

Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago

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MAHEBER Newsletter

April 2011

Senior Program and Health Program



Seniors Program:

The senior program teaches our clients the English language as well as gives them time to socialize and interact with other immigrants. We started the Bright Ideas class with only 9 students, but now have well over 14 students who regularly attend class as well two student volunteers who help teach the clients.

Class is taught twice a week: Monday and Friday, and after class on Friday, the seniors play games, socialize with each other, and listen to music. We have established March 25th to be our annual Seniors' Day here at the ECAC. This year, we celebrated with food

In This Issue

Annual Fundraising Dinner

African Community Forum with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and UAO 2011

African Summit

The Effects of Libya's Violence on Sub-African Migrant Workers

Annual Fundraising Dinner

Even though most of us are still donning our winter attires, spring is just around the corner, which also means that our Annual Fundraising Dinner is not that far away either. We are currently still raising funds in prospect of renovating our agency into the center that will best serve our community and clients. So come join us on May 7 at the White Eagle Banquets in Niles, IL, for a formal sit-down dinner, traditional music and dance, and cultural performances by the ECAC youths, which will then be followed by awards and recognitions. We look forward to seeing all of you there.



EMAT Graduates

For the third time since its founding in 2008, the Electromechanical Assembly Training Program (EMAT) have completed yet another cycle, granting 24 participants from the immigrant community an improved prospect of employment opportunities and job advancement.

Participants of this program are dedicated to an intensive 10-week

celebrated with food, dancing, games, and storytelling. Our program is growing to be a very successful, providing much joy to our seniors.

Health Program:



Supported by the Chicago Community Trust and other funders, the Health Program arranges for various health topics to be presented at the ECAC to our community members once a month by a PowerPoint presentation. This program also provides for house visits, one-on-one health education on diabetes, hepatitis A,B,C, women health, mental health, HIV, and etc, for our new clients and community as a whole.

On March 30th, we gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Dangers of Cigarette Smoking and the Effects of Second Hand Smoke, to 24 community members.

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program, taught by our EMAT instructor, Yohannes Tegegne. The class teaches the participants a vast knowledge of electronics as they learn about resistors, capacitors, and currents, measure amperage, voltage, and ohms, and how to operate hand, measuring, and power tools. As part of the course, they also study engineering diagrams, sketch engineering drawings from different angles, calculate formulas, and are educated on safety and the environment.

But beyond the learning lies a satisfaction that only friendship can bring, as a statement from the graduation speech reads, "As important as any technical knowledge we've learned, however, are the friendships we've made with each other. I can say that we now share a new culture or understanding of what it's like to live in a new country, learning new ideas and facing new challenges." Therefore, our participants gain the closure of friendship, receive a fresh knowledge of electronics, and also invaluable job interview techniques and resume building tips by the end of the course. Our employment office will continue to offer guidance and help to our participants in their future job searches. The participants have now graduated from the program with a certificate and a multimeter, as a gift for the incredible amount of dedication during the training period. We would like to congratulate all 24 of our EMAT graduates and wish them great success in their future jobs.

If you are interested in enrolling in our EMAT program, please contact Yohannes Tegegne at (773) 508-0303, ext. 122 or visit http://www.ecachicago.org/TEMAT_Brochure.pdf.

African Community Forum with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and UAO 2011 African Summit

On Saturday, April 16 at 11:30 a.m, we will have a wonderful opportunity to meet Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and engage in an African Community Forum with her. Hosted here at the ECAC, this is a chance to hear her talk about her vision as the new President, be educated about the workings of the Cook County Board, and in turn, educate her about issues concerning the African community.

Very exciting also is the prospect of the UAO 2011 African Summit that will be held at the Schultz Auditorium from 8:30 am to 5 pm on Saturday, May 14. Her Excellency Ambassador Amina Salum Ali, Permanent Representative of the African Union to the United States, will be this year's keynote speaker. Ambassador Ali will speak on behalf of the AU and its member states in order to promote a socio-economic union of the continent. advocate for peace and stability. as well as

...of the community, to ensure the peace and security, to ...
establish alliances between the African governments and the civil society
and private sector, especially for women and youth. We here at the
ECAC, a sponsor of the Summit, strongly encourage all to attend this
incredible event. To attend, please RSVP at summit@uniteafricans.org or
call 312-949-9980.

The Effects of Libya's Violence on Sub-African Migrant Workers

As international companies close and evacuate their employees from Libya, refugees and migrant workers are left behind. Although they are surrounded by violence which was ensued by information concerning the African mercenaries Gaddafi had hired to oppress the revolt, many of their managers have already left the country, especially after a particularly violent attack in the city of Benghazi in eastern Libya, resulting in many deaths and over a thousand injuries in mid-February. Since the rising danger and discrimination in Libya are mainly targeted at sub-Saharan Africans, countless numbers of Africans are trapped indoors, afraid of being mistaken as mercenaries if they step foot onto the streets or off their work camp compounds, where several suspected mercenaries have already been caught, beaten, and even killed for their alleged work for the government.

Yet with two million sub-Saharan African refugees and migrant workers still trapped in Libya, the U.N refugee agency is calling out to all parties to send their support to the African immigrants who are victims of the turbulence from both the eastern and western parts of the country. Even though the violence continues to escalate, many have been prevented from evacuating Libya as heavily-armed government forces stand guard on the Tunisian border and on surrounding roads.

In the city of Benghazi in eastern Libyan, nearly 8,000 people, including Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis, are still awaiting their chance to be evacuated from Libya. Many Ethiopians and Eritreans have managed to go to Tunisia, Malta, and different Cities in Italy including Rome but are camped in restricted areas. Their fate is still unknown. Some advocacy work on the part of refugee communities, humanitarian and refugee resettlement organizations is called for.

Upcoming Events

On April 18, the ECAC is hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Party to thank all of our volunteers, interns, and employees who are dedicated to serving our community and clients. We would like to send out a very sincere thank you to our employees, volunteer, and intern staffs who are always devoted and ready

to aid our clients in all aspects of their new life here in Chicago.

We hoped you had enjoyed this edition of the MAHEBER Newsletter. Thank you for your time and we look forward to sharing our upcoming news and events with you.

Sincerely,

Erku Yimer
Executive Director

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President

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