

Annual Report



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

2015-16



Edmonton Intercultural Centre Grand Opening, May 2015

The Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta (CAAC), operating as Africa Centre, welcomes African immigrants and refugees whether newcomers or long-settled residents of Edmonton, to a Pan-African setting unlike any other.

There they will find:

- ✿ Programs that empower participants of all ages to integrate successfully into this country they now call home
- ✿ Growing capacity-building support for the city's African cultural communities.
- ✿ Cultural and intercultural events to celebrate the vitality of Edmonton's African communities
- ✿ Many committed volunteers who give generously of their precious time to support Edmonton's African community.

THIS YEAR

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COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AFRICAN CANADIANS IN ALBERTA

Vision

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

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 endeavours and contributes 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 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 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.

2016-2020 Strategic and Business Plans

At the end of 2014-15, the Board of Directors finalized the first phase of its strategic plan. Acknowledging the need to evolve, yet to define its fundamental goals more clearly, it established four pillars that will serve as focal points to orient programs, events and services in a manner that will distinguish them from what appear to be similar activities in other city organizations. Each pillar supports its own goals.

Advancement and Empowerment

- ✿ Goal One: Deliver a youth leadership program aimed at fostering the core values of leadership and citizenship: community participation, leadership, political participation, self-reflection and empowerment.
- ✿ Goal Two: Develop and implement a comprehensive program to support the advancement and empowerment of African Canadians of all ages (youth, adults, etc.). The focus of these programs should be on mentorship that is aimed at employment, intercultural competence and building business and community connections.
- ✿ Goal Three: Deliver a series of programs to support children and youth to succeed in school and life. The focus of these programs should be on early learning and academic advancement.

Cultural Identity

- ✿ Goal One: Expand program offerings to include ones that promote cultural exploration, belonging and pride for children, youth and families. This includes efforts to examine what African culture and identity is and provide opportunities on a regular and ongoing basis to express that identity.
- ✿ Goal Two: Celebrate the unique and diverse African heritage through a series of festivals and events that engage the African community and Edmontonians alike.
- ✿ Goal Three: Advocate and promote the teaching of African history in our education system

Integration

- ✿ Goal One: Influence and improve the “settlement system,” process, experience and outcomes for African Canadians by developing partnerships to support a richer, deeper and broader integration, and the development of intercultural competence.
- ✿ Goal Two: Promote political and civic engagement amongst the African Canadian community.
- ✿ Goal Three: Support immigrants and refugees in the settlement process through the creation of a formalized referral system. This goal is about intentionally leveraging the assets in our community to the benefit of our community.

Engagement and Unification

- ✿ Goal One: Strengthen the entire African community by working with community/cultural associations to develop and achieve their own goals.
- ✿ Goal Two: Utilize relevant communication tools and regular two-way communication, support community engagement and celebrate successes.

In 2016-17, Africa Centre Management will finalize a three-year Business Plan that will articulate the steps it will take to meet the goals articulated in the Board’s Strategic Plan.

2015-16 Board of Directors

Chairperson:	Beatrice Ghattuba
Vice Chairperson:	Keli Tamaklo
Secretary:	Meheret Worku
Treasurer:	Ireen Changamire
Director:	Nermin Allam
Director:	John Bol
Director:	John Gaye
Director:	Ismail Osman Hachi
Director:	Barnabas Kiliwa
Director:	Hassan Mohammed
Director:	Idowu Ohioze
Director:	Bukola Oladunni Salami
Director:	Edith Sam
Director:	Jean-Louis Zopke



Board Chair, Beatrice Ghattuba

Full-, Part-time & Casual Staff at March 31 2016

Executive Director:
Administrative Assistant:

Senior Program Manager:
Accountant/Book-keeper
WrapED Supervisor:
WrapED Youth Workers:

Rotary Early Learning & Family Programs Manager:
Youth Contract Worker:
Seniors' Program Co-ordinator:
Conversation Café Co-ordinator:
Facility Co-ordinators:

Tesfaye Ayalew
Eve Uwamahoro (maternity leave)
Ahlam Sadik*
Diane Conway
Proscovia Nabafu*
Dunia Nur*
Léonce Rushubirwa
Megah Tornwe
Juliette Auger*
Belen Samuel
Steller Lokonga*
Prince Borbor*
Jean-Pierre (JP) Valois
Dulu Modi



Executive Director,
Tesfaye Ayalew

Early Learning Assistants:
Sahra Hashi
Azeb Gedecho
Sandra Johanson
Violet Mrema
Beyene Muluembet
Irene Mwangi
Hannah Tekleab
Genet Tiruneh
Ruqia Towfiq
Ayan Wasuge*

* Employees hired or on temporary contracts in 2015-16

Languages spoken by one or more staff members at March 31 2016

✿ Amharic	✿ Luganda	✿ Rukiga
✿ Arabic & Sudanese Arabic	✿ Lusoga	✿ Runyankole
✿ Cidrinyi	✿ Lugisu	✿ Rutooro
✿ Creole	✿ Lugwere	✿ Somali
✿ French	✿ Lusoga	✿ Sudanese
✿ Harari	✿ Mandingo	✿ Swahili & Kiswahili
✿ Kikuyu	✿ Ogoni	✿ Tigrinia
✿ Kissi		✿ Turkish

2015-16 Africa Centre Partners and Partnership Representatives

BGCBigs' Africa Centre OST Site Co-ordinator:

Tessa Mulcair

BGCBigs' Africa Centre OST Program Facilitator:

Caleb Sindihebura

City of Edmonton Africa Centre Property Manager:

Mark Boyd

City of Edmonton Multicultural Relations Liaison:

Tim O'Donnell

Mediation & Restorative Justice Centre

Sage Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton

WrapED partners

Africa Centre (wraparound service delivery)

Edmonton Police Service (partnership support)

Edmonton John Howard Society (wraparound service delivery)

Native Counselling Services of Alberta (wraparound service delivery)

YOU CAN Youth Services (wraparound service delivery)

REACH Edmonton (partnership co-ordination)

PROGRAMS



Anyone interested in drumming/dancing classes at Africa Centre?

Despite the very real challenges of managing a non-profit in a less than ideal economic climate, 2015-16 has been a year of growth: settling Africa Centre programs into a new satellite, changes to the Early Childhood program, and strengthening the Seniors' program to name but a few.

Table 1 on the next page, shows attendance figures for each program. With the exception of one program (WrapED), this year's attendance figures are based on the number of participants attending each program each time it is offered and those figures are totalled over the year.

Table 1

Africa Centre Programs, their Purpose and Attendance Figures

Program	Purpose for which Program is funded	2015-16
Early Learning Drop-In	Early Childhood Development	1,581
Early Learning Summer Camp	Early Childhood Development	413
Women's Healthy Active Living	Early Childhood Development	393
Rhymes That Bind	Early Childhood Development	147
Out of School Time (OST))	Healthy Child Development	3,578
OST Summer Camp	Healthy Child Development	2,133
WrapED (avg. of 12. mo caseload)	Youth Crime Prevention	17
Youth Empowerment (YEG)	Empowerment and Leadership	877
Seniors Program @ Africa Centre	Socialization and Healthy Living	326
Cooking and Learning Together	Conversational English/Healthy Living	137
Sub-Total Programs		9,602
Special Events	Cultural Identity/ Intercultural Community Bonding	2,075
Total Participants		11,677

Attendance figures provide two types of information:

- ✿ the relative size of each program, based on the numbers of days per week it is offered and the number of people who attend the program each day.
- ✿ Amount of people traffic coming through Africa Centre's three sites for programs and events each year.

Take note of the wording "Africa Centre...programs" under the last bullet. Community members and organizations who rent space at Africa Centre's main site bring in considerable traffic too, mostly evenings and weekends. "Facility Users" hold classes, programs, worship services, events, meetings, garage sales, drop-in sports and many other types of activities. They bring hundreds and hundreds of people into Africa Centre's main building. All told, if these "Facility Users" reported their program /event attendance to us, this year's traffic figures may well have been over 20,000 this year.

Community Engagement

With funding from the Alberta Human Rights Multiculturalism Education Fund as well as Telus, and facilitated by the Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre, two Conversation Café series were held in 2015-16, one for men and the other for youth.

Conversation Cafés: Men



The Africa Centre uses an Asset-Based Community Building (ABCB) approach to dialogue with African Canadians about their integration experience, whether they be immigrants, refugees or Canadian-born. With this approach, participants become part of the solution by identifying the barriers or challenges that they or others they know face, proposing

solutions and considering the people and resources that exist in their respective cultural communities that may have the skills necessary to turn one or more of those proposed solutions into reality.

- ✿ Education: K-12 issues, pre-migration education, post-secondary opportunities
- ✿ Employment: Canadian experience
- ✿ Integration: liaison and navigation within political and government services; learning from successful, settled immigrants who have overcome Canadian integration and cultural challenges.
- ✿ Law and Order: basic orientation, understanding
- ✿ Culture and Identity: Living in two cultures; media and service-providers blending Africans under one umbrella despite their cultural diversity
- ✿ Social Challenges: language; gender; parenting roles and strategies
- ✿ Economic Challenges: expected vs actual standard of living

Details and discussions of these issues will be available in an upcoming report, *2014-2016 Men Conversation Cafés*.

Conversation Cafés: Youth

Africa Centre began exploring the concerns of Edmonton's African adolescents in 2009. A report summarizing a multi-faceted project to address these concerns was compiled in 2012, *Creating a Community of African Community Youth Leaders*. In 2012-13, postsecondary youth met three times to articulate and summarize their particular needs and potential solutions. They subsequently formed a youth empowerment group (YEG) which has now been in operation for three years. By 2016, it was time to update documentation to capture emerging issues young adults. Hence a series of Youth Conversation Cafés were held in winter/spring 2016. YEG itself has been exploring barriers, challenges, needs, solutions and young African human resources informally since its inception in 2013. These and more issues were addressed in this year's Cafés. Among the highlights:

- ✿ Self-Care Issues Unique to Black Youth: workshops such as a natural hair Forum
- ✿ Safe Spaces: Y.E.G and Non-YEG meetings and events
- ✿ Mentorship: Upgrade former YEG mentorship program
- ✿ Law and Order: Youth engagement with EPS decision-makers/front-line officers
- ✿ Decolonization: education about the concept, its impacts, strategies to address it;
- ✿ Literacy Enhancement: e.g. book clubs
- ✿ Equity: Exploration of strategies to deal with body image, positive mental health, individual Africans facing multiple types of prejudice types (e.g., culture/sexual orientation/religion)
- ✿ Engagement of African youth with one another: e.g., movie nights
- ✿ Multi-generational conflict

Discussion of these issues will be available in another upcoming report, *2016 Youth Conversation Cafés*.

Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Engagement with African Youth



(THE EPS-AFRICAN YOUTH MEETING) "...STARTED LIKE A DATE, CLIMAXED WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, OPENING OLD UNHEALED WOUNDS IN THE PROCESS..." BUT IT ALSO PROVIDED EDUCATION ON BOTH RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONCLUDED WITH A COMMITMENT TO MEET AGAIN.

DIVERSITY MAGAZINE

YEG members and other African youth met with EPS in November to voice their concerns in a frank discussion with Edmonton's Chief of Police as well as representatives of senior management and front line officers. The question and answer phase addressed:



- ✿ complaints against police
- ✿ police training
- ✿ shelters for homeless people
- ✿ diversity within the force
- ✿ being stopped and questioned by police officers
- ✿ police officer discipline procedures

African Leader Forums

In November 2015, African community and religious leaders met at the Westin Hotel to discuss relations between African cultural and religious community relations with Africa Centre. City of Edmonton staff facilitated group discussions on new and emerging issues in



communities, the relationship between Africa Centre and its community/communities, and the way forward together.

No matter their cultural or religious heritage, the leaders' were consistent. Their most pressing concern is African youth, their education, their settlement and integration, the choices they make to establish healthy and productive lives for themselves and their

future families, and the need for communities to work together to make this happen.

Africa Centre's Board of Directors heard them loud and clear. They subsequently made *Youth* its top priority for the coming year (2016-2017). Priority number two is for the Board and management to develop concrete strategies to build two-way *Communication* channels with its communities. Such communication sets the foundation for future collaboration and partnerships.

“WHAT I WILL BRING BACK TO MY COMMUNITY FROM THIS MEETING IS THE REMINDER THAT NO MATTER WHAT WE DO, WE CANNOT DISCONNECT FROM THE OTHER AFRICAN GROUPS IN EDMONTON. WE NEED TO BE UNITED, TO WORK TOGETHER AND ESPECIALLY TO BE AN EXAMPLE OF UNITY FOR THOSE BACK IN OUR HOME COUNTRIES.”

DIVERSITY TV INTERVIEW WITH A LEADERS’ FORUM PARTICIPANT

Families

Early Childhood Development



Storytime with a U of A practicum student

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Early childhood development is considered to be the most important phase in life...” because it has such a tremendous, life-long impact on the quality of their health and well-being, as well as the way that they learn and behave for the rest of their lives. Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers’ development relies heavily on the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance that children experience in their family, neighbourhood, and wherever they are cared for.

The purpose of the Centre’s Early Childhood program is designed to help African immigrant and refugee children acquire the skills that are expected for their particular age. By monitoring, stimulating and nurturing growth and development, they will be on track to achieve the same developmental level of “readiness” to start kindergarten when they are five years old as the majority of other children in their Canadian classroom. A few examples of “readiness” include the abilities to listen, to pay attention, to follow through on teacher’s instructions, to share toys, to play collaboratively with other children, and to put their own coat and boots on.

This winter, the program started using the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* to assess developmental skills of new children registering for the program. This involves a one to two-hour visit with the parent and child. Then children will be reassessed every six months to track their progress. If a child has not reached an expected skill at the expected age, staff use strategies and games to support that specific child’s need. Those strategies and games can also be given as handouts to parents if they want to use them with their children at home.

As a result of a couple of program promotional strategies this year, the program has had to start turning children and families away at the Africa Centre main site on a regular basis because it is very often “full.” Program capacity is determined by the size of the room(s) being used and also on the age of the children in the program on a given day. Usually the

program is full at the main site if it has 24 children. If there are a lot of two and three year olds, more staff are needed than if most children are four and five year olds. Fortunately, some of the families turned away were able to take their children to the same program that Africa Centre offers at its satellite downtown, the Edmonton Intercultural Centre (EIC). It is usually full when it reaches 11 children. It too has occasionally had to turn people away. In fact, many Main site participants actually live closer to EIC than to Main, but children want to visit their friends and parents want to work with the staff that they know well. So they go the extra distance.

Because the program is so often full, Africa Centre had to make the hard decision this winter to limit any given child's attendance in the program to once a week from twice a week. This means that children frequently being turned away now have a chance to participate, too. So Thursdays are usually full and Saturdays are almost always full at Main Site. We can no longer call it a "Drop-In" anymore!

ONE LITTLE GIRL WHO CAME WITH HER MOTHER, HAD NEVER SWALLOWED SOLID FOOD BEFORE. ALTHOUGH SHE WAS WELL PAST THE AGE OF EATING SOFT FOOD EXCLUSIVELY, SHE JUST WOULD NOT TAKE IT, EVEN WHEN HER MOTHER TRIED TO FEED IT TO HER. ON THE GIRL'S FIRST DAY, HER MOTHER STAYED FOR THE WHOLE SESSION TO OBSERVE HOW AND WHAT HER DAUGHTER WOULD DO. AT SNACK TIME, THE GIRL LOOKED AROUND THE TABLE AND SAW WHAT ALL THE OTHER CHILDREN WERE DOING, SO SHE PICKED UP A CHEESE STICK, BIT INTO IT, AND ATE THE WHOLE THING. HER MOTHER WAS SO ASTONISHED, SHE ALMOST CRIED.

Women's Active and Healthy Living (WAHL)

With the addition of a weekly class at the Edmonton Intercultural Centre (EIC), Africa Centre has been offering three WAHL classes a week this year, the others being at the main site and at the St John's Institute satellite. To make this work, a second instructor has been added. In addition, an Africa Centre employee took Zumba instructor training in January so the Centre may have an African instructor available within the year.

Africa Centre Out of School Time (ACOST)

Offered in partnership with BGCBigs, ACOST promotes healthy child development for six to 12-year-olds. Amongst its objectives, the program invites children to enhance:

- ✿ social skills
- ✿ relationships
- ✿ creativity
- ✿ problem-solving
- ✿ personal strengths

In winter 2016, the children started a class on African drumming and dance. Up to ten children spend an hour twice each week learning about African rhythms and tempo, ways to sustain them and to find their groove.

Related African history and dance are included to keep the classes lively and hold everyone's attention. Now in ACOST's eighth year, Africa Centre wants to find youth and young adults that were children in the program in its early days to reminisce with them and hear their stories. What memories have stayed with them; whether and how it made a difference to their lives, to be in the program with other African children? If you know of anyone who fits the profile, contact Africa Centre's Senior Program Manager.



A STAFF MEMBER CONTACTED A TEACHER AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO FIND OUT HOW THEY COULD HELP A CHILD IN THE ACOST PROGRAM THAT WAS STRUGGLING WITH READING AND WRITING IN FRENCH. A VISIT TO THE SCHOOL WAS SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS THE CHILD'S INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLAN AND AFTERWARDS, ACOST'S FRENCH-SPEAKING STAFF MEMBER WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE CHILD, HIS MOTHER AND THE SCHOOL USING STRATEGIES FROM THE CHILD'S PLAN. IT WAS AN HONOUR TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT HIM IN THIS WAY.

Spring and Summer Camps

The ACOST and early childhood spring break camps were held once again in 2015. After Africa Centre collaborated with the Francophone community to host Black History month in February, many Francophone parents discovered that the ACOST program had a



African story-teller with the pre-school children

French-speaking staffer. There were sufficient registrations of Francophone children in the subsequent weeks that in the spring break schedule, time was set aside each day for the Francophone children to come together for play activities in French, a most welcome initiative.

Since 2008, Africa Centre has partnered with BGCBiggs and others to run one of the city's largest summer camps for

school-aged children. Rotary's early childhood program also runs its own parallel camp so that parents can bring in young children with their older siblings. Africa Centre obtained federal funding to hire 10 post-secondary students, used four of its year-round Early Learning Assistants and hired two more temporary ones while BGCBigs offered their two year-round Africa Centre staff and hired four more post-secondary students. These twenty-two people (including a cook) made the Centre's eighth summer camp possible for:

- ✿ 125 registered school-aged children in the 6-week camp and a few more drop-in school-aged children when space was available
- ✿ 24 registered pre-schoolers in each of two 3-week camps

Maintaining an active waiting list made it possible to invite children to come in for a day from time to time when some registered children did not make it to camp that day.

See page 22 for the story of a former camper reflecting back as a young adult on his experiences with the camp and what they mean to him now.

WrapED

The program provides wrap around support to 12-17 year-old youth involved in significant substance abuse, self-destructive behaviours and /or criminal activity. This support enables participants to find their own strengths, motivation and capacity to plan, as well as to build and sustain a healthy lifestyle. Those who take full advantage of the program can do so for a period of 18 months. This means that for several youth from Africa Centre's caseload coming to the end of their time with the program are getting ready to transition out.



One of two Youth Workers

"ONE OF THE YOUTH I WORK
WITH WAS CHARGED BY
POLICE 42 TIMES IN THE
FIRST YEAR THAT I WORKED
WITH HIM. IN HIS SECOND
YEAR, HE WAS CHARGED
ONLY TWICE. HE HAS COME
SUCH A LONG WAY!"

AFRICA CENTRE
WRAPED YOUTH WORKER

What difference has it made for them? One of the project Evaluation team's early findings is that by the end of their 18 months in the program, those who have stayed the whole time tend to have learned just how negative is the impact that unhealthy friendships can have on their lives and they want to release themselves from these friendships, "but letting go of unhealthy peer associations is tentative and fragile." Fortunately, those transitioning out are referred to less intensive support programs, where they can continue the next steps on their journey to a healthy lifestyle.

Now that a second cohort of adolescents are entering a program in one of the four organizations providing wraparound service delivery, it is possible to make

comparisons between the first and second cohorts. While the majority in both cohorts were 15 or older when they started, a larger number of 12- to 14-year-olds are participating in the

second cohort (Cohort 1 was 6% vs 37% in Cohort 2). In the first cohort, program participants worked with up to three workers during their time in the program. More second cohort youth are sticking with their first Youth Worker than in the first cohort (82% vs 63%).

Poor cultural identity can be a significant risk factor for troubled youth. Edmonton's WrapED program has funds available for addressing youths' cultural needs. This ties in well with one of the Board's new pillars for its programs. Africa Centre program staff are working diligently to develop a strategy to assist youth participants to strengthen their cultural identity. It is expected that some of the more successful strategies to strengthen cultural identity will be incorporated into other Africa Centre programs.

WrapED is a close interagency partnership that is funded by Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre. Africa Centre's local partners include: Native Counselling Services of Alberta, YOUCAN Youth Services, Edmonton John Howard Society, Edmonton Police Service and REACH Edmonton.

YEG: Youth Empowerment Group

Young adult members tend to use the group's acronym these days, YEG, rather than its full name. It was formed to create opportunities for the empowerment of African Canadian young adults and interested youth.

In the first six months of 2015-2016, YEG participants worked intensively to prepare for their youth conference entitled: *#TheComeUp Youth Empowerment Initiative*. Their activities included:

- ✿ Securing a new venue to replace one that fell through
- ✿ Soliciting corporate sponsorships
- ✿ Planning and managing fundraising activities such as a basketball tournament and a fashion show
- ✿ Arranging many, many outreach visits to high schools to promote the event
- ✿ Taking a series of workshops on Making Presentations so that they could act as speakers, panelists and hosts for conference sessions



- ✿ Handling the usual event management responsibilities for one that targeted 200-400 people who would be participating in several full group sessions and a series of three sequential sessions of five simultaneous activities/talks/presentations

"I LEFT THE #THECOMEUP FEELING EMPOWERED, INSPIRED, AND PROUD OF OUR COMMUNITY FOR COMING TOGETHER TO ORGANIZE AN EVENT THAT WAS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED TO ADDRESS OUR ISSUES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENCOURAGING SOLIDARITY AND UNITY

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GROUP MEMBER

In all, over 300 youth participated with considerable enthusiasm throughout the day-long event, October 24 2015. Yet another upcoming report summarizes the details.

"SO MANY INSPIRING & PASSIONATE SPEAKERS AT @YEGTHECOMEUP. THANKS TO THE @AFRICACENTREYEG YOUTH FOR ORGANIZING. #YEG

*TWEET: ANDREW KNACK,
CITY COUNCILLOR*

To honour Black History Month, YEG presented *Melanin Narratives* at Edmonton's Latitude 53 Art Gallery in March. It was an art-inspired event featuring individual stories, experiences, and faces of African and Caribbean Edmontonians. YEG aimed to shed light on their experiences and positive achievements. Their intent was to have people humanize and identify with the realities of black youth by celebrating their various histories, cultures and present lives. The art they showcased included photographs of everyday Black Edmontonians followed by their personal life narrative. Other forms of art presented were painters, cultural artists, dancers, musicians, actors, visual artists, and Spoken Word poets.

Seniors Program @ Africa Centre (SP@C)

Despite not knowing whether there would be funds to continue after the pilot project ended in August, the program, offered in partnership with the West-End Seniors' Activity Centre, held a grand opening in April 2015 and an AFRI-CAN (African Canadian)



intercultural seniors event in September. A few weeks after the program officially ended in August, a group of African seniors approached the Centre's management staff to request that they continue to come to Africa Centre on Thursdays. They would be happy to organize it themselves, but could they get some time in the gym with the balance therapy, soccer and basket balls too? They wanted to keep up the

exercise program that they had started when there was an instructor to show them how to

use them. And so it went, right through the first months of winter until Africa Centre was able to find a small amount of money for outreach from a new partner, the Sage Seniors Association. The new funds enabled Africa Centre to hire a Social Worker to work a few hours a week to identify seniors that are particularly vulnerable and in need of some kind of assistance to improve their health, well-being and quality of life. The Social Worker would then work with the senior to come up with a plan to address what was needed and at the same time, find a way for them to increase their social time with friends, relatives, and African or other seniors. At the same time, the Social Worker has been able to book a few activities for the Thursdays' drop-in seniors group.

"THE SENIORS PARTICULARLY ENJOYED HAVING A LIBRARIAN COME IN WITH A BUNCH OF IPADS TO TEACH THEM HOW TO USE THEM!"
OUTREACH CO-ORDINATOR

Events

The underlying purpose for Africa Centre events is to nourish cultural identity and to strengthen bonding both within and between Edmonton's African Communities.

Africa Day Gala

Africa Day 2015 was held June 13 at the Shaw Conference Centre. Its theme was to celebrate, recognise and pay tribute to the city's African communities and organisations as well as their contributions and support. Gala participants particularly enjoyed the Shaw's "African inspired menu."



Africa Day Gala Entertainers

Alpha Yaya Diallo
Garth Prince
Isokan African Drumming

Lifetime Achievement Award

Naftal
Lucas Domingo

**Africa Day Gala Awards for involvement in
Annual All-Africa Games Soccer Tournament**

Thomas Bumbeh
Armando Correia
Nelson Kibandae
Amandla Ngwenya
Jamie Saffa

All-Africa Games Soccer Tournament



The 8th annual tournament took place July 5th and 6th 2015 at Confederation Sports Centre on the south side. Both the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and the city's Fire Rescue Services came out to the tournament to mingle with members of the African community,



Sweet Victory!

to promote careers in their respective professions amongst African youth and to play a little soccer.

Sixteen teams registered for the tournament that took place before 1,200 spectators over the two days.

AFRICA CENTRE SITES

Main Site

Public consultation sessions on the new building's design will be completed in 2017. In the meantime, the old 1957 school building continues to be put through its paces.

With this year's overall increase in attendance figures, space for programs is getting tight as is office space. It may not appear to that way at times since there is ample free space in the building in the mornings for example when few or no programs are running. But staff are increasingly spending negotiating use of shared spaces. Facility users are not getting their preferred choice when they book rooms.

It is highly unlikely that a "LEEDs silver" environmental standard will permit windows in the new building that are as big and bright as the ones in the Wellington building. So we settle eagerly, yet patiently, into the long wait for the new building by appreciating the ever so rare feature of the old building that we will actually miss.

Community Rental of Main Site Spaces 2015-2016

By providing rental spaces to African communities, the Centre can make a modest contribution toward building their capacity to offer services and programming to their communities. The following organizations and groups are among those that rented facility space in 2015-16.



The former Wellington school, circa 2006

African Cultures & Traditions Society	Eritrean Canadian Community of Edm.
Afro Revolution	Fikrn Selamn Association
Alberta Harari Committee Foundation	Fitra
Alberta Somali Advocacy & Support	Guinean Association of Edmonton
Association of Kenyans in Alberta	ICAE
ATIA	Islamic Circle of N. America Sisters Canada
Awdal Relief Fund	Liberal Party
BGS Entreprises Career/Corp. Dev't	Liberian Community
Burundi Edmonton Association	Liberian Friendship Society
Central Region Sons Association	Moferno Women's Soccer Team
Centre for Eritrean Community	National Black Coalition of Canada
CICE Ivorian Community	North Sudan Community
Christian Immigrant Support Services	Red Sea
Congregation Beit Mash	Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edm.
CWA	South Sudanese Women's Group
Divine Restorative Ministries	St. Albert Heavenly Rollers
Dogs with Wings	Sudanese Community Cultural League
Dynamic Church Int'l Fundraiser	Uganda Cultural Association
Eritrean Community Soccer Team	

Satellites



St. John's Institute
ІНСТИТУТ СВ. ІВАНА

African newcomer as well as settled immigrants and refugees are not congregated in one or two areas of the city. While there may be a few pockets in specific locations, most are dispersed

throughout the city. In order to make its services more accessible to Africans in different parts of the city, the Centre offers its programs at satellite sites, namely St John's Institute



on the south side and Edmonton Intercultural Centre, downtown. More and more, the main Africa Centre is acting as an incubator:

- ✿ To test new programs that address emerging trends (once well-established, these would be transferred to the satellites)
- ✿ To support nascent organizations representing African communities in their process of becoming established by providing:
 - ~ affordable rental of small spaces until they can pay standard rates elsewhere
 - ~ drop in rental of store front space as well as associated office support and meeting space
 - ~ opportunities for capacity-building



AN ALUMNUS BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



Born in London, England to Eritrean parents, Isaac's family packed their bags for Edmonton when he was eight. Although his first language was English, in Canada he still sensed that he was different, did not belong. Schoolmates invited him to sleepovers yet for some reason, his parents never allowed him to go. Nor was he allowed to take the bus like others his age. He thought his parents were strange and overprotective.

At twelve, he attended Africa Centre's summer camp for the first time. There, he found others who were just like him; who ate food with the same unique smell and who spoke his language; children whose parents' rules were like those of his own parents', leaving no need for the endless explanations necessary to reduce the risk of being teased by peers. He remembers well the reputation he earned for being the one to choke on carrots every time his friends wanted to make him laugh. At first, it was embarrassing but gradually, he realized that it was not a big deal and became less self-conscious. He enjoyed the camp so much that he kept coming back every summer. Developing meaningful relationships with camp leaders had a tremendous impact. One was studying petroleum engineering and Isaac found it fascinating that as part of her training, she got to blow things up! Another taught campers how to prepare a résumé. Isaac saved the material for years, referring to it when he applied for his first job at Africa Centre's summer camp.

HE CREDITS AFRICA CENTRE WITH HELPING TO SHAPE HIS
IDENTITY AND FOR GIVING HIM HEALTHY ROLE MODELS TO
WHOM HE COULD RELATE.

When he was too old for camp, he applied to volunteer one summer and the following year, applied to be a camp leader himself. During his two years a summer student employee, he learned to use creative problem-solving to encourage children to co-operate with him, especially with some of the more difficult ones.

Now, in third year of university, Isaac has a bright future before him. He credits the Africa Centre with helping to shape his identity and with giving him healthy role models to whom he could relate. He is able to see himself not as abnormal or weird but as he is; a Canadian, an Eritrean, and an Englishman. Nothing abnormal about that.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2015-16

- ✿ Boys and Girls Club Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area
- ✿ Centre for Family Literacy
- ✿ City of Edmonton
- ✿ ECALA
- ✿ Edmonton Community Foundation
- ✿ Government of Alberta
- ✿ Government of Canada
- ✿ Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre
- ✿ REACH Edmonton
- ✿ Sage Seniors Association
- ✿ Telus
- ✿ Westend Seniors Activity Centre

AFRICA CENTRE CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Information for all sites	
<p style="text-align: center;">Mailing Address</p> <p style="text-align: center;">P.O. Box 64072 11528 107 Avenue Edmonton AB T5H 4K7</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Voice and Electronic Communications</p> <p>Reception: (780) 455 5423 Fax: (780) 455 5473 E-mail: info@afRICACentre.ca Webpage: www.afRICACentre.ca Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Africa-Centre/418275331601442 Twitter: @AfricaCentreYEG</p>	
Programs offered at Main and Satellite locations	
<p>Main Site 13160 127 Street (former Wellington School)</p>	<p>St John's Institute Satellite 11024 82 Avenue</p> <p>Edmonton Intercultural Centre Satellite 9538 107 Avenue</p>