a burden while for the other family they were close and because of how close they are they served their grandma lovingly putting up with her funny ways knowing she is just elderly. No matter what may be responsible, the lesson there for me is a reminder of how important it is to love to the very end. Relationships, love and unity are the most important things in life for me. As much as possible, I need to continue to invest in the relationships I treasure never taking anything and anyone for granted. True love is unconditional in good times and in bad times, in youth and old age, in fun times and difficult times, in good health and in bad health. Every day, I want to remember what is most important investing my time and resources in what is most valuable - Relationships!

Think about your closest relationships, especially, your family and friends how much are you investing in them? Don't take them for granted. Deep relationships are not automatic. They takes effort to build and maintain, It's like a garden you need to weed it, prune it, nurture and look after it otherwise it will be overgrown and unkempt. At the end of the day, money that sometimes takes us away from our loved ones will mean nothing. "Family is not an important thing, it's everything" - Michael. J Fox

WOMEN OF COURAGE

Nachelle White
Aviation (Amelia Earhardt)

Nachelle White is a pilot, an adventurer, an instructor and a woman who has set her eyes on conquering the skies with her skills and desire to make a difference. Nachelle grew up in an aviation family. After a familiarization flight in a C172 at age 13, and trips with her father in the Learjet, the seed was planted for a future Aviatrix! Nachelle started her flight training privately, right after high school and completed her Commercial Pilot's License and Multi IFR in about a year and a half.

She had an opportunity in January of 2007 to fly a Caravan for a survey company in Gabon, Central Africa. Flying 300' AGL (above ground level) over dense jungle looking for elephants, wild beasts and other wildlife was incredible. After an adventurous five years throughout Africa, she worked in Afghanistan for two years, an extreme environment weather-wise and a war zone. Nachelle has been fortunate to have varied career and has spent most of her career in the niches of the industry.

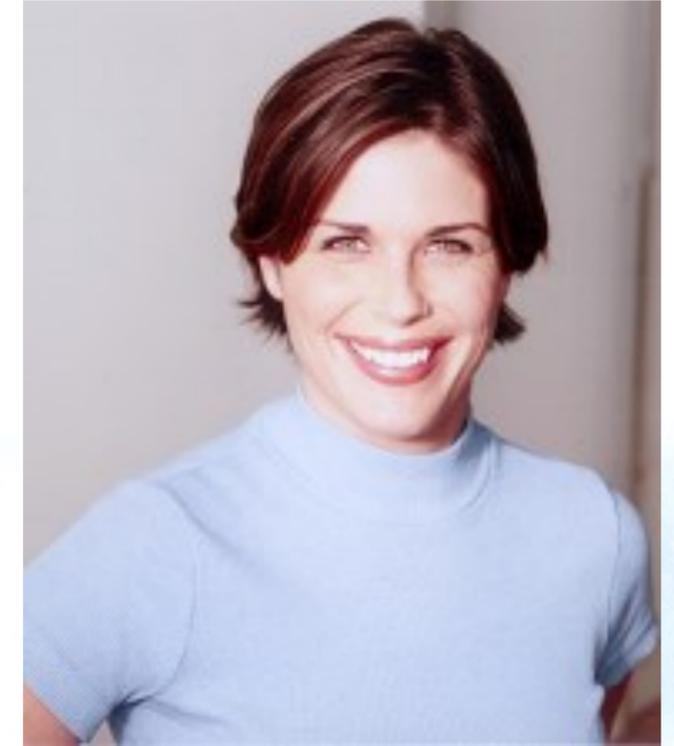
Cargo, fire, survey, overseas flying in conflict zones, now corporate, definitely not mainstream. She has been a pioneer and is fortunate to have had two opportunities to fly with other fearless women and be part of an all female crew. Many react to seeing three women as crew in Sudan and Afghanistan where local women unfortunately do not have that opportunity.

After seeing the bureaucracy and corruption in developing countries, she supports empowering organizations such as Gerladina Orphanage and Women for Women International. (<http://www.gerladina.com/>). In her spare time Nachelle volunteers with young offenders, women's treatment centres/detox and the SPCA.

She is now back in Toronto flying a Gulfstream out of Toronto International Airport. She is excited about starting a whole new chapter in her career—Corporate Aviation!

She is very grateful and proud to be among such an incredible group of women and honoured to be receiving this award, and we are proud to have you among Our Women Of Courage!

You are an example of what boldness is and we are proud to witness your courage in action! Be Encouraged! Be Inspired!



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| IMMIGRATION UPDATE |

150,000 New Citizens in 2014 So far



“Administering the oath of citizenship to the 150,000th person of 2014 in Scarborough in Toronto, Canadian Citizenship and Immigration minister Chris Alexander

Canada, which gets over 250,000 new immigrants from all over the world per year, recently administered the oath of citizenship to the 150,000th person of 2014. This is double the number of new citizens compared to the same period in 2013, says a statement by CIC. The statement claims that this has been possible thanks to “the action taken by the government to reduce backlogs and improve processing times.” Till now, a new immigrant had to stay continuously for three years in Canada since landing in this country. But after changes to the Citizenship Act, the wait time to become eligible for citizenship will go up to four years. The government claims that the processing time for citizenship applications will be brought down to under one year. Which means that if a new immigrant stays continuously four years in Canada, he

will get his citizenship in the fifth year of his arrival in this country. Many immigrants return after spending some time in Canada as they cannot find the right kind of work. But about 85 percent of all new immigrants who stay back end up taking up Canadian citizenship. Administering the oath of citizenship to the 150,000th person of 2014 in Scarborough in Toronto, Canadian Citizenship and Immigration minister Chris Alexander said, “Our government is proud to welcome more new citizens to the Canadian family. The increased number of new Canadians in 2014 is an indication that our government’s changes to the citizenship system are working. “With our recent changes to the Citizenship Act, we will see improved processing times and high numbers of new Canadians taking on the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship.”



| WORKFORCE |

CANADA ISSUES FIRST ENTREPRENEUR START-UP VISAS

Launched last year, Canada’s start-up visa aimed at entrepreneurs now has two successful applicants, both of whom are being supported by Vancouver’s GrowLab Ventures.

Canadian Immigration Minister Chris Alexander, met up with business leaders last week to further promote the scheme, the first of its type in the world. He is encouraging business owners across all provinces to help identify suitable young entrepreneurs wanting to set up a start-up business in the country.

Alexander believes that encouraging innovative new talent to try its luck in Canada gives a way forward for the entrepreneurs involved and should result in economic growth and long-term prosperity for the country. Jobs can and will be created, helping the labour market, and creative business ideas will promote the country worldwide.

Foreign entrepreneurs wishing to take this rare opportunity, he explained, will need to first secure a significant investment from one of the designated ‘angel’ investor groups set up for the programme. Financial commitments from business incubator firms and venture capital funds are also acceptable.

Residency visas depend on language proficiency skills in English or French at benchmark 5 levels for speaking, reading writing and listening. Applicants should also have one year or more’s education at a post-secondary level, and the pilot entrepreneur programme is slated to run for five full years.

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Shenale Fernando,
Space Engineering, Lassonde School of Engineering, 2014

yorku.ca/mytime

African Spirituality (XIII)

DID AFRICANS KNOW GOD BEFORE CHRISTIANITY?

BY REV. DR. CHARLES MANTEY
FOUNDER/SENIOR PASTOR OF REVIVAL DISCIPLES CHURCH—TORONTO
Send Comments to cbmantey@gmail.com



The goodness of the white man's God is now overflowing through the lives of the church members in Asiwa. Most of them are beneficiaries of the bi-monthly clothing supply that is shipped from Britain to the church. The church is now firmly rooted with members like Dialo, Cecilia and others totally committed with their unflinching support to the cause of the white man's religion (Christianity). The vibrancy of the church is evident in its youthful membership and the skill with which they play musical instrument during the praise and worship time.

Upon recommendation of missionary Stewart to the home office in Britain, Dialo has now been approved for ordination to become the first black pastor of the church. This is in line with their policy to raise and develop indigenous leaders for the expansion of the work in and around Asiwa. He now has to go through rigorous preparatory ordination lessons which include taking classes with Stewart; and occasional Sunday morning preaching.

The indigenes are mesmerized to see one of their own preaching in both English and Akan (Twi) languages; especially, his parents and friend Dadzie who would attend the service only on those occasions to give him their moral support. Dialo's friendship with Abena (Dadzie's sister) has developed to a stage where they have decided to marry. Abena has now completed her vocational training at the Mission Vocational school; graduating with a diploma in dressmaking. As a staunch member of the church, the missionaries helped her to open her own dressmaking shop where

she sews and teaches others her trade. The chief of Asiwa, Nana Atakora Mensah I was elated to hear that Dialo and Abena are going to marry. It looks like almost everybody in Asiwa is happy for the would-be couple; people know them to be industrious, humble and friendly.

The official date for the marriage ceremony has been chosen; and feverish preparations are underway. According to the Akan culture, there are two stages in performing the customary rites. The first comprises only few close family members from both sides of the family; so, Dialo's father together with few family members will go to inform Abena's parents that their son wants to ask permission to enter their house because he has seen a "beautiful flower in their garden."

The second stage is a grand public gathering comprising both families, relatives, friends and all well-wishers in the community. At this ceremony, Dialo's father will pay a dowry to Abena's parents; this is accompanied by other detailed customary rites like the pouring of libation to inform the gods and ancestors of the marriage and ask for their blessings on the couple. The ceremony is then crowned with feasting and dancing. As a sign of courtesy, Dialo and Abena together with their parents went to inform and invite the missionaries to the ceremony. To their surprise, Stewart and his mission team rejected the idea of the traditional marriage; insisting that the Christian way of marriage is by having a wedding in the church in order to invoke God's blessings on the marriage. This was a shocker to Dialo and his team; their spirits were

dampened; and they felt betrayed and rejected by the missionaries. To add insult to injury, Stewart later told Dialo and Abena that they will have to change their first names to George and Elizabeth before the wedding. He explained to them that the name change should have been done when they were being baptized and accepted as church members; but because the church was in its formative stage, that was put on the back burner.

The news hit the congregation and the community like a bullet. Church members and others clustered to discuss the kind of religion they have embraced from the white man. On their minds were questions like: "What is wrong with the African traditional way of marriage?" "What is wedding?" "Why would anybody be forced to change their first name as a way of enhancing their loyalty to God?"

Enthusiasm and loyalty from the leaders to ordinary church members were eroding and waning; giving in to cynicism and resentment towards the missionaries and their religion. One could sense fomenting of internal trouble within the church, as some members have decided to take a hard look at the white man's religion and his God. How are the missionaries going to handle the mess they have created in the church and the community? How are they going to answer some of the lingering questions? For answers, stay tuned to the next issue. comments to: cbmantey@gmail.com.

A Look at the Toronto International Film Festival



The Toronto International Film Festival is the leading public film festival in the world, screening more than 300 films from 60+ countries every September. They have earned a reputation for excellence, and a diverse array of films are shown: Hollywood galas, complete with red carpet glamour; the best in international cinema, the latest homegrown comedies and everything in between. Films are divided into Programmes to help guide your choices. Love horror flicks? Check out Midnight Madness! Feeling edgy? Try Vanguard. Need a mini stay-cation? Contemporary World Cinema may be for you. Starting out in 1976 as a collection of films from other festivals -- a "festival of festivals" -- the Toronto International Film Festival has become one of the most successful cinematic events in the world, universally regarded as an ideal platform to premiere films. Boasting a public eager for the best in contemporary film, as well as international attention from media, distributors, producers and

buyers along with a galaxy of stars, the Toronto International Film Festival is considered the premiere film festival in North America. The festival has been described as "the most important film festival in the world -- the largest, the most influential, the most inclusive." * The Toronto International Film Festival has undergone countless changes since beginning as an upstart on the international circuit in 1976. Nevertheless, throughout its growth in both size and influence, the Festival has remained committed to its principal objectives: to lead the world in cultural and creative discovery through the moving image and to place Canadian achievements in an international context. As the years show, the Festival continues to achieve these objectives by bringing together a remarkable diversity of local, national and international films and personalities to the delight of enthusiastic audiences, who have continued to grow over each of the past thirty-two years. (tiff.net)



The Power of Riboceine

By May Hughes, RN

As a health care professional with a background in public health, it is recommended for individuals to eat healthy, be physically active and manage their stress to promote their health and wellbeing. I always followed this counsel. Few years ago, I got very ill and ended up in intensive care. Shortness of breath, dizziness and sheer lethargy became my new norm. The healthcare team worked tirelessly to maintain my health with medication support. After a couple of years of ongoing lethargy, I started exploring the unfamiliar world of health supplements. I am grateful my search led me to Max International products: with Riboceine as active ingredient (After 25 years of medicinal chemistry research, Dr. Nagasawa's RiboCeine Technology is now fully patented and assigned to Max International).

Since taking Max products, my energy level is improved and I am living a much active life. I have become passionate about the products and my mission is to share these benefits with all wishing for effective cellular cleansing for optimal energy, improved immune system, reduced inflammation and enhanced health and wellbeing. I invite you to join in on this mission to collectively promote health and wellbeing for friends, families and communities: one person at a time.

So what's Riboceine got to do with it? Enhanced Cellular function to promote Glutathione production.

If you are in a position to conduct clinical research and wish to explore utilizing max products or need more information, call 416 579 0448 or email efua42@gmail.com for a free consult.

Marilyn Fields
Arts

"Given the opportunity, the arts can absolutely empower children, changing their lives for the better," asserts lifelong educator and musician, Marilyn Field. Passionate about that transformative potential, Marilyn took a risk, leaving her teaching position and founding DAREarts. Fifteen years later, her revolutionary organization has touched the lives of tens of thousands of children. She has served on several boards including, Theatre Orangeville, Speech Foundation of Ontario and much more. She was recently inducted into the Caledon Walk of Fame,

As a teacher with the Toronto District School Board, she discovered that any student's character could be developed through the application of the arts in daily life. She has a passion to help the youth, and personally knows the power of the arts in life after the loss of her mother at the age of two.

Since 1998, Marilyn has dedicated her life to bringing the arts as hope to children challenged by life's circumstances. This is achieved by exposing them to a wider world, to creativity and empowering them to ignite change in their lives and in their community as leaders. DAREarts is her full-time focus.

Since its inception, the programme has helped more than 180,000 students and is now in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal

Christina Sgro
Mentorship

She was born caring, giving, making the world a better place, thinking how she could be the change she wanted to be, Christine Sgro is now a young woman who is manifesting what she was born with.

She was the little girl who loved to make her sisters, parents, and grandparents laugh. She was the 5-year-old who spent her free time during family getaways with widows and abandoned pets, spreading her cheer and viewing the world through the filter of unabashed innocence. From the time she could walk and talk, it was apparent that her greatest achievement was measured in a value she put in making other people's lives warmer, easier, more tolerable, and just maybe, a little happier.

Christina founded a number of student associations and chapters aimed at supporting charitable organizations whose efforts were far-reaching, both locally and globally. From the university student senate, to setting up shop at a peer support centre, to working on behalf of disaster relief and literacy foundations, Christina solidified her role as a leader in her school and her community.

Most recently, she has established an entrance scholarship at her alma mater for newly admitted students who have a passion for serving their communities. These students have shown commitment to pursuing higher education, but have encountered challenges in securing financial support for their studies.

The world can rest a little easier because Christine cares!

WOMEN OF COURAGE

Regina Thompson
Human Rights Advocate

Mrs. Regina Thompson's life is all about giving back and advocating for humanity. With a Masters of Law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School, Regina continues her work of human rights advocacy to make life a little easier for immigrants, women, men and youth.

As a Chartered Mediator, accredited family and child protection mediator. Regina has worked tirelessly on behalf of cultural minorities in human rights and workplace conflicts such as discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, place of origin and sex including pregnancy and other grounds of the human rights code.

Regina uses her extensive experience and unique set of skills to assist among others, new immigrants and women to navigate systems and processes in Family/Civil Courts and agencies such as Children's Aid Societies, Ontario Works, Lawyers offices and much more. With her support such individuals and families are able to get the necessary help they need without getting lost in the system and being discriminated against.

Never one to stop at one achievement, Regina is working on establishing training and mentorship programs to expose youth to non adversarial conflict and to the importance of cultural competence in conflict resolution service provision.

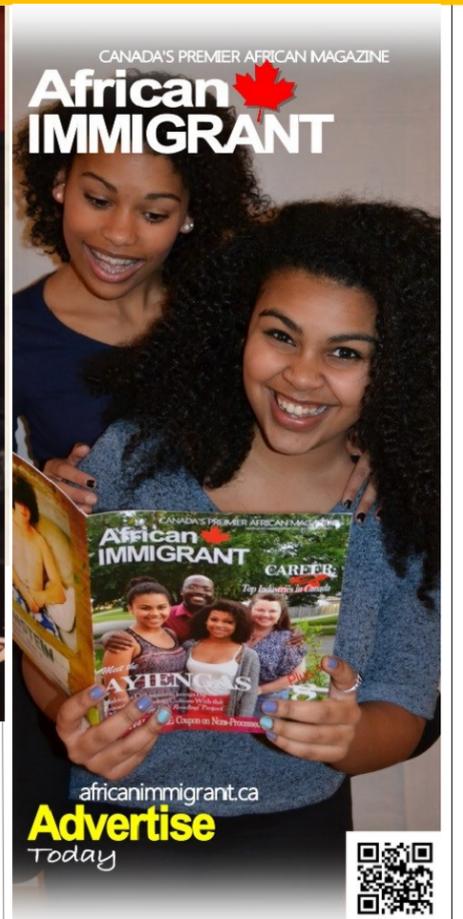


| PUBLISHER'S INSIGHT |



This year, African Immigrant is partnering with the Women's Courage Award to laud women across Canada who are the true heroines of our time. These fifteen women from diverse communities and backgrounds chosen for this year's award share some thing in common, that is, the need to help humanity and make a clear difference in their communities. They have volunteered their time selflessly and have contributed their goodness and works to humanity without the need to be rewarded. Their motivation is not money, nor material endeavours, but the often intangible, but yet essential things of life such as happiness, fulfillment, satisfaction and the innate knowledge that they have made a difference in a community, family or in the life of an individual. As Mahatma Gandhi once noted, "**Be the Change You Want to See in the World.**" Indeed, these women are agents of change in their world, in my world, in your world, of development, of motivation, of inspiration, of encouragement, of progress, of human development

and much more. Their stories are endearing, emboldening and invariably underscore the point that the forces of good must prevail over those of evil. All these courageous women navigating through life's challenges have emerged stronger and with an unflinching resolve to change their world. They have refused to be neutral and have chosen to side with humanity, with the under-privileged, the disenfranchised and the voiceless in our society. In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "**If you are neu-**



tral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." I congratulate these women for their courage. They are in indeed the true heroines of our time.





WOMEN OF COURAGE

Winnifred Berry
Trailblazer

Mrs. Winnifred Berry has been blazing trails for more than 30 years from nursing to education to volunteering her time while at the same time being a mother and wife. Winnifred Berry is the Founder and CEO of Back to Basics Learning Centre.

Over the last 30 years, Ms. Berry has brought her unique combination of teaching skills, parenting, nurturing and nursing acumen to students facing a wide array of learning disabilities and academic challenges. She has established an individualized teaching approach that fosters high self-esteem and accommodates students at various level of understanding

Since the inception of Back to Back to Basic Learning Centre, over 200 children have received a strong foundation in reading, writing and math, which has prepared them to exceed the Ontario curriculum.

As a volunteer, she uses her love for education to support The Spelling Bee of Canada, she is there when her friends and family need her, she gives back in various forms to community and continues to be a role model and a Woman of Courage to one and all.

She is the proud mother of four and has been married for 35 years. Ms. Winnifred thank you for blazing the trail for others to follow.

April Dequanne
Volunteer

Call her the queen of volunteering and uplifting humanity. April Dequanne takes volunteering her time, efforts and talents to a whole new level, volunteering has become a lifestyle for her. She coaches young people in various forms and stuffs backpacks to be distributed across Canada to underprivileged communities. She was also one of the organizers of the RCMP golf tournament that raised more than 125,000 for Children's Wish Foundation.

Further, she also dedicates her time to families whilst in uniform and is involved in the "Dreams Take Flight", an organization that flies deserving children to Florida for a break. April says it is such an honor to listen to and hear the stories of bravery and success from such families, for the past two years. On Monday nights, April is "Scouter Sunshine"; in this role she works with young people to plan various activities such as outing and camping excursions.

For the past five years, she has been involved in the Princess Margaret Cure for Cancer fundraising to raise money for cancer research. She has also been involved in The Sears National kids cancer ride to raise awareness about the scourge.

Additionally, April has personally raised \$30,000 for cancer research by riding her bike from Vancouver to Halifax raising awareness for children's cancer. She says cycling 180 km a day was no easy task but neither is the fight against cancer.

For all these selfless acts April has received the following awards: Golden Spare Awards by the RCMP, Commanding Officer

Award For Bravery, Queens Diamond Jubilee Award. All of these awards testify to the fact that she is an outstanding individual with a heart for the world!



ponchos to protect us from the Falls' mist, because we were going to be so close to the falls that we might get wet, we took our ponchos and put them on as we patiently, yet eagerly waited for our turn to board the tour boat. The Hornblower Cruise was phenomenal – it was even better than I had imagined.

As expected, there were so many tourists like myself eager to see the Niagara Falls up-close, and to also take countless photos to capture the wonderful moment. As we got close to it, I was thankful that I had my poncho on to protect me from the tiny drops of water hitting us from the falls.

As we got closer, the droplets increased in size and speed, however, this didn't bother me because I got to see the beautiful falls up-close, the boat passed by all three falls; the large curved Canadian Falls, popularly known as Horseshoe Falls, and the two smaller falls on the American side namely; the American Falls

and the Bridal Veil falls. I was also glad to share this experience with all the other excited tourists in the Hornblower Cruise Tour boat. I could tell that they cherished the boat tour just as much as I did, and this was evident from the amused chatters they uttered and the zeal they displayed while taking selfies right in front of the Falls.

Seeing the beautiful rainbow at the end of boat ride was the highlight of the whole trip. I have never seen a rainbow as beautiful as the one I was lucky to see getting to the end of the boat tour. The beautiful colors were the extra accessory the Falls needed.

I had an amazing time at the falls, and I am glad that I had the chance to capture the wonderful memories. I believe that I am very blessed to have experience such an amazing encounter at the Falls. And I cannot wait to see the other lovely places on my list this summer.



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WOMEN OF COURAGE

Fern Quist
Advocate



Fern Quist should be called the ultimate caregiver. As a nurse, mother and an advocate for physically and mentally challenged individuals, she has used her experience to improve their lives and equipped them to better manage the challenges of life.

A nurse for 43 years, Fern at one point became a single mother raising two children. While juggling parenthood, a career and navigating through the attendant challenges, she created a meaning and purpose for her life and encouraged other women in similar family situations.

As they say when life gives you lemons make lemonade, Fern became relentless with volunteering her time, giving back to community whichever way she could. She set up programmes to educate others about what she had endured, written for several medical publications in both Canada and the US, spoken at several conferences to share her experiences and has run a support group for mothers isolated due to Asperger's. As if that were not enough, she continues to reach out to single mothers at every opportunity by sharing information and resources and by providing the necessary emotional support. This is what Fern lives and advocates for.

We are fortunate to have a women with such talent and experience advocating for the physically and mentally challenged individuals. We are happy that she took her lemons and made lemonade which she gladly shares.

Dr. Jacobet Edith Wambayi
Humanitarian

Dr. Wambayi is a force behind the insatiable drive to uplift the under-privileged in her native Kenya and around the world. This drive led to the formation of a group called Abeingo (meaning people of home) specifically designed to give back hope to society. With her direction and guidance, the organization has helped orphans, AIDS victims and girls with their education.

In 2009, under the leadership, Abeingo provided support to two groups in western Kenya; TITLIP, which is a support group of HIV positive teachers and the Uzima Women, a group that provides holistic care to children orphaned by AIDS and their families. To effectively manage and align its functions in western Kenya, the Abeingo Association formed the Uzima Women Relief Group International in 2012 with the mandate of partnering with local grassroots organizations in western Kenya to identify and support needy families, particularly, women and AIDS orphans.

With its laudable efforts in Kenya, the Abeingo Association under the leadership of Dr. Wambayi twice received a grant to enhance the health of seniors from Wood Green Community Services in Toronto. This project involved the education, information and sensitization of seniors of African descent on matters concerning their health and wellbeing.

Dr. Wambayi holds a PhD and MSc in Medical Sciences, a Bachelor's degree in Education/Science, a Diploma in Community-Based Program Planning and Management, and several certificates in the health field. With a focus on HIV/AIDS, she has facilitated community-based workshops in Kenya and Toronto in the fight against the scourge as well as conducting research on HIV/AIDS among Toronto's African and Caribbean communities. In 2007, she was appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. The Council advises the federal minister of Health on strategy on



HIV/AIDS. Dr. Wambayi, you are indeed a role model for society and a shining example of what a humble, gentle and giving spirit is all about and we are grateful to have you in our midst.



WOMEN OF COURAGE

Josie De Leon
Youth Development

A teacher, mentor and hardworking woman Josie De Leon is inspiring hundreds of youth with her gift of music and the arts. As a top class performer and 5 star artist, Josie is the founder of the Josie De Leon School of performing Arts open to anyone who wants to express themselves through the performing arts! The motto of the school is Confidence! Perform! Shine!

Ms. De Leon started her singing career in Manila where she won the Student Pop Music Festival in 1988 and as part of her prize, she trained at the Center for Pop Music in the Philippines and eventually mentored younger and aspiring singers at the Center.

Josie has performed with top class artist and toured several performance venues in Toronto. Aside from these, she had several shows and concerts that have earned her a spot as one of VIVA- RJ's recording artists and being dubbed as "Toronto 's Diva" .

Josie says " its time to share with others what I have learned through the years in this business and with the support of my husband Mark Crescini, who is also an experienced talent and record producer, I am excited on this new endeavor ."

Thank you Josie for sharing your passion, a passion that uplifts souls!



Dr. Anna Benerji
Medicine

It took one journey for 11 year old Anna to make the decision to become a doctor and make a difference. As a child, her mother took her on a trip to Calcutta, a busy city in India. As everybody hurried to mind their lives and businesses, a man lay in a gutter bleeding with no one stopping to help. It was a moment of almost eerie clear-sightedness that, by her own admission, changed her life. Right then and there, she decided she would become a doctor and devote her life to improving international health.

Today, Dr. Banerji is the Director of Global and Indigenous Health, Continuing Professional Development, at the University of Toronto; an appointment she juggles with two professorships at the university and eight other appointments at Toronto hospitals. She works primarily with refugee children and, having visited more than 50 countries, became a tropical and infectious disease specialist to optimize her impact in those parts of the world.

But the reason for her acclaimed body of work is also, perhaps, the aspect least recognized by those outside her field: her patients. Dr. Banerji deals with populations that are among the world's most vulnerable, disadvantaged and ignored. In 2009, word got out that Dr. Banerji would open a small clinic in a village in Malawi and 300 people lined up to meet her. "I saw 200 kids that day in a cement shelter with no running water, electricity or examination table," she later wrote.

Nigerian-Born Edet Umoafia Bags Prestigious Canadian Business Award

BY PROF. PHIL TAM-AL ALALIBO

It was celebration galore on September 24th at the 10th Anniversary of Canadian Aboriginal Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC) gala event where several awards were given to high achieving global business leaders, corporations and small businesses across the country for their exploits in various spheres of business endeavours. The well attended event held at the Liberty Grand in Toronto brought together business executives from a broad spectrum of the economy, government officials, politicians, Media personalities and sports figures.

The evening began with an Aboriginal prayer in acknowledgement of, and deference to the Aboriginal people. This was followed by an opening speech by Cassandra Dorrington, the president of the CAMSC, who welcomed all guests and lauded the achievements of the association in a very short period of time.

She noted how CAMSC had come a long way from its humble beginnings in 2004 to being a formidable association with many corporate sponsors who share its objectives of furthering the course of Aboriginal and Minority owned businesses. CAMSC, she further noted, has been instrumental in leading corporations to spend more than \$1.2 billion with Aboriginal and Minority owned businesses since its inception ten years ago. She proudly stated, "CAMSC is proud to announce that since its inception in 2004

and as a direct result of our initiatives, leading corporations in Canada have spent more than 1.2 billion dollars with Aboriginal and Minority owned businesses."

Dorrington believes that these staggering numbers are clear indication of CAMSC's commitment to Aboriginal and Minority businesses that have benefited from employment opportunities created by an invigorated supply chain process. In 2013 alone, Aboriginal and Minority suppliers that conducted businesses with the various corporate members of CAMSC had over six thousand full-time employees more than half of whom were Aboriginals and other minorities.

In the course of the evening, seven key awards were given . But the only individual award of the evening, **Procurement Business Advocate of the Year Award**, went to Nigerian-born **Edet Umoafia**, a Senior Buyer with the ABC Group, a world leader in vertically integrated plastic processing, based in Toronto. Umoafia, as the Lead Coordinator for the ABC Group's Supplier Diversity Program, was instrumental to the direct involvement of 60 small businesses in CAMSC Diversity Supplier Program.

Through his efforts, 30 of these companies have become CAMSC certified suppliers, providing goods and services to ABC Group which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Through Umoafia's leadership, certified Aboriginal and Minority Suppliers are not only engaging and competing well with other businesses, they are liaising with large corpor-



Edet Umoafia giving his acceptance speech



Edet Umoafia (2nd L) & Reps of award winning companies / corporations



Edet Umoafia & wife, Stella

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ations in an effort to garner more opportunities. In his acceptance speech, Umoafia noted, "I am indeed humbled and encouraged by the kind gesture. I believe this is a thoughtful way of encouraging supporters of supplier diversity, especially, in small, medium and large organizations to be more supportive in promoting and making this commitment sustainable." I would like to thank this opportunity to

my lovely wife, Stella, my daughter Joy, the ABC Group senior management and our Procurement team under the leadership of Michael Quail for leading our team.

Lastly, thank you to CAMSC, ABC Group customers and all certified suppliers and supporters for their dedication and hard work – this award would not be possible without this great association."

Toronto from the Eyes of an Outsider

BY JACQUELINE TORTO

“My enthusiasm drove me to come up with a list of all the places that I would love to visit during my stay in Toronto.”

One of my best friends always says that, “It is better to travel a thousand miles, than to read a thousand books.” I have loved this Chinese proverb ever since. I adore reading, yet going to the places to see and experience all the different things they have to offer beats reading about them.

So being invited by my Uncle and Aunt to spend the summer holidays in Toronto, made me feel like Christmas came early. I thought of it as an amazing gift. Even though I loved being in Kent, Ohio, I couldn't wait for my first semester to be over; I couldn't wait for summer. I was just so thrilled. My enthusiasm drove me to come up with a list of all the places I would love to visit during my stay in Toronto. Niagara Falls, the CN tower, Ontario Place, the Eaton Centre, and the Canadian National Exhibits were definitely at the top of my list.

I got here a few days after finally obtaining my much-awaited visa, I was so glad to finally see the great city of Toronto. Although my journey from Kent to Toronto was awfully lengthy and exhausting, I could not fall asleep; I eagerly looked outside the window like a child, waiting for Santa Claus on a Christmas Night. I just could not sleep when my eyes could be seeing all the things that Toronto had to offer.

I made a few observations about Toronto. Firstly, I noticed

that Toronto (at least the parts I saw) is very diverse, however, I am yet to see what I would call Canadian. In addition to that, I noticed that there are so many American department stores and clothing shops like Wal-Mart, Target, Staples, Banana Republic, Marshalls, H&M and many others. Yes, Toronto is not very different from the US. Does that mean that it doesn't have anything extraordinary to offer? I am yet to find out.

NIAGARA FALLS - A WONDERFUL WONDER:

The Falls were the first tourist attraction I visited in Toronto, not just because it was the first on my list of places to visit, but also because it's a place I've been dreaming of visiting ever since I learnt about it in my Geography class.

The trip to Niagara Falls seemed like forever; I went with my Uncle, Aunt, cousins and a friend of the family. I took pictures of the picturesque scenery; I took shameless selfies with my cousins, whilst trying to suppress my excitement and keenness. I was finally going to see the great historic landmark. I remember dreaming about the Falls the night before. Yes! That is how eager I was to see the legendary Honeymoon Capital of the World.

Alas, we parked at a lot not far from the Falls. We packed our bags with necessary items for



I got here a few days after finally obtaining my much-awaited visa, I was so glad to finally see the great city of Toronto.”

our trip such as water and juice, because they were a tad expensive close to the Falls. This is understandable considering that Niagara Falls is a hot tourist and honeymoon destination. We also set our cameras as we were determined to capture every scene and places of interest. These places included, but not limited to Planet Hollywood, the Giant Hershey's Chocolate shop, a statue of a soldier in a red coat with a musket on the Old Fort Erie street and in front of the popular Rainbow Bridge.

We parked approximately 15 minutes away from the Falls; there were so many places to see en route to the Falls, and the scene ahead of us was incredible. It was totally picture worthy, so we made frequent stops at different recreational venues and took turns taking pictures. As we walked

through the well-manicured grassy area, I saw the Falls from a distance-It was just breathtaking and very beautiful. My heart skipped a beat the moment I saw it, I was more anxious than ever to get on the Hornblower Niagara Cruise ride and be as close to it as humanly possible.

After taking a few good pictures, we made our way to the booth to purchase some tickets; the tickets were awfully expensive, but totally worth it. We each got a ticket and made our way to our tour boat called the Hornblower Niagara Cruise ride. There were so many tourists waiting to experience the Falls up close even though it was Sunday. Though I am claustrophobic, still, it didn't really bother me, I was just glad and blessed to be there.

As we made our way to the roofless boat, we were handed...continued on p. 9



Rachel Cacal Philanthropist

Leaving her two daughters in the Philippines in search of a better life for herself and her two children sent Rachel into a world of unknown, a world where cruelty and kindness married each other to bring out the courage she thought she never had. After arriving in Hong Kong and spending a few months there, she realized that wasn't the place for her. Still, with the wellbeing of her two daughters in mind, she made her way to Canada to pursue education that would enable her be a better mother and provider.

After surviving an abusive relationship, she set out once again to discover herself, through many trials and error, working different odd jobs, taking whatever she could to make ends meet. After many years of perseverance, she is now a business woman with close to 40 employees and still pursuing her dreams.

Rachel hasn't forgotten how difficult life was and this knowledge has formed the basis for her giving nature to ensure that others in her community have the opportunity to improve themselves and achieve their life's dream.

Rachel says God has been good to her and she has to return the favour!

Rachel—Your courage, foresight and refusing to give in to the pressures of life gives us all the strength to keep pressing forward! Be Encouraged! Be Inspired!

WOMEN OF COURAGE

Sonia Fachinni Making a Difference

It is the little things we do that will impact someone in a big way. Sonia's desire to make a difference and to impact society positively has brought smiles to faces and cheers to many hearts.

This shows in one of her most successful giving back programmes called “Circle of Friends Butterfly Memorial Release.” This event provides an opportunity for people to remember their loved ones who have passed on.

With an infectious ability to make a difference, Sonia makes you feel welcome the moment you meet her. With this ability, she works with families and youth to help resolve issues in several communities so they may have the capacity to be productive through collaborative initiatives.

Sonia credits her mother for being her staunch ally and number one supporter who when no one else believed in her. She was right there rooting for her and making her believe she could conquer all things.

