

Annual Report



Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta (CAAC) operating as Africa Centre

2013 - 2014

Children at play during the Out of School Time program



The Council for Advancement of African-Canadians (CAAC), operating as Africa Centre, was launched in 2006. It is a one-stop multi-purpose centre, an Edmonton based non-profit organization where culturally appropriate programs, services and activities are delivered to members of the community, and serves as the hub of the African community.

Celebrating Achievements

- Over **2000** children and youth were served
- Over **3000** women and men were served in conversation cafes and community events
- All our programs are popular and over subscribed
- Moving forward with a new Multicultural Centre
- Our programs and services are open to ALL

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13160 - 127 ST
Edmonton, AB T5L 1E2
Tel: 780 455 5423
Fax: 780 455 5473
Email: info@afriacentre.ca
Web: www.afriacentre.ca

Council for Advancement of African-Canadians

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

The Council for Advancement of African - Canadians (CAAC), operating as the Africa Centre was launched in 2006. It is a one-stop multi-purpose centre; an Edmonton based non-profit organization where culturally appropriate programs, services and activities are delivered to members of the community, and serves as the hub of the African community. Africa Centre is also a hospitable place for new African immigrants.

Our Vision

To establish an African Centre that will serve as the hub of the community and provide an atmosphere that is welcoming, shows respect for diversity, and support members of all interests and abilities.

Our Mission

This organization strives to create opportunities for full access and participation of members of the African community in all aspects of society including economic, social, cultural and educational endeavors and contribute to the holistic development and wellness of the African individual, family and community.

Motto

Prosperity through hard work and cooperation.

Values

The council is committed to diversity, accessibility and social justice. All policies, rules and regulations respect people of all races, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status and ability. As an organization and individuals, we value:

- **Integrity and Honesty:** We demonstrate honest and ethical behaviours in all transactions.
- **Openness and Respectfulness:** We believe that all people should be treated with consideration and dignity.
- **Responsiveness:** We strive to be accessible, flexible, and transparent and to also demonstrate a sense of urgency in all our resolves and decision making processes.
- **Accountability:** We are committed to donors/funders, members, partners and employees for commitments, results, quality and responsible use of funds.

- **Team work:** We are committed to effective partnerships between volunteers and staff members, and we also seek opportunities to form alliances with others. Together we make every effort to achieve continual improvement as an organization, and personal renewal, constructive self-criticism, self-improvement and personal excellence as individuals.
- **Responsibility:** We have an obligation to call upon each other if an individual chooses not to follow our values.

CAAC'S Objectives

- To promote early learning to African-Canadian families and offer educational opportunities to pre-school children.
- To provide educational opportunities and support to African-Canadian school-aged children to help them succeed in the Canadian school system.
- To educate and empower African-Canadian women, youth, seniors and others to help them integrate into Canadian society.
- To educate and increase the Canadian public's understanding of and appreciation for African culture.
- To educate African-Canadians about the Canadian political process in order to encourage respect for and participation in the democratic process in Canada.

CAAC Strategic Priorities 2012 - 2014

- CAAC will collaborate with its partners to secure funding that will be used to create additional office space or build a new facility at the existing location. This is for the purpose of introducing more beneficial programs for the African community and to make the facility more welcoming for them.
- CAAC will evaluate and strengthen its existing programs periodically to ensure they are of high quality and appropriate for the children, youth and the families it caters for.
- CAAC will continue to assess community needs and consult with community members to identify gaps or needed shifts in program delivery.
- CAAC will pursue strategic alliances with complimentary partners that are aligned to its mission, to identify and meet the needs of African children, youth and their families.

- CAAC will strengthen and expand the organization's visibility in the community by making greater use of volunteers, establishing a strong online presence via the website and social media outlets, as well as the use of a newsletter and other promotional and marketing tools.
- CAAC will build on its financial resources to further invest in providing quality services. This will include fundraising campaigns, timely request for grants and increasing the in-house facility rental income.
- The CAAC board will remain focused on governance and policy matters, fundraising and expand Board of Directors to deepen its collective community and professional expertise and knowledge.
- CAAC will continue to develop a stable, highly qualified and motivated workforce that actively delivers the organisation's mission.

Board of Directors

Chairperson:	Ghettuba Beatrice
Vice Chairperson:	Tamaklo Keli
Secretary:	Worku Meheret
Treasurer:	Mohammed Hassan
Director:	Isaac dawit
Director:	Khamisi Muru
Director:	Tamanikwa Tichanowa
Director:	Gaye T. John
Director:	Allam Nermin

Staff & Supports

Executive Director:	Tesfaye Ayalew
Rotary Early Learning & Family Program Manager:	Roman G. Mariam
Facility Coordinator:	Jean Pierre Valois
Administrative Assistant:	Eve Uwamahoro
City of Edmonton CRC- Africa Centre Liaison:	Tim O'Donnell
City of Edmonton Asset Management & Public Works:	Lynda Nelson

PROGRAMS

Africa Centre focuses on programs and services that create economic, educational, social, cultural and professional opportunities for its members. The centre also addresses the diverse needs of African youth including after school programs, stay-in-school initiatives, peer support and mediation, crime prevention, business training, the environment, health, leadership development, recreational and sports activities. Africa Centre encourages voluntarism and increased civic understanding.

Rotary Early Learning and Family Programs (RELFP)

The Rotary Early Learning and Family Programs consist of several beneficial initiatives developed by Africa Centre to meet the diverse needs of families and the overall African community as a whole. We strive to foster family connections and ease the challenges that families sometimes face with children. One of our many goals is to contribute substantially to the holistic well – being of children and their families so that they can easily adapt to their environment.

Programs for:

✓ Young Children:

Child Drop – In Program

Every year, many African families with young children relocate to Edmonton, from various countries. A warm environment is needed for these families and their children to feel welcomed and at home. The drop-in program gladly provides this opportunity to parents as they are able to drop off their children at the Africa Centre for a couple of hours, several times a week.



The main objective of the drop – in program is to keep these children safe while also helping them adapt to their new environment. This program also assists them with improving different aspects of their learning and development areas. In doing this, they are able to successfully integrate and associate with other children in a diverse environment.

Child drop – in program, which occurs from 2 – 5pm on Thursdays and 12:30 – 4:30pm on Saturdays, was very successful this year. The total participants involved in this year's program were 489 participants with a total of 118 new intakes for the year.

In this program, children develop their play, social, and emotional skills, as well as physical skills through a variety of self – selected games, songs and story play and exercise. Nutritious snacks and meals are provided for the children as well.

Rhymes That Bind

The Rotary Early Learning Program at Africa Centre brings additional programs to the centre for the benefit of children and their families. RTB is a program offered in partnership with the *Centre for Family Literacy*, to help children under the ages of three with their language development skills. It is aimed at supporting oral language development through rhymes, songs and naming body parts.



This program is for children under the ages of three years and their parents. It is an oral language development program that also promotes positive parenting. The program runs for three sessions, in spring, fall and winter. It runs every Wednesday from 1-2pm.

This year, we had a total of 13 parents and 15 children throughout the year.

Remarks from Parents who have been part of the Rotary Early Learning Program

"My main concern is my child's socialization .When he plays with children at the centre; it will be smooth for him to socialize with children in his Soccer team."

"I want my child to play with her peers because she is a bit shy."

"I would like my child to obey an adult when directed by a teacher."

"My child faced a delay in developing his speech. After coming to this program, he made a lot of friends and talks a lot."

"My son likes Africa Centre because, he makes new friends, learns how to share, to be polite and friendly."

Africa Centre Out of School Time (ACOST)

The program provides a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for school aged children in grades 1 to 12. One of its numerous aims is to foster creativity and problem – solving through academic based programs. We also aim to provide various learning opportunities to children and youth.

This program runs during critical hours after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Although the program focuses on African immigrants/refugee children, it is open for anyone interested in the program. There is no cost for the program; snacks and meals are provided as needed. This is usually directed by volunteers and various themes are applied to the program schedule.

At the end of this year, we had a total number of 377 participants.

Highlights 2013

*... Each child was served a hearty meal at every ACOST program
...children were served nutritious meals and snacks in the 4 day
spring break camp*

RELFP Summer Camp

This program runs for six weeks during the summer and caters to children of ages four to five years. Working parents have specifically acknowledged that this was a great service that the Africa Centre provided as it was educational, engaging and entertaining.

This year, it provided a safe place for children to play, interact and explore during the summer months. It helped the children keep their minds active while being out of school. They were able to make connections with other children within the African community.

30 children were registered for the early learning program and the average attendance per day was 20 children.



Out of School Time Summer Camp July 9, 2013 - August 16, 2013

The Africa Centre hosted a summer camp in 2013, where children from grade 1 to 12 were registered.

This summer program also helped children to spend their day participating in physically stimulating activities that brought about the experience of success. This process encouraged the gain of resilience, autonomy and independence and much other beneficial life – long skills. The children were also involved in the experience of success that contributed in building their confidence. Having the opportunity of being unplugged from technology and the social media, their social skills and sincere communication was developed. This summer camp helped build teamwork among the children and they had the chance to gain other valuable skills. They also got the chance to reconnect with nature, and make good friends.

The Spring Break Camp

The Spring Break Camp was held from Tuesday April 1st, 2014 to Friday April 4th, 2014. It was an all-day program from 9am to 4pm. Twenty-one children in total participated in the program. There were many indoor and outdoor activities such as arts and crafts, sand play, play dough, physical activity in the big gym and a visit to the Calder Library for a puppet show.

✓ Women:

Women's Active and Healthy Living (WAHL)

African women desire programs where they can get together for fun, exercise and safe interactions with other women to allow for healthy sharing experiences and information. It is also well documented that people benefit from culture-specific programming.

Women who frequent the Africa Centre for various programs asked for an exercise program where they can also access child care. As a result, Africa Centre introduced the *Women's Active Healthy Living* program in the North side and South side of Edmonton.

The objectives for this program are:

- To encourage women in the community to gather, socialize and exercise while their children are cared for

- To enhance the fitness level and healthy lifestyle for immigrant women in a group setting
- To provide a platform for women to better care for themselves and their families
- To provide women with a safe space to discuss, identify and take action on their needs and strengths within the Community.

This program comprises of childcare, a Zumba fitness class led by a certified instructor and a healthy snack. Also, it is now currently followed by a participant led discussion group, facilitated by a registered social worker.

Africa Centre is happy to provide this program as it meets with its mission to reflect the needs of the community, to use the resources within the community, and to build the capacities of Edmonton's African community.

Remarks from participants of the Women's Active Healthy Living program:

"I get to exercise while my children are looked after by qualified childcare professionals, I cannot ask for more."

"Zumba fitness is the best thing I have done for myself, I would not have been able to have access to such a fun class if it was not for the Africa Centre."

"I will talk about this program to the women I know because I personally wish Africa Centre was created long ago when I raised my children as a new immigrant to Canada without any support."

Cooking and Learning Together at Africa Centre

Cooking and Learning Together provides an opportunity for women from various African nations to come together to Africa Centre to plan, prepare and share nutritional, low cost foods appropriate for their families.

The objectives of this program are:

- To provide nutritional, low cost cooking and food selection skills that are adapted to Canadian culture for recently settled African women.
- To create a welcoming environment that fosters friendship, community and family support for participants while reducing isolation.
- To create opportunities for English language, reading and Math skills enhancement.
- To honor and celebrate the many diverse languages and cultural heritage.

The class is a space for the women to gather together to support each other socially, to support their families, to preserve their cultures through the sharing of food knowledge, and to learn more about Canadian cuisine and nutrition.

Women Conversation Cafés

Africa Centre initiated a series of conversation café style community engagement involving women and men of African heritage to assess needs and challenges, to build capacity within the community in order to address identified challenges/needs. They also aimed at providing opportunities for networking and information sharing.

In addition to the above mentioned objectives the conversation cafés have a number of other goals which include the following:

- Empowering women and men with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully integrate into the Canadian system.
- Enhancing the skills/abilities of women and their communities through capacity building, knowledge and information sharing, and networking opportunities
- Increasing dialogue, support and cooperation between community members and organisations.
- Increasing awareness of societal issues and community involvement in advocacy and civic engagement
- Increased use of professional leaders and mentors within the African communities.



ANNUAL EVENTS

Africa Centre events have seen tremendous success by attracting the interests of culturally diverse crowds, including the attendance of important dignitaries, the Mayor and councillors of the City of Edmonton and VIPs from the African-Canadian community. The centre hosts four major events throughout the year; *Black History Month*, *Mother's Day*, *Africa Day* and the weekend-long *African Soccer Tournament*.

Africa Day

This event was held on June 15, 2013. The theme of the year 2013 was **“to highlight and celebrate the achievements of the leadership of African Community Associations in Edmonton”**.

This event was accompanied by showcasing a spectacular African group, “Afrafranto”. This group performed authentic acoustic palm wine style music alongside three JUNO Award winning members of the African Guitar Summit group; Liziwe “Lizzy” Mahashe from South Africa, Fantahun Shewankochew (who is a krar player, vocalist, and

composer/arranger from Ethiopia) and Edmonton-based Namibian singer Garth Prince and his African - Canadian band: Okapi Jambo. 530 people attended the gala.

All Africa Games

The 5th annual 'All Africa Games' tournament, organized by Africa centre, was held from June 28 – June 30 2013. This tournament comprised of various sporting activities such as basketball, volley ball, soccer and track and field. There were twelve African Nations represented in the soccer tournament; four different team of players participated in the basketball and volleyball tournaments, while eight individuals participated in track and field. The three days tournament brought together over 700 people each day from diverse backgrounds including children.

Black History Month

The Africa Centre Youth Empowerment Group (YEG) - supported by the City of Edmonton, organized and implemented a black history month celebration on February 22, 2014. The theme of the year was "What is black?" The objective of this event was to connect various African ethno-cultural within Edmonton - as well as mainstream communities, through a vehicle of cultural activities. This goal was fully achieved during this event. It helped interconnect the various ethno-cultural groups with each other and to begin amplifying and articulating each other's needs within the community, so as to potentially lead to a future collective action. By bringing together various



individuals from different cultural backgrounds, public figures, members of main stream agencies and the larger community during the Black History Month, helps all parties involved to learn more about the achievement of African Canadians. It also helps everyone involved learn more about Africa Centre and its goals and objectives, as well as programs and services that are offered at the Centre, its challenges and the next steps that need to be taken to fully realize its purpose.



SPECIAL EVENTS

African Poetry and Arts Day

African Poetry and Arts Day (APAAD) was an initiative that was developed by the African communities in conjunction with the Africa Centre, APAAD committee, APAAD's partners and the Edmonton Poetry Festival Society. It was held on April 27th, 2013 at the Africa Centre. The day consisted of poetry workshops, a short film workshop, community lunch, networking and celebration alongside multilingual African, African Diaspora and African Canadian poetry. These poetries were performed by local and global poet performers.



National Day of Healing and Reconciliation

This was a great celebration and cultural union organised by Africa Centre and the Chinese Community on June 9, 2013. It was named “A Potluck of Cultural sharing”. Africans, Chinese and Aboriginal people came together introducing each other’s culture through sharing, food, and music drumming and dancing. The event was well attended by approximately 250 people.



Aids Walk for Life

The Council for the Advancement of African Canadians (operating as Africa Centre) was a proud supporter of the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life 2013.

Africa Centre joined hundreds of people in a fun 5km walk through the streets of downtown Edmonton in the fight against HIV on Sunday, September 22, 2013 at the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life 2013 at Sir Winston Churchill Square.

We created “Team Africa Centre” to help us raise funds and awareness about HIV/ AIDS, Funds raised from the walk by Team Africa Centre went to HIV Edmonton, a community based not-for-profit organisation that works to eliminate HIV and AIDS related stigma and discrimination. Our donations provided essential services for people living with and affected by HIV/ AIDS in our community.



Alberta Culture Celebration

National Black Coalition of Canada (NBCC) Edmonton and the Africa Centre were happy to be part of ALBERTA CULTURE DAYS 2013.



On September 27, 2013 there was an African story performance by Edmonton-based Tanzanian author Tololwa Mollel, Edmonton-based Namibian singer Garthe Prince and accompanist Karen Porkka. Three elementary schools and residents from Winfred Stewart Association attended these performances.

On September 28, 2013 there was a unique presentation title "ROOTS: A CELEBRATION OF BLACK CULTURE IN ALBERTA." We celebrated the diversity within what is considered black culture by showcasing everything from African & Caribbean drumming, to Hip-Hop and Afro-Cuban dancing.

Kids Holiday Celebration

The Council for the Advancement of African Canadians (CAAC) operating as Africa Centre hosted a 'Kids Holiday Celebration' on December 21, 2013.

CAAC is a non-profit organization that strives to create opportunities for access and full participation of members of the African-Canadian community in all aspects of society. Since its conception in 2007, the Africa Centre has become a hub for a growing community, a support system, and resource portal for African Canadians in Edmonton.



This holiday celebration also included the entire families of these children, and featured gift-giving, storytelling, holiday themed singing performances, food & refreshments, arts & crafts stations, faces painting and many other exciting activities.

It was a remarkable opportunity for all of us to bring joy to hundreds of children in our community, especially those that are less fortunate.

International Women's Day

Africa Centre in collaboration with various African Communities hosted for the first time International Women's Day on March 8, 2014.

This was an evening of Music, Inspirational speakers, Poetry and cultural dances. A global Women's Day, celebrating and remembering the Economic, Political and Social achievements of women, past, present and future.



The Consultants have drawn out a potential plan of the African Multicultural Centre showing the different aspects of the building. This will be delivered by the end of September.

The next step after it has been received would be coming up with fundraising strategies for Africa Centre to receive funds within the community. Also, we would be seeking funds from the City of Edmonton.

WrapEd Project

WrapED (Wrap = wraparound, ED = Edmonton) is a collaboration between the Africa Centre, Edmonton John Howard Society, Edmonton Police Services, Native Counselling Services of Alberta and YOUCAN Youth Services.

This project is partially funded through the Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy and will use the collective expertise of core and supporting organizations in the city to tackle the complexities of youth gangs using the Wraparound Approach.

REACH Edmonton brought these diverse organizations together to collaborate in seeking the support, rather than each group submitting a proposal in competition with one another.

This program focuses on vulnerable, multi – barried youth with a focus on up to 180 young people primarily from Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee communities.

Participants are youth between the ages of 12 and 17 that currently reside in Edmonton. This age range was targeted as they seem to be at risk of involvement with gangs.

Mayoral Election Forum

Africa Centre hosted a forum for the mayoral election of 2013 and was moderated by Mr. Keli Tamaklo, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), City of High Prairie and a Board Member of the Africa Centre.

This was to highlight the principles of the democrats and the importance of educating the community about the Canadian democratic system. This forum provided the opportunity to explain the means of working together to make a difference in the political aspects of our community and develop a combination of skills, knowledge and values in order to make a difference.

The moderator facilitated the forum. The moderator asked questions and each candidate had two minutes to respond to each question. At the end, each candidate had two minutes

for concluding remarks. This format gave candidates the opportunity to meet people on an individual basis.

AFRICA CENTRE: A COMMUNITY FACILITY

Provision of Space to Cultural Groups

In addition to programming and services, the Africa Centre has a dual purpose in providing space to cultural organisations which helps these groups to provide their own services and programming to their communities.

These groups include but a few to mention;

- Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton
- South Sudanese Canadian Community Association of Edmonton
- Oromian Community Association of Northern Alberta
- Edmonton Harari Community of Alberta
- African Cultures and Traditions Society of Edmonton
- United Bilal Community Association of Alberta
- Airport Taxi Drivers
- Association of Intercultural and Community Prosperity
- IGBO Cultural Society of Edmonton
- Alberta Somali for Support and Advocacy
- Moroccan Society of Alberta

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Edmonton

Boys and Girls Club Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area

Alberta Government - CIP

Rotary Club

Edmonton Library Calder Branch

ECALA

Contact information

Phone number: 780 455 5423

Email: info@africacentre.ca

Website: www.africacentre.ca

