2014 was called the year of “unexpected opportunities in time of challenges,” and 2015 must be remembered as the year during which the Coalition of African and Caribbean Communities (AFRICOM) implemented profound changes that are necessary to adjust to the changing non-profit environment. Part of transition consisted of increasing the Coalition capacities to deliver direct services by seeking recognition and accreditation with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), more funding opportunities, and joining statewide and national networks of immigration agencies. Changes also consisted of moving general meetings to week days to better accommodate existing and prospective members. Rededicating itself to its first goal: advocacy, AFRICOM has linked with prominent organizations including the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Citizenship Coalition (PICC), Public Citizens for children and Youth (PCCY), Job Corps and many more. In 2015, AFRICOM broke grounds by initiated new projects of interest to the community for instance the Autism Awareness campaign, which was launched with seed money from the Philadelphia Autism Project. AFRICOM’s transition to new frontiers is also visible through the its new renovated website, which has attracted numerous hundred of visitors and partners. In 2016, AFRICOM will definitely followed the trail it blazed in 2015. Many thanks to the Executive officers, the Board of Directors and the volunteers who contributed to this transition.
**AFRICOM joins PICC’s statewide efforts on immigration**

The year 2015 started with AFRICOM attending and conducting discussions at the first PICC immigration conference in Harrisburg, PA. The aim of the Conference, which took place a few weeks after President Obama’s Immigration Relief Executive order was meant to educate immigrant communities on the meaning of DACA/DAPA and other important issues about immigrants’ rights. Attending this conference as a member of PICC, was part of the Coalition’s strategy to increase its capacities and offer more appropriate immigration and legal services to the communities. AFRICOM joined PICC in 2014 after working with the New Sanctuary Movement group, campaigning and advocating for immigrant rights.

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**Summer Meals Program 2015**

In summer 2015, the Coalition of African Communities (AFRICOM) joined the Coalition Against Hunger in the Greater Philadelphia Area in promoting summer free meals for kids and teenagers aged 0 to 18 in a effort to help reduce hunger. The partnership was agreed at a meeting on May, 27, 2015 at the Coalition Against Hunger’s office on Fairmont Avenue. The summer meal program was consistent with AFRICOM’s food bank initiative. AFRICOM’s role consisted of translating flyers in French and Haitian Creole and serving as information resources for African and Caribbean immigrant and refugee families, especially those who are limited-English proficient. In its final report, AFRICOM indicated that it received about 8 direct calls in the first two weeks, reached out to community members through radio shows on WURD, email alerts to community leaders, and one on one referrals and information. The launching ceremony took place at the Aquinas Catholic Center. AFRICOM’s C.O.O’s and Chairman, Mr. Giordani were present.
AFRICOM joins Mayor Nutter’s MBK Philadelphia response as community partner

In 2014, President Obama tasked local communities leaders around the nation with developing an action plan to implement his “My Brother’s Keeper Program,” which is meant to “build support to tackle the opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color.” While former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter accepted the challenge, he commissioned his administration to work with community and faith-based organizations to define effective strategies, which would enable young African American and Latino men, to reach their full potential. On March 31, 2015, MBK Philadelphia was launched at the Community College of Philadelphia. Mayor Nutter attended the launching the event. AFRICOM attended the event as it was one of the community-based, faith-based organizations and city departments, which contributed to Philadelphia’s MBK action plan. The MBK Philadelphia project is expected to continue even after Mayor Nutter left office.

Health Fair 2015: The legacy continues

On August 29, 2015, Kingsessing Recreation Center in West Philadelphia was once again the hosting site of AFRICOM’s 15th Community Health, Wellness, and Cultural fair. Hosting the 15th Edition of the fair means that the Coalition has kept its legacy alive. The famous Health Fair started in 2001, the same year when AFRICOM was launched. The goal of the fair was to help African immigrants, whose number was increasing in Philadelphia be connected to health services and other public benefits. 15 years after, the goal remains the same: contribute to reduce health disparities among low-income African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees. The 2015 edition broke records: 20 agencies attended, 217 people registered, 39 people screened for HIV (highest number in 15 years. 3 teams competed for in AFRICOM’s famous soccer tournament, which Nigeria won for the fifth time. Councilwoman Jenny L. Blackwell and Hon. Stanley Straughter (former chairman of the Mayor’s Commission for African and Caribbean Affairs) attended the fair. According to Mrs. Oni Richard, the Executive Director of AFAHO, the fair was the best in the last five years. In recognition of their inestimable service, AFRICOM presented M. Steve Smith of Kingsessing Recreation Center with the Community Award plaque, while Ms. Antoinette Ghartey (former chairperson of the Health and family wellness commission) received
Global Health: AFRICOM supports Ebola-related efforts in Philadelphia

The outbreak of the Ebola virus, the numerous lives that it claimed in West Africa (Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia), and its social repercussions on the African immigrant populations in the United States left nobody indifferent. AFRICOM showed its concerns by supporting all initiatives taken in Philadelphia to raise awareness and know the latest about the disease. In Philadelphia, community leaders from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone formed the Coalition of Countries affected by Ebola, with the leadership of Rev. Moses Suah of Faith Immanuel Lutheran Church (Lansdowne, PA) to collect resources to help in the affected communities Africa. AFRICOM endorsed and supported the efforts of this Coalition and attended the Concert at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church. AFRICOM also sent representatives to citywide forums, seminars and lectures about the Ebola virus at diverse places including Salus University (January 9, 2015) the University of Pennsylvania (April 2, 2015)

AFRICOM launched ground-breaking autism campaign

One of the ground-breaking initiatives of the Coalition in 2015 was the launching of the African and Caribbean Autism Awareness and Education Campaign. The new program was a response to the astounding silence that the African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees have kept about the issue, which is yet affecting youngsters in our communities. The successful program was made possible thank to a small seed funding from the Philadelphia Autism Project. AFRICOM’s innovative project was recognized at the Award ceremony at Drexel University on May 14, 2015. Ms. Raphiatou Noumbissi (Head of social service) and Dr. Eric Edi (C.O.O) represented AFRICOM at the ceremony. With the funding, AFRICOM was able to host an Awareness dinner on August 28, 2015, developed posters in three languages and radio address in 5 African languages, with the help of Ra-
Caring for our senior citizens: AFRICOM joins conversations

In 2015, AFRICOM rekindled its commitment to help improve the lives of African and Caribbean Citizens. In so doing, the Coalition took part in various conversations, which brought together local agencies including the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA). The partnership with PCA is crucial because it is the largest agency that serves senior citizens in Philadelphia and because PCA has been AFRICOM’s partner for the past 10 years. Each year, PCA gives AFRICOM $1,000.00 for its health and senior citizens program. Two Community meetings took place in spring and fall 2015. In order to move the conversation forward, AFRICOM pledged total support to the Multicultural Family Services’ suggestion to establish an African Advisory Board to work closely with PCA. This year, AFRICOM also attended PCA’s annual luncheon during which Rev. John Jallah was honored. AF-

Bowl with AFRICOM: Temple University Team wins third edition

This third edition of the “Bowl with Africom,” took place on June 12, 2015 in observance of Immigrant Heritage Month. Unlike the two previous edition, which were dominated by Team Jamaica, the 2015 edition was the affair of Team Temple University, a team of colleagues that Dr. Udo-Inyang invited to the fun, relaxing competition. Team Jamaica (double champion 2013 & 2014) Team Liberia, Team Ivory Coast, Team Mali and Team Senegal competed in the tournament. Every year, “Bowl with AFRICOM” brings together diverse communities to raise friends and funds and network. Congrats Team Temple University. See you all in 2016

End of Year 2015: Upenn student Christiana Kallon and friends help AFRICOM give less fortunate kids a smile

Christmas (2015), a student from the University of Pennsylvania and a native from Sierra Leone, Christiana Kallon rallied her classmates and friends to collect, wrap, and donate numerous gifts to be distributed to less fortunate kids in the African and Caribbean Communities. The two bags of toys were dropped at AFRICOM’s Baltimore Avenue office. The Coalition for Jamaica and the Haitian Coalition of Philadelphia were the two main beneficiaries. Thanks to Mr. A. Batchelor and Mr. Giordani J.B, who committed to distribute the packets, some children had a smile on their face and a story to share with their friends. All honors to Ms. Christiana Kallon and her friends
Many thanks to our 2015 sponsors and partners:

- Philadelphia Autism Project
- Health Partners Plans
- Allstate Foundation
- African Diaspora Health Initiative
- ShopRite of Haverford
- Children’s Crisis Treatment Center
- Minuteman Press
- PCCY: Public Citizens for Children + Youth
- African Family Health Organization
- Multicultural Community Family Services
  - Dedicated to serving immigrant children and families
- Haitian of Philadelphia
- Southwest CDC
Health care and health insurance for all, AFRICOM attends PCCY campaign

24,000 children in PA are blocked from Public Health insurance, which puts them at risk of not receiving the care they need. While research shows that affording these children health insurance would not trigger a budget crisis for the State of Pennsylvania. No doubt that African and Caribbean immigrant children count among these 24,000 kids. This is the reality that AFRICOM has accepted to help fight against by joining PCCY’s campaign for Health Insurance for all. The efforts will continue in 2016. African Community leaders are summoned to join the advocacy campaign. Together let us make a difference for our children.

AFRICOM part of 76ers African & Caribbean Heritage Night

This year, Team Temple University, won AFRICOM’S annual bowling event by scoring the highest points in two sets of game in a fun competition, which saw the participation of Team Jamaica (double champion 2013 & 2014) Team Liberia, Team Ivory Coast, Team Mali and Team Senegal. The annual bowling competition took place on June 12 to commemorate immigrant Heritage month. It is a social fundraising event, which brings diverse community members of AFRICOM. Do not miss the 2016 competition coming up soon. Congratulations Team Temple University.

AFRICOM welcomes new Philadelphia Mayor, Jim Kenny

On January 4, 2016, the city of Philadelphia inaugurated its new Mayor, Jim Kenny. The Coalition was represented at the Inauguration by its board chairman, Mr. Giordani Jean Baptiste. Like with previous administrations, AFRICOM wishes the new city leader and his team a wonderful term and successful leadership for the benefit of the citizens of this great city.

AFRICOM has advised the new Mayor’s transitional team on questions related to African and Caribbean Immigrants and refugees. AFRICOM hopes that this collaboration will continue fruitfully. Like many other immigrant communities within PICC, AFRICOM congratulates Mayor Kenny for reinstating the ICE-hold Executive order that Mayor Nutter signed in 2014, which he overruled a week before leaving office.
Pics of the year 2015
2016 Kick off Celebration at African Cultural Center

Friday, January 8, 2016, was the day Africom chose to hold what is now going to be the annual “pop the Champagne event,” to kick off every year.

For 2016, the free event took place at the African Cultural Center, 5000 Springfield Avenue in West Philadelphia. More than 100 guests of all ages from various communities including Mali, Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal, Guinea, Liberia, Sudan, Cameroon, Haiti, Jamaica, Ghana, Togo, Congo, etc. attended the event.

The Cameroonian Association of Philadelphia sent in the largest crowd as the members of this illustrious organization seized the occasion to introduce their new officers. The kick-off event was an opportunity to tell the community about AFRICOM’s work. Attending leaders had the opportunity to network and talk about their respective organizations. A raffle and an auction competition took place. The Cameroonian Association brought in the highest bid.

On behalf of the board of Directors, Mr. Giordani Jean Baptiste, chairman congratulated the planning committee of the Kick-Off

AFRICOM Partners with the University of Pennsylvania

Africom joins the University of Pennsylvania Museum to bring the 21th annul celebrations of the cultures of Africa.

Romario Brown a high school senior from Sankofa Academy Charter School, is interning for AFRICOM and has put together AFRICOM’s presentation for the event.
Africom turns 15

Can you believe it! 2001—2016, fifteen years since a group of dedicated African and Caribbean immigrant leaders launched what is today the Coalition of African Communities. For fifteen years, AFRICOM’s members have selflessly moved the Coalition to achieve its mission, advocate for African and Caribbean on many issues. The fifteen anniversary will be a time of remembrance, evaluation and projection. Numerous events will take place in the spring time. Get involved in the planning committee of this great-to-be occasion. The adjoined picture was taken the day the organization was launched at the Balch Institute of Philadelphia on May 21, 2001.

GET INVOLVED

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Organizations: $150.00/year
Individuals: $75.00/year
Students & Organizations: free

Mail checks or money orders made payable to AFRICOM

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