



# AFRICAN SERVICES

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## COMMITTEE

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## Welcome to 2011.... and 30 Years of African Services!



Co-Executive Director, Kim Nichols,  
sits atop the Gheralta Massif, a  
mountain range in Ethiopia

Hello all. First, I want to wish you and yours a happy post-holiday season and New Year. It was a wonderful 2010 at ASC, and we are excited to turn our eyes forward to 2011, and to celebrate **30 years** of service to the African and Caribbean immigrant community in New York City and abroad.

Last week, a Fedex package arrived from ASC Ethiopia, containing a complete list of antiretroviral (ART) drugs and laboratory reagents and supplies now provided free of charge to African Services by the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health (MOH). Under MOH contracts for AIDS medicines and diagnostics supply with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Clinton Foundation Health Access Initiative, ASC, as a higher clinic serving patients living with HIV/AIDS, has become the latest treatment site in Addis Ababa. Poised as we are, at the community-based level, to reach the most marginalized and at-risk populations, ASC's Shola Market clinic will now be able to treat, at the outset, patients diagnosed HIV positive on-site instead of making referrals to other health centers.

Looking at those inventory lists brought me a sense of accomplishment at having finally arrived at our goal increasing access to HIV treatment. Thank you for supporting us in this journey from humble beginnings as an

outreach and voluntary counseling and testing center to a multi-service treatment center. In the year ahead we plan on initiating ART treatment at an additional clinic in Mekele.

Looking out my office window over snowy Harlem, on this side of the globe, there are three game-changing advances, quite different from our nascent treatment access programs in Ethiopia that have the potential to significantly impact our work in increasing HIV prevention and access to treatment for immigrant communities in New York:

- First, new HIV testing regulations in New York State, enacted several months ago, seek to routinize HIV testing. Although these new regulations affect HIV testing in clinical facilities more than in community-based testing centers, we have seen a marked uptake in HIV testing at our testing center in Harlem.
- Second, the new "Test and Treat" paradigm, which advocates for early detection and linkage to care, has changed the way providers and communities are looking at management of HIV. Test early, treat early and these PLWH patients may never develop acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
- Third, the publication of results of the iPrEx study have shown for the first time a partially protective effect of a fixed dose combination of antiretroviral medicines (Truvada) among MSM and transgender male-to-females, in preventing HIV transmission to HIV negatives, when administered consistently in a controlled clinical trial. The implications of this study are many, and provocative.

The contrast between treatment access challenges in the developing world and rapid advances in the science of treatment and prevention in the developed world are indeed stark. Those of us with a foot in both worlds need to ensure that like a relay, we keep handing off access to these advances in the developed world to our partners in the South.

Thank you for your continued support of African Services in New York and abroad! Best wishes for a healthy and

prosperous New Year!

Best--

Kim Nichols  
Co-Executive Director

## News and Activities

### African Services Celebrates World AIDS Day 2010



World AIDS Day is celebrated on December 1 every year around the world. It is one of the most recognized international health days and is an opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories in the fight against HIV. This year the celebration had a thematic focus on Universal Access and Human Rights.

African Services' events were spearheaded by peer counselor, Tembeni Fazo, along with the assistance of members of the women's support group and sewing cooperative. This moving day featured the presentation of a prayer cloth honoring the friends and loved ones that we have lost to HIV & AIDS. In addition there was a candlelight vigil and sewing cooperative sample sale.

Here are some photos from the event:



It is as much a time for celebration of successes, as it is a time for reflection on the challenges

ahead. It was with these thoughts in mind, that Tembeni addressed the attending crowd.

"Today is a very special day for African Services," she stated. "As we remember all the friends and families that have passed from HIV, let's also remember the survivors that are still fighting this war...because the struggles continue."

She challenged the crowd to consider the meaning of universal access and human rights, and whether these rights are a gift afforded to all.

"What is really meant by human rights," she asked. "A child born in the US, does that child have the same rights as a child born in Africa? What about a young woman born in Asia? Would she have the same rights as a man? My understanding of the universal declaration of human rights is that these rights are fundamental. The rights of people should not be determined by gender, birthplace, race, religion or wealth. And most certainly not by HIV status. I wish I could say that all people enjoy human rights equally, oh how I wish," she continued.

She concluded her remarks with thought provoking questions, she demanded, "Let me ask you, do people with HIV have a right to live? Do they have a right to dignity? Do they have a right to treatment, care and support?" A chorus of resounding yes's were shouted from the crowd.

The sad reality however is that we currently live in a world where only 36% of people who need HIV treatment have access to it. As economies continue to shrink, so do financial commitments to address the crisis, while HIV infections continue to rise.

Through our programs in New York City and in Ethiopia, we work towards bridging the gap between HIV positive individuals and the treatment and rights that they deserve. It is our hope that the world doesn't turn their attentions away from the global AIDS epidemic as soon as the calendar says December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and that everyone continues to commit to the fight against HIV.

**-Stephanie Kaplan**

## English as a Second Language Classes Go High Tech



African Services' ESL Instructor, John Patterson, looks on as students use the software.

Walking into the ESL classroom, one feels the atmosphere buzzing with hopeful study and determination. Each participant stares at a computer screen, intensely concentrating on their individualized programs. Salimata is studying travel vocabulary, Mariama is reading a passage out loud, and Mohammed is playing an interactive game - all on brand-new computers that were bought specifically for English classes.

In this room, immigrants from many different backgrounds and native tongues come together to master the intricacies of the English language. ESL classes are one of the many essential forms of support that ASC extends to newly arrived individuals. When Yuliya Kalshteyn, African Services ESL Coordinator, noticed that

the participants were having trouble developing their English vocabulary, she decided to diversify their study program. Through her ingenuity, ASC acquired brand-new computers for use during the classes - one for each student. The courses never previously had access to this type of technology for class use. Now, participants spend up to an hour during each class using Rosetta Stone to expand their vocabulary and become better equipped for conversational English.

"It's amazing how much their speaking has improved already," Yuliya said. "I'm sure we will continue to see the students become more and more comfortable with using English in their everyday lives. Not being able to speak the local language makes life so much more difficult, and skills that they're getting with this technology will help them in school and with employment."

Immigrants of all ages come to the ESL classes at African Services Committee. Teenagers who have just arrived in the United States and elderly participants alike enjoy being able to study English through the high-tech medium. It is clear that the students feel optimistic about their progress and look forward to achieving fluency. "The computers are giving us another way to practice and get better. I'm really excited about them," said one ESL class participant.

Acquiring these computers has provided ASC clients with access to technology that many of the students would not otherwise have had. Combining the computer program with standard teaching methods gives the participants a more holistic education in English, and allows them to build on their computer skills.

-Chloe Noonan

## New Additions to the ASC Family



**Amy Kaiman** is the program coordinator of African Services' English as a Second Language program. She teaches ESOL and literacy classes, manages classroom and literacy volunteers, and is responsible for preparing and developing curriculum, applying testing methods, scheduling, documenting, reporting, and interfacing with funding agencies and other community and literacy organizations. She also works with individual students to make referrals for advanced education, GED preparation and testing, employment and other life-skills opportunities. Before joining African Services, Amy taught ESOL at Tenafly Public Schools, Bergen Community College, and Rockland BOCES. She was an Internship Coordinator and Career Counselor at Lehman College, where she also taught Freshman

Orientation classes and a Cooperative Learning class. She is the author of several textbooks aimed at helping high school students prepare for statewide standardized tests, and published by Amsco School Publications. Amy has a B.A. in English Literature from the City College of New York, and an M.S. in Education- TESOL from Lehman College.

## Fun in the City

Staff Recommendations

**Olobunmi Segun**, Staff Attorney recommends...



**Winter Jam NYC**  
[Website](#)



**Winter Jam NYC is a FREE annual winter sports festival that encourages New Yorkers to get out and enjoy the outdoors in the colder months!**

Saturday, February 5, 2011

11 am - 4 pm

**WINTERJAM NYC**

The Nethermead in Prospect Park (Brooklyn, NY)

Learn how to ski, snowboard or snowshoe at Lake Placid Snow Field. Free lessons and equipment will be provided...for all ages! Bring a sled, or just sculpt something in the snow! If you're hungry, you can head over to the NY Winter Market for a free snack and drink samples!

Click [here](#) for information on the event. Escape Manhattan and head to Brooklyn for a winter wonderland that will definitely provide fun for any age...and best of all...it's FREE!

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