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# AFRICAN SERVICES

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## COMMITTEE

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## ASC Assists "Dreamers" in Applying for Deferred Action



Columbia Law School volunteers Charles Alvarez and Nora Markard at African Services Committee's DACA clinic. (Photo courtesy of Chitra Aiyar)

African Services Committee is putting thought into action and ensuring that the young immigrant community of Harlem is able to access their right to Deferred Action (DACA), a policy introduced by the Obama Administration in 2012. The legal opportunity for deferred action allows young

immigrants to receive temporary legal immigration status and receive a work permit for up to 2 years.

Working closely with the New York Immigration Coalition, African Services Committee received a grant from the New York Community Trust, which gives ASC the much-needed funds to create and organize deferred action clinics throughout the months of September and October. The clinics are held in the evenings and free and open to the public. Organized by ASC staff attorney, Chitra Aiyar, alongside other ASC legal staff Andrea Panjawani, Dalit Kaplan and Jessica Greenberg, the goal is to offer as many opportunities as possible to young immigrants for a chance to confirm their eligibility and apply for deferred action status.

The first DACA clinic on September 20th was an incredible success, drawing in close to 50 individuals. ASC staff recruited law student volunteers from Columbia University, and throughout the evening assisted participants in determining eligibility and initiating the application process.

The goal of the deferred action executive order was to

assist young immigrants, who were brought to the United States by their parents before 16 years of age and wanting to attend college and look for work. However, they are realizing-some for the first time-that they do not have legal status. The stories shared during the first evening clinic were unique in their own ways, but all shared the same theme of living the majority of their lives as an "American," and wanting the opportunity to continue that life and to contribute as an American citizen.

Andrea Panjawani, Supervising Attorney at African Services says, "Deferred action gives young people the opportunity to come out of the shadows and participate in civic life. We hope this inspires them to then pay it forward, and create better opportunities for others."

The next DACA clinic will be held on October 11, 2012, 6pm and will be open to anyone who feels they might be eligible. Eligibility requirements are listed at the link below, but the applicant must have arrived before the age of 16 and must be either working towards their high school diploma, or they have graduated or received a GED.

To learn more about Deferred Action and the specific guidelines for qualification, [click here](#).

## News and Activities

### ASC Partners with Gilead & the CDC to Combat Hepatitis in the African Community



For the last several years African Services has been working to bring more attention to the issue of Hepatitis prevalence infection--particularly Hepatitis B--within the African immigrant community. Our testing center has been monitoring the issue and to-date, the Hepatitis B infection rate amongst African clients in our testing center averages **above 15%**! With few public health interventions at the national or state level, few understand the health risks that come with being diagnosed with Hepatitis B or C chronic infection.

Late last year, ASC initiated a partnership with Mt. Sinai Medical Center and their Hepatitis Outreach Network (HONE). HONE is a community viral hepatitis, screening and linkage to care program focusing on adult, minority groups in New York City. This allowed us to step up our efforts within the African community to link patients chronically infected with Hepatitis B and C to treatment and care. It is thanks to this pilot program at ASC, that we were selected as a recipient of grants from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Gilead to expand our work in this area, and to vaccinate adolescents and adults against Hepatitis B.

"We are so proud to partner with the CDC and Gilead on this project. It is wonderful to see this issue getting the attention, and funding, that it deserves. We have been engaged in this issue for years, and with adequate resources we can really start to make positive strides in battling this epidemic," stated Kim Nichols, Co-Executive Director at African Services.

These grants will allow ASC to hire additional testing center and outreach staff to do targeted outreach to the African immigrant community and to educate, test, treat and/or vaccinate immigrant patients. Rates of infection in Sub-Saharan African for Hepatitis B, for example, can range anywhere from 9-20%, and infection comes with a 25% mortality risk. It is important to detect infection as early as possible, as long term effects of Hepatitis B range from cirrhosis to elevated risk of liver cancer.

"With HBV infection rates as high as they are we must engage and educate the community on the risks of infection, and what they can do to detect it, treat it, or be vaccinated to lower their risk," shares Daouda Ndiaye, the ASC HBV Patient Navigator.

In the next several months, ASC will be rolling out its targeted outreach and testing campaigns. Working closely with local African organizations—including the Senegalese Association, the Gambian Association, Roza Promotions, the Pulaar-Speaking Association and others—ASC hopes to test, vaccinate, and connect clients to care so that they can avoid the deadly consequences of Hepatitis.

Stay tuned for further developments and testing events that are sure to come.

## African Services Committee Teams Up With Budge



African Services is proud to announce our partnership with what we think will be the next big 'app' on your smartphone!

ASC was fortunate to be selected by the founders of Budge, as one of the first charity organizations to be featured in the beta test launch of this revolutionary

smart phone application.

Budge is simple...Just create a 'budge' and challenge your friends to anything. And by anything, we meant it! It could be a game of chess, or even a pizza-eating contest. If **you** win, they give a micro-donation to a pre-selected charity (i.e. African Services Committee). If they win, you do. In the end, the real winners are the the people in need that we help here at African Services Committee.

How did ASC get involved in this project, you might ask? Well, the Budge team heard about us from an ASC legal intern, and knew that it was the perfect fit.

"We're focused on partnering with organizations that are not only relevant to our users, but do great work in the community," said Hillan Klein, CEO of Budge. "We were very impressed by ASC's impact on the African community and the depth of support that the organization provides."

It's a simple, engaging and revolutionary way to engage the digital generation to give to charity—of which African Services Committee is one of the select beta partners.

Keep an eye on our Facebook & Twitter pages as we move towards the launch of Budge...and help us get the word out! You can also download the application for free from the Apple store at <http://download.thebudge.com> – available by mid-October!

## ASC Partners with OMH to Produce HIV Testing Video



African Services Committee (ASC) is pleased to continue its relationship with the Federal Office of Minority Health (OMH) for the 2012-2013 season. In early June, ASC was informed that it would be one of 5 organizations selected to receive a grant as part of the National African Immigrant Project, whose goal is to work with organizations targeting African immigrants that are impacted and/or infected with HIV/AIDS/STDs.

ASC has been committed for the last several years to challenging HIV stigma and discrimination within the African immigrant community—including our city-wide Why Stand campaign. With the help of OMH, the award will be used to produce and widely distribute a virtual tour/video of the ASC New York testing center. This video will work to 'demystify' HIV testing. By highlighting the process from start to finish, we hope to alleviate the stigma and fear that surround HIV and the HIV testing process, thus increase utilization of the ASC testing centers in 2012-2013.

We are extremely excited to have been chosen as one of the five supported organizations, and we look forward to sharing the video with all of you upon its completion!

## ASC Welcomes New Staff



**Melissa Ip** is the new **Community Nutrition Educator** responsible for the development and delivery of African Services' nutrition health education services for clients living with HIV. Prior to joining African Services, Melissa was a nutrition and health educator serving largely immigrant communities in New York City and Philadelphia. She has also supported HIV education programs in Malawi and the Dominican Republic. Melissa has a Masters degree in Health Education and is a registered dietitian and certified health education specialist.

## Fun in the City

Olubunmi Segun, Staff Attorney recommends...



### Figure Skating in Harlem

Figure Skating in Harlem (FSH) is a pioneering not-for-profit organization that provides girls ages 6-18 with vital educational and skating opportunities that build self-worth and promote physical well being and academic achievement. Our on and off-ice classes teach perseverance, responsibility, teamwork and leadership in a safe and positive environment.

**Where:** Riverbank State Park (145th Street and Riverside), Lasker Rink (Central Park), & FSH HQ on 125th Street

**When:** After-School Hours -- 3 afternoons per week, October-April

**Cost:** \$375 for the 2012-2013 season, although **NO ONE** is turned away if they cannot pay the full tuition.

Activities include **professional skating instruction** and **education enrichment classes**, which include academic tutoring, individual and group counseling sessions, and weekly classes covering topics such as nutrition, financial literacy, the history of figure skating, personal

development and leadership development.

In addition, students participate in special events and activities such as cultural field trips, including professional art, dance and theater performances.

Visit [www.figureskatinginharlem.org](http://www.figureskatinginharlem.org) for more information and to enroll!

**Stephanie Kaplan**, Communications Director recommends...

**David Marell**  
Animals on the Verge of Extinction  
Etchings Paintings Drawings  
October 4 - 25, 2012



Early Man etching and aquatint 11 x 14.75 inches

**VanDeb Editions**  
***Animals on the Verge of Extinction***

VanDeb Editions is pleased to announce the publication of a suite of 9 etchings titled *Animals on the Verge of Extinction*. The work was inspired by Marell's trip to Miyuga, a small village of about 2000 people in the Rachuonyo District of southwest Kenya.

In 2007, David and his wife Patricia formed a committee to raise funds so that water could flow in that drought-ravaged village. It would be a nearly five-year, one-war, culture-clashing, \$50,000 project for a pump, electricity and a storage tank.

The drawings will be sold in support of the Miyuga, Kenya Water Project in an effort to complete the water project, and connect

the water source to a local school.

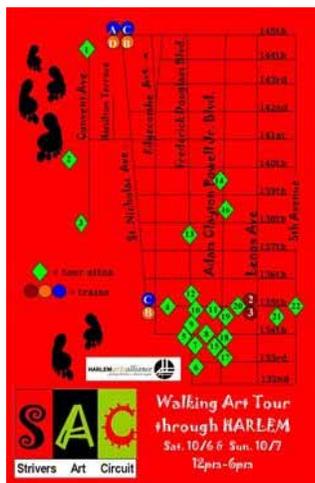
**Where:** VanDeb Editions, 313 West 37th Street, 7th Floor

**When:** October 4th - October 25th, **Opening Reception on October 4th, 6-8 pm**

A percentage of all sales will go to the Miyuga, Kenya Water Project bringing potable water to the village school

Visit [www.vandeb.com](http://www.vandeb.com) to learn more!

**Kim Nichols**, Co-Executive Director recommends...



**Strivers Art Circuit 2012**

SAC is a self-guided, walking Tour of Harlem's Art Venues and Artist Studios in the Strivers Row corridor. This Circuit is a collaboration created to develop a hub of arts activity, increased visibility and exposure for creative entities in Harlem.

This 5th annual **FREE** event will take place during October 6th & 7th and is one of the many events sponsored by the Harlem Arts Alliance during its annual Arts Advocacy Week.

**Where:** There are over 22 venues hosting for the event. Download a printable PDF map [here](#).

**When:** October 6th & 7th, from 12 pm - 6 pm

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Strivers Art Circuit event...and we hope to see you there!

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