

AFRICAN COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES

April, 2009

Volume 2. Issue 1

Welcome to the spring edition of the ACHI's Newsletter. This year, the organization has seen tremendous growth and we cannot help but share our excitement with you. Our phones have been ringing non-stop as more people are seeking out the assistance of ACHI. The visibility of the organization in and out of the African community has increased and we are truly excited about that. Messages of appreciation keep streaming in from our clients as they attest to the improvement of ACHI's services and efforts towards them and the whole community.

In light of this, we would like you to join us in this edition as you learn about some key events ACHI has participated in since the year began.

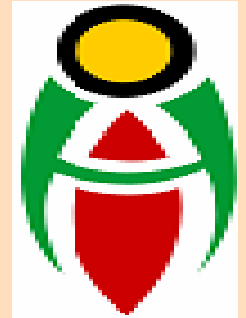
The featured events in this edition include the Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign , the Black History Month celebration and the 11th Annual Veterans Appreciation Brunch . You will also be privileged to read about the life changing experience of a client since he registered with ACHI.

At this point, please dive in and encounter some examples of ACHI's impact in the community.

Words from a sponsor.

"The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is proud to have been one of the first organizations to support African Community Health Initiatives. In just a few short years, their efforts have had a large impact on how African immigrants in Massachusetts access health care. They have also helped many local hospitals and health centers better respond to the needs of this important community."

—Phillip O. González, Director of Grantmaking for the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation



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BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

ACHI had an interesting outing during the Black History Month celebration in Roxbury, Massachusetts on February 7th 2009.

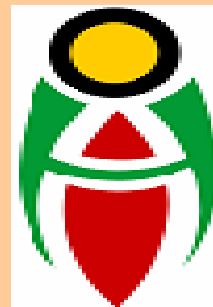
The event was organized by Cherish Our Hearts And Soul Coalition (COHS) and Harvard School of Public Health. A lot of people and vendors from different parts of Massachusetts were in attendance.

At the event, ACHI's staff engaged a lot of people by sharing the organization's vision with them. The occasion was also used to inform participants about the benefits of wellness programs, keeping to doctor's appointment, visiting the dentist and eating healthy food.

Some participants were also assisted with enrollment into the state's health insurance programs.



CROSS SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION





ACHI in the Community.

Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign

This year's Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign (EITC) was kicked off by the Mayor of Boston, Thomas Menino in January 2009 at the City Hall in Boston.

ACHI, a member of the Health Insurance Professionals (HIPSTERS) was at the events with other volunteers from different organizations.

In his welcome address, the mayor encouraged every resident of Boston and environs to make use of the 25 free tax preparation sites to file their taxes as the government has

provided enough funds for this process. The event also featured different speakers from the Internal Revenue Service and the State's Department of Revenue.

ACHI was highly commended during this event for its role at the EITC tax sites and for its timely submission of a detailed report of its services at the sites. ACHI served at ACORN in Dorchester and Roxbury Resource Center during the tax season.

At both sites, ACHI provided health insurance enrollment assistance, Food SNAP (Food Stamps) and WIC application assistance, etc.



MAYOR OF BOSTON, THOMAS MENINO KICKING OFF 2009 EITC CAMPAIGN AT THE CITY HALL IN BOSTON

11th Annual Veterans Appreciation Brunch

The 2009 11th Annual Veterans Appreciation Brunch was held in Dudley Library Branch on May 20th 2009.

ACHI was present along with other Health organizations to grace the celebration. The event was anchored by Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury and attended by veterans and the general public.

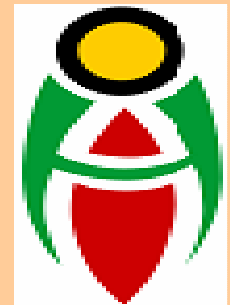
ACHI had a lot of encounters with participants of the events and used the



FREDERICA WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

opportunity to inform them of the organization's vision, objectives and programs.

Selected participants were honored with different awards presented by the President and CEO of Whittier Street Health Center, Ms Frederica Williams.





A Life touched– A Client’s Experience with ACHI.

In 2002, Ronald Nsubuga, came to the United States as an immigrant from Uganda. Shortly after his arrival, he worked at the Watertown Mall. In 2003, he became a Certified Nursing Assistant from the American Red Cross in Massachusetts. Currently, he is married and works at Golden Care, a residential home for the elderly and Newton Corner, providing nursing assistance.

Ronald heard about ACHI from a close friend. He came to one of the several events organized by ACHI and got enrolled into a state’s health insurance program. With the help of ACHI, he was able to obtain Commonwealth Care that provided him access to several health services. “When I had a tooth problem, I got a dentist to look at it; when I had a foot problem, a doctor was able to treat me. Without the health insurance, I would never have received medical help” Ronald detailed.

Aside from the medical problems, Ronald suffered

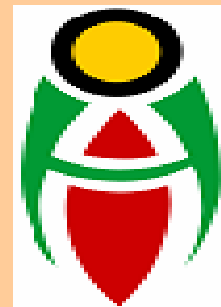
from very bad sight. Again, with ACHI’s assistance, he was able to have his eyes checked and was given a pair of reading glasses. Till date, his sight has gotten better and he still uses the services of his primary care doctor. As an ACHI client, Ronald affirms the importance of looking after one’s personal health, especially with needed support from the society.



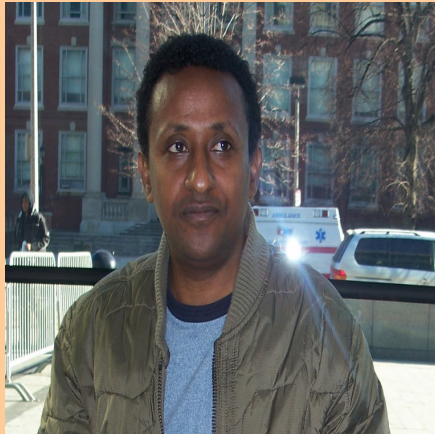
RONALD NSUBUGA , ACHI’S CLIENT FOR OVER TWO YEARS

Ronald expresses his gratitude to ACHI saying, “ACHI is doing a lot for the African Community and we appreciate it. Please, keep it up!” He also encouraged ACHI to reach out to more people who need health care and social services. “There are still a lot of Africans out there who need ACHI’s help but don’t know about this organization”, he emphasized.

He believes that ACHI’s impact would be felt more if their services were extended to all parts of Massachusetts. Knowing how beneficial his relationship with the organization has been, Ronald is very passionate that other uninsured African immigrants get in touch with ACHI. As for giving back to the organization, Ronald promises to be an ACHI volunteer, sharing the vision through his words and experience.



Member's Corner



DANIEL ABIRE , AN ACHI HEALTH SYSTEM NAVIGATOR.

My name is Daniel Abire, I am an Ethiopian, born into a big family with seven sisters and three brothers and I am the tenth gift to my parents. My father was an elementary school teacher who taught me to read and write. He also encouraged me to become a motivated and determined student.

I got married almost three years ago, couple of months before my arrival in the U.S and I have a daughter. I also recently graduated from Cambridge College with a B.S in Business Management this summer, 2009.

I was employed by the African Community Health Initiatives (ACHI) in September, 2008 and have been working as a Health System Navigator till date.

Working at ACHI has been a satisfying experience. As an African, I understand the societal problems, especially health related problems many African immigrants experienced from their native countries and the difficulties they face when navigating a new system in America. As such, the African immigrant community in the U.S. really needs the assistance of organizations like ACHI in obtaining good health care and social services.

A memorable encounter for me occurred six months ago. An Ethiopian gentleman with three children met me at church and told me he was confused and depressed. His children were unable to get vaccination for school because he did not have a health insurance. I brought him to ACHI and got him enrolled into a state health insurance program. He got MassHealth, his children were vaccinated and registered for school, and he also got medical attention. He was filled with joy and promised to get other uninsured Ethiopians to register at ACHI for health insurance. This is just one of several success stories I have encountered working at ACHI and I always thank God I could be part of such goodness.

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