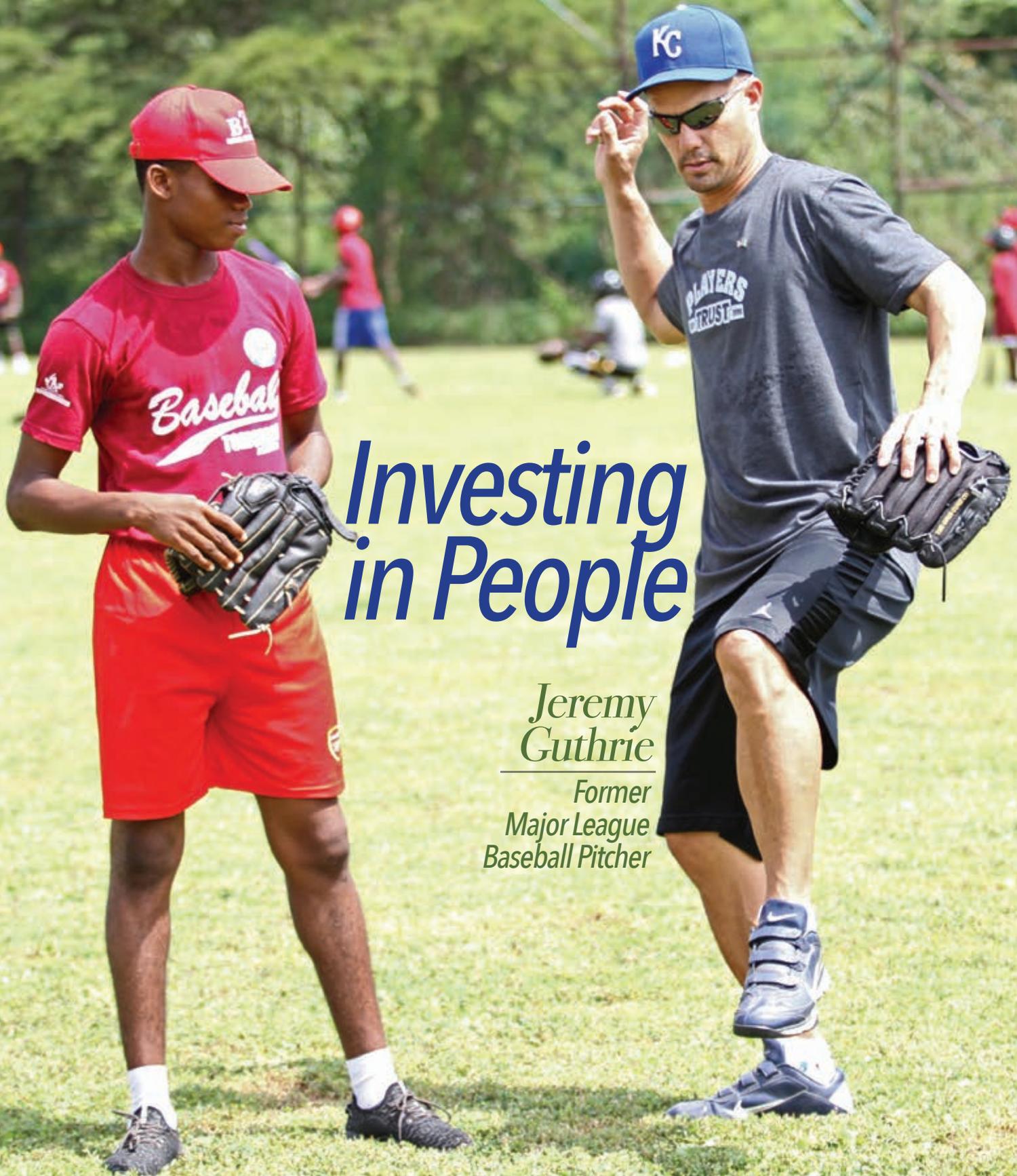


CROSSROADS



Investing in People

*Jeremy
Guthrie*

*Former
Major League
Baseball Pitcher*

Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan in Abuja

November 20, 2017



Vice President Yemi Osinbajo welcomes Deputy Secretary Sullivan to the Presidential Villa



Deputy Secretary Sullivan, flanked by U.S. Ambassador, Stuart Symington and Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama, at the Bi-National Commission

The United States-Nigeria Bi-National Commission (BNC) met on November 20, 2017, in Abuja, Nigeria. The BNC was co-chaired by Geoffrey Onyeama, Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federal Republic of Nigeria and John J. Sullivan, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of State, United States of America.

This year's BNC focused on advancing U.S.-Nigerian shared prosperity, including in-depth discussion of three areas:

- Security Cooperation,
- Economic Growth and Development, and
- Governance and Democracy.

Prior to this year's BNC, in their February 13 call and their September 20 lunch event at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly, President Donald J. Trump and President Muhammadu Buhari recalled the enduring bonds between the peoples of the United States and Nigeria. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the U.S.-Nigeria partnership.

Additionally, in their February 17 call, President Buhari and U.S. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson decided to utilize the BNC as the high-level strategic platform through which to advance the nations' shared goals.

Details are on the U.S. Embassy website: ng.usembassy.gov



Deputy Secretary Sullivan joins the dance troupe which received him before a tour of the Asokoro General Hospital



Deputy Secretary Sullivan addressing embassy personnel, as Ambassador Symington looks on



W. Stuart Symington
U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria

Dear Crossroads readers,

First, on behalf of all the Americans and Nigerians who work at the United States Mission in Nigeria, and our families, I want to send each of

you our very warmest wishes for a peaceful and prosperous New Year. We hope that this will be a joyous and memorable one for you and your family.

During my first year in Nigeria, I have seen the extraordinary warmth, energy, resilience, diversity, and strength of the Nigerian people everywhere I have traveled. All over your country, I have met Nigerians who have taught me that Nigeria's greatest resource is the people of Nigeria

The past few months have also been exciting for the U.S. Mission and I'm delighted to share some of what we've been up to recently.

In November, the United States-Nigeria Bi-National Commission (BNC) met in Abuja. It was a great honor to receive the Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan, as he led the U.S. delegation. The focus of the meeting was advancing U.S.-Nigerian shared prosperity. We discussed three key areas: Security Cooperation; Economic Growth and Development; and Governance and Democracy. Our discussions and the agreements we made at the BNC will help to achieve the shared goals of both nations.

In this issue, you'll read about some extraordinary Americans we've invited to visit. They have shared their wealth of knowledge with Nigerians working in similar fields, and each will return home enriched by their time learning about the rich culture and heritage of Nigeria. The cover features Jeremy Guthrie, a former Major League Baseball star who played on the World Series champion Kansas City Royals team a few years ago; Kathlyn Horan and Kim Bogucki made a film that has positively changed the lives of women dealing with incarceration; and the Chicago Bucket Boys shared their urban sound with audiences in Kano and Abuja. Learn more about them and their interactions with Nigerians as you flip through these pages.

More than anything else, as we look ahead to the New Year, we will seek to deepen the trusted partnership between our peoples and our nations. In agriculture and culture, in energy and technology, in security and health, education and infrastructure, we will work ever more closely to achieve our shared goals and realize our common hopes to make a better future.

W. Stuart Symington

CROSSROADS
is published quarterly by the Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Nigeria

EDITORIAL TEAM
Aruna Amirthanayagam
(Counselor for Public Affairs)
Darcy Zotter
(Public Affairs Officer, Lagos)
Russell Brooks
(Press Attaché)
Olaoluwa Aworinde
(Editor & photographer)

Address all correspondence to:
The Editor, Crossroads Magazine
Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy
Plot 1075 Diplomatic Drive,
Central Business Area, Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (09) 461-4000. Fax: 09-461-4305

LAGOS OFFICE:
U.S. Consulate General, Public Affairs
2, Walter Carrington Crescent, Lagos
Tel.: +234-703-150-4867/2444

E-mail: crossroads@state.gov
Website: ng.usembassy.gov

Follow us on:

In This Issue... Vol. 24 No. 1

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | S.T.E.M. Programs Pg 4 |  | Chicago Bucket Boys Pg 14 |
|  | Jeremy Guthrie Pg 6 |  | Opportunity Funds Program Pg 16 |
|  | Greetings From America Pg 12 |  | CDC HIV/TB Symposium Pg 18 |

U.S. PROMOTES STEM EDUCATION IN NIGERIA WITH ROBOTICS TRAINING AND COMPETITION



RoboRAVE North America Director, Brian Montoya engaging school pupils during the Robotics challenge

by Ibrahim Aliyu

To promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in Nigeria, the U.S. Mission in Nigeria, in collaboration with RoboRave International, a U.S.-based robotics education academy, and the President Obasanjo Presidential Library Foundation held robotics workshops and competitions between October 23 and 28 in Lagos and Abeokuta. More than 500 students, teachers, IT entrepreneurs, robotics enthusiasts, alumni of U. S. government exchanges and journalists participated in the events. The training programs were held at the recently inaugurated American Corner hosted at Co-Creation Hub (CCHUB), Yaba in Lagos and at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Complex, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

United States Consul General F. John Bray declared the workshop open in Lagos. In Abeokuta, Consul General Bray was joined by former President Olusegun Obasanjo as they both sought to inspire the participants to work collaboratively with the aid of technology to create innovative solutions to shared global challenges.

“Children who receive STEM education via robotics training will be better prepared to solve real life problems with more creativity, critical thinking and effectiveness. These are the tools that they will need to compete effectively in the global economy,” Consul General Bray said, while declaring the workshop open.

The training facilitators, RoboRAVE International Director of Global Programs Russ Fisher-Ives, and RoboRAVE North America Director

Brian Montoya engaged the participants in hands-on robotics activities to stimulate their interest in math and science as well as careers in the STEM fields.

The highlight of the week-long event was the 2017 RoboRAVE Nigeria inter-school robotics challenge at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Complex, Abeokuta where 302 students and 52 coaches/teachers from 32 schools across five states (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Edo and Delta states) engaged in a fierce robotics competition. The outcome?

Amazing Challenge Elementary Category

- 1st Place – St Bernadette School, Akoka, Lagos
- 2nd Place – UPSS, Benin City, Edo State
- 3rd Place – St Bernadette, Ipaja, Lagos

Amazing Middle School Category

1st Place – City of Knowledge Academy, Ijebu –Ode, Ogun State
2nd Place – City of Knowledge Academy, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State
3rd Place – Doregos School, Ipaja, Lagos State

Amazing High School Category

1st Place - Heritage Home School, Ikorodu, Lagos
2nd Place – Christ the King Catholic School, Odolewu, Ogun State
3rd Place – Corona Secondary School, Agbara, Ogun State

Sumobot

1st Place - Vivian Fowler Memorial College for Girls, Ikeja, Lagos
2nd Place - Vivian Fowler Memorial College for Girls, Ikeja, Lagos
3rd Place – Blazers School, Egbeda, Lagos State

74 robots were donated free-of-charge to participating schools, many of them with little or no experience in robotics. This will provide the students and their teachers with an opportunity to put their skills to use following the completion of the training. This is in addition to the twelve robotics kits presented to the winners of the robotics competitions.

The grant awarded to RoboRAVE Nigeria by U. S. Consulate Lagos will also fund follow-up activities in the schools that participated in the Abeokuta events. Additionally RoboRAVE Nigeria led by Director Kingsley Imade will hold “Robot Academies” in five key cities in the next six months. Participating schools were all invited to the RoboRAVE International World Challenge in Albuquerque, New Mexico and pre-event activities on advanced robotics at the NASA Space Center in Houston, Texas in May 2018.

During the five days, more than 50 journalists reported on the events and often found themselves on the floor programming robots.



Consular General, John Bray, delivering welcome remarks at the event

14TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

by Ibrahim Aliyu

The United States Consulate General Lagos partnered with the International Centre for Leadership Development Nigeria (ICLDNG) to mark the 14th Annual National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) at the Barack Obama American Corner, on Thursday, October 26.

A mix of public and private sector cybersecurity leaders and digital security experts addressed various aspects of cybersecurity and cybercrime at the event. Delivering his welcome remarks to more than 130 participants including 40 journalists, the U.S. Consul General F. John Bray said “This national public awareness campaign is

a collaborative effort between government and industry that encourages individuals to protect their computers and our nation’s critical cyber infrastructure.” The Consul General also invited the public to visit www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect, urging them to become active members of the STOP.THINK.CONNECT campaign. He said, “By joining the STOP.THINK.CONNECT campaign you will connect with partners and subject matter experts who are committed to increasing online safety, cybersecurity tips, messaging, articles, and presentations, as well as monthly discussions highlighting current cyber issues and trends.”

LIFE LESSONS FROM BASEBALL

WITH JEREMY GUTHRIE *by Sani Mohammed*

They call it America's national past time because baseball was one of the earliest sports to achieve mass popularity in the United States. Like other sports, baseball provides an opportunity for players to develop leadership and problem solving skills. The ability to relate to others, gain respect from peers, and lead by example are not only qualities utilized on the field or court, but also in everyday life. These are also the qualities that former Major League Baseball pitcher Jeremy Guthrie demonstrated from October 11 to 14 when he spent four days in Abuja helping to coach Nigerian youth and promoting the game of baseball.

During his professional baseball career, Guthrie played for the Cleveland Indians, Baltimore Orioles, Colorado Rockies, Kansas City Royals, and Washington Nationals. He won 91 games with a career earned run average of 4.42 and played on the Royals team that won the 2015 World Series.

Guthrie participated in the Baseball Tomorrow Academy's youth baseball camp in Abuja. The camp included 60 kids from five states in Nigeria who worked on improving their batting, pitching, fielding, and base running under the watchful eyes of the former major leaguer and local coaches. "Baseball teaches about life because in baseball most times

you fail, Guthrie told the kids. He said good hitters only succeed 30% of the time, which he described as "excellent." "So you learn to deal with frustration and you learn to deal with failure." Guthrie spent time on the field, working with the kids individually and collectively. He also identified the outstanding players among the kids and motivated them with gifts, including several pairs of baseball cleats (shoes), gloves, bats, balls and branded caps.

Describing the potential of Nigerian kids, Guthrie said, "I've seen some strong arms among these kids. There are so many skills in baseball that I want them to practice and to perfect. You always have to practice if you



Jeremy Guthrie pitches the ball during the baseball camp in Abuja

want to be good. It requires a lot of skills." He also reminded the kids that things don't always go according to plan. Whether in a practice or a game, players must learn to develop the ability to think on their toes and diffuse negative situations as they arise. When life throws a fastball at you, having the capability to bounce back and deal with that situation is an invaluable skill that will help you accomplish whatever you set out to do. These are the lessons that Guthrie wants kids to learn and remember throughout their life, whether or not they become professional baseball players.

Guthrie's visit to Abuja attracted huge interest in the media, both electronic and print outlets, because of his background as a professional athlete.

On a week dominated by news on the 2018 World Cup in Russia, sports reporters in Abuja devoted extraordinary attention to baseball. In his numerous interviews with the Nigerian media, Guthrie said, "I was very surprised to learn that baseball is played in Nigeria. I have seen some other teams (in international competition) like Kenya, Uganda but not Nigeria."

Guthrie said he was impressed by the enthusiasm and determination shown by the Nigerian kids. "I came over here not knowing exactly who was already

teaching them, but here we are with Peter Imonikhe, Coordinator of the Baseball Tomorrow Academy. He and his coaches have brought kids from all over the country here to Abuja for four days, to develop a love for the game, talk about skills, and talk about techniques that hopefully they can take back, share with their friends and begin to increase the popularity of baseball little by little," he said.

He told the enthusiastic callers on live radio shows that, "Baseball teaches many life lessons and you have to practice a lot to be good at it. A lot is required of baseball players so I teach the importance of work," he said. He assured everyone he encountered that with hard work and devotion to the game, "Nigerians have all it takes to play the game at the highest level."

Russell Brooks, Information Officer at the US Embassy in Nigeria, said, "We are very fortunate that a former U.S. Major League Baseball player agreed to come to Nigeria to help the Baseball Tomorrow Academy promote the sport here. We believe that if Nigerians continue to work as hard as they are, they have a great future in this game," he said.

Jeremy Guthrie's visit to Nigeria was facilitated by a U.S. Embassy Abuja grant to the Baseball Tomorrow Academy and support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs' Sports Envoy Program.

Jeremy Guthrie handed out certificates and memorabilia at the end of the baseball camp



JEREMY GUTHRIE CAREER TRACK

Born: April 8, 1979
in Roseburg, Oregon

Bats: Right
Throws: Right

MLB debut:
August 28, 2004,
for the Cleveland Indians

Last MLB appearance:
April 8, 2017,
for the Washington Nationals

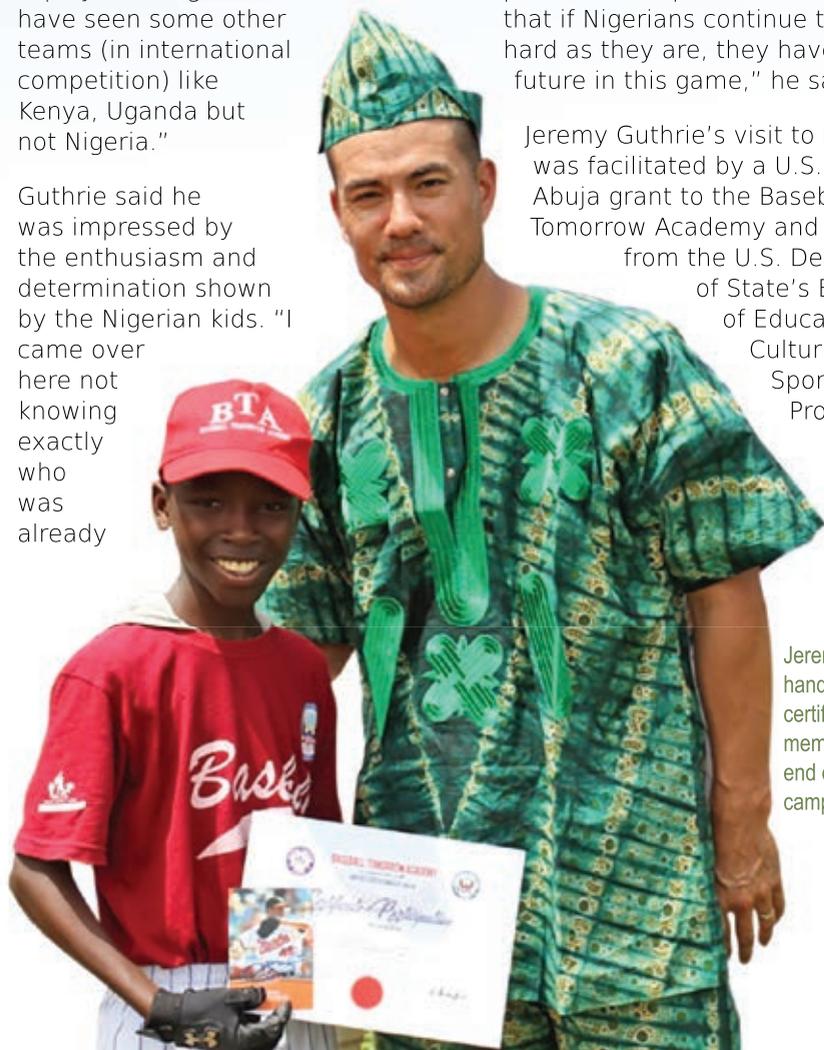
MLB statistics:

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Win-loss record: | 91-109 |
| Earned run average: | 4.42 |
| Strikeouts: | 1,046 |

Teams

- Cleveland Indians (2004-2006)
- Baltimore Orioles (2007-2011)
- Colorado Rockies (2012)
- Kansas City Royals (2012-2015)
- Washington Nationals (2017)

Retired: July 31, 2017



Behold Nigeria's First Internationally Accredited Public Health Lab

by Halilu Usman

Staff at the Center for Human Virology and Genomics, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, NIMR, working in one of the laboratories recently accredited by SANAS



The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has supported the Nigeria Government to achieve its very first internationally accredited public health laboratory. The accreditation of the laboratory of the Center for Human Virology and Genomics (CHVG) of the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), was carried out by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS). Prior to the accreditation, SANAS conducted a detailed assessment of the CHVG-laboratory and adjudged its procedures for all the accredited laboratory tests and the laboratory management practices to be compliant with the ISO 15189 standards. The CHVG laboratory in NIMR was thus recognized with the SANAS unique accreditation number - M0588. This achievement has put Nigeria on the map of countries with internationally accredited laboratories.

To improve the health outcomes of Nigerians, CDC Nigeria is supporting the development of systems that will

ensure the consistent use of accurate and reliable testing and reporting from medical laboratories; for clinical and public health decision making in the country. Hitherto, results could not be given full assurance, for lack of a standard system that regularly measures and monitors laboratory practice for quality management in the public health facilities.



Director, Lab Services, Dr. Jay Osi Daniels, with Dr. Rosemary Audu, Lab Director CHVG, and CDC Nigeria Lab Branch Chief, Mr. McPaul Okoye with the SANAS accreditation certificate.

With the launch of the Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation (SLMTA) process, CDC Nigeria, through the PEPFAR program, enrolled CHVG in 2010,

to join 23 other laboratories out of more than 344 PEPFAR supported labs working in the areas of HIV/AIDS and TB in Nigeria. The SLMTA program significantly enhanced the quality of laboratory systems to such an extent that the CHVG achieved a 4-star rating in the quality ladder and was supported to enroll for SANAS accreditation in 2016. After due assessments and clearances, the laboratory received an award of ISO 15189:2012 certification, dated August 25, 2017. The accreditation makes CHVG the first public medical laboratory to gain international recognition in Nigeria and is expected to minimize quality costs, which comprise of failure, appraisal, and remedial costs.

The scope of the accreditation covers molecular diagnostics such as HIV-1 Drug Resistance Testing, HIV-1 Early Infant Diagnostic, HIV, HB and HC viral loads. It also includes serology such as HIV ELISA, Hepatitis B surface antigen, and Hepatitis C antibody ELISA. The accreditation also covers clinical chemistry tests such as Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT), cholesterol (Total) creatinine, glucose, and urea.

In a special ceremony to present the certificate of accreditation, held on October 11 at the NIMR Conference Hall in Lagos, the representative of CDC Nigeria, Mr. McPaul Okoye, who is the CDC Nigeria Laboratory Branch Chief, reiterated the support of CDC for the CHVG. He also charged the management of NIMR to strive to sustain and improve on the set standards for the benefit of Nigeria and its teeming population.

One of the major highlights of the occasion was the presentation and handing over of the Certificate of Accreditation to the Center on behalf of SANAS, by the South African Consul General in Lagos, Mr. Darkey E. Africa. The Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, Prof. Babatunde Salako received the certificate, on behalf of the Center for Human Virology and Genomics.

CONNECTING ETHIOPIAN & NIGERIAN JOURNALISTS

The American Embassy Media Exchange Initiative

by Sani Mohammed

An exchange program initiated by the Public Affairs Sections of the American Embassies in Abuja and Addis Ababa brought together Ethiopian and Nigerian journalists in October and November 2017 to share best practices, learn about their respective countries, discuss business models, find ways to collaborate, enhance the profession and promote press freedom.

The initiative entitled “Uniting African Journalists” is driven by the conviction that a well-functioning media protects and enhances democratic institutions, holds governments accountable, educates the public about social, economic, and development issues, and forms a bulwark against extremist messages.

In pursuit of these objectives, five Ethiopian journalists came to Nigeria October 30 through November 3, where they met with Nigerian counterparts from select Nigerian media organizations, both government and private. They received briefings from executives of the Nigerian media partners, including NTA, Channels tv, Radio

Nigeria, Premium Times, Cool/Wazobia/Nigeria Info, and the Daily Trust. The Ethiopian media team was accompanied by Nicholas Barnett, Information Officer in the American Embassy, Addis Ababa.

The Nigerian media team accompanied by Aruna Amirthanayagam, Country Public Affairs Officer and Sani Mohammed, Senior Information Specialist at the U.S. Embassy, Abuja visited Addis Ababa, from November 27 through December 1, 2017, where they met with Ethiopian media executives at the Reporter Newspaper, Fortune Newspaper, Ethiopian Broadcast Service (EBS), Sheger FM 102.1 FM Radio and Capital Newspaper. They also visited government-owned Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), to share experiences and discuss ways to collaborate.

Both visits to Nigeria and Ethiopia featured sessions with American officials and media experts. It also featured home hospitality hosted by the journalists in Abuja and Addis Ababa, promoting professional bonds between the Nigerian and Ethiopian media teams.

U.S. Embassy Abuja CPAO, Aruna Amirthanayagam hosted the journalists at a dinner in his residence, where U.S. Ambassador W. Stuart Symington interacted with them and emphasized the importance of press freedom as well as the media’s role in nation-building. He applauded the efforts of the journalists from both countries to find ways to better their craft, help alleviate conflict, and inspire development on the continent.

In Addis Ababa, the journalists attended a dinner hosted by Ambassador Michael Raynor, who also commended the goodwill, energy and commitment of the journalists from both countries to get to know each other better professionally through this program. “So that connection will last, and the connection between these two countries will last. You represent the journalistic core of two extraordinarily, important, dynamic and complicated countries. So, your commitment to your craft, and your commitment to building the strength of your institutions, is enormously valuable,” he stated.

Following the Abuja and Addis Ababa exchange, the representatives from both countries have expressed an interest in exchanging working-level journalists to broaden their experience and awareness of events in Africa. They also discussed the need to focus more on Africa, raise public awareness of what is happening on the continent, and promote Africa’s diverse cultures. Participants in the broadcast field discussed cooperative programming and arranging content-sharing agreements.



Ethiopian and Nigerian journalists at the Channels TV Abuja station during the Nigerian leg of the exchange



Assistance from USAID Helps Launch Nigerian-Owned Kaptain Foods

by Genevieve Bosah

As a university student in the United States, Onyekachi Ekezie missed the homemade stews he ate growing up in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. For a quick meal, he would make something similar using jarred spaghetti sauce over rice or beans.

After graduating from Bowie State University in Maryland with a degree in computer science, Ekezie, 34, stayed in the United States to work in the oil and gas sector with an eye to someday taking up a similar career back in Nigeria. In 2016, family and friends finally convinced him to return home and contribute to the development of his homeland.

By the time he returned to Lagos, the downturn in Nigeria's petroleum sector led Ekezie to look at other careers including manufacturing. And he had just the product: A "Naija" stew like the one he missed during his college days that could be prepared in

minutes. His target demographic would be busy Nigerians all over the world.

"It dawned on me I could package an authentic, easy to prepare stew in an appealing way," Ekezie said. "We thought Nigerians abroad, especially students, would appreciate the convenience as a sort of 'life hack.'"

Thus was born Kaptain Foods and Ready Stews, a tasty and convenient product for both the Nigerian and international markets. A little more than a year later, as Kaptain Foods prepares to diversify into new products and markets, Ekezie was named one of Forbes Magazine's 30 Most Promising Young Entrepreneurs in Africa in 2017. He was also named January 2017 "Agropreneur of the Month" by Agropreneur Naija blog. They cited his innovation, out-of-the-box thinking, and willingness to take risks to successfully manufacture and market his product.

Ekezie received initial financial support from his family, but also from a USAID-funded grant that helps budding agro-entrepreneurs develop business plans, generate investments and facilitate exports. This grant was part of the USAID funded Nigeria Expanded Trade and Transport (NEXTT) activity, which ended in October 2017. The NEXTT activity brought together private sector traders, processors, business service providers, and government entities to expand trade in agricultural products and increase private sector access to investment capital.

"Starting up was a lot of work," Ekezie said, recalling the early days when his business was based in the kitchen of his two bedroom apartment. Beginning with a concept note to secure funding, he had to engage the National Food and Drug administration, establish relationships with suppliers of ingredients, and produce the



Onyekachi Ekezie,
founder of
Kaptain Foods

product. While he was nervous when giving out the first samples, the initial feedback was good.

The focus of Kaptain Foods evolved according to market research and feedback, even down to tweaking the recipe of the product itself.

“The first thing in business is to write everything down, he said. “The main thing is to start the journey and see where it takes you.”

Production moved to a small factory catering to startups with low overhead costs. With continued success, the business scaled up to a larger factory and began to focus on developing convenient, affordable high quality products, featuring locally sourced ingredients. Fresh tomatoes are blended with onions, pepper and spices with no artificial flavors or preservatives.

The brand is sold in stores across Lagos and is expanding into neighboring countries in West Africa with Nigerian expatriate populations, with an eye on Europe and the United States.

Ekezie believes others can experience similar success in the agricultural sector while helping the Nigerian economy move away from its dependence on oil and gas.

“Ultimately the scope can be enormous,” he said. “We need more young people to get into the agriculture sector. Funding shouldn’t be a deterrent because there are a lot of different grants that young people can apply for like I did.”

Speaking from a place of experience, his advice to emerging entrepreneurs is to create a plan and start small so it’s easier to correct the mistakes and revise plans when the inevitable mistakes occur.

“It all starts with an idea.”

Genevieve Bosah is USAID’s Nigeria Expanded Trade and Transport Communications Specialist

U.S. HISTORY, EDUCATION AND CULTURE FOR RADIO BROADCASTERS

by Nafisah Ahmad



Journalist and policy analyst, David Ruffin speaks to the participants - L - R: Saadiya Ibrahim of Progress Radio, Gombe; Ifeoluwa Ademidun Adedokun of Grace FM, Lokoja; Junaidu Muazu Imamu of Rima Radio, Sokoto; Lawrence Aienleboise Onime, Volunteer Producer, Gotel Radio; Emmanuel Expensive James of WAZOBIA FM, Abuja; Nazeeb Sulayman Ibraheem of Radio Nigeria Globe, Bauchi; Late Tijjani Ado Ahmad of Freedom Radio, Kano; and Hung Grace Gyang of Peace FM, Jos.

Eight broadcasters from northern Nigeria were sponsored by the United States government on an International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) with the theme "U.S. History, Education and Culture for Radio Broadcasters". All eight participants are radio presenters of the U.S. Government-sponsored Greetings from America (GFA) program. GFA gives Nigerians studying abroad or those on exchange programs the opportunity to narrate their experiences about the U.S. to listeners back home.

This IVLP was organized specifically with the aim of giving these broadcasters the opportunity to better understand the history, educational system and culture of the people of the U.S. The 10 day visit which began on September 23 took the participants through

Washington DC, Detroit and Atlanta, and included a wide variety of appointments with private individuals and organizations who are not U.S. Government affiliated. It was important to ensure participants received a clear and unbiased understanding of the U.S.

The group arrived in Washington DC first, and the program began with a tour of historical sites and continued with a classroom discussion and other meetings. During one of the meetings with the U.S. producer of the GFA program, a member of the group made a statement which proved the program would succeed in its goal. In his words; "I have been presenting the GFA program since 2007 and I never liked it because I thought it was American propaganda in Nigeria. But today, with the things I saw, I have been proved wrong and

I now have a better understanding of the U.S."

The Washington itinerary included tours and interactions in places like Operation Understanding DC (OUDC) - an organization that works to promote mutual understanding among African American and Jewish community leaders; the Belmont - Paul Women's Equality National Monument where they were briefed about the history of the women's movement in the U.S.; Masjid Muhammad, where they had an interaction with the Imam who talked to them about the importance of finding a way to live together in peace and harmony; and a visit to Voice of America (VOA) where they toured the station and were given a brief history of the organization.

The tour continued in Michigan in places like Fordson High School, a school composed of 95% Arab Americans in the city of Dearborn, outside of Detroit. The Nigerian group was briefed on how immigrants and their children are integrated into American society and the challenges they face when they arrive in the U.S. They also met representatives of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), a large Arab American nonprofit community organization that offers a wide range of services in Detroit, and took a tour of the Arab American National Museum (AANM) which is the only museum in the United States devoted to Arab American history and culture. The participants also visited the Muslim Center in Detroit and had a meeting with Imams who told them how the center is playing a crucial role within the community by working with youth and helping with housing and land development. The radio presenters visited the WGPR TV Historical Society, the first black owned and operated television station in the country, and had the privilege of attending the screening of "Summer 67" a documentary about the riots that took place in Detroit in 1967.

In Atlanta, Georgia, they met with members of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and MedShare who elaborated on the problems and challenges Africa faces in its fight against corruption and poverty. MedShare described how it is directly involved in providing medical help in Africa. The group also met with a representative of the Black on Purpose TV network - the largest black owned TV network in the world; the board of Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta (FAMA) - an organization that promotes dialogue and initiatives by working with others who want to create a better and loving world; and visited StoryCorps - an organization that is preserving the oral history of ordinary people. Their last meeting took place at Morehouse College a historically black liberal arts college for men. The group took a tour around the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, entered the house where he was born, as well as Ebenezer Baptist Church, the pastoral home of MLK Jr.

During the trip, they experienced American "Home Hospitality." Three different families hosted three members of the group, and the Nigerian guests were invited by the hosts to chat, drink and have dinner.

Overall, it was a very interesting and fulfilling program despite a tragic event which occurred during the trip - one of the participants, Tijjani Ado Ahmad of Freedom Radio Kano, collapsed and passed away at the hospital in Georgia. Tijani was boisterous during the entire trip, excitedly participating in every activity and it was devastating for his fellow participants and everyone else involved to lose him so suddenly. Upon hearing the sad news, ambassador W. Stuart Symington called Tijani's family to offer his condolences and later Deputy Chief of Mission, David Young paid his family and colleagues a condolence visit in Kano.

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

FILM SERIES INSPIRES MEDIA AUDIENCES

by Russell Brooks

The U.S. Embassy in Abuja hosts a monthly film series devoted to journalists, journalism students, and journalism faculty that has quickly gained a loyal following in the Federal Capital Territory. The series began in August and has proven to be quite successful, attracting an average audience of 50 people per session.

The films shown to date include **Page One: Inside the New York Times**; **The Paper**, a documentary about the student newspaper at Penn State University; **Spotlight**, the Academy Award-winning film about the investigative unit at the Boston Globe newspaper; and **Good Night, and Good Luck**, the George Clooney-directed story depicting the confrontation between famed journalist Edward R. Murrow and Senator Joe McCarthy.

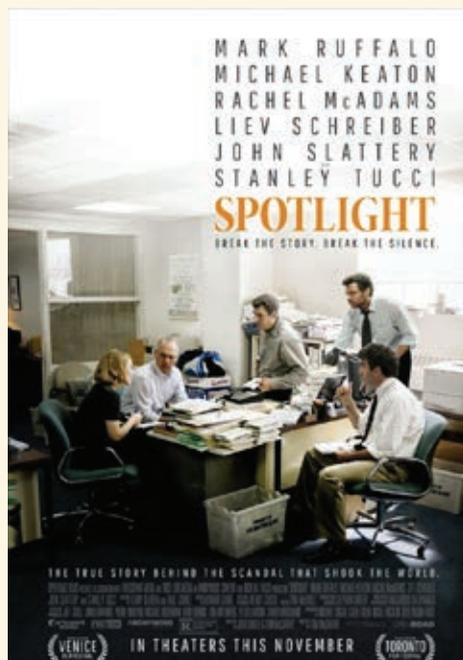
The series is hosted by Information Officer, Russell Brooks, in collaboration with the Rosa Parks Center, the Embassy's information resource center. At the conclusion of each film, Brooks leads a discussion of the issues raised by the movie in

order to clarify any questions posed by the audience. Brooks, an avid fan of the cinema, is a believer in the power of film to provoke reflection and he thought a film series focused on journalism would contribute to the Embassy's goals of promoting press freedom and increased media professionalism.

"The level of enthusiasm for the film series has been quite high. It has served as an eye-opener for many of the journalists and has caused them to reflect on how they might improve their ability to serve their communities," said Mr. Ahmed, American Center Director.

Future film offerings will cover themes intended to coincide with the commemoration of Martin Luther King Day, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Earth Day, World Press Freedom Day, and the July 4 celebration of U.S. independence.

For information about the monthly journalistic film series, please contact the American Center at ircabuja@state.gov or tel: 08034081201



THE CHICAGO BUCKET BOYS SHARE THEIR URBAN AMERICAN SOUND

by Susan Dauda

The US Embassy Abuja hosted Timothy Stewart and Corey Weathersby, known as the Chicago Bucket Boys, in Nigeria from November 27 to December 1 to share their unique urban American sounds. Using a plastic bucket as a percussion instrument or drum is a Chicago tradition that traces its origins to the public housing projects on the South Side of the city. Now, "bucket boys" are a common sight in parts of the city. The young drummers are known for their coordinated routines and fancy stick work.

Making their first trip to Nigeria, Stewart and Weathersby first visited Kano where they played at historic landmarks including Gidan Makama and the Kofar Mata dye pits. At Gidan Dan Hausa, they were joined by the Kano Drummers, who won first prize at the African Drum Festival in Abeokuta in April. Timothy and Corey were also honored with an audience before His Royal Highness the Emir of Kano Muhammadu Sanusi II. His Highness encouraged the young men to extend the reach of their talent and message beyond the United States and recognize the unifying power of music to inspire and engage young people.

Corey Weathersby explained that he has been "playing buckets" for 14 years. "These buckets saved me," he said. "Before I was kinda drifting without a purpose,



and I found I loved to make music out of the buckets I found in my neighborhood." He continued, "When I would play for tourists downtown and bring home more money than the guy selling drugs on the corner, people started to take notice." Timothy Stewart said he'd been drumming for a little more than four years and has learned upwards of 15 distinct beats. "Every bucket boy is mainly self-taught. We realize no one is going to give you a handout. You've got to work for it."

At the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, the Bucket Boys performed for an audience of youth and art enthusiasts. They were joined by drummers from the Cyprian Ekwensi Center for Arts and Culture as well as dancers from the Krupp Studios. The musicians also visited a number of high schools in the FCT and took part in the U.S. Embassy's World AIDS Day commemoration event at the Government Secondary School Wuse.

The Chicago Bucket Boys often come from Chicago's poorest and most violent neighborhoods and view drumming as a way to make an honest living entertaining tourists, executives, and others who frequent some of the city's most well-known avenues. Their sound is now part of the urban cultural scene in Chicago, and it is not without financial reward, as some "bucket boys" are able to earn several hundred dollars in one day.

Top: Corey Weathersby and Timothy Stewart performing in the Emir of Kano's Palace

Left: Performing during an Embassy event



AFRICA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (AFRIFF)

by Russell Brooks

A seven-day program of screenings, workshops, and networking events opened October 29 in Lagos with remarks by Information and Culture Minister Lai Mohammed, Access Bank CEO Herbert Wigwe, Senator Godswill Akpabio, and representatives of the French, British, and U.S. diplomatic missions. Opening night screenings included the documentary short *Waiting for Hassana*, directed by Nigerian-American filmmaker Ifunanya Maduka. AFRIFF featured films from more than 20 African countries as well as the United States, Turkey, Haiti, and several European

countries. AFRIFF screened four U.S. films selected from ECA's American Film Showcase (AFS): *The If Project*, *Class Divide*, *She Started It*, and *All the Difference*.

Consul General John Bray hosted filmmakers, prison reform activists, and security officers at his residence for *The If Project*. *The If Project* follows a group of inmates incarcerated in a maximum security women's prison who are part of a writing workshop co-created by a Seattle police detective and a repeat offender serving a nine-year prison sentence. The film takes you on a journey as the women take a brutally honest look into their past and work to explore what exactly led them to prison. Mission Nigeria also facilitated the participation of Los Angeles-based lighting designer, Christian Epps, who led several master classes for AFRIFF with an emphasis on how to use a limited budget to achieve professional results.



Ifunanya Maduka,
director of *Waiting For Hassana*



Kathlyn Horan, director of *The If Project* and
Detective Kim Bogucki who starred in the documentary



DOUG BLUSH INSPIRES NIGERIAN FILMMAKERS

by Russell Brooks

PAS Abuja hosted award-winning American film editor, writer, and director Doug Blush on a week-long visit to Nigeria. Blush who has worked on over eighty feature and television projects in a long and distinguished career, conducted a screen-writing master class at the Nigerian Film Institute in Jos. In addition, the American Film Showcase title *The Music of Strangers* featuring famed cellist Yo-Yo Ma and The Silk Road Ensemble was screened at the Chief of Mission's Residence in Abuja before an audience from the Nigerian filmmaking community and diplomatic personnel. Blush was the supervising editor on the critically-acclaimed film that tells the extraordinary story of the international musical collective founded by Yo-Yo Ma. He concluded his trip by traveling to Lagos to conduct master classes and meet with Nigerian filmmakers.



Doug Blush speaking at a master class in Lagos

OPPORTUNITY FUNDS PROGRAM

Transforming Lives

by Malate-Ann Atajiri

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Program (OFP) assists talented and determined, low-income students who are good candidates for financial assistance from U.S. colleges and universities but lack the financial resources to cover the up-front cost of obtaining admission.

OFP works closely with students through regularly scheduled meetings and seminars to assist them throughout the application process to secure admission and scholarships to attend colleges and universities in the United States.

Applicants are welcome from all the states in Nigeria. However, students must be able to reach our offices in Abuja or Lagos. The 2016/2017 participants in the Opportunity Funds Program secured about \$2 million in scholarships from top schools in the US. Here are the stories of a few of our successful students:

Bukola Adeoye is the firstborn from a humble family of 8. He was the first in his family to attend and graduate from university. He finished with a First Class in Microbiology from the University of Ilorin. Bukola is currently pursuing his Ph.D at Boston University.

“Despite my desire for graduate education after my first degree in 2014, it was impossible to achieve as I did not have the financial support. My passion inspired me to start applying for scholarships. In 2015, I got two full-tuition Master’s scholarships in the UK, but couldn’t raise the funds for living and traveling expenses. Concurrently, I applied and was accepted at a local university in Nigeria with no scholarship. Little did I know that the best opportunity awaited me, but I

had to wait two years! “Fortunately, I received one of EducationUSA Abuja’s outreach



Bukola Adeoye

messages as early as October 2015 inviting me for the general orientation session, but I couldn’t travel to the Abuja or Lagos office to inquire, so I decided to call. I was still skeptical after speaking to advisors in Abuja on the phone. I never believed it was possible to get directly into a Ph.D. program with just a Bachelor’s degree but I am living proof. I am currently part of a team of researchers investigating emerging infections endemic to West Africa as part of Boston University’s National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratory (NEIDL). My story would be incomplete without the Opportunity Funds Program.”

Ifunanya Nwolah was the head girl and valedictorian of Bishop Otubelu Juniorate, Enugu. Upon graduation in 2016, with an impressive WAEC result of 8As and a B2, she applied and was one of only two girls accepted into the EducationUSA Lagos Opportunity Fund Program. With the help she got from her EducationUSA Advisers who provided

support and financed the entire College application process, Ifunanya got admission to five schools in the U.S. She got a full ride to Wellesley College, The University of Rochester, and New York University, Abu Dhabi. She chose Wellesley College, a very prestigious women’s liberal arts college that has graduated distinguished women such as Hillary Clinton, Madeline Albright and Nigerian singer, Onyeka Onwenu.

“I am currently leaning towards becoming a Biochemistry major and a computer science minor. Since coming to Wellesley, I have joined a Christian Acapella group called Awaken the Dawn, and I am also a member of the Wellesley plus program and the Wellesley Emerging Scholars Initiative. I recently became a member of the chemistry branch of the SeedKit’s curriculum development team (an initiative developed by some Wellesley students to help bring science education to students in Africa). I am planning to commence research with some faculty members. I hope to go to medical school to get an MD/ PHD degree in order to help foster



Ifunanya Nwolah

more ground breaking research in the medical sciences. I am thankful to my amazing advisors and the Opportunity Funds Program for making my dreams a reality.”

Mudi Egbunu will be the first in his family to attend university. Upon graduation from secondary school, Gabriel was uncertain about his prospects of attending a university in

Nigeria let alone studying abroad on a full scholarship. He had no plans of applying for the Opportunity Funds Program until EducationUSA advisers heard about the boy from School for the Gifted Gwagwalada who had 9As in WAEC from his guidance counselor and encouraged him to apply. Mudi is currently in his first year at New York University, Abu Dhabi Campus on a full-ride scholarship



Mudi Egbunu

“‘The aggressive taketh it by force’ although I had heard it before, it was the push that drove me into swift action as Aunt Shade bluntly delivered them to me. Back then I was unbothered, and my highest ambition was to get into a Nigerian University. I was uncertain- financial

and intellectual uncertainties held me captive- and I convinced myself that the program would not work out for me even though I knew people

who were successful.

“With the stern warning about my laidback approach to life at the back of my mind, I kick-started the process. I knew very little to nothing about applying to US colleges. Nevertheless, with my amazingly experienced advisors, I speedily reinvented confidence in myself and gladly faced an army of challenges that included several examinations and a multitude of essays. Now I know that pursuing opportunities with unfaltering focus and determination begets dazzling rewards.”

Applications open April 1, 2018 and close June 30.

EducationUSA College Fairs 2017

by Shade Adebayo

In the continuous attempt to enhance the educational relationship between the United States and Nigeria, the EducationUSA for the first time collaborated with the U.S. Commercial Service to host the 2017 college fairs. This annual educational relationship has increased the number of educational and professional accomplishments of Nigerian students around the world.

The three-day college fair held this year from September 25-27, 2017. The fair was held in Abuja on the 25th of September at the Sheraton hotel and the 26th-27th in Lagos at the Radisson Blu and Renaissance Hotel with almost 4,000 students registering and participating in the fairs. Deputy Chief of Mission David Young and Ambassador W. Stuart Symington in their opening remarks in Abuja and Lagos respectively urged participants to utilize the opportunities the college fair presents.

While the several U.S. institutions present provided hands-on information of their institutional requirements for admission and financial aid alongside other



A college rep responds to enquiries during the College Fair in Abuja

noteworthy information, the Consular Officers spoke to the participants about student visas and navigating the application process. The EducationUSA Advisers also explained the Five Steps to U.S. Study, which include; researching options, financing studies, completing an application, applying for a student visa, and preparing for departure.

The EducationUSA students volunteers assisted the college fair participants with logistics and registration while also supporting admissions recruiters. Members of the media were present to capture

the event and interview speakers and participants about their experiences.

Over the years, the EducationUSA annual fairs have contributed enormously to the increase in the number of Nigerian applicants to U.S. institutions. The 2017 college fairs certainly fulfilled the Education Trade Mission expectations of providing a platform to connect U.S. educational institutions with prospective Nigerian students and create opportunities for partnership between U.S. and Nigerian institutions.



THE FIRST HIV AND TB SYMPOSIUM

by Halilu Usman

Monday, November 13 and Tuesday, November 14, 2017, were historic dates for the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Nigeria field office, as key stakeholders gathered for the first time to discuss the impact of CDC's HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) programs in Nigeria with specific reference to the last five-year implementation cycle. The two-day event tagged CDC Nigeria HIV & TB Interventions Symposium with the theme Partnering for Sustainable HIV Epidemic Control in Nigeria was organized by CDC, in collaboration with its PEPFAR implementing partners. The symposium provided a platform for stakeholders to openly and transparently discuss program implementation and impact on the people of Nigeria, thereby enhancing CDC and its partners' accountability and credibility among all concerned.

While declaring the event open, Nigeria's Minister of Health, Prof. Isaac Adewole, in a keynote address stated that an estimated 3.2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, ranking only behind South Africa. Of this number, just one million Nigerians currently have access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), and access to care and treatment remains a challenge. He then reiterated President Muhammadu Buhari's stance to reverse the trend by making prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV infection one of the signature projects in the health sector.

Earlier, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, the honorable W. Stuart Symington, in his remarks at the opening ceremony, thanked the stakeholders for their work, emphasizing that one of the most important things that truly matter in life is "saving lives." He asked them to think about how they are doing in that regard. "How many people have been tested? How many are now getting treated, and how many more need to be tested?"

Speaking about ownership and sustainability, Ambassador Symington said, "We know that when we make people pay for

and TB programs are implemented in Nigeria. Transparency and accountability are further enriched by providing a forum for robust discussions to share innovative strategies, successes achieved, challenges faced, and lessons learned during the past five-year funding cycle.

Aside from the national-level stakeholders who spoke at the symposium, state-level political leaders were represented by the commissioners of health from 19 states in Nigeria, where CDC implements its programs. Also in attendance were representatives

of international development partners, including the World Health Organization, as well as beneficiaries, who gave testimonies on how CDC's intervention made a remarkable difference in their lives.

During the last year alone CDC and its partners and other PEPFAR implementing agencies in Nigeria

have worked to place more than 750,000 people on HIV treatment, and provided nearly 4 million people with HIV counseling and testing services. HIV prevention messages and activities have reached over 300,000 people identified as most at-risk. Around, 50,000 pregnant women have received antiretroviral drugs for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, 750,000 adults and children living with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis have received care services, and more than 1.2 million children orphaned by AIDS or otherwise vulnerable have received care and support services.



Promise Okafor delivers a goodwill message at the symposium

service at the point of delivery, that is a counterproductive thing." At the same time, he added that it is essential for the citizens of Nigeria to find a way to support these services. "We as a people, as a world, are committed, and must stay committed, to making sure that those people are not turned away and that they get care."

CDC Nigeria Country Director, Dr. Mahesh Swaminathan indicated that the symposium was the outcome of CDC and its partners' resolve to ensure transparency and accountability in the way HIV

AMERICAN SPACES

For the most comprehensive and curated information on America, Register with the

American Centers

ABUJA | LAGOS



To register as a member, please visit:
<http://bit.ly/acregistration>

For all enquiries:

Rosa Parks Center

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy
Plot 1075 Diplomatic Drive Central District Area
Abuja, Nigeria

Telephone: 09-461-4000 **Fax:** 0-9-461-4011

E-Mail: ircabuja@state.gov

Open Monday - Thursday 9am - 3pm
Friday 10am - 12 noon

Whitney M. Young American Center

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Consulate General
2 Walter Carrington Crescent, Victoria Island, Lagos Nigeria

Telephone: 01-460-3400 **Fax:** 01-261-2218

E-mail: wylagos@state.gov

Open Monday - Thursday 9am - 3pm
Friday 9am - 12 noon

For more info, visit

<http://ng.usembassy.gov/education-culture/american-centers/>

American Corners provide access to general, substantive and accurate information about the United States to interested parties. Materials in the American Corners cover a wide range of subjects pertaining to the United States, such as such as government policy, educational institutions, and American society and culture. Free, open access is provided to all materials.

Presently, there are 12 American Corners in Nigeria:

ABUJA

Chief Bola Ige Information
Technology Center
C/o National Center for
Women Development
CBD, Abuja

BAUCHI

Professor Iya Abubakar
Community Resource Center
C/o Bauchi State Library
Complex
Abdulkadir Ahmed Road
GRA, Bauchi

CALABAR

Cross River State IT Village
37 Ekpo Archibong Road
Calabar

ENUGU

No. 53 Udoji Street
Ogui New Layout
Enugu

IBADAN

Nigerian Society for
Information,
Arts and Culture, Leventis
Building
54, Magazine Road
Jericho, Ibadan
Telephone: 02 753-5838

JOS

University of Jos
11, Murtala Mohammed
Way, Jos

KANO

Kano State Library Board
Murtala Mohammad Library
Complex
Nasarawa, Kano

LAGOS

29, Gafar Animashaun Street
(off Ajose Adeogun St.)
Victoria Island, Lagos

Co-Creation Hub (CcHUB)
6th Floor, 294 Herbert
Macaulay Way,
Sabo, Yaba, Lagos

MAIDUGURI

University of Maiduguri
Library, PMB 1069
Maiduguri

PORT HARCOURT

Donald E. U. Ekong Library
University of Port Harcourt
Port Harcourt

SOKOTO

Usmanu Danfodiyo
University City Campus
Sultan Abubarka Road
Sokoto



HOW-TO YALI

Become a member of the **YALI Network** to access virtual **resources** and **networking opportunities** for young African leaders!

STEP 1

VISIT **YALI.STATE.GOV** TO SIGN UP

JOIN OUR NETWORK
The YALI Network provides you email updates and opportunities to collaborate with young leaders across Africa.



STEP 2

TAKE THE FREE YALI NETWORK ONLINE COURSES AT **YALI.STATE.GOV/COURSES**



STEP 3

READ OUR WEEKLY BLOGS AT **YALI.STATE.GOV/BLOG**



YALI Goes Green and Accepts the Earth Day Call to Action

Jeffrey Richardson is an AmeriCorps alum and advocate for service and volunteerism. As executive director of the Commission for National and Community Service in Washington, Jeffrey led national, state and...



You, too, one day, can be president

Women are quite capable of going into politics. Does that seem obvious to you? It is not for everyone. In many countries, female candidates must scramble to convince voters and...

Read More

STEP 4

CONNECT WITH US!

-  /GROUPS/YALINETWORK
-  /YALINETWORK
-  @YALINETWORK

STEP 5

MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN BY ORGANIZING **#YALILEARNS** ACTIVITIES AT **YALI.STATE.GOV/LEARNS**

