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# AFRICAN SERVICES

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## COMMITTEE

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### In This Issue

Health Screening Day

Food Pantry Filled!

Harlem Nights Success!

ASC Hosts Financial Literacy Workshop

New Faces at ASC

Fun in the City: WMI Nimbaya! Drum Ensemble

Fun in the City: Immigrant Women's Forum

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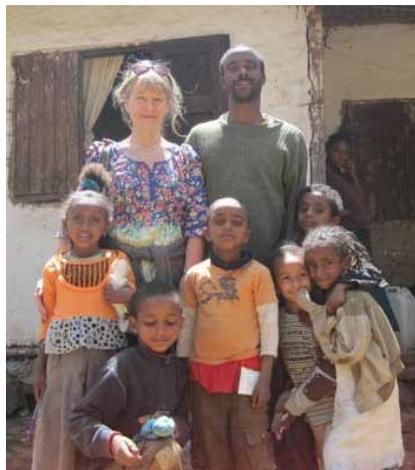
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## Kim's Notes from the Field: Ethiopia



Kim poses with children in Entoto

I arrived in Addis Ababa late at night after a long flight through Amsterdam and Khartoum. A lovely supper of shiro and misir (Ethiopian fasting food, chickpeas and lentils) was waiting for me at the ASC headquarters office. Until the end of Lent, vegetarian food is the predominant fare in Ethiopia.

African Services Committee's Ethiopia programs are running in

high gear. With 115 staff now operating HIV community clinics in 4 regions, ASC has become one of the most integrated clinical and care- providing services in the country. As a community-based organization, we stay close to our roots- outreaching to, testing, and treating the most vulnerable, and complementing clinical services with other forms of support- income generation, for example- that will strengthen the ability of our patients, young and old, to maintain their health once we've helped them regain it.

Visiting African Services' Shola Market clinic on a recent Saturday morning, I happened upon the monthly TOMS Shoes field site visit, evaluating a new canvas shoe model that TOMS is pilot testing in Ethiopia. Dozens of kids who'd received shoes in ASC's December distribution had stopped by ASC's Shola clinic to have the wear and tear on their shoes inspected by TOMS' friendly Ethiopia representative. Due to the sharp paving stones used on alleyways and streets throughout most of Ethiopia, a few toes were peeking through, so design alterations may be made to address these local challenges. In 2011, 8,976 pairs of brand-new TOMS Shoes were distributed by ASC to children aged 2- 18 through our 4 clinics. Every six months, enrolled

children bring back their old pair in exchange for a new pair.



Children wait to have their shoes inspected by a TOMS Shoes representative at the ASC Shola Clinic.

This all started as a result of ASC having participated in a massive school-based de-worming campaign in Ethiopia with Ben Gurion University several years ago. It made us think: why don't we help our kids get shoes? We got our wish, because TOMS Shoes was on the same wavelength.



ASC pediatric patients crowd around Ann Nichols, Kim's Mom, to look at pictures taken on her camera.

Children in ASC's programs are surviving, but in desperate need of nutritional support. We've had to stop providing milk, due to budget shortages. ASC continues to distribute legumes, eggs, and vegetable oil, as well as multivitamin/mineral supplements, but our children on antiretroviral treatment require additional protein, calories, and fat for optimal metabolism and growth. They live at high altitude, and burn excess calories walking and climbing steep slopes each day between home and school or helping parents with work. ASC supported 1,446 children with food subsidies and 1,900 children with vitamins in 2011. 1,079 of their pregnant and lactating mothers also received a year's supply of vitamin/mineral supplements, thanks to Vitamin Angels. But we need help putting the milk back in

the groceries!

ASC Mekele's programs are thriving as well. We attended the 5th anniversary celebration of the Mekele clinic, in the open-air amphitheatre at the clinic.



The ASC Mekele Clinic Auditorium is decorated for the 5th Anniversary Celebration

Representatives of the local kebeles (town councils), regional health bureau, local youth associations and orphanages, elders' associations and patients, gathered to tour the compound and recognize the achievements of ASC Mekele, from its early days as an HIV testing site to its present configuration as a higher clinic, offering everything from HIV and STI testing to antiretroviral treatment and full laboratory monitoring services.

Every time I make the journey to Ethiopia I am amazed at the progress, reach and impact of the work that we do there. As African Services in New York celebrates 30 years of service, Ethiopia is only celebrating a nascent 7 years. I beam with pride to think of what has been done in such a short time, and the strides that we will have made when Ethiopia hits its 30-year mark. The work continues to bring all of our sites up to the full capacity of the Shola and Mekele sites. Up next for our clinics: TB diagnosis and Directly-observed TB Treatment (DOTS). Stay tuned to the newsletter as we continue to update you on our stateside and international endeavors.

## News and Activities

### African Services' Partners with Kress Vision for Health Screening Day

Making your way in New York City as a recent immigrant is hard enough with perfect vision—now imagine doing it with poor eyesight: the disorienting lights, the blurry street signs, the indistinguishable faces. Thus it was no surprise this month that the line stretched out the door when the Kress Vision program arrived at African Services to conduct free eye screenings for



clients. People arrived as early as 8 AM to get their eyes tested by a professional optometrist and, if needed, receive a free pair of glasses. "Affordable eye care is a complete void area in the community," noted Testing Center Director Alice Clomegah. "It's hard to get Kress Vision because they're so in-demand, and I wish there were more organizations like them."



Founded in 1988, Kress Vision is operated by the New York Downtown Hospital. The program connects with community organizations serving underprivileged populations to extend eye care to those who may not otherwise have access. Based on the results of the eye examinations, Kress Vision can offer patients anything from a simple pair of glasses to medical and surgical treatments.

Many of those visiting in hopes of an eye examination or new glasses also took advantage of the ASC testing center, with several people taking HIV and glucose tests after their exams. The event allowed staff to dialogue with clients about the importance of preventative care and urge attendees to seek ways to maintain and improve their health before getting sick. Blood tests, eye exams and other kinds of check-ups all help to ensure that potential problems are addressed before growing into more serious issues.

In all, 33 people received examinations and glasses, with Kress Care generously going beyond their original limit of 25 patients. We hope everyone with a new pair of glasses enjoys plenty of perfectly clear books, blackboards, street signs, and faces for years to come!

--Marshall Thomas

## Sicomac Elementary Fills Up the Pantry

African Services recently welcomed members of the Sicomac PTO, who arrived with a van full of groceries to donate to the ASC food pantry. Volunteers helped us unload the bounty and bring it upstairs to the pantry, after driving into New York City from their homes in Wyckoff, New Jersey.



**All of these bags fit in one car?!**



**Pasta, Oil, Beans, Coffee & Peanut Butter...ready to be bagged!**

While \$800 can buy plenty of food in the city, Sicomac was able to contribute a small mountain, thanks to one of the volunteer's shopping expertise and some friendlier New Jersey prices. "They asked me at the grocery store if I was from Extreme Couponing," she joked, referring to the TLC show in which expert shoppers manage to leave the supermarket with cartfuls of food for a few nickels and pennies. The haul included beans, rice, oil, peanut butter, coffee, canned fruit and vegetables, cereal, pasta, soup and more.



**Decorated bags...ready to be filled!**

Sicomac students contributed as well, covering brown paper bags with handmade valentines- plenty of kind messages greeted everyone who took one home. In addition to the usual Valentine's Day hearts and flowers, students added drawings of broccoli, hamburgers, and a

New York Giant. A valentine from every student at Sicomac was enough to cover almost forty bags, each of which was filled with a package or two of each kind of food. Even after filling the bags, plenty of supplies remained to stuff the shelves of the ASC pantry, including some precariously tall stacks of Cheerios.

This year, with the food pantry forced to meet higher demand with a lower budget, Sicomac's contribution will go a long way towards ensuring that clients can always depend on a full, nutritious meal from African Services.

"To look in the pantry and see the shelves stocked full for the first time in months was a sight for sore eyes," explained Kim Nichols, our co-executive director.



**Even after filling 40 bags...there was enough to FILL the pantry!**

Of course, it wasn't just Kim who took notice of the new supplies. A few minutes after the last full bags were set out, clients began taking them home, ready to enjoy a hot, filling meal that evening.

--**Marshall Thomas**

## ***Harlem Nights/Visionaries Premieres at African Services***

On January 18th, African Services opened its doors after dark to welcome the Harlem community into our space to enjoy an evening of art and activism with an Afropolitan twist.

*Visionaries*, a newly formed art promotion collective, partnered with African Services to present *Harlem Nights*, a new event series meant to invite Harlemites and friends to enjoy our space, become acquainted with African Services, and to make connections with others within the community, all while enjoying the work of featured artists and presenters.

The inaugural event, which drew almost 100 attendees, showcased the work of photographer Barron Claiborne, and filmmaker Joshua Bee Alafia, who collaborated on *Fashioning Peace in Kenya*, a film about using fashion as a tool to advocate peace in Kenya.

Guests enjoyed screenings of the artists' work as well as a lively Q & A session.



**A packed house for the premiere of *Harlem Nights***



**Marissa Jackson, Jennifer Samuel (Visionaries Founder) & Chitra Aiyar pose for a photo. It was their hardwork and genius that created this evening.**

A fantastic spread of food and beverages were available as the festivities went late into the evening with mingling and good conversation had by all.



**Joshua Bee Alafia (2nd From Right) poses with friends**



**A rapt audience listens on as Barron Claiborne presents**

To learn more about the artists you can visit their respective websites here:

Joshua Bee Alafia: <http://www.joshuabeealafia.com/>  
Barron Claiborne: <http://www.barronclaiborne.com/>

African Services and Visionaries hope to continue the collaboration with future events to come in April and beyond. Stay tuned to our [Facebook page](#) or newsletter for information on

upcoming events.

--Stephanie Kaplan

## ASC Hosts Financial Literacy Workshop



African Services Committee, in collaboration with the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Department of Consumer Affairs, hosted a Financial Literacy Workshop for the African Immigrant community on Saturday, March 3rd.

Speakers from the NYC Mayor's Office, Department of Consumer Affairs and the NYC Commission on Human Rights presented on issues surrounding being financially secure.

Topics included personal and business budgeting, credit management, loan opportunities, opening bank accounts, obtaining a taxpayer ID and more.



It was a lively discussion and we were pleased with the turnout of clients and friends of African Services who were interested in learning more for themselves, their families and their communities.

Thank you to all of the government offices that collaborated with us on this effort!

--Stephanie Kaplan

## New Staff

**Youma Nafu** joined African Services Committee in February as the new front desk receptionist.

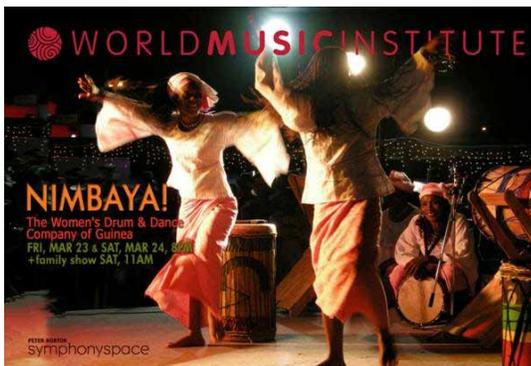
Born in France to Malian parents, Youma was raised in the Parisian suburb of Asnières and moved to New York in 2004. She went on to receive her degree in medical administration, with honors, from the Bronx's Monroe College in 2009.

After working at Isabella's Geriatric Center and Gotham Per Diem as a certified nurse's assistant over the past few years, Youma is excited to embark on her new role at African Services: "I like what I do here, and the people have been very nice," she says. In addition to English, Youma is fluent in French and Bambara, allowing her to comfortably greet and assist our diverse clientele. We're proud to welcome Youma to African Services and hope those of you who stop by in the coming months can have the pleasure of meeting her!



## Fun in the City

Chitra Aiyar, Staff Attorney recommends...



World Music Institute presents the NY debut of spectacular ensemble, NIMBAYA! The women's drum & dance company of Guinea.

The group is a daring response to the taboo of women playing the *djembe* in West Africa. NIMBAYA! is the first all-women's percussion and dance troupe from Guinea. The concerts in New York City, feature their internationally acclaimed drumming and dancing -- both contemporary and traditional -- and also include new work to raise awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM). The post-concert conversation with the artists will deal with the role of women in African society today, and highlight talk about their new work

in combatting the widely adopted practice of FGM.

**When:** Friday, March 23rd and Saturday, March 24th at 8 pm (+ post-concert conversation with the artists), Family Show: Saturday, March 24th at 11 am

**Where:** Peter Norton Symphony Space  
Broadway at 95th Street, NYC

**Cost:** Evening Shows: \$30/Students: \$20  
Family Show: \$25 adults; \$15 children

Thanks to World Music Institute for offering ASC supporters a 2-for-1 Ticket deal. To access this deal follow the instructions below:

- Tickets must be purchased through World Music Institute's website: [http://wminyc.org/World\\_Music\\_Institute/Nimbaya.html](http://wminyc.org/World_Music_Institute/Nimbaya.html)
- At Checkout, Enter Code: **AFDANCE**

\*\*\*Online purchases must be made by 1PM on Friday, March 23, 2012\*\*\*

For more information visit [worldmusicinstitute.org](http://worldmusicinstitute.org), or call the box office at 212-545-7536

See below for a short sample performance:



NIMBAYA! Video Performance

Marshall Thomas, Communications Intern recommends...

INVITES COMMUNITY LEADERS  
TO A FORUM & DISCUSSION  
AND REFLECTION ON  
THE HISTORY AND THE LIVES OF

**Adelante Alliance** **IMMIGRANT WOMEN  
IN THE UNITED STATES**

**Celebrating International Women's Month  
March 30, 2012**

Please come and join us if  
you are a community  
leader working in issues  
of immigration, education,  
health, reproduction,  
housing, labor, race,  
gender, sexuality, among  
many others.  
Help us build the network  
we need so that together  
we can work for social  
justice for immigrant  
women! —

For more information please  
contact: Ana Vasquez, Daniel Alonso o  
Karla Quiñonez-Ruggiero at  
news@adelantealliance.org or  
call us at Tel (347) 889 6125  
www.adelantealliance.org

New York University  
The Puck Building  
295 Lafayette Street,  
2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10012

This event is Co-sponsored by  
OWS LatinAmerica and  
Research Center for  
Leadership in Action  
@NYU

RSVP

Adelante Alliance invites the community to a forum, discussion & reflection on the history and lives of immigrant women in the United States.

Consider joining them to help discuss and build a network of likeminded leaders in the community working towards social justice for immigrant women.

When: March 30, 2012

Where: NYU, The Puck Building  
295 LaFayette Street, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10012

For more information and/or to RSVP please contact:  
Ana Vasquez or Daniel Alonso at  
[news@adelantealliance.org](mailto:news@adelantealliance.org). or call them at (347) 889-6125

Visit [www.adelantealliance.org](http://www.adelantealliance.org) for more information

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