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“Build Trust between Black Communities & the Police” Justice Michael H. Tulloch

By Emmanuel Ayiku and Ebenezer Amankwah, Aurora, Ont.

The Honourable Michael H. Tulloch, Chief Justice of Ontario, has stated that the police should strive to build and maintain trust within communities. He noted that tension between law enforcement and the communities they serve has led to mutual distrust.

Chief Justice Tulloch, the first Black Chief Justice of Ontario, made these remarks during his keynote address at the York Regional Police Black History Month Celebration held at the York Regional Police Headquarters.

He acknowledged that this is not a task for police officers alone, but also a challenge that judges in the courts must confront.

“If we do the necessary work, I’m confident that 30 years from now, at another gathering celebrating Black History Month, we will be
 cont’d on pg. 33



Justice Michael H. Tulloch

Major news stories that kept our community talking in 2023

By Jonathan Baah Annobil, Toronto, ON

JANUARY

- Star Wars, the movie: Google fights back – NEPMC
- Korle Bu Hospital approves naming of Isolation Ward at Rebecca Akufo Addo PICU after late child cancer Ambassador (Breanna Fosua Addai)
- Mayor John Tory announces his resignation after an affair with a staffer
- Hazel McCallion longtime mayor of Mississauga passes away at age 101
- Vice President Bawumia cuts sod and offers support for the construction of Liberty Assemblies of God Church Hospital
- Lonely Planet, renowned international guidebook company names Ghana as Top destination for connecting in 2023
 cont’d on pg. 27

Apostle Daniel N.L. Engmann visited Church of Pentecost, Red Deer Assembly

By Staff Reporter, Red Deer, AB



Group picture of Apostle Daniel Engman and wife Mama Debbie with the congregation

Apostle Daniel N.L. Engmann and Mrs. Debbie Engmann visited Church of Pentecost, Red Deer Assembly on February 11, 2024, during Alberta Area Leadership School and Apostolization (COP). The theme for the year 2024 is “A People of God Unleashed to Transform their World.” He spoke on the topic “Unleashed People of God” (1 Peter 2:9; 1 Timothy 4:12). He encouraged the congregation to be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

cont’d on pg. 7

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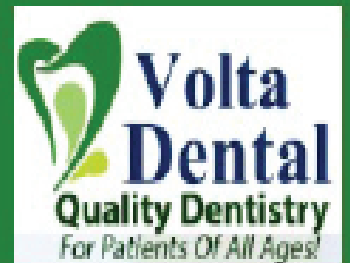
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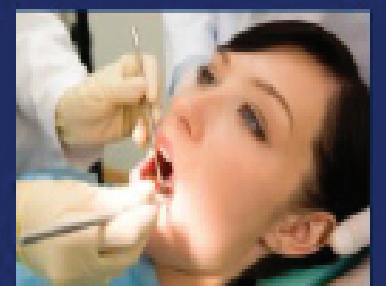
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TTC users will soon be able to transfer to and from GO Transit for free

Toronto transit users will soon save a few dollars when transferring to or from other public transportation systems, including GO Transit.

The program, aptly called “One Fare,” has been a long-time and delayed promise of Ontario Premier Doug Ford’s.

Beginning on Feb. 26, riders will only pay once when transferring between GO Transit, TTC, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay and York Region Transit.

“That means someone living in Barrie, you take a Barrie Transit bus to the GO Station, ride the GO Train to here, Downsview Park Station, and take the subway to the (Toronto Metropolitan University) campus, all with one fare,” the premier said Monday morning.

“This program will be a game changer for transit riders. It will provide people with more transit options and more convenience.”

Riders will, however, be charged the highest single fare associated with

their trip. Using the above example, officials clarified that transit riders will be charged a fare on Barrie Transit and then that fare will be reduced from the GO Transit fees they will be charged afterward. No fee will be charged when that rider uses the TTC—still equaling one single payment for the trip.

The Ontario government eliminated double fares on the majority of these transit systems in March 2022, but the Toronto Transit Commission—the largest urban transit service provider in the GTA—was left out.

Fare integration was promised by the end of 2023, but it was delayed. No reason was provided for the postponement.

The government has promised to cover the cost of the One Fare program, although it’s unclear what the total cost will be. Vijay Thanigasalam, Associate Minister of Transportation, indicated the Progressive Conservatives will fully fund the program to “kick start” the One Fare program, totalling about \$67 million.

When asked about long-term funding, Thanigasalam said he is “confident this is going to be a successful One Fare program moving forward in the long term.” He did not specify how many

years the government will fund the program.

Here’s what the Ford government wants people to know about the top contentious transit projects

Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow called the program a “godsend,” saying it will provide people with different opportunities to get in and out of the city.

Ontario Liberal critic for transportation and infrastructure MPP Andrea Hazel said that while she is pleased with the idea of fare integration, she will be watching to ensure the TTC doesn’t lose revenue as a result of the program.

“Ontario Liberals will be watching vigilantly to ensure that Canada’s largest transit system is made whole.”

“There are a lot of, Torontonians that outside the City of Toronto,” she said.

“When public transit is working well, life is more affordable. More people can choose to leave their cars at home. It becomes less expensive to get around the city and it reduces the congestion on our roads.”

The Ford government says riders will be able to save about \$1,600 on average each year. CTV News


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EDITORIAL

Patronising our Community Businesses is Key to economic success

Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau’s vision in supporting Black Businesses was demonstrated when two years ago he visited some of the Black Community Businesses in Montreal to make sure that they survive. While we encourage our community businesses to strive for higher heights, the Ghanaian News wish to use this opportunity and this column to strongly advise and appeal to our community members to consciously and strongly patronise the businesses in our various Ghanaian community Businesses here in Canada.

We all know of the economic, political and social successes of many migrant communities in Canada. We also know that the key to their economic, political and social successes has been due to only one major act of their community members: patronage of the businesses in their various communities. There’s a common saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.” The power of the community has paved the way for many of our community business owners. When you choose to support community-owned businesses, you’re supporting community pride and unity. While that may be intimidating to some, it would mean the world to many families and communities. Ghanaian entrepreneurship is a tool for survival in a world that does not want to see us win. When we win against all odds, our young children grow up seeing successful entrepreneurs and the world a better place. We do not need to stretch this point very far. We can see these realities of the success of other communities around us. We can take tours of those businesses and establishments and we will come away with only one major reality: the active patronage of these businesses by their community members. Charity, they say, begins at home. “Home” in this context means ‘our own communities’ right here in Canada. When businesses in our communities flourish, the benefits transcend to the larger communities as well.

The economic success will enable the businesses to support initiatives in our communities from support for youth education, recreation, and services to by extension creating a positive image for our community. The economic successes will also lead to social and political recognition from the larger Canadian community. Again we can see evidence of these around us from other communities: their economic and business successes mean that the larger society takes them seriously. This has enabled them to make inroads into the bigger political arena enabling them to be part of the vital decision-making process of the country that eventually affects all of us. We therefore entreat our community members to take cues from the above and actively and strongly patronize the businesses in our community. It is very important. It is vital and it is the major key to our communities’ success, revival, recognition and future strength.

2023 GCAO Annual Report

President’s Message

Community Members, Associations, Churches, Nananom, Clergy, Mosques;

2023 was a year of growth and collaboration for Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) alias, Ghana Union. I am grateful for the support we have been able to garner from our community and the constant prayers for the success of this great community we have.

Thank you to our Funders for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 include the New Horizon Grant, Canadian Women Foundation, Taibu Community Health Centre, City of Toronto, Rexdale Community Health Centre, National Alliance of Black Communities.

GCAO serves as an umbrella organization encompassing all Ghanaian-Canadian individuals, religious, professional, cultural, and social organizations in Ontario. We boast over 27 cultural associations, 25 faith groups (churches and mosques), numerous businesses, and professional group associations. We are a non-profit organization with a mission to enhance the well-being of Ghanaian-Canadians in Ontario. Our extensive membership of over 45,000 individuals across the Greater Toronto Area relies on our support and services.

As you read our 2023 annual report, it is with humility and astonishment the level of leaders, volunteers, subject matter experts, media, and other stakeholders who have contributed immensely to our success thus far. We thank you all for your unwavering support to our leadership teams and our community members.



Emmanuel Duodu, GCAO – President

We still have work ahead of us, our financial goal of reaching \$1,000,000 to secure our heritage centre continues to be a priority. The welfare of our community continues to be our aim. As we look to 2024, we look forward to journeying with you. To mention just a few; the heritage project, consolidating the gains we have made, attracting more volunteers, paid staff to man our HUB, and health education on physical, emotional, and mental health, international students integration, youth at risk, business development, mentoring, data analytics, and housing are the work ahead of us and we need your support. Please reach out and take some time to help. I have no doubt that we can accomplish our goals.

Please stay safe and get involved in your community. We need you, please!

‘Together We Build, The Time is Now’

E. Duodu, GCAO – President

See full report on page

Online harms: Liberals seek to create digital safety commission, new ombudsperson

to create a “digital safety commission of Canada” to regulate social media companies to take steps to reduce the risk of online harms to their users.

Justice Minister Arif Virani tabled the much-anticipated Online Harms Act on Monday afternoon, and creating a new regulator is just one of the new measures being proposed.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has long promised to better protect Canadians, especially youth, from online harms. But his ministers repeatedly said developing such legislation was complicated.

The new legislation, titled Bill C-63, seeks to create a new regulator for social-media services and establish an ombudsperson to advocate for users who have concerns about online safety.

It covers harms including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, including deepfakes created by artificial intelligence, as well as content used to cyberbully, urge self-harm or incite violence, terrorism or hatred.

The law seeks to give the new digital safety commission power to “order removal of content that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a

shared without an individual’s consent

It says companies, which must generally abide by a “duty to act responsibly,” must remove such material within 24 hours.

Under the new bill, users could file a complaint with the platform itself or to the new regulator.

The Liberals are also amending the Criminal Code to introduce stiffer punishments for existing hate propaganda offences and amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include online hate speech as a form of discrimination.

The mother of a British Columbia teen who died by suicide after being targeted by online sextortion is already pleading with federal lawmakers to pass the bill.

Carol Todd, whose daughter Amanda posted a video on YouTube detailing her ordeal before she died in 2012, said she worries that opposition parties will vote against the bill and wants them to communicate.

cont’d on pg. 10

What would happen without a Leap Day? More than you might think

Leap year. It's a delight for the calendar and math nerds among us. So how did it all begin and why?

Have a look at some of the numbers, history and lore behind the (not quite) every four year phenom that adds a 29th day to February.

BY THE NUMBERS

The math is mind-boggling in a layperson sort of way and down to fractions of days and minutes. There's even a leap second occasionally, but there's no hullabaloo when that happens.

The thing to know is that leap year exists, in large part, to keep the months in sync with annual events, including equinoxes and solstices, according to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology.

It's a correction to counter the fact that Earth's orbit isn't precisely 365 days a year. The trip takes about six hours longer than that, NASA says.

Contrary to what some might believe, however, not every four years is a leaper. Adding a leap day every four years would make the calendar longer by more than 44 minutes, according to the National Air & Space Museum.

Later, on a calendar yet to come (we'll get to it), it was decreed that years divisible by 100 not follow the four-year leap day rule unless they are also divisible by 400, the JPL notes. In the past 500 years, there was no leap day in 1700, 1800 and 1900, but 2000 had one. In the next 500 years, if the practice is followed, there will be no leap day in 2100, 2200, 2300 and 2500.

Still with us?

The next leap years are 2028, 2032 and 2036.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WITHOUT A LEAP DAY?

Eventually, nothing good in terms of when major events fall, when farmers plant and how seasons align with the sun and the moon.

"Without the leap years, after a few hundred years we will have summer

in November," said Younas Khan, a physics instructor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "Christmas will be in summer. There will be no snow. There will be no feeling of Christmas."

WHO CAME UP WITH LEAP YEAR?

The short answer: It evolved.

Ancient civilizations used the cosmos to plan their lives, and there are calendars dating back to the Bronze Age. They were based on either the phases of the moon or the sun, as various calendars are today. Usually they were "lunisolar," using both.

Now hop on over to the Roman Empire and Julius Caesar. He was dealing with major seasonal drift on calendars used in his neck of the woods. They dealt badly with drift by adding months. He was also navigating a vast array of calendars starting in a vast array of ways in the vast Roman Empire.

He introduced his Julian calendar in 46 BCE. It was purely solar and counted a year at 365.25 days, so once every four years an extra day was added. Before that, the Romans counted a year at 355 days, at least for a time.

But still, under Julius, there was drift. There were too many leap years! The solar year isn't precisely 365.25 days! It's 365.242 days, said Nick Eakes, an astronomy educator at the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Thomas Palaima, a classics professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said adding periods of time to a year to reflect variations in the lunar and solar cycles was done by the ancients. The Athenian calendar, he said, was used in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries with 12 lunar months.

That didn't work for seasonal religious rites. The drift problem led to "intercalating" an extra month periodically to realign with lunar and solar cycles, Palaima said.

The Julian calendar was 0.0078 days (11 minutes and 14 seconds) longer than the tropical year, so errors in timekeeping still gradually

accumulated, according to NASA. But stability increased, Palaima said.

The Julian calendar was the model used by the Western world for hundreds of years. Enter Pope Gregory XIII, who calibrated further. His Gregorian calendar took effect in the late 16th century. It remains in use today and, clearly, isn't perfect or there would be no need for leap year. But it was a big improvement, reducing drift to mere seconds.

Why did he step in? Well, Easter. It was coming later in the year over time, and he fretted that events related to Easter like the Pentecost might bump up against pagan festivals. The pope wanted Easter to remain in the spring.

He eliminated some extra days accumulated on the Julian calendar and tweaked the rules on leap day. It's Pope Gregory and his advisers who came up with the really gnarly math on when there should or shouldn't be a leap year.

"If the solar year was a perfect 365.25 then we wouldn't have to worry about the tricky math involved," Eakes said.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH LEAP YEAR AND MARRIAGE?

Bizarrely, leap day comes with lore about women popping the marriage question to men. It was mostly benign fun, but it came with a bite that reinforced gender roles.

There's distant European folklore. One story places the idea of women proposing in fifth century Ireland, with St. Bridget appealing to St. Patrick to offer women the chance to ask men to marry them, according to historian Katherine Parkin in a 2012 paper in the *Journal of Family History*.

Nobody really knows where it all began.

In 1904, syndicated columnist Elizabeth Meriwether Gilmer, aka Dorothy Dix, summed up the tradition this way: "Of course people will say ... that a woman's leap year prerogative, like most of her liberties, is merely a glittering mockery."

The pre-Sadie Hawkins tradition,

however serious or tongue-in-cheek, could have empowered women but merely perpetuated stereotypes. The proposals were to happen via postcard, but many such cards turned the tables and poked fun at women instead.

Advertising perpetuated the leap year marriage game. A 1916 ad by the American Industrial Bank and Trust Co. read thusly: "This being Leap Year day, we suggest to every girl that she propose to her father to open a savings account in her name in our own bank."

There was no breath of independence for women due to leap day.

SHOULD WE PITY THE LEAPLINGS?

Being born in a leap year on a leap day certainly is a talking point. But it can be kind of a pain from a paperwork perspective. Some governments and others requiring forms to be filled out and birthdays to be stated stepped in to declare what date was used by leaplings for such things as drivers licenses, whether Feb. 28 or March 1.

Technology has made it far easier for leap babies to jot down their Feb. 29 milestones, though there can be glitches in terms of health systems, insurance policies and with other businesses and organization that don't have that date built in.

There are about 5 million people worldwide who share the leap birthday out of about 8 billion people on the planet. Shelley Dean, 23, in Seattle, Washington, chooses a rosy attitude about being a leapling. Growing up, she had normal birthday parties each year, but an extra special one when leap years rolled around. Since, as an adult, she marks that non-leap period between Feb. 28 and March 1 with a low-key "whew."

This year is different.

"It will be the first birthday that I'm going to celebrate with my family in eight years, which is super exciting, because the last leap day I was on the other side of the country in New York for college," she said. "It's a very big year." **AP**

Apostle Daniel N.L. Engmann visited Church of Pentecost, Red Deer Assembly

Cont'd from pg. 1

He added that believers should bear the fruit of the spirit as stated in Galatians 5:22-23. Apostle and Mrs. Engmann's visit to the Red Deer Assembly was a blessing to all the members and the Church Family

New 'One Fare' program begins on Monday in the GTA. Here's what you need to know.

A new integrated public transit fare system is launching in the Greater Toronto Area on Monday for riders transferring between GO Transit, the TTC, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay, and York Region Transit.

A long-time and delayed promise of Ontario Premier Doug Ford, the new "One Fare" initiative aims to provide people with "more transit options and more convenience," he said at a recent news conference.

It also has the goal of addressing fare duplication on the TTC, which was excluded when the province eliminated

double fares on most of Ontario's transit systems in March 2022.

The One Fare program is expected to save public transit riders on average \$1,600 a year in fares, the province said.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Riders who make a trip on any of these systems (GO Transit, the TTC, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay, and York Region Transit) must pay the highest single fare associated with their trip, but will be charged a reduced fare when they transfer to another system within

a designated two- to three-hour timeframe.

"That means someone living in Barrie, you take a Barrie Transit bus to the GO Station, ride the GO Train to here, Downsview Park Station, and take the subway to the (Toronto Metropolitan University) campus, all with one fare," the premier said during a Feb. 5 news conference.

WHAT SHOULD TTC RIDERS EXPECT

cont'd on pg. 10

Ontario adds \$1.3B in post-secondary funding, freezes tuition for three more years

Ontario's colleges and universities minister says the province will put an additional \$1.3 billion over three years toward "stabilizing" post-secondary institutions but will keep tuition fees frozen for at least three more years.

A government-commissioned report released in November said that low levels of provincial funding to colleges and universities combined with a tuition cut and freeze in 2019 are posing a "significant threat" to the financial sustainability of the sector.

Minister Jill Dunlop says today that the government will put \$903 million over three years into a new Postsecondary Education Sustainability Fund, with some of that money set aside for institutions with the highest financial need. The rest of the funding will go to capital funding, some STEM program costs and research and innovation projects, among other initiatives.

The expert report had recommended a one-time, 10 per cent increase in per-student funding to colleges and universities followed by inflationary increases in subsequent years, as well as a five per cent increase in tuition along with an "equally generous" increase to student aid.

But Dunlop says today that a tuition freeze in place since 2019 will continue until at least 2026-27, the year of the next provincial election.

Dunlop introduced legislation today that would require colleges and universities to give students information about ancillary fees and other costs such as textbooks, and the bill would require institutions to have mental health and wellness supports policies in place.

Provincial funding for publicly assisted colleges for full-time domestic students is at a lower level than every other province, while the Council of Ontario Universities has said at least 10 universities are facing operating deficits.

A report last year by Higher Education Strategy Associates said Ontario's post-secondary funding is "abysmal" and raising spending to the average of the other nine provinces would require \$7.1 billion per year in additional funding -- much higher than the current level of operating funding at around \$5 billion.

Post-secondary institutions have recently been saying their situation

has grown even more dire following a federal announcement earlier this year that the number of visas for international undergraduate students will be slashed, with Ontario seeing its allotment cut in half.

The low levels of government funding have caused post-secondary institutions to increasingly turn to international student tuition fees, which are much higher than the rates for Canadian students.

Average university fees in 2020-21 were \$7,938 for domestic undergraduate students and \$40,525 for international

undergraduate students, the auditor general said in a 2022 report.

The Smart Prosperity Institute, a University of Ottawa-based think tank, reported last year that Ontario universities nearly doubled international student enrolment between 2014 and 2015, and 2021 and 2022, and colleges more than tripled international enrolment.

Ontario's government-commissioned report on post-secondary finances said international student revenue is now fundamental to the sector's viability, greatly raising institutions' risk exposure. The Canadian Press

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The number of inmates awaiting trial in Canada’s provincial jails has quadrupled in the last 10 years: CCLA

The rate at which Canada has incarcerated individuals awaiting trial has more than doubled in the last 10 years, leading to a fourfold increase in the legally innocent population housed in provincial and territorial detention facilities, according to a new report released by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

The 93-page report was delivered by Shakir Rahim, Executive Director of the CCLA’s Criminal Justice Program, alongside Queen’s University Associate Professor Nicole Myers, at Queen’s Park on Monday.

“The findings are dire,” Rahim told reporters. “Conditions in pretrial detention in our country are dangerous and inhumane.”

The report comes 10 years after the CCLA’s landmark 2014 publication on the national bail system, Set Up To

Fail: The Revolving Door of Pre-Trial Detention, and suggests that little has changed in the last decade for those serving in pre-trial detention.

When Set Up to Fail was published, the CCLA reported that nearly 55 per cent of people detained in Canada’s provincial and territorial jails were awaiting trial and considered legally innocent. The new report suggests that figure is now at 70 per cent across the country.

As far as provincial data, which was obtained by CTV News Toronto through a Freedom of Information Request last month, 82 per cent of individuals jailed in Ontario last year were awaiting trial.

“We are facing very serious and long-standing nuclear issues in Canada’s bail system despite the political rhetoric of leniency,” Myers said.

To produce the report, the CCLA, alongside justice system professionals and volunteers, monitored 79 days of bail court throughout 2021 and 2022. In total, 1,284 bail appearances were observed and 33 professionals were interviewed.

When reached for comment on the issue last month, the Ministry of the Attorney General, which oversees Ontario’s court system, told CTV News Toronto that \$100-million has been spent on measures meant to prioritize public safety and security.

“This funding will help police apprehend high-risk violent offenders wanted for breaching bail and community supervision order conditions and support prosecutors and courts when dealing with bail hearings for repeat offenders involved with serious violent crimes,” it said.

CTV News Toronto has reached out to both the Ministry of Attorney General and Solicitor General for comment on the report.

BAIL COURT CHALLENGES

The CCLA researchers found that Canada’s bail courts continue to struggle to ensure that all accused people have access to a timely hearing, and that, when those hearings do take place, the law is not always fairly applied.

In turn, individuals are made to spend unnecessary time in custody, they found.

“People who are legally innocent – people who may never be convicted of the charges they are facing – are deprived of their liberty, housed in overcrowded jails, and separated from their families and communities for days and weeks,” the report reads.

Several Ontario interviewees, mostly defence counsel, highlighted practices in their jurisdictions that “stand in the way of timely, efficient bail hearings.”

In one mid-sized Ontario city, an interviewee raised concerns that new arrests were not receiving same-day bail hearings, as the local court rarely stayed open past 4:30 p.m.

“That often results in people sitting at the police department for 28 hours, 30 hours. I mean, if they’re arrested at 11:00 in the morning, they may not appear in court until 3:00 the next day,” the interviewee said.

Frequent adjournments are also cause for concern, the association reports. Of the court appearances observed by CCLA researchers, over 65 per cent were adjourned to another day.

In Ontario, the most recent data shows that 74 per cent of bail matter hearings were adjourned.

“It is important to remember that each adjournment is effectively a short detention order – the accused is required to remain in detention until the next appearance, and there is no guarantee that a bail decision will be made on their next appearance,” the report states.

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FOCUS

Skilled Trades are necessary Pathways for Students Success

By Joe Kingsley Eyiah, OCT, Brookview Middle School, Toronto-Canada

Pathways in education are great opportunities for students success and the trades are definitely part of them. It is no secret that not all students at the end of their education journey could become teachers, doctors, lawyers or engineers. It's therefore necessary to as expose students to most if not all the opportunities in education at the High School, including the trades, to empower them to make individual choices that will lead to success in life before it's too late. IT IS SAID THAT PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS BEGIN WITH YOUR DESTINATION IN MIND. This includes early identification of opportunities which suit your strengths and interests as well as planning goals and strategies to achieving them.

I am motivated to write on the topic of Pathways at High School by a recent education tour I made with Grade 8 students to their "home" High School in the vicinity of Toronto in the Ontario Province of Canada to expose them to the trade programs being run for students at the High. The programs include Healthcare, Cosmetology, Food, Media/Computer, Transportation



and Masonry.

Skilled Trade Programs at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB):

Some High Schools in the TDSB offer programs in the skilled trades and technologies to students as pathways to success in their education journey for

local and national development.

According to the TDSB such connectivity, robots and rapid prototyping using 3-D printers are some of the technologies impacting the learning required for journeypersons, also known as skilled trades people. For example, electricians, carpenters and aircraft technicians are a few examples of trades requiring intensive study, which blends technology with careers and academic learning.

At the TDSB, there are many ways to explore the over 300 skilled trades and technologies that contribute to our economy. These include: the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP) program, technological education programs in 10 broad-based areas of study, the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) and dual credit programs at Toronto's colleges. Apprenticeship is a post-secondary pathway which incorporates college study with work-integrated experience, hence the term *live your learning!*

Student Success Initiatives at the Toronto District School Board:

As part of our Student Success Initiatives, the TDSB partners with local colleges to provide Dual Credit and School Within a College (SWAC) Programming. These programs allow students to earn high school credits in an adult learning environment while experiencing

college in their grade 11 and 12 years as part of their transition to post-secondary education.

These hands-on educational programs offer students the opportunities to learn about skilled technologies such as brick-laying, carpentry, masonry, electrical, heating and air conditioning needed in the construction industry.

During the one-day visit with my elementary students (grade 8) to the High School to learn briefly about the trade programs offered to students at that level I observed how enthusiastic my students were about such exposure to the available trades at the High School level which they could pursue as pathways to success in their educational journey. I therefore encourage parents and guardians to support their students/wards in their pursuit of such pathways at the High School level.

Also, as an educationist, I suggest that the trades should be made available at the Senior High Schools in Ghana to offer early opportunities to students at that level of their education. It should not just be Vocational and Visual Arts studies at that level of education. Let's catch the students young with the skilled trades and technologies for the needed national development. After all, "the early bird catches the worm!"

New 'One Fare' program begins on Monday in the GTA. Here's what you need to know.

When a riders uses the TTC as part of their trip they will not be charged. The TTC will automatically calculate a 100 per cent discount and apply it to their PRESTO card, credit, or debit card.

It should be noted that customers who pay their TTC fare with a monthly pass will not receive any additional discounts when transferring to GO Transit.

Riders who need to transfer into or out of the TTC system must tap using their original method of payment on a PRESTO reader. Customers will receive a free transfer and won't be charged another fare as long as they are within two hours of their first tap on the TTC.

This program applies to youths, adults, post-secondary students, seniors, and TTC fair discount pass customers. Children 12 and under always travel for free on the TTC.

WHAT THIS PROGRAM MEANS FOR GO TRANSIT USERS

Those riding GO Transit will be reimbursed for the TTC portion of their fare as long as they are within two-hours of their first tap. Riders should tap off when they get to their destination, unless they have a default trip set.

Much like the TTC, GO Transit riders should tap using their original payment when transferring to other transit vehicles during their trip. GO Transit

offers a three-hour transfer window.

A tapped PRESTO card, PRESTO in Google Wallet, debit, or credit card is considered proof-of-payment.

INFO FOR NON-TTC MONTHLY PASS HOLDERS

Customers who have a monthly pass for Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay, or York Region Transit will receive a free transfer when they connect to the TTC.

On return trips starting in Toronto, rider will pay a single-ride TTC fare and receive a free transfer when connecting to the agency where they hold a monthly pass.

ONE FARE EXCLUSIONS

At this time, the UP Express is not included in this program.

The TransHelp program in Peel Region is also excluded from this offering as it does not accept PRESTO.

Ontario is contributing \$67 million to "kick start" the One Fare program, which supports the [2041 Regional Transportation Plan](#) and is part of more than 100 actions outlined in the [Greater Golden Horseshow Transportation Plan](#).

It is, however, unclear at this point where money will come from in the long-term for One Fare as the province has not specified how many years it would fund it. CP24

Online harms: Liberals seek to create digital safety commission, new ombudsperson

cont'd from pg. 6

Todd said in an interview before the legislation was tabled that it has been frustrating not to have seen a bill guarding against online sextortion and cyberbullying earlier.

But she said: "Sometimes you have to wait for something good."

She pointed to how similar laws already exist in the European Union, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Canada cannot afford to wait any longer to see such legislation in place, Todd said, predicting it could save many lives from the increased prevalence of cyberbullying and sextortion.

"It's the lives of our kids," she said.

"I'm talking about everyday life, and just something that happens online -- that can happen in a split second -- can make a young person spiral so deeply."

She said she is hopeful that the legislation becomes another part of Amanda's legacy. Her YouTube video helped many parents and youth to have important conversations about protecting themselves in an online setting, she said.

"Amanda's legacy continues to live on, and I think that it's a teaching experience for all of us," added Todd.

"And if she were watching from wherever, she would be proud of that."

Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh has called on Trudeau for weeks to introduce the long-awaited bill, pointing to the case of 12-year-old Carson Cleland of Prince George, B.C.

Last October, police said he was found with a self-inflicted gunshot wound after his family said he had fallen victim to online sextortion.

In the lead-up to the bill being tabled, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre signalled his opposition to it, saying he believed Trudeau would target online speech.

"This is very important legislation," government House leader Steven MacKinnon said at a news conference on Monday. "The government has worked on it for a long, long time."

He said many parents know the dangers posed to children, and he thinks "any responsible government has to act." The Canadian Press

Ghana's Nurse Migration; A Call To Action!

By Edmund Agbeko

Elizabeth Kabukie Ocansey says that, in the heart of Ghana's healthcare system, a silent crisis is unfolding as a significant number of seasoned nurses bid farewell to their homeland. The Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association revealed a staggering exodus, with 732 nurses having left the country since the onset of January 2024 alone. The President of the Association, Perpetual Ofori Ampofo, however revealed in an interview that this alarming trend is not a new phenomenon.



Reflecting on the past, she highlighted that over 8,000 trained nurses departed Ghana in 2003, setting the stage for a chronic issue. Perpetual Ofori Ampofo reveals that, what's more troubling is that the professionals leaving today are not novices in their field; instead, they carry with them years of valuable experience. "January 2024, we have had 732 already going through our offices with the intention of moving out. When we look at last year, the whole of last year in total we had a close of 8,000 who actually were in the process, and I'm sure by now a number of them have left. It is worrying because, for me, those who are leaving are not those who have 1 year or no experience in the practice. These are the ones who have a number of years of experience."

Last year, more than 1,200 Ghanaian nurses reportedly joined the United Kingdom's nursing register, exacerbating the strain on the local healthcare system. Additionally, about 150 experienced nurses and health professionals from Pantang Hospital have sought opportunities abroad, further emphasizing the magnitude of the issue. Ghana's healthcare sector stands at a critical crossroads, grappling with an unprecedented departure of experienced nursing professionals. The nation faces the urgent task of addressing the root causes of this healthcare exodus to safeguard the well-being of its citizens and the future of its healthcare infrastructure.

As the healthcare community contends with internal challenges, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has acknowledged and actively addressed the issue of brain drain. In June, the Ghana Health Service announced its commitment to tackling the adverse effects of professionals migrating to other regions or industries. Addressing the healthcare exodus in Ghana requires a multi-faceted approach involving government interventions, policy reforms, and collaborative efforts from various stakeholders.

According to Elizabeth Kabukie Ocansey, the government should implement strategies to retain experienced nurses, such as offering competitive salaries, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. The migration of over 4,000 nurses from Ghana to Europe between January and July 2023 is attributed by the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (GRNMA) to the inadequate improvement in working conditions.

GRNMA President, Perpetual Ofori Ampofo, notes that the issue of subpar salaries and a lack of respect for healthcare professionals extends beyond Ghana to the wider African context. "The truth of the matter is that our salaries in Ghana as nurses and midwives are not the best. But I also know that it is not only Ghana. Within the sub-region, within Africa as a whole, it is the same issue." To curb this trend, urgent attention is needed to enhance working conditions in healthcare facilities, creating a safe and supportive environment, and ensuring sufficient staffing levels to alleviate workload and prevent burnout among healthcare workers.

In 2005, a shortage of nurses due to many seeking opportunities abroad led to a government ban on nurses travelling overseas. Effective measures, including funding nursing education with a requirement for a five-year work bond, successfully increased the nurse workforce by 2015, prompting the end of the bond. However, recent reports of a significant nurse exodus necessitate an immediate review to implement measures to address the issue. This, I believe, is calling for the need to increase investment in nursing education and training programs to ensure an ample supply of qualified professionals. Establish continuous professional development initiatives to keep nurses abreast of the latest medical advancements.

The Ghana Health Service should be collaborating with the government and other sectors to improve the overall economic conditions of healthcare professionals. There must be a need to implement measures to address social factors that contribute to the decision to migrate, such as housing, education, and healthcare for their families. Government should review and update immigration policies to ensure that healthcare professionals are adequately recognized and supported and also collaborate with international bodies to regulate and monitor recruitment practices to prevent unethical poaching of healthcare professionals.

The Government should conduct regular surveys and assessments to understand the concerns and needs of healthcare professionals and also implement measures to improve job satisfaction, including recognition programs and opportunities for professional growth. There must be a need to foster collaborations between

cont'd on pg. 14

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IMMIGRATION AND SOCIAL ISSUES

By: James A. Kwaateng, B.A. (Hons), LLB (Hons)

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S TOUGH STANCE ON SPONSORSHIP OF PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

This topic is being revisited because of the confusion and frustration generated by the newly introduced process and rules regarding sponsorship of parents and grandparents. As indicated in the earlier article, it is permissible for a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident of Canada and a person registered in Canada as an Indian under the Canadian Indian Act to sponsor his or her own parents and grandparents related by blood or adoption.



The spouse or common-law partner of the parent or grandparent being sponsored can be included in the application as a dependent relative. Additionally, sponsors can include their brothers and sisters or half brothers and sisters or step-brothers and step-sisters in the application if they qualify as dependent children of the principal applicant.

Like all forms of immigration sponsorships, sponsors must meet certain conditions of eligibility, the first of which is being a permanent resident or citizen of Canada above the age of eighteen years. A sponsor must provide a proof of income to demonstrate capability to support the persons being sponsored. And among other things, the sponsor must not be in jail, prison or penitentiary; must not have defaulted in payment of immigration loan, a performance bond or court-ordered support payments; must not have defaulted in any sponsorship agreement; must not be an undischarged bankrupt; must not be receiving social assistance for a reason other than disability; must not have been convicted of a violent criminal offence or any offence against a relative or any sexual offence inside or outside Canada and must not be under a removal order.

The process of sponsoring parents and grandparents has changed. Under the current system, the first step to sponsor your parents or grandparents is to fill out **an interest to sponsor form**. This form is available at the beginning of the year for only a limited time after which submission of the form will be closed.

At the second stage, Immigration will **invite** potential sponsors to submit a complete application. It is at this time that you complete an application package, pay the necessary fees and submit the application. The complete application should get to Immigration within 60 days of receiving the invitation.

The current minimum necessary income for sponsoring parents and grandparents is the existing Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) amount plus 30 percent of it. The period for demonstrating the minimum necessary income has extended from one year to three years. Thus, sponsors will be required to demonstrate that they meet the new income threshold for the three consecutive tax years prior to submitting the sponsorship application. This, as opposed to 12 months that used to be the case, will assure the Government that sponsors have income stability and the financial means to provide for the basic needs of the sponsored parents and grandparents. This assurance is further enhanced by the fact that under the new plan, evidence of income for eligibility purposes is confined to Canada Revenue Agency notices of assessment.

The sponsorship undertaking period for parents and grandparents has been extended from 10 to 20 years. This means sponsors and co-signers (if applicable) will be responsible for repaying any supplementary health care costs or provincial social assistance benefits paid to the parent and grandparent and their accompanying family members within sponsorship validity period of 20 years, and not 10 years.

While the foregoing measures do not benefit the sponsor and the sponsored relative, it is presumed the lengthened sponsorship undertaking will protect Canadian taxpayers by compelling the sponsors to shoulder financial responsibilities associated with the care and upkeep of their sponsored aged parents and grandparents and their accompanying dependent children.

Notwithstanding the increasingly

tough process and measures being adopted in respect of such applications, the Government still places a cap on acceptance of new applications for sponsorships of parents and grandparents. The newly-adopted tough measures however do not seem to have had the dissuasive effect the policy makers might have anticipated. Children and grandchildren still struggle to sponsor their parents and grandparents in large numbers.

Sponsorships of parents and grandparents are becoming increasingly

complex due to the ongoing changes to the process, laws and regulations. Contact immigration law professionals for advice and assistance whenever you deem it necessary.

James A. Kwaateng, is an Immigration Law practitioner with offices located at 168A Oakdale Road, Suite 4, Toronto, Ontario. For thorough discussion of your immigration and related social and legal issues, contact him at telephone number (416) 743-2758 for an appointment.

MPs to use local languages for parliamentary debates

Parliament is set to introduce the use of local languages on the floor of the House as a means to promote Ghanaian culture and safeguard it from potential extinction.

According to Order 63 of the new Standing Orders, Members of Parliament (MPs) will be permitted to utilize any of the local languages, with interpretation and translation provided to ensure understanding by all present.

This initiative is scheduled to commence during the second meeting of the fourth session of the Eighth Parliament.

Speaker of Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, has confirmed that



necessary arrangements, including the provision of translators and appropriate gadgets, will be made to facilitate a seamless implementation.

The new measure is expected to be implemented following the Easter break. classfmonline.com

United States (U.S.) Provides \$2 Million to Construct a New National Vaccine Cold Room

The state-of-the-art building will have two floors with the cold room on the ground floor and offices and storage space on the first floor

The United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is providing \$2 million (24.8 million Ghana Cedis) to construct a new national vaccine cold room and a national cold chain vaccine management resource center at Korle Bu.

USAID/Ghana Deputy Mission Director, Grace Lang, joined the Director General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr. Patrick Kuma-Aboagye, to observe the progress of the construction, on Tuesday.

“The national vaccine cold room will store Ghana’s routine vaccines at optimal temperatures and provide surge capacity in case of future pandemics,” said Ms. Lang. She also acknowledged UNICEF for their technical support and the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service for providing their leadership in the health sector. When completed, the state-of-the-art building will have two floors with the cold room on the

ground floor and offices and storage space on the first floor. The ground floor will have the capacity to house six walk-in cold freezer rooms. Construction is expected to be complete by June 2024.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the existing national vaccine cold room had reached full capacity. USAID’s support enabled Ghana to triple its vaccine distribution capacity, through the rental of two specialized cold vans.

The new national vaccine cold room builds on this support and represents USAID’s continued commitment to Ghana’s health sector.

The United States Government is Ghana’s largest bilateral partner with over \$140 million in support in the last year for health, economic growth, agriculture, education, and governance.

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President Akufo-Addo Commissions Borteyman Sports Facilities; Ghana Ready To Host Historical 13th African Games

The event will also herald the 25-day countdown to the holding of Africa's biggest multi-disciplinary sporting event at the Borteyman Sports Facilities and the newly constructed facilities at the University of Ghana

The President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, has on Tuesday 13th February, 2024, commissioned the multipurpose Borteyman Sports complex to climax preparations by Ghana to host her first ever All Africa Games showpiece since independence.

The event will also herald the 25-day countdown to the holding of Africa's biggest multi-disciplinary sporting event at the Borteyman Sports Facilities and the newly constructed facilities at the University of Ghana.



President Akufo-Addo

The masterstroke decision leading to the adoption of the hybrid method, according to the President, has proven to be a wise one, as facilities, both at the University of Ghana and in Borteyman, are ready for the hosting of the 13th edition of the Games.

With preparations largely characterised by difficulties and uncertainties, following the unexpected effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's infrastructural

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Greater Collaboration necessary in Fight against use of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines Vice President Bawumia

Ghana recognizes the urgent need for concerted action to address the humanitarian impact of improvised anti-personnel mine

Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia has opened the Regional Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines with a call for urgent action to prevent the thousands of needless deaths and injuries arising from the proliferation of landmines or Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs).



Vice President Bawumia

Speaking on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at the Conference, attended by representatives from all 15 ECOWAS countries, 8 from the Sahel region, UN agencies and organisations, and humanitarian agencies, Vice President Bawumia deplored the debilitating effects of anti-personnel mines on innocent persons, and called for greater cooperation between countries and adherence to the Mine Ban Treaty.

devastating humanitarian consequences caused by improvised anti-personnel mines."

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction also known as the Mine Ban Treaty seeks an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines through the pursuit of four core aims: Ensuring universal adherence, clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiled mines, and assisting the victims. The currently convention has 164 State Parties including Ghana.

"The use of improvised anti-personnel mines poses a grave threat to civilians, particularly in conflict-affected regions. These insidious weapons indiscriminately maim and kill innocent men, women, and children, inflicting lasting physical and psychological harm. They disrupt livelihoods, impede socio-economic development, and hinder efforts to achieve sustainable peace and security.

"As we gather here today, representing various nations, organizations, and stakeholders, we unite under a common goal: to confront and mitigate the

The Landmine Monitor reported that in 2022, at least 4,710 individuals were killed or injured by landmines or Explosive

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Money Matters, Every Dollar Counts! –Tax Time -U Owe or Payback Time

By: Eddie Twumasi-Smith, (P.Eng, PMP, CPA, MBA)

Greetings to all both near and afar. For some years now, I have been burdened by the rate of change across many nations and within geopolitical space, and across other continents and its impact towards racialized minorities. Out of these changes, there have been some government responses to implement new rules and adapt to increase the economic activities, external climate and improve the standard of living of all citizens. However, it is fair to say that these governmental strategies haven't been equally advantageous or beneficial to all within the country and elsewhere.

In today's discussion, I would like to present the why we have to file our taxes and why it is important for us to recover some of these taxes that were taken out of our pay checks or other incomes: Some of the reasons why we need to file our taxes are as follows:

- When we dispose of capital property (for example, sold real estate, a principal residence, or shares) or realized a taxable capital gain;
- When we are required to repay all or a portion of any Old Age Security benefits or Employment Insurance benefits received;
- When we have withdrawn amounts under the Lifelong Learning Plan or the Home Buyers' Plan that have not been repaid;
- When we are required to make Canada Pension Plan contributions, because pensionable employment income and/or self-employment earnings total more than the basic CPP exemption (\$3,500 for 2022& 2023);
- When we are paying Employment Insurance



premiums on self-employment and other eligible earnings (by choice);

- When we have applied for and received advance Canada Workers Benefit payments in the current tax year or want to apply for advance payments in the next tax year;
- Elected to split pension income with their spouse or common-law partner;
- Claimed a capital gains reserve on last or prior year's return;
- Incurred a non-capital loss and want to be able to apply it to other years;
- Want to carry forward unused amounts from the current year return, such as tuition fees or RRSP/PRPP contributions;
- Want to claim the Canada Workers Benefit for the current tax year;

- Want to report income in order to keep their RRSP/PRPP deduction limit up to date (also applicable to very young individuals);
- Want to receive the Goods and Services Tax credit or Harmonized Sales Tax credit (GST/HST credit) or any related provincial or territorial credits;
- Want to begin or continue receiving the Canada Child Benefit or any related provincial or territorial benefits (in this case, if the individual is married or living common-law, the individual's spouse or common-law partner must also file a return);
- Want to receive or continue receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement or Allowance Benefits from the Old Age Security program; or
- Want to claim the Climate Action Incentive (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario only).
- Want to claim a refund;
- Received a demand to file a return from the CRA.

The above are some of the reasons why we need to file our taxes and earn something back, since the government provide all avenues for residents in Canada to get back what is "unduly" an over taxed income and hence from this, we can invest into other portfolios or investments to improve our social and financial resources and hence our ability to cover some routine expenses and needs

As a community we should take another look at how we plan, prepare and perform financially in order to take advantage of government legislations. Finally, let's be wise and show the usefulness of knowledge as stated in the good old book, for the lack of knowledge my people perish!

Please Note: For any comments, corrections or recommendations, please forward all to my email: eddiesmith77@gmail.com

President Akufo-Addo Commissions Borteyman Sports Facilities; Ghana Ready To Host Historical 13th African Games

cont'd from pg. 13

development plans and general preparations, Ghana has demonstrated commitment and resilience.

"When all hope appeared lost, we came up with a brilliant idea of adopting a hybrid approach to hosting the Games, that is, using facilities at the University of Ghana, which were under construction, as well as selected facilities we could develop on time, here in Borteyman," President Akufo-Addo said at the brief yet resplendent commissioning ceremony.

In the face of calls and increased pressure by some pessimists, for Ghana to withdraw from hosting the tournament, the President told the gathering that, "Ghana remained resolute and can be proud of the massive sporting infrastructure we have put in place for the Games, which will be a huge legacy for the country."

The games will see some five thousand elite athletes, three thousand experienced officials and thousands of fans in the country, in addition to an estimated global audience of 2.2 billion people watching through traditional and social media.

Despite Ghana being a founding member of the African Games, under the leadership of first leader Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana has never hosted the event in her fifty-seven years of existence.

Responding President Akufo-Addo in response to this, said, "there is a time for everything, and this is our time. We are now ready and capable of organising and hosting the rest of the continent, here in Ghana. The people and Government Ghana are honoured and grateful to the Africa Union for the opportunity to host the rest of Africa for the

first time in our history.

He stated that, "the construction of these magnificent, multi-purpose facilities at Borteyman and the University of Ghana for the African Games, clearly demonstrate the Akufo-Addo Government's commitment to the development of much-needed sports infrastructure in Ghana."

"Over the last seven years, my government has renovated the Accra Sports Stadium, Cape Coast Sports Stadium and the Baba Yara Sports Stadium in Kumasi. In addition to this, Government has built ten sports stadia in the ten original regions of our country. Six of these stadia, namely Wa in Upper West, Dunkwa on Offin in Central, Axim in Western, Dormaa Ahenkro in Bono, Ho in Volta and Koforidua in Eastern, are ready, with the Koforidua Sports Stadium having been commissioned by me. The remaining four are expected to be completed this year."

With only three public Astro turfs constructed across the country before January 2017, he disclosed that, government has invested massively in the provision of 150 astro turf pitches for various communities across the country.

Whilst offering the assurance of the best arrangements for planned events and a taste of the famed Ghanaian hospitality, he said, "Government, together with the African Union, the Association of National Olympic Committee of Africa (ANOCA) and the Association of Africa Sports Confederations (AASC) and other partners, will do everything possible to make our visitors welcome," and admonished "the Minister for Youth and Sports, staff of the Ministry and the Local Organizing Committee to go all out and organise the best African Games in history."

Distributed by APO Group on behalf of The Presidency, Republic of Ghana.

Ghana's Nurse Migration; A Call To Action!

cont'd from pg. 11

the public and private sectors to create a more robust healthcare system. We must explore partnerships with international organizations to bring in expertise and resources to strengthen local healthcare infrastructure.

That said and done, we must create support systems, such as counselling services and peer support groups, to address the emotional and psychological challenges faced by healthcare professionals. The need to utilize technology is very important to improve efficiency and effectiveness, reducing the burden on healthcare professionals. We must provide training and resources to healthcare professionals to adapt to technological advancements, plus the need to invest in research to understand the root causes of nurse migration and inform evidence-based policymaking. We must establish a comprehensive database to track healthcare professionals and assess the impact of migration on the healthcare sector.

In conclusion, the ongoing healthcare exodus demands a proactive approach to safeguard the well-being of citizens and the future of Ghana's healthcare infrastructure. The issue extends beyond Ghana's borders, requiring collaborative efforts, policy reforms, and investments in the healthcare workforce to address the root causes of migration.

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Has Ghana lost its Music Identity?

By Joyceline Natally Cudjoe

Over the years, Ghana Music has evolved. As time succeeds the former, various advancements in technology have contributed to changes in music: sound, rhythm and genres.

Music is defined by the oxford dictionary as vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion.

In Ghana, music is traced way back before the European invasion. The music which was sung during that era was called “Adadamu” which literally means “Old-time music.”

It was mostly sung when the people gathered to drink. In the 19th century when the British came to Ghana, the Europeans changed the name to Palmwine Music. The name Palmwine is believed to have come about due to the production of Palmwine in the country.

With time, the Palmwine Music evolved when singers in the Urban Sectors started using traditional and indigenous Western instruments to sing the Palmwine music.

The music then attracted the elites, wealthy and businessmen who engaged the singers to pay them to perform in clubs. Palmwine music now was full of class and it was only the wealthy and elite folks who could access such music.

This made those in Gold Coast rename the City music as Highlife. The reason was that if one has not reached a high level in life, one cannot patronise or access such music.

Highlife is a music genre that started in British West Africa, along the coastal cities of present-day Ghana in the 19th century. Highlife Music then describes multiple local fusions of African music and western jazz melodies.

It uses the melodic and main rhythmic structures of traditional African music, but is typically played with Western instruments. This Music was later promoted by E.T Mensah who was known as the King of Highlife.

He later featured Louis Armstrong, a renowned Jazz player who perfected the genre by infusing traditional Africa drums and western “Native Blues.” Highlife is then characterised by jazzy horns and multiple guitars.

The Gold Coast musicians told the tales of their culture, traditions among other life experiences and stories through Highlife music. After Ghana attained independence and many musicians perfected the highlife, Gyedu-Blay Ambolley in 1973 introduced rap music.

Ambolley’s sound has led many to label him the godfather of “hiplife,” the fusion of hip hop and highlife. Reggie Rockstone developed the Hiplife genre and perfected it, earning him the pioneer of Hiplife in the year 1994. Later on “the Godfather of Hiplife” was conferred on his shoulder with his extreme rapping skills.

In the late 90s and early 2000s, many Ghanaian musicians embraced Hiplife making it one of the best genres in the country. Renowned singers like Obrafour, VVIP, 4x4, Tic Tac now known as Tic, Nkasei, Okomfo Kwadee, Sarkodie, R2Bees, Ruff n Smooth and Castro among many others broke boundaries with Hiplife music.

However, there were musicians like Amakye Dede, Akosua Agyapong, Daddy Lumba, Becca, Ofori Amponsah among others still projecting the identity of Ghana music through Highlife.

Sarkodie mastered the Hiplife genre and introduced Azonto music which EL also helped to develop it and it became the new “craze” in the late



2010 and early 2011.

However, the influx of dancehall music a Jamaican genre which was introduced in the Ghana industry by Samini, Stonebwoy and Shatta Wale sparked the interest of the Ghanaian music lovers and Azonto was relegated.

These three musicians relabeled the Jamaican Reggae/dancehall as “afro-dancehall” to make it Ghanaian till the 20s brought us Afrobeat, a Nigerian genre and Amapiano, a South African genre.

Many Ghanaians and musicians on many occasions lamented that those foreign genres have had a negative toll on “our music” as now musicians are no longer singing the Hiplife, Azonto or the Highlife music.

In a media interview, Femfem, a Hiplife musician revealed that the original genres of Ghana, Highlife and Hiplife are not even on the modern streamline media. He said the genres were unknown so Hiplife musicians were compelled to upload Hiplife music under the Afrobeat category.

Shatta Wale also has expressed the need for Ghanaian Musicians to go back to their roots to revive the Hiplife and Highlife music for Ghana music to be identified.

Entertainment pundits have expressed concern about how Ghana music has lost its identity on the global stage for Nigerian musicians who they claimed had learnt Ghanaian genres to outwit them.

Helping the musicians to get back on their feet, the government in December introduced “Play Ghana” to propel Ghanaian disc jockeys to only play Ghana music during the Christmas period to attract investors into the sector.

This in many ways was believed to help Ghanaian Musicians to re-strategise and sing the authentic Ghanaian song to project the image and identity of Ghana music in the international market.

However, the initiative, did not see the light of day and Ghanaians are still producing Afrobeats and Amapiano tracks, claiming it is the new movement and that is what music lovers want.



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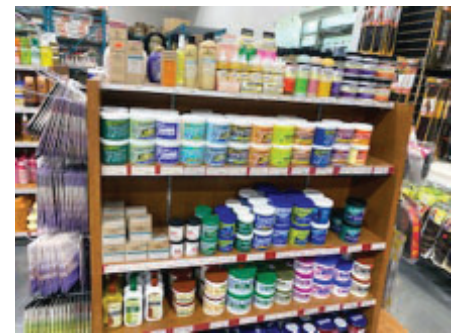
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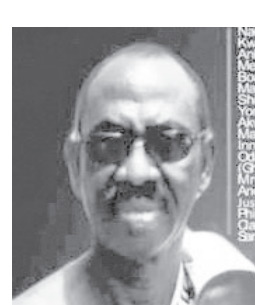
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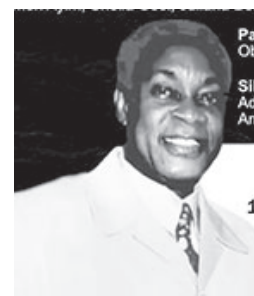
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CELEBRATION OF LIFE

THE AVONIE ABUSUA OF AMIKON AND ADUNA DAMPOASE, Living Word Assembly of God Church (Toronto), Ghana Youngsters Club (Toronto), and Oyenapa FM Club (Toronto) regret to announce the passing of their beloved daughter, which sad event occurred on Saturday, 6th January, 2024 at the Humber River Hospital in Toronto, Canada.

CHIEF MOURNERS: Nana Ansa Bedwa - Chief, Ex Anandashewa and Abusapanin (Kumasi); Mr. Harry Kofi Bansa (London); Nana Kwabena Bansa - Odiro, Akoparia (Accra); Oshesha Senwaa Kyerehie (Kumasi); Oshesha Mercy Mensah Bansa (Kumasi); Mr. Kwabena Asanteh (London); Nana Anandah Gyantaa Debrah - Asantehokonas of UK and Ireland (London); Mr. Kwaku Dash (London); Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Oyeku (Ghana).

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What is Nato and which countries are members?

US President Joe Biden criticised Donald Trump's recent comments about Nato as "dumb" and "shameful".

The former president told an election rally **that he would encourage Russia to attack Nato countries which failed to meet the organisation's spending target.**

Nato, which is a military alliance of countries in Europe and North America, has been recruiting new members and bolstering its defences following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

What is Nato and when was it set up?

Nato - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - was formed in 1949 by 12 countries, including the US, UK, Canada and France.

Its aim was to block expansion by the then Soviet Union - a group of states which included Russia.

Members agree that **if one of them is attacked, the other nations should help it defend itself.**

Nato does not have an army of its own, but member countries can take collective military action in response to crises. They also **coordinate military plans and carry out joint military exercises.**

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Nato said that it posed the **"most significant and direct threat to allies' security"**.

Which countries are Nato members?

Nato has 31 members across Europe and North America, including the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Turkey.

After the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, many Eastern European countries joined: Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Sweden and Finland applied to join in May 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The two countries feared for their security.

Finland - which has a 1,340km (832 mile) land border with Russia - became a Nato member in April 2023.

Sweden only needs Hungary's parliament to approve its membership. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia also want to join.

When will Ukraine join Nato?

Nato has said that Ukraine can become a member, **but has not confirmed when.**

It refused Ukrainian President Zelensky's request for "fast-track" membership in September 2022.

Nato boss Jens Stoltenberg has told President Volodymyr Zelensky that Ukraine can join in "the long-term"

Russia has consistently opposed the idea of Ukraine joining Nato, fearing it would bring the alliance's forces too close to its own territory.

President Zelensky accepts that his country **cannot join Nato while it is at war with Russia**, but wants to join as soon as possible after fighting ends.

Since July 2023, the **Nato-Ukraine Council** has coordinated efforts to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia.

How much do Nato members spend on defence?

Nato asks member states to spend at least 2% of their national income on defence.

The US spends nearly 3.5% and countries which border Russia - such as Poland and the Baltic Republics - also spend more than 2% on their armed forces.

UK spending is just above the 2% target.

However, countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain **spent less than the target in 2023.**

However, Nato secretary general Jens Stoltenberg says **there was an "unprecedented rise" in several members' defence spending in 2023.**

Mr Stoltenberg expects 18 Nato countries to meet or exceed the 2% target in 2024, compared with only three in 2014.

What weapons are Nato countries giving Ukraine?

As a group, Nato has not sent weapons to Ukraine, but several individual member countries have.

The US, UK, Germany and Turkey have provided anti-tank weapons, missile defence systems, artillery guns, tanks and military drones.

The US and UK have also supplied long-range missiles.

The US is supplying long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine

The US is allowing two Nato countries, Denmark and the Netherlands, to transfer US-made F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, once pilots have been trained to fly them.

Ukrainian media say **the first planes could arrive in spring 2024.**

However, Nato countries have not sent troops to Ukraine, and ruled out using their air forces to impose a no-fly zone over the country, because of fears such action could provoke a direct conflict with Russia.

How is Nato increasing its defences against Russia?

In 2023, Nato commanders agreed detailed plans for countering possible Russian attacks in the Arctic and north Atlantic, central Europe, or the Mediterranean region.

Nato previously announced plans to increase the number of its troops in Europe on high alert **from 40,000 to more than 300,000.**

It has also bolstered its defences on its eastern flank, bordering Russia.

There are currently **eight battlegroups** in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the Baltic Republics. Before the war in Ukraine, there were four.

What is the Steadfast Defender exercise?

In February 2024, Nato is staging one of its largest military exercises since the end of the Cold War.

The Steadfast Defender operation in Eastern Europe involves 90,000 personnel from all 31 Nato countries plus Sweden.

The UK is sending **20,000 personnel** and is shipping **600 military vehicles to the continent.**

Media caption,

Hundreds of people lined the shoreline to watch HMS Prince of Wales depart for the exercise

The aircraft carrier **HMS Prince of Wales is taking part**, replacing HMS Queen Elizabeth, which broke down ahead of its planned departure. BBC

Greater Collaboration necessary in Fight against use of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines *Vice President Bawumia*

cont'd from pg. 13

Remnants of War (ERWs) in 49 states. Among them, 1,661 lost their lives, 3,015 sustained injuries, while the status of 34 remains unknown. Civilian casualties constituted 85% of the total, with nearly half of the civilian victims being children (49%), amounting to a total of 1,071.

As of October 2023, it was also reported by the Landmine Monitor that approximately 60 countries and other areas worldwide were grappling with the detrimental presence of anti-personnel landmines contaminating their territories.

Among these, at least 24 States Parties are either believed or confirmed to be afflicted with improvised mine contamination. These states include some African states such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. The presence of improvised mines exacerbates the already grave humanitarian and security challenges faced by these nations, necessitating urgent and concerted efforts towards effective mine clearance and risk mitigation strategies.

Cost

According to Minesweepers, it is currently estimated that there are about 110 million landmines scattered across the globe. While the individual cost of mines ranges from \$3 to \$30, the expense of their removal varies significantly, ranging from \$300 to \$1000 per mine.

Considering these figures, the total expenditure for clearing all existing mines is projected to range from a substantial \$50 billion to \$100 billion. However, the Landmine Monitor (2022) report indicates that States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have destroyed more than 55 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines. This underscores the significant financial commitment made by both States and international organizations worldwide towards the effective implementation of the Convention.

Ghana recognizes the urgent need for concerted action to address the humanitarian impact of improvised anti-personnel mines. We remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting a world free from the scourge of

landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Vice President Bawumia advocated greater compliance with the laws governing war and the proper production, storage and use of weapons of war, noting that such adherence would go a long way to save lives.

"Compliance with the legal instruments (governing the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines) is essential to preventing further human suffering and fostering a safer, more secure world for all. I therefore urge all States that are not Parties to the Convention to strive towards the ratification of the Convention.

"This conference should serve as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and action. We come together with a shared commitment to safeguarding human lives, protecting communities, and advancing peace and stability in our regions. It is imperative that we confront the menace of improvised anti-personnel mines with unwavering determination and collective effort.

"May our deliberations be fruitful, our actions impactful, and our resolve unwavering as we work together to address the humanitarian impact of improvised anti-personnel mines in order to build a future of peace, prosperity and dignity for all."

The Conference is being attended by a number of high profile personalities including H.E. Dr Ly Thuch, Senior Minister of Cambodia, Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, and current President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; Margaret Arach Orech, Founder and Director Uganda Landmine Survivor Association and Ambassador for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines; and H.E Irchad Razaaly, Ambassador of the European Union of Ghana.

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Government implements 23% salary increase for public sector workers

Controller and accountant General, Kwasi Kwaning Bosompem

The government of Ghana has officially adjusted the salaries of public sector workers by 23%, marking the conclusion of negotiations on the 2024 base pay, Daily Graphic reports.

The 23% adjustment, effective from January 1, 2024, has received approval from the government, according to Controller and Accountant General Kwasi Kwaning-Bosompem.

Speaking to the Daily Graphic, Mr. Kwaning-Bosompem affirmed the government's commitment to public sector workers' emoluments, highlighting the consistent and timely payment of salaries. He emphasised that salaries have been disbursed accurately and punctually, with the government upholding its commitment even during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Mr. Kwaning-Bosompem expressed Ghana's unique approach during the pandemic, stating, "In other jurisdictions, during the COVID-19 pandemic, salaries were cut and people were laid off, but in Ghana, the government kept faith with workers by paying their salaries."

Acknowledging the government's efforts, he urged public sector workers to collaborate in stabilising the economy, noting positive signs of economic recovery. "The economy has started showing signs of full recovery, and we must work together to stabilise the fiscal environment and prosecute stability

in the macroeconomic environment," he added.

Members of Organised Labour, including the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU), confirmed the receipt of the 23% salary increase. Mark Dankyira Korankye, the General Secretary of TEWU, assured that the union had not received any complaints from its members regarding the payment.

This salary adjustment follows last year's significant increase of 30% in the base pay on the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS), making it the largest increment secured by Organised Labour since 2010. The government's commitment to improving workers' remuneration has been evident, bringing an end to the cost of living allowance (COLA) and demonstrating a continuous effort to support public sector employees. ghanaweb.com

The number of inmates awaiting trial in Canada's provincial jails has quadrupled in the last 10 years: CCLA

cont'd from pg. 9

TRIAL DETENTION

Time spent in pre-trial detention is not only dangerous but criminogenic, further increasing the chance of reoffence, the report suggests.

"Over-crowding and under-staffing continue to be significant concerns," it states. "In Ontario, for example, courts have repeatedly decried the frequent lockdowns caused by inadequate staffing."

During such lockdowns, prisoners may receive only 30 minutes outside of their cells a day, and be forced to go days without showers, recreation, or phone time, the report says.

As one Ontario judge put it, "it is shocking that detention centres in Toronto in 2017 are consistently failing to meet minimum standards established by the United Nations in the 1950s."

A number of defence lawyers who spoke to the CCLA said rolling lockdowns have proved a challenge in accessing their clients.

"Even getting contact with your client by phone is near to impossible, so, you're relying on these [Zoom] court appearances to hopefully just get a breakout room with them or to at least exchange a few sentences on the record so that they know what is going on," an interviewee in Ontario said.

Meaningful access to the telephone would solve the issue, they said, as clients are often hesitant to speak openly about their charges during video conferences. "They don't know who's listening," they said.

"It's not very helpful in ensuring that there's a trust there that you would be working in their best interest."

Despite the conditions, the report suggests bail courts and pre-trial detention facilities are often acting as makeshift shelters for vulnerable populations.

"[This] means that people who really need housing, health care, and community support end up cycling through the criminal justice system."

Numerous interviewees emphasized that changes in the bail system have not made a meaningful difference for the most marginalized accused people.

"Securing bail for clients who do not have

resources, stable housing, or social supports remains exceptionally challenging," one said.

RECENT CHANGES NOT EVIDENCE-BASED

Recent changes to the national bail system are not based in evidence, according to the CCLA.

On Jan. 4, Bill C48, the most recent amendments to Canada's bail system came into effect.

The changes, first introduced by the Liberal government in May 2023, expanded the use of reverse-onus provisions. Instead of prosecutors having to prove why the accused should remain in custody, the onus has shifted to the accused to prove why they should be released.

The bill landed amid increased anxiety over public safety in the wake of the fatal shooting of Ontario Provincial Police Const. Greg Pierzchala in December 2022.

A month after Pierzchala was killed, a letter that originated in Ontario Premier Doug Ford's office, penned alongside several premiers, urged the federal government to take "swift action" on the bail system.

That spring, the Ford government also announced it would spend \$112 million on measures meant to "fix Ontario's broken bail system," including the introduction of specialized prosecution in court hearings and police compliance teams.

According to the CCLA, the legislation was premised off the notion that Canada's bail system is too lenient, particularly when it comes to "repeat offenders."

This isn't the case however, it says.

"An extensive body of research contradicts the contention that Canada's bail system has become unduly lenient or that the bail system is propelling an increase in crime," the report reads. "Against the backdrop of these debates, it is vitally important to focus on careful research, empirical evidence, and thoughtful policy-making."

When asked in January what meaningful bail reform might look like, Rahim pointed to community-based programs that help the accused meet their conditions successfully.

"These evidence-based programs supervise and support people on bail, but no money is being directed to them and that's one of the central problems."

The Bail Program, run by the John Howard Society, is one such example. The program offers beds to those with no fixed address who have been released on bail, ensuring they can meet their conditions by returning to a set location each night. CTV News

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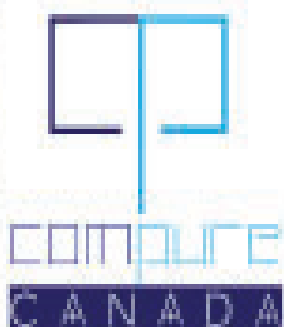
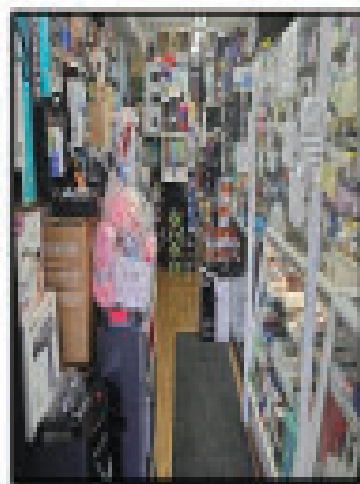
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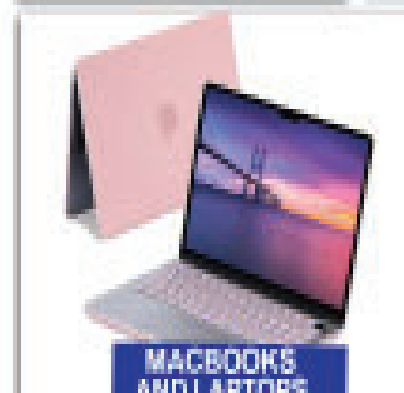
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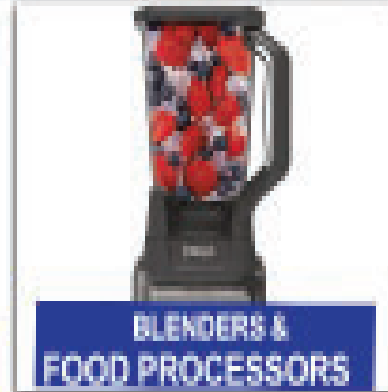
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Day Vigil for Adu Boakye at Driftwood Community Centre, Toronto

By Naomi Apenteng, Toronto, ON

On February 24, leaders of the GCAO gathered with Ghanaian community members in Toronto to remember Mr. Adu Boakye. Mr. Adu Boakye newcomer from Ghana, has been in Canada for only 3 months and his life was sadly and senselessly taken away. Community members were joined by the Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow and many media outlets.

With heavy hearts and strong police presence and security, leaders such as the GCAO president, Mr. Emmanuel Duodu shared their thoughts on the matter and how we could overcome as a community.

We were led into a time of prayer and singing By Rev. Ft. Kenneth Korsah.

Also with us was Mr. Richardson Adorsu who expressed gratitude to the Toronto police for their diligent work in the investigation so far. Mr Adorsu also explained that the oldest son of Mr. Adu Boakye is not yet aware of his father's demise. As he is cute in school and in exam season, this news would be too much of a devastation to him.

With a banner, flowers, candles and a photo in hands together with community members

and police, we marched to the bus stop where Mr. Adus' life was taken singing, "We Shall Overcome". There was more singing and prayer as community members laid down their sentiments in remembrance of Mr. Boakye.

As the Kudu Horn was raised and sounded the vigil solemnly came to an end.

Mr. Adu Boakye's life was taken in a senseless act of cruelty. As a community we try and move forward. Yet we ask the pressing questions, how can we make our streets safe again? How can the narrative change?

The time for change is now!



Mayor Olivia Chow (center)



Community members



Ghanaian Communitymembers



Mayor Olivia Ohow with community members



Members of the community



Group picture of Mayor Olivia Chow and some community members

Major news stories that kept our community talking in 2023

cont'd from pg. 1

Endless Possibilities launches the Women Courage Business & Networking Group

Dr. C. Odame Ankrah, Ghanaian-Canadian scientist in Calgary granted US patent for Photolytic converter



African-Canadian Seniors Workshop on Wellness & Abuse

Ghanalinx Foundation donates to the International Federation of Skate Soccer Ghana

Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario attends lying in state of Hazel McCallion

FEBRUARY

York Regional Police celebrate Black History Month.



Black History Month celebration at Vaughan City Hall

Ghana marks 66th Independence day celebration at Ho, Volta Region

Selected GCAO Homework Club Students completed advanced Modern Batic Workshop this winter

Senior Canadian Military Officer acquitted of sexual assault sues government, Prime Minister for \$6m

Samaritan's Feet Canada prepares help families seniors toward active spring

Ohio man who falsely claimed to be Ghanaian princes sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The Association of Ghanaian-Canadian Law Enforcement Officers inaugurated.

Prof. George Dei receives U of T President's Impact Award

Anita Erskine CEO of Anita Erskine Media Meets the community in Bowmanville



Ghana Flag raising at Brampton City Hall

GCAO Women's wing in collaboration with North York Women Centre (NYWC) celebrate Women Valentine's Day & Black History Mont

MARCH

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris pledges Aid to Ghana and security and economic concerns



Ghana Methodist Church Easter Convention

President Akufo Addo cuts sod for vaccine manufacturing plant in Accra, Ghana.

Ghana becomes first country to approve Oxford malaria Vaccine RQ1/Matrix-m

Dr. Charles Stanley, Legendary Alberta Pastor Broadcaster, Author dies at 90 years

GCAO holds a successful council meeting in Toronto.

The Greater Toronto Area Assemblies of God 2023 joint Easter Convention

Apostolic Church International Canada Easter Convention 2023

The Apostle's Continuation Church International Toronto Easter Convention 2023

Hamilton Ghanaian community celebrates Ghana's 66th Independence in style

Ghanaian community celebrates Ghana's 66th Independence in Calgary

APRIL

Toronto Mayor' race draws more than 100 candidates

Mother's Day celebration at Living Word Assembly of God

John Mahama wins Ghana's opposition presidential primaries

Ontario announces break up of Peel Region cities to become independent by 2025

New Liberal law would make it harder for some repeat violent offenders to get bail.

We are Toronto: FIFA unveils 2026 world cup brand, emblem.

Health Canada issue public advisory for abortion, morning after pills sold on "Dr Pooja" websites

Supreme court of Ghana declares Gyekye Quayson's election null and void

Asante King asks British Museum to return gold to Ghana

Nigerian delegates attend Canadian Municipal Government program in Toronto

Dedication of the Apostolic Church International Canada's new Miracles Assembly Temple



Hajia 4 Real extradited from U.K. to U.W. over USD 2m fraud

Kwadwo Akwaboah Snr. Ghanaian Highlife legend dies.

MAY

GCAO clean up in Toronto

Kairos development mission (KADEM) organized fundraiser dinner event for Medical Mission to Ghana



Prime Minister Modi seeks full G20 summit membership for African Union

Ghana can unlock EU prospects to quicken economic recovery

Canada says it won't deport international students who are victims of immigration fraud.

Bank of Canada raises interest rates as it tries to get ahead of hot economy

Canada, Ontario reach historic \$10b proposed First Nations treaty settlements

Ghanaian artist, Kwame Mintah, organized maiden OBGMAU Award in U.S. to honor gospel musicians

School feeding caterers reject 1.20 cedis increment per child, vow to march to Jubilee House with naked demo.

UK and Ghana launch new investor group to scout for top investment opportunities

Installation of the new Executives of St. Joseph's Men's Fellowship of St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church

Dr. De-Lawrence Lamptey named Holland Bloorview's first Emback Scientist the first of its kind in Canada

Dr. Charles Odame-Ankrah honored with Calgary Black Chamber's Black

Achievement Award 2023 in STEM, Propelling of future of Black Excellence

Ontario First Nations Chiefs protest federal Metis self-government bill

National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada celebrates Press Freedom Day

The Association of Ghanaian-Canadian Law Enforcement Officers Family BBQ at Paul Coffey Park Mississauga



2023 GCAO ANNUAL REPORT

Authored by: **Mary Akuamoah-Boateng**

Building the Community Together

In 2023, our community health took center stage as the GCAO embarked on a year of exceptional engagement and upliftment within the Ghanaian-Canadian Community in Ontario. Notable events and initiatives marked this period, showcasing the strength and unity of the community.

B'Well Clinic and Mental Health Program: The B'Well Clinic and Mental Health program played a pivotal role in promoting health within the community. This initiative focused on providing education and services aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of community members.

Ghanaian Community BBQ and Cultural Events: Festivities, such as the Ghanaian community BBQ, Ghana fest, Independence Day celebration, Africa Day, etc., served as joyous occasions that brought the community together. These events provided a platform for collective celebration and support.

Community Engagement through Partnerships: Initiatives like the Clean Up Chalk Farm project brought together different segments of the community, including associations and churches, fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility.

Annual Soccer Tournament: The 2nd Annual Soccer Tournament brought together young men and women of various ages, using sports as a platform to share information on preventing violence at home. This event not only promoted physical activity but also facilitated important conversations within the community.

Youth Education and Seminars: Empowering the youth remained a priority, with educational seminars providing valuable information and preparation for their future success. These efforts aimed to equip young individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for personal growth.

Homework Club Expansion: The expansion of the Homework Club's language program allowed individuals from across North America to participate and learn Twi virtually.

Women's Conference: The Women's Wing organized their 2nd Women's Conference, focusing on engagement and empowerment while addressing gender violence. This event provided a platform for women to come together, share experiences, and support each other.

Newcomer and Refugee Support Program: A dedicated program by the welfare team aimed to support newcomers and refugees in Ontario, recognizing the unique challenges faced by individuals starting anew in a different country.

Golden Age Group Initiatives: The Golden Age group undertook various educational programs and field trips to combat social isolation among seniors, promoting continued learning and community connectivity.

GCAO Welfare Support Program: They focused on social support of Ghanaians in Toronto to assisting individuals facing various challenges, including distress, family loss, illness, and crises related to employment and housing.

Through these diverse initiatives and collaborative efforts, GCAO demonstrated a commitment to community well-being, education, and empowerment, fostering a sense of belonging and unity among the Ghanaian-Canadian community in Ontario.

BWell Clinic and Wellness Program



In Collaboration with community organizations in the GTA, we aimed at promoting overall well-being, including physical health, mental health, nutrition, fitness, stress management, and preventive care.

BWell Clinics were held every month to provide community members with information and support with navigating health resources. The clinics held each month focused on different theme such as Wellness and Mental Health, spring into wellness, Diabetes Awareness and Education, Heart Health and Black History Month, etc.

Community members attended Clinic throughout the year to obtain:

- free access to massage,
- groceries,
- blood pressure and glucose check and many went home with
- Free blood pressure monitor.

Together, we have protected over 5000 community members at various settings to ensure no one is left behind.

Thank you to Black Vaccine Engagement Team and North Etobicoke Cluster organizations, Black Physician Association of Ontario, African Food Basket.



GCAO Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Africans in the Diaspora (Project)

The Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) under an awarded grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)'s supporting the Mental Health of those most affected by COVID-19: Black Communities in Canada implemented a project to promote health equity and service of Black communities in Canada.

Project: Mental Health First Aid for Africans in the Diaspora

This project is designed to build capacity amongst Black Canadians and Africans in Diaspora communities in Canada through the implementation of culturally focused and relevant Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course. Education of mental health among Black or African communities is a major challenge and as a result, many who suffer from mental health fail to get the appropriate support to improve.

Black Community organizations nominated Mental Health First Aid Instructor who were trained for 5 days to build intervention capacity of individuals to provide immediate support for those experience mental health problems or in crises. 25 Instructors from across Canada were trained in the summer and fall season. From these 25, each is expected to train 25-50 community members.

GCAO understand that the involvement of all Black organizations across the province will enable us to reach the most Blacks and Individuals of African descent across Canada. So far, we have trained over 200 individuals from across Canada.

Youth Sports Program

A new program was established under the support of Foundation for Black Communities, a funding opportunity to support Black communities to explore ideas, projects, structures, and systems that positively impact youth wellness through sports and recreation in Ontario's Black communities (ages 6 - 29).

From this grant, we established the table tennis and soccer program. The objectives was to develop a youth program to expose our youth to different sports experience and raise awareness about different sports. This program was exciting as it exposed our community to resources and many opportunities. Participants learned how to play soccer and table tennis, at the end of their learning session, they took part in local tournaments.

At the end of program, many families and participants expressed interest in engaging in program in the next year and having more local tournaments. These tournaments served as a space for networking, collaboration and skill development.



DATES: MAY 2023 to AUGUST 2023

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 15 weekly participants and 50



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people in the tournament GCHRC Fundraising Launch



The Ghanaian-Canadian Heritage and Resource Center fundraising continued with the drive donations for the seed money needed to build the maiden and historic GCHRC. Leaders in this group visited various churches and Association to request for funds for the Heritage Centre.

We continue to encourage members to donate at least \$100 per year and Associations to donate at least \$5000 each year. 2023, we raised closed to \$90,000.

The Heritage and Resource Centre project is the core piece of GCAO's ambitious community project to combine affordable housing with a Resource Centre as one unique holistic model for our Ghanaian-Canadian community. For the Heritage and Resource Centre project alone, we have an estimated budget of \$5million to build or renovate an existing facility and operationalize it with all the programs afore mentioned.

Our target is to raise \$1 million by the close of 2024 to enable us to start Preliminary Engineering of the project in Q1/2025. The Needs Definition and Feasibility Studies have been completed.

To achieve this fundraising objective, we have designed sponsorship packages based on voluntary donations and naming rights to various areas of the facility.

All contributions are tax deductible. GCAO encourages all community members to donate at least \$100 per year.

Ghanaian Community BBQ & Picnic



The Community BBQ and Picnic was a success this year as it brought all the various Association and Churches together at Malton, Mississauga to enjoy each other's company, share laughter, and take a break from their hectic lives was truly heartwarming. The turnout was impressive, and it's safe to say that every participant had a great time.

This event showcased a diverse range of cultural displays, with the highlight being the Ga festival (Homowo). It provided us with a precious opportunity to reflect on the past few years, acknowledging the challenges and achievements we've faced and endured together.

Annual GCAO Clean-Up Chalk Farm

Each year during the spring, the Ghanaian-Canadian community come together for an Annual Community Spring Clean-up. This year, the community held two clean up. One at Chalk farm park, Toronto and, the other cleanup was held in Duggan Park, Brampton. These gathering is exciting as all the various cultural Association, churches and community members came together to help clean neighborhoods.



YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT



The mission of our young adult engagement group is to elevate, cultivate, and inspire the strengths and collaborative efforts of the young generation, encouraging them to take charge as positive change agents while leaving an impactful and lasting footprint in local communities.

Objective

- * Provide a space for reflection, communication, mentorship, and growth, through innovation and implementation.
- * Showcase and promote local Ghanaian Canadian businesses and organizations
- * Develop strategies to increase civic engagement, ensure representation in media and creative arts, grow Black wealth and ownership, and enrich mental health and physical wellness
- * Enable the mobilization of young people to own initiatives focused on strengthening educational outcomes, improving access to social justice and community safety, and better facilitate diasporan efforts

ACTIVITIES

OF PARTICIPANTS

- A Visit to Ahenfie
45
- Speed Dating
40
- Youth Bowling Day
35
- Financial Literacy
32
- Social Networking Event
60
- Table Tennis Tournament
15
- Soccer Tournament
120
- Social Network Holiday mixer
45

Ghanaian Young Adult Social Networking Holiday Mixer



The aim of this festive gathering was to unite Ghanaian young adults in the Greater Toronto Area for a final gathering before the year concludes. On December 2, 2023, more than 50 individuals attended the event at the GCAO hub, fostering connections, networking, and building relationships.

At the gathering, participants engaged in entertaining activities such as Ghanaian trivia, game involving the elimination of countries etc. These games not only added excitement to the event but also facilitated knowledge about various African countries. Laughter filled the night as all attendees were encouraged to join in the games.

The positive response from attendees was evident, with many expressing enthusiasm for more events tailored to youth and young adults. The occasion provided newcomers to Canada with an opportunity to connect and interact with Ghanaians who have either lived in the country for years or were born here. This interaction served as a valuable platform for learning and seeking advice, especially regarding living in Canada during the winter.

Homework Club

The Homework Club is focuses on teaching young children ages 6-16 years the Ghanaian language and culture as well as supporting them with Math. In 2023, the program continued to provide twi education to larger community around the country. The program offered



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various activities such as career planning, life skills, budgeting, money management, arts and other recreations. The goal is to inform and help prepare the students for post-secondary.

The programs were all held virtually and as a result, more students were able to participate. Below are few activities held:

- Virtual Batik program
- Educational workshops
- Game day
- Christmas Giveaway
- Back to School Giveaway
- Weekly cultural instruction and practiced Twi language.
- Weekly virtual math support with their peers and their teachers/mentors.

Women, Stronger together!



Gender-based violence is a harmful act directed at an individual based on their gender. It is often rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and often impact women and as a result, the GCAO women's wing focused on creating programs and activities that supports Ghanaian Women in Ontario. The aimed is to support Ghanaian women of all ages and working together to eradicate poverty, violence, lack of self-confidence and employ creativity, cultural heritage and leadership among women to support the community.

Activities

- Bi-Weekly Keep Fit Zumba With Anna Aidoo
- Fun Party To Celebrate Women Valentine's Day & Black History Month
- Empowering Our Women & Girls
- The Criminal Justice System
- Mother's Day Brunch
- Come De-Stress & Treat Yourself To A Relaxing Day(Boat Cruise)
- Annual Women's Conference - Igniting Our Collective Power

We are a community, we want every women to have the best-lived experience. We want to be the advocate for women and so we are here to support women experiencing violence, mental health, and any challenges.

Men's Wing Inauguration



The launch of the GCAO Men's Wing in early 2023 marks a significant step towards creating a safe space for Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaian men to address issues such as gender violence, mentorship, and community building.

This initiative aimed to actively involve men in discussions and actions against gender-based violence. The engagement of community leaders from various associations and churches underscores the broad support and reach of the initiative. On the launch day, 85 community leaders attended.

Utilizing platforms like WhatsApp and incorporating sports events like soccer games to educate men about gender violence highlights a proactive approach to engaging the community. By leveraging these channels, the Men's Wing can effectively disseminate educational messages and foster a culture of respect and non-violence. Over 70 men came out to play soccer in August 2023.



Additionally, the GCAO's focus on post-COVID recovery programs reflects a holistic approach to community development. Initiatives targeting mental health, financial education, cultural preservation, and relationship building demonstrate a commitment

to addressing diverse needs within the community. By collaborating with experts and creating networks of professionals, the organization aims to provide accessible resources and support systems.

The emphasis on passing down culture and tradition to younger generations and fostering understanding between different age groups speaks to the importance of intergenerational dialogue and heritage preservation. Furthermore, the commitment to joint sessions with the Women's Wing underscores a collaborative approach to addressing gender-based issues and promoting mutual understanding.

Overall, the GCAO Men's Wing's multi-faceted approach to community engagement and empowerment holds promise for creating positive social change and fostering a more inclusive and respectful society. Continued evolution and expansion of programs will be crucial in achieving long-term impact and promoting gender equality and violence prevention.



GCAO Golden Ages Program

This program is designed to connect seniors to programs to reduce isolation by engaging them to actively participate and run programs for themselves and address their needs. The program focuses on the following activities:

- Senior Digital Literacy
- Exercise and wellness programs
- Counselling Programs
- Peer-to-Peer connect
- Intergenerational engagement (seniors and youth engagements, homework club volunteering)
- Senior Educations Such as:
 - * Falls Prevention
 - * Financial Management as Seniors
 - * Chronic Health Management education
 - * Personal Hygiene
 - * Safety Checks
 - * Other Disease Management
 - * Aging 101



2023 ACTIVITIES

OF PARTICIPANTS

- Falls Prevention
35
- Baby Boomers, Are you properly protected
82
- Elderly Abuse, Scam & Fraud Prevention
64
- Planning Ahead Seminar: Are your Affairs In Order?
127
- Seniors Lunch at Wok of Fame
70



Field Trip to Toronto Island

Seniors Summer BBQ

- 120
- Stress Reduction for Seniors
35
- Seniors Holiday Party
120

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Seniors Weekly Fitness Program	144
Wednesday Trivia and Games	381
Thursdays Chat Time	144
Golden Age Members WhatsApp Chat	381

Newcomer Support Program

Toronto, renowned for its diversity, stands as one of Canada's most cosmopolitan cities,



attracting a substantial number of newcomers, including individuals and families from diverse African countries. In the current year, Toronto has welcomed numerous individuals seeking refuge, driven by factors such as escaping conflict, persecution, and various hardships in their countries of origin.

In a commendable effort to support asylum seekers, the GCAO utilized community donations to provide relief items to 200 individuals at the Revival Time Tabernacle in North York, Ontario. This initiative reflects the community's commitment to extending a helping hand to those in need, especially newcomers facing challenges in their resettlement process.

Recognizing the ongoing needs of African refugees and asylum seekers, the United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) awarded GCAO with funds, specifically towards aiding newcomers across Peel Region, Toronto, and York Region. GCAO supported to over 150 newcomers from Ghana who arrived in Canada between the months of September to December 2023. The assistance includes:

Housing/Rent Subsidy:GCAO facilitated housing and rent subsidies, recognizing the importance of stable and affordable housing for the well-being and integration of newcomers.

Winter Clothing Distribution:Winter clothing, including essentials like coats, scarves, gloves, socks, and boots, were provided. This initiative is crucial for helping individuals adapt to the colder Canadian climate.

Food Support for Cultural Appropriateness:The organization extended support for obtaining culturally appropriate foods by providing assistance to grocery stores. This ensures that newcomers can access familiar and culturally relevant food items.

Gift Cards to Walmart:GCAO distributed Walmart gift cards, offering flexibility and empowering newcomers to choose essential items based on their individual needs.

These initiatives demonstrate the collaborative efforts of the community, GCAO, and the support from United Way Greater Toronto in addressing the immediate needs of newcomers. By focusing on housing, winter essentials, food security, and providing practical resources, these efforts contribute significantly to the well-being and successful integration of African refugees and asylum seekers in the Toronto region.

GCAO Welfare Support

The GCAO Welfare Support Program in Toronto took a comprehensive approach to addressing the social support needs of Ghanaians in the community. The program was dedicated to assisting individuals facing various challenges, including distress, family loss, illness, and crises related to employment and housing. Here are key components of the program:

Visitation and Guidance:Leaders from the GCAO welfare support program actively visited individuals undergoing distressing situations. They provided personal guidance and support to those facing difficulties, fostering a sense of community and solidarity.

Referral Services:The program offered practical assistance by referring individuals and families to essential services. This included guiding them to food banks, legal services, health and mental health services, childcare resources, and housing support. These referrals aimed to connect people with the necessary resources to address their specific needs.

Crisis Management:In situations involving distress or crisis, such as family loss or housing and employment challenges, the welfare support program played a vital role in offering immediate assistance. This could involve coordinating with relevant services and organizations to ensure timely support for affected individuals.

Funeral Arrangements:In cases where deceased individuals were not accounted for, the program collaborated with funeral services to ensure proper and dignified burials. This compassionate approach addressed the emotional and practical aspects of handling loss within the community.

Community Fundraising:Leaders in the GCAO welfare support program actively engaged the community in fundraising initiatives. Bringing communities together, these efforts aimed to raise funds to support families experiencing distress. This collective approach strengthened community bonds and provided tangible assistance to those in need.

The GCAO Welfare Support Program demonstrated a commitment to holistic well-being by addressing not only immediate crises but also connecting individuals and families to ongoing support services. Through visitations, referrals, crisis management, funeral arrangements, and community fundraising, the program played a pivotal role in fostering a supportive and resilient community for Ghanaians in Toronto.

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'We're going to catch you:' City workers fired following fraud investigation

Toronto's top auditor is reporting a record number of fraud and waste allegations as part of her annual audit into wrongdoing within City Hall, leading to the firing of some city workers and even police prosecution.

The Auditor General's office received 1,054 complaints via its reporting hotline last year, representing 1,450 allegations — the highest number since the program began in 2002.

"We cannot afford, literally, to have people defraud the taxpayers of the City of Toronto, and have waste," Toronto Councillor Josh Matlow told CTV Toronto. "We need to make sure that every single dollar goes to the priorities of the people of this city."

The allegations of fraud implicated municipal staff, residents, and companies doing business with City Hall.

In one instance, an unidentified builder was accused of constructing mansions with grandiose features not approved by the Toronto Building department.

One of the homes was more than 600 square metres in size and contained a basketball court and underground parking for six vehicles, auditor Tara Anderson noted.

"The builder made material changes to both houses without getting the proper

approval," she concluded, indicating that other homes may not comply with the code as well, "and therefore could be unsafe."

In another instance of fraud a city employee was found to own a subcontracting company that was being granted municipal contracts, in breach of conflict of interest rules in at least four instances.

A member of the public, meanwhile, was found to have used fake identities to claim 31 fraudulent subsidy payments worth \$61,000. The auditor referred that matter to the Toronto Police for prosecution.

In total, a dozen city workers were disciplined last year for fraud and waste, including a municipal employee who was fired for using sick days to work shifts at another job.

Another city worker submitted false benefits claims for 33 instances where no service was provided. That employee was also terminated, and is now ineligible to work for the city.

The auditor pegs the total loss to fraud and waste over the last five years at nearly \$30 million.

"We do need every dollar," audit committee member Paula Fletcher told CTV Toronto. "And we do need to say, 'if you're going to break the rules, we're going to catch you.'"
CTV News

Black History Month celebration at York Region Police in pictures



The Executive Command Team of YRP in uniform



Jim MacSween, Chief of YRP



Det. Const. Alethia Dougal Gabriel



YRP Chief with some guests



Guests



YRP Officers and a guest



Robert Small (third from left) with the York Regional Police Chief. Looking on are two of the featured individuals in the poster.



Cultural group



Det. Sgt Don Yirenkyi with other officers and guests

“Build Trust between Black Communities & the Police”

Justice Michael H. Tulloch

rejoicing and celebrating the progress made,” said Chief Justice Tulloch.

Regarding the history of Black people, he emphatically stated that accurate Black stories can only be told by Black people themselves. He noted that one of the reasons why Black stories are often distorted is because those who tell them are influenced by negative images and stereotypes.

Chief Justice Tulloch did not deny that many Black individuals have grown up believing that their history began with slavery. This belief, he said, has led to low self-esteem, an inferiority complex, and other issues that hinder their abilities and efforts. He added that this affects how others perceive Black people.

However, he commended the York Regional Police for their progressive approach to policing. He expressed his admiration for their work and used their service as a benchmark against which he would measure other services.

York Regional Police Chief, Jim MacSween, stated that his division is building a proper police service with policies and processes that align with the needs of all constituents, including Black communities.

“Since becoming the chief of York Regional Police in May 2020, I’ve been focused on championing diversity and collaborating with our community partners to ensure York Region is welcoming and inclusive,” said Chief MacSween.

He praised the Executive Command Team of York Regional Police, comprised of Deputy Chiefs Kevin McCloskey, Cecile Hammond, Paulo Da Silva, Alvaro Almeida, and the entire York Regional Police officers, for their commitment to equity and social justice.

While he acknowledged that there is still much work to be done, Chief MacSween said his division would continue to work to strengthen relationships and build confidence with the Black community every day of the year, not just during Black History Month.

During the event, the Chief of York Regional Police unveiled the 30th edition of the Black History Month Legacy poster by Robert Small. The poster, now in its 30th year, celebrates, recognizes, and reflects on the contributions of Black individuals who have left a positive legacy in the community.

The event was further enlivened with musical and dance performances.

Racism and cultural beliefs can affect organ donations in some communities: doctors

A kidney-shaped cake will likely be on the menu for Reema Garcha and her family as they celebrate the six-year anniversary of her kidney donation to her older sister.

That’s been the traditional dessert to mark Feb. 26, 2018, when the bond between Garcha, 46, and Binn Johal, 51, deepened through their shared experience as organ donor and recipient.

Johal’s worsening autoimmune disease meant she needed a transplant. And when doctors suggested she ask someone to consider donating one of their kidneys, Garcha, her mom and brother were ready to help.

“I felt like I won the lottery when they told me I was a match,” Garcha said from Langley, B.C.

But many people in the South Asian community fear asking family and friends to donate a kidney, she said.

“Even though our cultural background is anchored to giving back and pride, I don’t know if that comes across in being an organ donor.”

Years earlier, her mom’s best friend needed a kidney but did not ask anyone to step up.

“I remember her telling my mom that she felt really insecure about asking family and friends. So she didn’t. She ended up going on a wait-list and then eventually received the kidney, probably 10 years later,” Garcha said. “I think she didn’t want to put her family and friends in a position to say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ She just assumed that they would all say ‘no.’”

Dr. Jagbir Gill, a nephrologist at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver, said South Asian Canadians have a 50 to 77 per cent lower likelihood of getting a kidney transplant due to multiple reasons, including a lack of awareness about organ donation. However, they are more hesitant than Caucasians to ask relatives or friends to donate a kidney, he said.

Compared to waiting up to three years or longer for a kidney from a deceased donor, a kidney donated by a living person would improve a patient’s quality of life quicker and last longer, said Gill. It may also eliminate the need for dialysis, which removes waste and extra fluid from blood once kidneys stop working properly, he added.

South Asians are among the populations more prone to kidney disease due to an increased risk of diabetes and high blood pressure, among other factors.

A project linked with the Health Canada-funded Organ Donation and Transplantation Collaborative is trying to improve equitable access to living donor kidney transplants among racialized groups in British Columbia and Ontario.

Gill has led a qualitative study in Vancouver through Providence Health Care to identify why South Asian patients typically do not approach loved ones about kidney donations. Dr. Istvan Mucsi, a nephrologist with University Health Network in Toronto, did similar research involving African, Black and Caribbean patients.

South Asian focus groups included people who received a transplant from a living or deceased donor, patients on a wait-list, those who donated a kidney and community members.

Many of them revealed that they hesitated approaching family or friends for a potential kidney donation because they worried about the donor’s health cultural beliefs, Gill said.

For example, he said, “there was a concern that perhaps living donation may impact a young woman’s marriage prospects.”

Recent immigrants face the additional hurdle of not having any family to approach in Canada, while language barriers also make it harder for some of them to navigate the health-care system, Gill said.

“All of the existing education materials we had were felt to be not necessarily culturally sensitive in terms of their approach.”

The research showed that online testimonials from patients and families, currently being developed in Hindi and Punjabi, would be an ideal way to create awareness about the benefits of a living donor transplant. Gill said the program is expected to be piloted in the summer before it’s integrated into clinical practice and potentially used across Canada.

Key recommendations from focus groups included ongoing education and the need for health-care providers to develop formal relationships with South Asian community groups.

Unlike in Toronto, participants in Vancouver had positive views of the health-care system, with many highlighting cultural sensitivity shown by South Asian doctors.

cont’d on pg. 49

McGill and Concordia sue the province of Quebec over 33% tuition hike

Two Canadian universities are suing the province of Quebec over a plan to hike tuition fees by 33% for out-of-province students and changes to fees paid by international students.

McGill and Concordia, two English-language universities in Quebec, argue the measures are discriminatory.

Applications for both have dropped since the measures were announced.

Quebec has defended the plan, claiming that it will help preserve the French language.

In December, the predominantly French-speaking province said tuition for out-of-province students would increase from C\$9,000 (\$6,700; £5,200) to C\$12,000 a year.

Quebec will also take a larger chunk of the universities’ international student fees, which once boosted the schools’ operating budgets. Those funds are to be redistributed to French-speaking universities.

The province will also require that 80% of students from outside Quebec reach an intermediate level of French by the time they graduate.

The tuition overhaul is part of a range of policies Quebec has adopted to help preserve French heritage and language in the province – a longtime goal.

But both McGill and Concordia, two of the three English-language universities in the province, announced separate legal challenges on Friday on the basis of discrimination. They declared they had exhausted all other avenues.

“We would have greatly preferred not to do this, but we have run out of viable alternatives,” Deep Saini, McGill’s vice-chancellor and president, said in a statement.

He added that the university’s board believes the “measures are illegal” and “threaten” the institution’s mission.

McGill University is seeking a stay on both the

tuition hike and the changes to their funding model. It says they constitute discrimination under federal and provincial rights charters and are “an unreasonable exercise of the powers” by the higher education minister.

Concordia is seeking a judicial review of the tuition measures, saying in its court filing that they are “based on stereotypes and false assumptions about the English-speaking community of Quebec and its institutions”.

The schools also argue the changes are already negatively affecting their future enrollment.

Combined, out-of-province and international undergraduate applications for McGill have dropped by more than 25% since last year. Concordia has had a roughly 39% combined decline in both types of applications over the same period.

A spokesman for Quebec’s higher education minister, Pascale Déry, declined to comment as the matter is now before the courts. **BBC**

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Unlocking the Potential of Cassava: A recipe for economic growth and food security

Amidst global challenges to food security and the rising cost of living, Nigeria finds itself at a crucial turning point. The key might lie in one of our nation's most abundant crops—cassava. This versatile root crop, which has been a dietary staple in Nigeria for centuries, still holds untapped potential. There is a growing call to transform cassava into more valuable products for both local use and export, providing economic benefits and addressing the escalating food crisis.

indigenous materials for export.

Victoria Ajayi, Deidree Lee Kin and Trinidad's AWE Women

In a twist, I stumbled upon a waffle mix produced by an agro-processing company in Tobago. Initially appearing as just another waffle mix, a closer examination revealed that it was made from cassava flour. This encounter sparked a revelation about the untapped potential of cassava, a realisation that holds significant relevance for Nigeria.

During my recent visit to Trinidad and Tobago, in my role as the Vice-President of the Academy of Women Entrepreneurs Alumnae Association (AWEAA) Nigeria, I engaged with fellow female entrepreneurs embarking on the U.S. government-backed Academy of Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program. This initiative extends support to women entrepreneurs across nearly 80 countries, offering training, resources, and funding. Our discussions in Trinidad and Tobago centred on identifying opportunities to create value-added products utilising

Despite being the world's largest cassava producer, with an impressive 63 million metric tonnes in 2021, Nigeria consumes 90% of this harvest locally, mainly as garri or fufu. Nigeria earned a modest \$1 million from cassava exports, while Thailand, with 30 million metric tonnes of cassava production, generated a remarkable \$1.3 billion from exports during the same period. This sharp contrast emphasises the need to optimise cassava processing to significantly boost export earnings and meet local demand.

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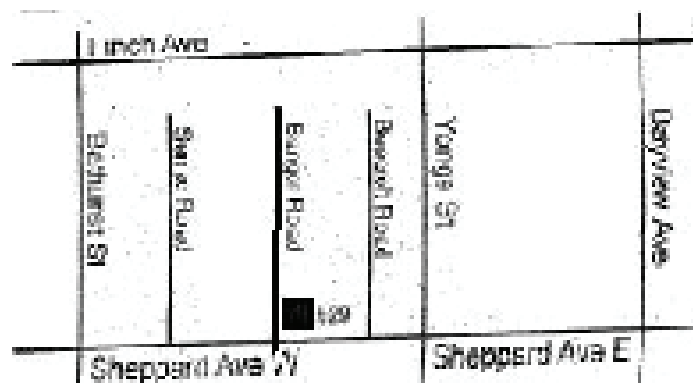
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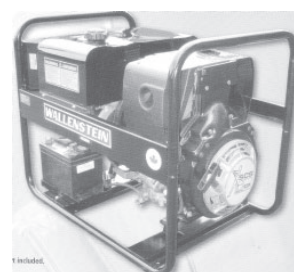
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Here's a breakdown of what the Doug Ford government is changing for Ontario universities and colleges

The Ontario government announced Monday it would be providing struggling colleges and universities with nearly \$1.3 billion in funding while also freezing tuition fees for another three years.

Post-secondary institutions will have the ability to increase tuition for out-of-province domestic students, or Canadians living outside of Ontario, by up to five per cent in 2024-2025.

The government will also make a number of changes through new legislation, which would give the Minister of Colleges and Universities the power to issue directives requiring institutions to provide more information about student costs.

Here's what you need to know about the Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act:

- The government wants to make costs for textbooks and other learning materials—as well as other ancillary fees—transparent. It's unclear what this means, but the example provided would be publishing the costs in a course syllabus.
- Ontario will also consult on creating “tuition fee transparency” so that people have a better idea of how the money is being used.
- The government would require colleges and universities to have policies in place related to mental health and wellness, as well as policies in place to “combat racism and hate, including but not limited to antisemitism and Islamophobia.” The ministry said it will issue further policy direction about what should be included in policies such as these at a later date.
- The legislation will also allow colleges to offer applied master's degrees.
- As part of the measures, the government will launch a career portal to help students “understand labour market needs.”
- The province has promised to “integrate” enforcement efforts regarding college oversight and “establish certain core competencies for board members, including financial literacy and risk management.” Very few details have been provided regarding what enforcement efforts the government is referring to.

Here is how the funding will be divided:

- The majority, about \$903 million, will be provided to post-secondary institutions over three years. About \$700 million will be in broad-based supports, while \$203 million will be for institutions with greater need. The government says factors such as geography, total enrolment and reliance on international enrolment will be taken into account.
- Another \$167.3 million will be provided for capital repairs and equipment.
- \$10 million in additional one-time funding for small, northern and rural grants.
- \$15 million over three years to “support third-party reviews” to find savings
- \$100 million in STEM program supports
- \$65 million to support research and innovation
- \$23 million to enhance mental health supports

The government says the tuition fees, which were reduced by 10 per cent in 2019, have saved students and parents an estimated \$1,600 per year for university, and an estimated \$350 per year for college.

Colleges Ontario has previously asked for a five per cent bump in tuition as well as a 10 per cent increase in operating grants.

A government-commissioned report also found that Ontario should end its post-secondary tuition freeze and increase per-student funding for universities and colleges. The report also suggested the institutions' dependence on international students, especially the province's colleges, needs to be recognized as a “financial risk.” Cp24

Afua Asantewaa's sing-a-thon attempt unsuccessful Guinness World Records announces

The Guinness World Records says Ghana's Afua Asantewaa failed to break the longest singing marathon she attempted in December 2023.

The GWR said this in a statement on X (formerly Twitter) adding that despite the setback they hope she makes another attempt.

“We've seen how inspirational it has been for her fans... We wish Afua the best of luck with any future record attempts,” they noted.

They added that the money Afua Asantewaa's team paid for a priority review has been refunded.

Afua Asantewaa in December 2023 took on the challenge to beat the existing record which stands at 105 hours set in 2012.

Asantewaa endured a five-day singing marathon which began at midnight on Sunday, December 24, 2023, and ended at 7:00 am on December 29, 2023.

At the time she ended her record attempt on Friday morning, the young woman had sung for five days, six hours and 55 minutes.

Ending her record attempt on an emotional note, Afua Asantewaa sang Osibisa's ‘Woyaya’. The national anthem was later played to honour her and celebrate her efforts.

She was also announced as a Tourism Ambassador by the Ghana Tourism Authority days later.

However, after eagerly awaiting the outcome of her record attempt, the Guinness World Record was yet to announce her results.

In January 2024, she disclosed that her team had expedited the approval process. She revealed that they paid \$750 to the Guinness World Record for a priority review.


However, even though a priority review takes five business days, her result was delayed again fuelling rumours that she may have not passed.

Meanwhile, the Guinness World Record in their statement announced that at the time Afua Asantewaa applied for her result to be expedited, they had stated her review.

“The evidence check had already begun before Afua requested priority service, so we refunded her payment earlier this month,” the statement read. [myjoyonline](https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2024/1/afua-asantewaa-sing-a-thon-attempt-unsuccessful)

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MAMA aims at supporting Ghana Aerospace Industry

By Sammy Heywood Okine



The Michigan Aerospace Manufacturing Association (MAMA) is poised to support Ghana in many areas especially aerospace.

The MAMA has held consultations with experts and citizens on development as the global focus is now based on digitalization.

MAMA serves interest in space ecosystem encouraging private / public partnerships that will affect standard of living of all residents.

MAMA members focus on all phases of aerospace manufacturing from tool to assembly and provide a wide range of services such as business development, education, networking, legislative updates and industry events.



MAMA is committed to positioning Michigan as mid – America’s Space Harbour ensuring to play leadership role in the growing commercial and government aerospace industry.

Ghana provides a strategic, geographical advantage because it is close to the Equator, and as the earth rotates, the rotation provides a natural advantage to put satellites into orbit. The further away from the Equator, it takes more energy which means more financial cost.

European and Canadian space companies have been putting launch facilities into African countries including Ghana.

Amazon, Space X and European broadband internet companies are seeking launch sites that are politically safe, can be guaranteed to be secured from any threats, and fuel sources can be obtained from locally and maintained.

The companies are working to put their satellites constellations into low earth orbit (LEO). There is a race to put thousands of micro satellites into orbit.



MAMA representative Mr. Emmanuel Quaye says Ghana stands to benefit and urged the citizens to be aware and conscious of current global developments with technology.

Mr. Gavin Brown, CEO of the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturing Association hopes the government and people of Ghana would offer the space of opportunity internally and externally for support to gain the benefits from space technology.

He will lead a powerful delegation of MAMA from the United States of America to discuss the next steps to build a spaceport in Ghana since Ghana is closer to the Equator.

New York medical school eliminates tuition after \$1bn gift

A New York City medical school will offer students free tuition following a \$1bn donation from the 93-year-old widow of a major Wall Street investor.

The gift to Albert Einstein College of Medicine came from Dr Ruth Gottesman, a former professor at the Bronx school.

It is one of the largest ever donations made to a US school and is the largest ever made to a medical school. The Bronx, New York City’s poorest borough, is ranked as the unhealthiest of New York’s 62 counties.

In a statement, university dean Dr Yaron Yomer said that the “transformational” gift “radically revolutionises our ability to continue attracting students who are committed to our mission, not just those who can afford it”.

Tuition at the school is nearly \$59,000 each year, leaving students with substantial debt.

The statement from Einstein noted students in their final year will be reimbursed for their spring 2024 tuition, and from August, all students, including those who are

currently enrolled, will receive free tuition.

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The donation “will free up and lift our students, enabling them to pursue projects and ideas that might otherwise be prohibitive”, Dr Yomer added.

Dr Gottesman, now 93, began working at the school in 1968. She studied learning disabilities, ran literacy programmes and developed widely used screening and evaluation protocols.

Her late husband, David Gottesman, founded a prominent investment house and was an early investor in Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffet’s multinational conglomerate. He died in September 2022 at the age of 96.

Dr Gottesman said in a statement that the doctors who train at Einstein go on to “provide the finest health care to communities here in the Bronx and all over the world”.

“I am very thankful to my late husband, Sandy, for

leaving these funds in my care, and I feel blessed to be given the great privilege of making this gift to such a worthy cause,” she added.

About 50% of Einstein’s first-year students are from New York, and approximately 60% are women. Statistics published by the school show that about 48% of its medical students are white, while 29% are Asian, 11% are Hispanic and 5% are black.

In an interview with the New York Times, she recalled that her late husband had left her a “whole portfolio of Berkshire Hathaway stock” when he died with the instructions to “do whatever you think is right with it.” “I wanted to fund students at Einstein so that they would receive free tuition,” Dr Gottesman said she immediately realised. “There was enough money to do that in perpetuity.”

She added that she occasionally wonders what her husband would have thought of the donation.

“I hope he’s smiling and not frowning,” she said. “He gave me the opportunity to do this, and I think he would be happy - I hope so.” **BBC News, Washington**

Major news stories that kept our community talking in 2023

cont'd from pg. 27

JUNE

- Canada welcomes new citizens in its 156th birthday
- Thanksgiving service in honor of Marvis Adwoa Ansu, MD
- Ontario rolls out programs to boost health staffing
- Ottawa announces plan to phase out “inefficient fossil fuel subsidies
- Oil and gas methane reductions less expensive than paying carbon tax study finds
- African Development Bank approves \$23.04m for modern floating Dpck Facility in Ghana
- Canada’s homelessness strategy gets \$5.3m boost
- Canada announces funding to help with refugee housing crisis
- Laval police handcuff illegally search Black military man’s home after street check
- GhanaFest held in Ottawa
- GCAO Seniors organize educative/fun trip to Toronto Island
- GCAO donate items to refugees
- Over \$1m allegedly stolen from Ghana Minister Cecilia Abena Dapss’s house
- V.P. Bawumia commissions District Hospital for Akotombra, Western Region, Ghana
- Ghanaian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce to launch online market platform.
- The Evangel Assembly of God Church celebrated Evangel Day in grand style.

Change Islamophobia by being a faithful Muslim – Lal Khan Malik

1st edition of the Ghana-Canadian Youth table tennis program records success



JULY

- Ghanaian-Canadian Law Enforcement Officer encourage youth to join police Force
- The Apostle’s Continuation Church International held a culture day for all nationals at church service
- Ghana President Akufo Addo commissions \$6.6m Ashiam and Bankman sewerage and treatment plants
- Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow makes amends with Police Association following public dispute.
- Class-action lawsuit proposed over Toronto police practice of carding.
- Provinces may have to agree to Ottawa’s 2035 clean power target to access funding
- Presto cards are now \$2 cheaper
- World likely to bread 1.5c climate threshold by 2027, scientist warn
- Canadians will need a permit to enter Europe
- The Apostle’s Continuation church BBQ
- Some breast cancer patients may not need radiation, new Canadian research suggests



Ga-Adangbe Association in Toronto have celebrated their annual Homowo Festival at Malton Park



Ghana Association of Red Deer, Alberta Picker/Potluck at Kin Canyon Park

Ghana Women’s Prayer Conference Ontario group donate items to refugees

Initiation of new members & installation of new executives of Christian Mothers and Fathers Association of St. Andrew Catholic Church

Akwaboah thrill fans at Ghanafest in Toronto

Groundbreaking African-Canadian animated series “The Mansa Family show” captivates global audience

Hungarian Embassy denies Ghanaian athletes visas for World Athletics Championships

AUGUST

- Air Canada slashing routes out of Calgary in face of outgoing pilot shortage
- Alan Kyeremateng withdraws from NPP flagbearership race
- Ghana to be granted observer status in Pacific Alliance
- 120 CRA employees fired for claiming CERP covid 19 benefits while employed.
- Ontario banning online gambling commercials team trip athletes a celebrity
- Parents must be fully involved in student’s decision to change pronouns, Ontario education Minister says.
- The Apostolic Church, Peel International Church donates items to refugees and Peel Family shelter.
- Ghanaian Canadian Zongo community gets a “Sarki”
- Council votes in favour of new revenue tools for cash-strapped city
- Toronto gets new Asantefuohene and Asantefuohemaa
- Ethnic Press at CNE 2023
- The Ghanaian Presbyterian Church of Toronto observe Culture Day



SEPTEMBER

- Toronto celebrates 30 Ghanaian-Canadians at Dazzling Awards
- Establishing a social support network: A call for Ghanaians in Canada Dr. David Firang
- Ghanaian News Canada receives aotades from Canada High Commissioner H.E. Anselm Sowah
- Scotia Bank cutting 3% of global workforce, will take \$590m Q4 charge after tax
- Ghana’s former First Lady Theresa Kuffuor dies at 87.
- Toronto City Council approves hike in vacant home tax amid scarcity of housing.
- “Democracy in West Africa indanger” President Akufo Addo to ECWAS parliament
- Toronto Pearson airport reveals new autonomous security robot
- Ghanaian Presbyterian Church of Toronto donates to refugees at Dominion International Church.
- Seso Global launches Ghana Diaspora mortgage platform with Republic Bank
- Ford Government reverses changes to urban boundaries of multiple Ontario municipalities
- Food Banks Canada report paints dive picture of Canada-wide affordability crisis
- Africa-Canadian Social Development Council host “Anti-Black Racism and Islamophobia” conference
- Pastors lauded by Living Word Assembly of God Church.
- Ghanaian Women’s Prayer Conference extends blessings to Canada and Ghana
- Ghanaian community in Montreal festival at Park Howard
- Diasporans are key to National Development – John Mahama
- Toronto Police charge 228 people, recover more than 1000 vehicles with \$60m during year-long theft probe



Ford doubles down on ‘like-minded’ judges remark; Civil liberties group ‘deeply’ concerned

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association says it is “deeply concerned” after Ontario Premier Doug appointed two former staffers to the provincial committee responsible for selecting judges, stating he wanted “like-minded” people in the role.

Ford, speaking to reporters in Brampton last week, defended his appointments of the staffers, adding that he wouldn’t appoint a Liberal or New Democrat into those roles.

“In the view of the CCLA, it’s imperative that judicial appointments remain non-partisan and based on merit to ensure that the Charter right to bail is implemented in a way that upholds the rule of law,” Rahim said at Queen’s Park Monday, there to deliver the association’s 10-year report on the Canadian bail system.

“Comments that we should modify the decision making of justices of the peace or judges by injecting different concerns are deeply worrying and concerning,” he continued.

It was first reported last week by The Toronto Star that Matthew Bondy, a former deputy chief of staff to Ford, had been appointed chair of the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee, and Brock Vandrick, Ford’s former director of stakeholder relations, had also been given a spot.

The committee, made up of three judges, three lawyers and seven members of the public, reviews applications and conducts interviews for prospective Ontario Court judges, then sends a ranked list of its recommendations to the attorney general, who appoints someone from that list.

Speaking at Question Period on Monday, Ford doubled down on the comments, pointing to a purported increase in crime in the Toronto area – an assertion the CCLA has disputed.

“We have massive crime waves across our cities,” Ford said. “Theyre kicking doors in, putting guns to people’s heads, and guess what? They get out on bail and then they do it again.”

“I’m going to make sure we have like-minded judges,” the premier continued.

Also at Question Period, Attorney General Doug Downey said he takes the responsibility of making judicial recommendations to the cabinet “seriously.”

“And obviously I want advice from those that I respect,” Downey said. “The advisory committee provides the advice and it has more than two members on it.”

Speaking to reporters on Monday afternoon, Kristyn Wong-Tam, the NDP attorney general critic, said that the appointments raise serious concerns about the impartiality of the judicial system.

“Under this government, we have seen our court system pushed to collapse,” Wong-Tam wrote.

“Instead of fixing the mess in our courts, the Attorney General is focused on awarding partisan patronage appointments.” The Canadian Press.

Major news stories that kept our community talking in 2023

cont’d from pg. 40

1 in 4 Ontarians could be without a family doctor in 3 years due to worsening crisis survey.

Toronto Christ Redeemer Church sees Pastor Eric Maxwell Amoah ascend to Bishop.

Safe Haven cancer support society initiate breast cancer awareness with its annual 5k walk



Joint Retirement service for Elder Akuamoah Boateng and Elder Kwasi Arhin

Assemblies of God Ghana to host 2026 World Congress Fellowship

Ghana Union mobilizes funds for Heritage Centre

OCTOBER

Prof. Sefa Dei launches “The Black Scholar Travelogue in Academia” book

Endless Possibilities and Hope Development honored 17 Women of Courage at 600 Dixon Rd.

Rosalyn Carter, wife of U.S. ex-president died at 96

CRA claws back \$458m in pandemic-era wage subsidies after partial audit

President Akufo Addo Ghana National Defence University to begin early next year

John Mahma visits Calgary

Lakeside Estate sweeps 5 awards at 35th GREDA Anniversary and Awards Night

Ontario to take control of 2 Toronto highways in new deal for city

NOVEMBER

Montrealhene Nana Kwaku Kwateng Amaning passed away at 69 after returning from Ghana

Toronto’s Ghanaian Presbyterian Church helps feed the homeless

Ottawa launches \$13b dental-care program with kids and seniors first up for coverage

Toronto Council approves renaming Yonge Dundas Square, Dundas subway stations



Ottawa backs listing Black and LGBTQ workers under Canada’s workplace equity law source

Integrity of immigration system at risk as international student numbers balloon, Minister says

Ethiopia Airlines has banned “Ghana must go luggage on its Nigeria flight

Deal to lower visa, mastercard processing fees will come up short for many retailers, critics say

The state still owns 30% shares in Vodafone Minister of Communication and Digitalization Ursula Owusu

Goldstar Air, Toronto Airport agrees on Incentive Packages

COP 28 reaches ground breaking climate deal in Dubai calling for “transition away from fossil fuels

The Doug Ford government will no longer dissolve the Region of Peel

Female amputee football team gets support

DECEMBER

Zumunta held its end of year symposium and dinner

Fruitful communities celebrate its food bank volunteers

Federal dental care program will exclude 4.4m uninsured Canadians – report

Canada to stabilize growth and decrease number of new international students permits issued to approximately 360,000 for 2024

World Bank welcomes Ghana’s agreement with OCC over external debt restricting

Six coup plotters sentenced to death, ACP Agordzo, two others acquitted in Ghana

World Bank approves \$300m for Ghana to strengthen macro economic stability

VP Bawumia commissions Ghana’s 2nd Fire Service Academy and training school in Wungu

Canadians worry about quality of health care, have little faith it will improve poll

Evangel Assembly of God hold Christmas Party

Living Word Assembly of God hold Christmas Party

Pentecost Church Calgary held a 2024 New Year Service

Apostle’s Continuation Church held a 2024 New Year Service

Impact Lives Church held a 2024 New Year Service

Association of Concerned Guyanese (AGC) honor Ned Blair and others during 50th Anniversary



GCAO Women Wing celebrating Black History Month in Toronto with emphasis on Ghana Culture

By Ms Liz Okai, Co-Lead, and Maud Cole, GCAO Women's wing

On Saturday, Feb. 24th the Ghanaian Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO)'s women's wing led by Ms. Maud Cole and Ms. Liz Okai organized and celebrated Black History Month.

The theme was: Black African and the Arts. The focus of the event was Empowering Black families and the Ghanaian community to tell their stories through the Arts. The event was packed with different performances like poetry, music, visual Arts, spoken word, storytelling, drumming and dancing.

In her welcoming speech, the women's wing leader Ms. Cole stressed that, the stories of Black African families and communities are rooted in strength, determination, and a rich tapestry of traditions that form the bedrock of our collective identity. These stories deserve to be told, celebrated, and preserved for generations to come. Encouraging Black African families and communities to tell their own

stories is an act of empowerment, a declaration of agency, and a pathway to a future built on understanding and unity. By embracing and valuing these narratives, we affirm the dignity of every individual and honour the legacy of those who came before us.

The Keynote speaker, Mr. Acquah-Harrison urged Ghanaian families and the larger Black community to proudly own their individual and collective identities in its originality and richness. He reminded us that Ghana has become the destination of choice for the diaspora and other tourists because of its people and rich culture, and we need to continue to celebrate this fact.

We encourage our chiefs and elders to continue working on preserving and promoting the Ghanaian rich culture and tapestry.

The event was beautiful and the GCAO leadership wishes to thank

all participants, including our royalty, community elders and church leaders. Further acknowledgement goes to the women's wing planning committee member who helped bring this event together so nicely. Thank you



Maud Cole



Liz Okai



Cultural drummers



GCAO Women leaders



Emmanuel Duodu, President (3rd left) and Juliet Opoku Vice (4th left)



GCAO Women wing members with Agyekumhene, Sankofa Radio



Executives and some community members



GCAO Women wing



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416-743-4555 (Office) 905-216-2323 (Residence)

Day and Time of Worship:

Sunday: Bible Class Meeting:	10:00 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.
Church Service:	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Jericho Hour Prayer Meeting -	8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday Mid-day Prayer -	1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Friday: Bible Teaching/Prayer Meeting	8:00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.
Saturday Organizational Meeting:	6.30 p.m. - 9.30 p.m.
Sunday Brampton Prayer Meeting	8:00 p.m.

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Felix Gyimah (289-931-8443)

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Weekly Service Schedule: Monday 7 pm - 8 pm
Online Bible Study: Thursday 7 pm - 8:30 pm, Prayer Meeting Friday 7:30 pm - 9 pm
Divine Service, Sundays 10 am - 12:30 pm
Contacts: Agnes Donkor - 647-881-4808, Felicia Owusu - 647-533-1093, Grace Kubi - 647-608-5373

Ottawa Methodist

613-315-3443

Holy Trinity Methodist Church, Montreal

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Day and Time of Worship

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Contact: Bro. Joselin Twumasi 438-881-6640

Ebenezer Methodist Church

Stoney Creek United Church (Chapel)
1 King Street West, Stoney Creek,
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Contact: Bro. Kofi Bonsu 289-684-6074

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MEETINGS

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8:30am

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Rev. George Agyei Kwabi

FOOD FOR LIFE

Bringing the Gospel to our Community *By Rev. Isaac De-Graft Takyi*

THE CHRISTIAN IN 2024: LOVE BECAUSE YOU ARE LOVED

QUOTES TO NOTE

God loves you. He wants you to succeed. He wants the best for you. —Norman Vincent Peale

Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without compass, God's love encompasses us completely... He loves every one of us, even those who are flawed, rejected, awkward, sorrowful, or broken.



Kindly take the time to read through 1 JOHN 5:1-21 (NLT) and think through with me on the fact that the people in love are assured of God's love.

What does assurance mean?

Assurance is a state of certainty – you *know* for sure that something is true.

WHAT IS THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE?

The assurance of God's love is an underlying necessity in the life and spiritual formation of a disciple of Jesus: Nothing is so fundamental to the Christian journey as knowing and feeling that we are loved. Nothing. This is the basis for the whole of what it means to be a Christian.

Take a glance at 5 key Assurances we find in the Bible:

The Assurance of:

- Salvation: 1 John 5:11-12
- Answered Prayer: Matthew 7:11
- Victory: 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Forgiveness: 1 John 1:9
- Guidance: Romans 8:11

WHY ARE WE ASSURED OF GOD'S LOVE? BECAUSE:

1. **WE ARE BORN OF GOD:** As believers we have the assurance of God's love because we are born of God (1 John 5:1)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ^[a] has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the father loves his children, too.

2. **OUR LOVE FOR GOD'S CHILDREN:** Those of us who love God also love His Children, and this mutual love is an assurance of our connection to God (1 John 5:1-3)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ^[a] has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the father loves his children, too. ²We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. ³Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

3. **OUR VICTORY OVER THE WORLD:** As Believers we are assured of God's love as we overcome the trials, challenges, and temptations of the world through our faith (1 John 5:4)

⁴ For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith.

4. **THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT:** The testimony of the Holy Spirit within us as believers serves as an assurance of God's love, conforming the truth of our relationship with him (1 John 5:6-9)

⁶ And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross^[b]—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. ⁷So we have these three witnesses^[c]— ⁸ the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. ⁹Since we believe human testimony, surely, we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son.

5. **THE ETERNAL THROUGH THE SON:** As believers we have the assurance of God's love in that through His son, Jesus Christ, we have eternal life. (1 John 5: 11-13)

¹¹ And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. ¹³I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.

6. **OUR CONFIDENCE IN ANSWERED PRAYER:** As Believers we have confidence in our prayers, knowing that God hears and answers us according to His love and will (1 John 5:14-15)

¹⁴ And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. ¹⁵ And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

7. **OUR PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL ONE:** God's love provides assurance that believers are protected from the evil one, and we can trust in God's power to keep us safe (1 John 5:18-21).

¹⁸ We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. ¹⁹ We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God.^[d] And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life. ²¹ Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.

When you know how much God is in love with you, then you can only live your life radiating that love. — Mother Teresa

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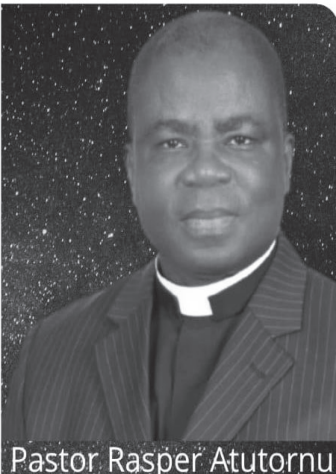


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The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Amen.
John 10 :10-11

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Promoting Healthcare through Faith-based Organizations

New Jerusalem Prayer Garden have contributed immensely to healthcare delivery and the early detection of health conditions or diseases of interest

ACCRA, Ghana, February 18, 2024/ -- Community engagement and participation play a significant role in the health system delivery. Community actors are uniquely positioned to drive demand for health services and champion community ownership of public health interventions, especially at the primary level of health care.

In the Twifo-Hemang-Lower-Denkyira-District (THLDD), activities of Maame Sofo Sarah Pamful, and her faith-based organization, New Jerusalem Prayer Garden have contributed immensely to healthcare delivery and the early detection of health conditions or diseases of interest.

"As a leader in society, I must ensure that my followers make the right decisions that will impact positively on their health.

That is why I have been helping them to understand that the solution to health problems is at the hospitals," Maame Sofo, the Overseer of the New Jerusalem Prayer Garden.

Since 2004, she has been a strong advocate of Primary Health Care services. This prayer camp, located along the Twifo-Hemang-Nsuntem Road is an excellent example of how faith-based actors can contribute to surveillance and health care in general. As an advocate, Maame Sofo has been involved in several referral of pregnant women to the health center for Antenatal Care (ANC) and delivery services.

Furthermore, she has helped to change the health seeking behaviour of expectant mothers to patronize ANC services at the health centre instead of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA). This has been achieved through education and prompt referrals. Unlike other prayer camps, she only accepts to see expectant mothers who have initially

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What to know about a shooting at Joel Osteen's megachurch

A shooter's motive for opening fire in celebrity pastor Joel Osteen's megachurch remained unclear Monday as authorities searched the suspect's home in suburban Houston and identified the weapon used in the attack as an AR-style rifle.

The house in Conroe, Texas, is more than 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of Lakewood Church, where Sunday's shooting in between busy services sent worshippers scrambling to find safety.

The shooter was identified as 36-year-old Genesse Ivonne Moreno, according to police. Police say Moreno was shot and killed by two off-duty officers working security at the church, one of the largest megachurches in the U.S.

Two other people were shot and wounded, including the shooter's young son, who entered the church with Moreno.

Here's what to know about the shooting:

HOW DID THE SHOOTING UNFOLD?

The sound of gunshots inside the massive church, which was formerly the home of the NBA's Houston Rockets, startled worshippers just before 2 p.m. Sunday, around the time many people were getting ready to watch the Super Bowl later.

Houston police Chief Troy Finner said Moreno entered the church wearing a trenchcoat and backpack and armed with a long rifle. Moreno began shooting and was confronted by two off-duty officers, a Houston police officer and an agent with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, who returned fire.

"They held their ground in the face of rifle fire at point blank range," said Kevin Lilly, chairman of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

Before being shot and killed, the suspect told officers that they had a bomb and were carrying "a yellow in color rope and substances consistent with the manufacture of explosive devices, which appeared to be a detonation cord," according to the search warrant affidavit. Authorities said Monday that no explosives or hazardous material were found at the scene.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Moreno's son, whom authorities described as a 7-year-old, was shot in the head and remained in critical condition Monday. The boy was initially described Sunday as a 5-year-old.

It remained unclear how the boy, who was taken to a Houston children's hospital, was struck by gunfire. Finner said he did not want to speculate but added: "That suspect put that baby in danger."

Authorities described the other victim as a man in his 50s who was wounded in his hip.

WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THE SHOOTER?

Authorities said Moreno had a history of mental illness, including being placed under emergency detention in 2016, but provided no other details.

Houston Police Commander Chris Hassig said Moreno sometimes used both male and female aliases, but he said investigators determined through interviews and past police reports that Moreno identified as female. Authorities said investigators were looking into a dispute involving Moreno and the family of Moreno's ex-husband.

Police said Moreno legally purchased in December the AR-15 style rifle that was used in the shooting. Moreno was also carrying a .22-caliber rifle.

Investigators also found antisemitic writings by the shooter, and Hassig noted Moreno's rifle had a "Palestine" sticker on the buttstock. He described Moreno as a "lone wolf" who was not

acting as any part of a larger group.

HOW DID WORSHIPPERS INSIDE REACT?

Alan Guity, whose family is from Honduras, has been a member of the church since 1998. He said he heard gunshots while resting inside the church's sanctuary as his mother was working as an usher.

"Boom, boom, boom, boom. And I yelled, 'Mom,'" he said.

Guity, 35, said he ran to his mother and they both lay flat on the floor as the gunfire continued. Guity said he and his mother prayed and stayed on the floor for about five minutes until someone told them it was safe to leave the building. As he was led outside, Guity could see people were crying and looking for loved ones.

WHO IS JOEL OSTEEEN?

Osteen, 60, took the helm of Lakewood Church after John Osteen, his father and the church's founding pastor,

passed away in 1999. The church has grown dramatically under Joel Osteen and is regularly attended by 45,000 people weekly, making it the third-largest megachurch in the U.S., according to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

Osteen is a leader of what is known as the prosperity gospel, a belief that God wants his followers to be wealthy and healthy. He is the author of several best-selling books, including, "Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential."

His televised services reach about 100 countries and renovating his church's arena cost nearly \$100 million.

After Hurricane Harvey flooded Houston in 2017, Osteen opened his church to those seeking shelter after social media critics slammed the televangelist for not offering to house people in need.

Associated Press

Promoting Healthcare through Faith-based Organizations

cont'd from pg. 48

visited the Antenatal Clinic and sees to it that the client completes all her ANC visits.

"Sofa Maame Sarah Pamful's activities at the new Jerusalem prayer camp has contributed immensely to improve our ANC coverage over the years. Many pregnant women and OPD cases have been referred to Hemang Health Center and Nsuntem Community Health Planning and Service (CHPS) due to her collaboration with us," says Mary Boadi, the Physician Assistant of Hemang Health Center.

Similarly, and to address low Child Welfare Clinic (CWC) attendance by caretakers/ mothers, the Overseer provided a shed within the prayer camp for Community Health Nurses to render CWC services. The location of the CWC has promoted visits by Caregivers to CWC, which has improved immunization services for under five children. Her ability to mobilise the community including caregivers has been crucial to both routine and campaign immunization sessions.

Over the years, the New Jerusalem Prayer Garden has notified Nsuntem CHPS and Hemang Health Center of some diseases and health events for prompt action. In the past 5 years, 31 priority conditions have been reported by the prayer camp to the Health Center or District Health Administration for treatment or further investigations.

The District Health Administration has recognized the Overseer of New Jerusalem Prayer Garden as very cooperative and very exemplary. "Activities of Sofa Maame have contributed to an increase in Tuberculosis case detection and reduction in defaulter rate/cases. The camp itself serves as a DOT Center for treatment and management of TB cases" says Edmund Bowah the District Disease Control Officer.

It is worth noting, the health belief model of some community members makes these prayer camps an important collaborator in health service delivery.

"I came to the prayer camp with a 3-year-old baby with difficulty in walking, weight loss and wasted muscles. In addition to prayers, I was referred to Hemang Health Center to see a Nutritionist for nutritional care and now my baby can walk on both legs", says Cecilia Ofori, a caregiver.

"The activities of this prayer camp align with WHO's efforts to promote health for all. We will continue to work with every stakeholder to promote the health and wellbeing of the people," noted Prof Francis Kasolo, WHO Representative to Ghana.

In many communities, visits to prayer camps form an integral part of health-seeking behaviour and there is the need to engage faith-based leaders to ensure that prayer camps and other religious establishments play their role in the promotion, protection and provision of appropriate health care to all.

Distributed by APO Group on behalf of World Health Organization (WHO), Ghana.

Racism and cultural beliefs can affect organ donations in some communities: doctors

cont'd from pg. 33

Mucsi said a lack of African, Black and Caribbean physicians and nurses in Toronto meant patients in those communities had less trust in the system, which some viewed as racist due to "discriminatory microaggressions from individuals and institutions."

"When patients are travelling through the transplant journey, which is a fairly complex and complicated one, they rarely see people who look like them," Mucsi said.

"Transplant knowledge in the Black

patient population is less than for whites but it may be also related to the fact that, because of trust issues, they simply cannot believe what is being taught to them because it's coming from a source that is not trustworthy."

People of African ancestry have a greater risk of end-stage kidney disease due to genetic reasons and socioeconomic factors that can lead to other risks, such as obesity, said Mucsi, who leads the Kidney Health Education and Research Group at UHN.

He said the group is working with

Black Health Alliance and researchers elsewhere to launch a website that includes the testimonials of African, Black and Caribbean patients and families.

Data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information shows that 3,777 Canadians were waiting for a solid organ transplant as of December 2022. Nearly three-quarters of them needed a kidney, but the data does not include information about the patients' race and ethnic background.

The Canadian Press

Are you really in love?

How expanding your love lexicon can change your relationships and how you see yourself

What is love? Could those feelings you label as love be something else?

What about infatuation? Obsession? A passing fancy? Being smitten? Enthralment? Beguilement? Lust? A crush? A squish? Platonic admiration? Why do people categorize some attachments as romantic love but not others?

Suppose Holly meets someone on vacation. They quickly become romantically and sexually intimate and seem deeply compatible. Holly is from the U.K., where the term “holiday romance” is commonly used and part of her vocabulary. Because she knows this term, she can apply its social scaffolding to this relationship. She understands that the rapid emotional intimacy and apparent compatibility she experienced likely sprang from fleeting circumstances that aren’t meant to last.

Someone from the U.S., however, where this term is rarely used, might more easily interpret this rapid intimacy as a sign of deep, significant lifelong compatibility.

Judging that you are in love can be powerful. It can affect your feelings, relationships and even your sexuality. But how do people judge whether they are in love?

This, I argue, depends on your linguistic community. That is, how the people around you talk about romance, relationships and attraction.

I am a philosopher who studies categorization schemas – how, when and why people label things such as emotions, sexuality and health. I examine the effects of those labels on how people understand themselves and on their well-being, and how alternative taxonomies and labels can make people understand and shape the world differently.

What happens when a culture instills a broader, more encompassing definition of love, or a narrower, more restrictive definition? How does having a richer vocabulary of words in the neighborhood of love change how we understand it?

The social scaffolding of words

Self-ascriptions of love depend on two things. The first are introspective judgments about your feelings: Are you attracted to the person? Energized by them? Nervous around them? And the second is what you think love is: Does love require caring about the person? Thinking about them a lot? Sexual attraction? When how you feel about a person and what you think love is match up, you self-ascribe love. That is, you judge that you are in love.

Words provide social scaffolding. That is, they create expectations and norms that steer how you behave and react to other people. And vocabularies vary by culture and era.

Categorizing an attachment as a “holiday romance” doesn’t just describe it but can also change its course. The label affects what Holly notices and values about the time she spends together with another person and whether she is inclined to pursue a long-term relationship.

Vocabulary is empowering. Having

an even more expansive vocabulary would allow Holly to experiment with different labels, and these could shape her relationships in different ways. For example, the term “eintagsliebe,” based on the German word for “mayfly” and translating to “one day’s love,” refers to an intense and brief relationship. “Comet lovers” have a deep romantic bond but see each other only intermittently, living far apart the rest of the time without much contact. A “holibae” is a perennial date that happens only when you’re visiting home for the holidays. See also “zipcoding” – dating someone only when you’re both in the same ZIP code.

The dictionary of polyamory

Words create possibilities, and the recent surge of interest in polyamory, or having more than one romantic relationship at a time, has introduced substantial amounts of new vocabulary.

An “anchor partner” is a central figure in your romantic life. A “nesting partner” is a partner you live with. And a “satellite partner” has emotional and physical distance from your home. Vocabularies sculpted by traditional monogamous relationships might not distinguish between these types of attachments because they see non-cohabitating partnerships only as temporary transition phases that end by breaking up or become serious by moving in.

By rejecting the mainstream social scaffolding about relationships, polyamory creates the need for more terms to describe innovative relationship structures. And those words in turn create more possibilities for how polyamorous people interpret and structure their attachments.

“New relationship energy” is the buzzing excitement of a new relationship. “Established relationship energy” is the comfort of a stable, long-term relationship. These emotions are especially salient within polyamorous relationships, where the excitement of a new relationship can arise alongside the comfort of preexisting relationships.

But monogamous relationships also benefit from these linguistic innovations. Monogamous relationships might also involve new relationship energy, established relationship energy, and nesting, anchor and satellite partnerships, even if they aren’t labeled as such. Such self-understandings affect the values, emotions, commitments and beliefs people use to forge relationships.

Conceptual tourism

Conceptual schemas, or the words and concepts we have for understanding ourselves and the world around us, have permissive flexibility: People can disagree about what words like “love,” “crush” and “bi-curious” mean. Disagreement doesn’t mean that someone is wrong. Rather, flexibility allows us to explore different ways to understand the world and ourselves. We can be conceptual tourists.

Suppose Nell develops an ambiguous attachment to a new classmate. She finds her charming, witty and pretty, but it isn’t a clear-cut case of romantic attraction. Nell can adopt a broad or narrow definition of the word “crush,” depending on whether her feelings

meet how she defines a “crush.” Altering what she means by a “crush” would change whether she labels herself as having a crush. This, in turn, could affect whether Nell sees herself as queer or straight.

If she knows other terms to describe her feelings, Nell might interpret them as “alterous attraction,” which is the desire for emotional intimacy in a way that is neither platonic nor romantic. She might seek a “queerplatonic relationship,” which resembles a conventional romantic relationship but without sex or conventional romance. Or, if her feelings are intense, Nell might self-ascribe “limerence,” which is obsessive infatuation.

Self-ascribing labels affects what people notice about themselves, how they interpret their feelings and what they appreciate about their attachments. What she pays attention to fuels particular emotions and can bolster certain attitudes, like profound gratitude, that might distinguish love from crushes.

For example, if Nell interprets herself as having a crush, she may become more attuned to the excitement she feels around her classmate, which can fuel those emotions in a feedback loop. If she labels her feelings as

platonic admiration, she might instead interpret herself as being nervous about impressing her new classmate.

Nell can experimentally adopt different labels – alterous attraction, queer, crush, limerence, straight and more – to see which fit best. Some labels might better match her emotions. And those labels might also change her emotions and become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Conceptual tourism can be a valuable cognitive skill. It requires the mental dexterity to inhabit rival conceptual schemas and try on new interpretative terms. Doing so can increase your self-understanding, cultivate self-determination and even help steer your heart.

Culture unavoidably provides a lexicon of attachment that shapes how you relate to other people. A culture that is more deliberate about the words it uses for different kinds of attraction can help people bond in new and more open-minded ways.

It’s also a great motivator for education: Learning new words can help you improve your love life.

The Converdation

Alarming number of youth reporting to facilities with stroke

Ghana Society of Cardiology

The Ghana Society of Cardiology says the high incidence of stroke among young people is being driven by unhealthy lifestyle choices and a lack of exercise. The Society is intensifying its efforts to educate the public about the risks of unhealthy lifestyles and the importance of regular physical activity.

It is also advocating for individuals to get regular checkups to screen for cardiovascular diseases.

At an annual general scientific meeting, held in Accra on February 22, 2024, the Vice President of the Ghana Society of Cardiology, Dr. Francis Agyekum, said that cardiovascular diseases often go undetected because they are not associated with symptoms.

“Formerly, we used to say that atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease is the disease of the rich country but now we are seeing a number of them. You can attest to the fact that you are hearing a lot of stroke cases. If you go outside, they are more elderly but in Ghana, we are seeing more of the people in the productive age group.

“Our patients are younger if you compare that to the United States or the UK. My youngest patient that came with a heart attack was 27 years old,” he said.

According to Dr Agyekum, the rise in cardiovascular diseases can be attributed to lifestyle changes, particularly dietary choices.

He noted that many people are consuming more processed and fast foods and fewer fruits and vegetables which is leading to a rise in cardiovascular diseases.

“People are now eating more energy-dense meals, fast foods, cholesterol, excessive salt intake. People are eating less fruits and vegetables. People are not exercising.”

“In fact there are people who wake up from their bed, sit in their cars, go to work and then come back sit behind the television and sleep,” he said.

Source: myjoyonline

Health/Lifestyle

Colon cancer is rising in young adults and thousands of Ontarians want to lower the screening age

When Bishop Brigante underwent his first chemotherapy session, he never expected it to end in joy.

Brigante, a 45-year-old artist living in the Toronto area, was diagnosed with colorectal cancer about three months prior, in October 2023.

The months that followed illuminated a gap in Ontario's health care for Brigante – too many young people were being denied early screening for colorectal cancer.

Bishop Brigante (centre) is seen at Queen's Park after his petition to lower the minimum age for colonoscopies from 50 to 30 is presented in the legislature. (Supplied)

"The more I talked to people, the more I heard, 'My doctor won't give me [a colonoscopy]. I'm not old enough. I have to be 50,'" Brigante told CTV News Toronto in an interview last week. "I realized this problem is so much larger than just me and I had to do something actionable."

While colon cancer rates across all age groups have steadily declined over the last 20 years, Brigante's effort comes as the disease has seen an unexplained increase in younger Canadians.

"I had no idea about any of this – and my peers, I'm talking about people in their 30s and 40s – they didn't know either," Brigante said. "There was just this big flaw in the system."

So, on Jan. 26, he started a petition seeking to lower the minimum age for colonoscopies from 50 to 30 years old.

Three days later, coming out of his first chemotherapy session and checking the petition, Brigante was met with 5,000 names.

"It's heartbreaking. It's heartwarming. It's all across the board," he said.

Five days later, 10,000 people had signed.

When Brigante first approached NDP Health Critic France Gélinas, she assumed he was a constituent in need of help accessing cancer care.

"But to my surprise, he wanted to help others," Gélinas told CTV News Toronto last week.

On Tuesday, Brigante, alongside his partner Melanie McVey and Gélinas, presented the petition at Queen's Park, boasting about 25,000 signatures after only a month of circulation.

"I've been around for a long time and I'm often called the queen of petitions," NDP Health Critic Gélinas told CTV News Toronto. "And I would have never dreamed that we could get 25,000 in less than a month."

As Brigante watched Gélinas put forth his petition to Ontario's politicians, he was brought back to the moment of diagnosis.

"I was terrified, holding onto my lady's hand so hard as I cried and took in all the information, and I thought about the millions of people after me that are going to experience that, and I knew I needed to change that," Brigante said.

"It's not even an option to me – lowering the age criteria for a colonoscopy is imperative."

The government now has 24 sitting days to provide a written response to Brigante's request.

COLON CANCER IN CANADA

The Canadian Cancer Society estimates that about one in 16 men and one in 18 women will develop colorectal cancer during their lifetime. The disease makes up about 11 per cent of all cancer death in the country.

Among all age groups in Canada, colorectal cancer is actually decreasing, with rates going down almost every year since the 1980s.

But the decrease seems to be confined to older generations, likely due to an increase in screening after 50.

Colorectal cancer on the rise in younger patients: Should screening age change?

Among younger adults, incidence rates are increasing – not only in Canada, but in the U.S. and "several other high-income countries," according to the society. One study, published in the Cancer Epidemiol in 2020, also reported a "concerning increase" in the disease among younger Canadians.

"We are hearing reports of colorectal cancer increasing in adults younger than 50," Elizabeth Holmes, Executive Director at the Canadian Cancer Society, told CTV News Toronto. "The reason for this remains unclear, but we are monitoring it closely."

Currently, those diagnosed with colon cancer have a just under 70 per cent chance of survival – a prognosis that continues to improve with screening and treatment technologies.

"At this time, more research is needed

to mitigate risk," Holmes said.

GET A COLON CANCER SCREENING

Age is still the most significant risk factor with colorectal cancer, Holmes said.

While 50 remains the age for the introduction of routine screening, Holmes underlined that guidance is only in place for symptom-free patients with no history of the disease.

"If you have symptoms, they are not the guidelines that should be referenced," she said. "If you have blood in your stool, unexplained weight loss, fatigue, and/or changes in bowel movements, you should ask your doctor for a screening."

Ultimately, Holmes feels patients should listen to their bodies. "Trust yourself, you know what's right," she said.

With continued investment in treatment and early detection, the

Canadian Cancer Society expects that overall prevalence of colorectal cancer will decrease. Those investments, according to Brigante, don't need to be costly for the government, either.

"It costs so much money to treat somebody with cancer – tens of thousands of dollars – as opposed to just giving somebody a colonoscopy when they have symptoms of colon cancer," he said.

"I don't know how it got to this level, but it's God's work now and he's taking the wheel," Brigante continued. "I'm just a vessel that's trying to save lives and, you know, make it a lucrative situation for the government at the same time."

On March 22, Brigante, a hip hop artist and actor, will join forces with the director of Narc, a 2002 neo-noir thriller, and the first movie Brigante ever acted in, to host a 20th anniversary screening of the film at Revue Cinema.

The proceeds will be used to support Brigante and fund his medical treatment while he battles cancer.

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All African Games: Ablakwa blows alarm on GH¢604m 'unapproved' operational expenses

Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the North Tongu Member of Parliament, has published documents alleging that the government is overspending its operational expenses threshold by about 500% of the amount approved by parliament relative to preparations for the 13th All African Games.

He accused President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the sports ministry, and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of the games of being complicit in the ballooned expenditure.

The three groups, he said, in a February 26, 2024, post on social media, "have shockingly agreed to spend an elephantine, wrongful and unconscionable US\$48million on so-called "operational expenses" for the 13th African Games to be hosted in Ghana between the period — March 5 to March 23, 2024. [Refer to intercepted documents attached]

"2. It must be noted that this staggering US\$48 million is an entirely different amount from the mega US\$195 million (GHS2.4 billion) already spent on infrastructure for the games.

"3. At the prevailing exchange rate, US\$48 million is equivalent to a colossal GHS602 million," he added.

Ablakwa also disclosed how the presidency organized a fundraiser regarding the games, emphasizing how the said move was untoward.

He has since hinted that the sports minister will be held before parliament this week to explain the circumstances surrounding the said expenditure.

Read his full post below:

PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO'S ELEPHANTINE, WRONGFUL & UNCONSCIONABLE US\$48MILLION (GHS602MILLION) "OPERATIONAL EXPENSES" FOR THE 13TH AFRICAN GAMES

1. Even before the dust settles on the scandalous US\$8.5million AFCON budget brouhaha; unimpeachable, unassailable and incontrovertible intercepted documents in my possession reveal for the first time that President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and his appointees at the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) have shockingly agreed to spend an elephantine, wrongful and unconscionable US\$48million on so-called "operational expenses" for the 13th African Games to be hosted in Ghana between the period — March 5 to March 23, 2024. [Refer to intercepted documents attached]

2. It must be noted that this staggering US\$48million is an entirely different amount from the mega US\$195million (GHS2.4billion) already spent on infrastructure for the games.

3. At the prevailing exchange rate, US\$48million is equivalent to a colossal GHS602million.

4. A careful reading of the intercepted February 13, 2024 letter signed by the LOC Executive Chairman, Dr. Kwaku Oforu-Asare confirms that this ginormous US\$48million



Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP for North Tongu

(GHS602million) will be spent in less than a three week period (18 days). This translates into a 6-day weekly expenditure on "operational expenses" of a mind boggling GHS200.6million, and an even more incredible daily "operational expenses" of GHS33.4million.

5. It is most instructive to note that apart from the blatant profligacy and reckless wastefulness by the leader of a bankrupt, debt-distress IMF bailout country; President Akufo-Addo's conduct is absolutely wrong because Parliament approved GHS100million under Goods and Services and then GHS50million for Capital Expenditure for the 2024 expenditure by the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the 13th African Games. [see page 230 of 2024 Budget as attached]. It is therefore totally lawless and utterly repugnant for President Akufo-Addo to unilaterally vary by more than six times what Parliament has approved for non-CapEX — that is from GHS100million to GHS602million.

6. The intercepted documents confirm that despite Parliament's approval of only GHS100million, President Akufo-Addo instructed the LOC to send out official request letters as recent as February 13, 2024 in which they defy Parliament and communicate their outlandish, unlawful and unjustifiable US\$48million (GHS602million).

7. It is regrettable to note that instead of President Akufo-Addo and his appointees at the Sports Ministry and LOC acknowledging Ghana's current economic crisis and slashing their ostentatious US\$48million (GHS602million) "operational expenses" budget, he rather proceeded to personally chair fundraising meetings on the 6th and 7th of November, 2023 at the Jubilee House with an objective of raising the US\$48million (GHS602million). [See evidence of the President's meetings attached].

8. A number of top executives who have received the Akufo-Addo-inspired US\$48million (GHS602million) shocking request letter are outraged about the quantum for a broke country and the deliberate refusal to transparently present a breakdown.

9. Careful analysis of the entities President Akufo-Addo met during his now infamous fundraising engagements show that the President is mainly interested in public funds either by targeting SOEs such as GNPC, Ghana Gas, BOST and GOIL; or by targeting private companies such as MacDan, Zoomlion, MODEC and Kosmos all noted for executing huge government contracts.

10. Additionally, the President's conduct raises fundamental ethical questions: how did the President select

these companies? What promises did President Akufo-Addo make to these CEOs? How can other companies compete fairly with these "presidential companies" in any competitive bidding process, particularly considering the current single-source procurement epidemic? After these companies present their US\$5million sponsorship cash to the President's misplaced fundraising campaign, how can taxpayers be assured of value for money in the projects these entities would execute?

11. Should GNPC, Ghana Gas, BOST and GOIL which belong to the Ghanaian people be compelled by President Akufo-Addo to sponsor his unconscionable GHS602million 13th African Games "Operational Expenses" when these corporations could be allowed to make more meaningful investments in expanding their operations so they could create sustainable jobs for the youth and thereby help address Ghana's acute youth unemployment?

12. Why are these SOEs beginning to make payment due to President Akufo-Addo's unlawful pressure when they haven't sought Parliamentary approval? The BOST management should prepare to answer questions in Parliament for the initial US\$500,000.00 (GHS6.2million) it transferred to Akufo-Addo's LOC a few days ago.

13. The Minority Caucus in Parliament led by the dynamic Dr. Cassiel Ato Baah Forson will this week seek Speaker Bagbin's blessings to summon the Sports Minister, Mustapha Ussif on their unlawful, ostentatious and unconscionable US\$48million (GHS602million) "Operational Expenses" budget which undermines the authority of

Parliament — that will be a first step in a series of constitutional actions, not ruling out possible impeachment of President Akufo-Addo, as we are determined to make sure the President doesn't get away with another blatant "create, loot and share" scheme.

14. President Akufo-Addo's unpatriotic and nation-wrecking act of approving and leading the collection of this gigantic US\$48million (GHS602million) for so-called "Operational Expenses" for the 13th African Games deserves to be exposed and scuttled.

15. A government denying pensioners their life savings; a government unable to house VRA spillage victims who are still living in refugee-like tents after five months; a government unable to equip our hospitals including the renal unit of KATH, the imaging departments at Korle-Bu, Ridge, 37 and our regional hospitals; a government which claims it cannot subsidize dialysis treatment and prevent our compatriots from dying; a government unable to clear billions in arrears to contractors, independent power producers, school feeding caterers, public sector workers, teacher and nursing trainees, national service personnel, DACF, NHIS, GETFund; a government unable to employ thousands of young graduates who offered nursing and PharmD and have had to stay at home for years; a government which embarrassingly owed the Black Queens for many months until recent fierce mass agitations; and a government desperately seeking an IMF bailout must not be allowed to spend US\$48million (GHS602million) for an 18-day event, particularly when Parliament has generously approved GHS100million. We shall surely defeat this lootocratic scheme!

Ghanaweb.com

Evelyn Badu grateful to fans despite defeat to Zambia

Ghana midfielder Evelyn Badu has expressed her gratitude to fans following their team's narrow 1-0 defeat against Zambia in the Olympic Games qualifier.

Despite the setback, Badu acknowledged the tremendous support from the Ghanaian fans.

On her social media account, Badu wrote, "The [Thank] you Ghana for the amazing support," reflecting the midfielder's appreciation for the fans who rallied behind the Black Queens during the crucial match at the Accra Sports Stadium on Friday evening.

The Black Queens faced a tough challenge against Zambia, with the visiting Copper Queens securing a 1-0 victory in the first leg of the third-round qualifier.

Despite the loss, the team remain optimistic ahead of the second leg which comes off in Zambia on Wednesday, February 28.

The defeat was Ghana's second under



Ghana midfielder Evelyn Badu

Swiss tactician Nora Hauptle in 12 games. Hauptle took over in January 2023 and has succeeded in transforming the team to a formidable side.

Evelyn Badu's message resonates with the resilient spirit of the team and the unity between the players and their supporters.

As the Black Queens aim to turn the tide in the upcoming match, the expressions of gratitude from players like Evelyn Badu reflect the determination to bounce back and continue the journey towards Olympic qualification.

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FOOD AND RECIPES

Traditional African Dishes

Compiled by Nana Ama, Toronto, ON

ABUNUABUNA OR COCOYAM LEAVE SOUP

Abunuabunu is a soup that is very popular in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, also made from cocoyam leaves, like the Kontomire stew, this can be served with Banku, fufu, or anything according to your preference.

INGREDIENTS

- Snails or any meat of your choice
- Herrings/dry or smoked fish
- Onion
- Ginger
- Garlic
- Fresh tomatoes
- Kontomire
- prekese
- salt
- peanut butter /groundnut paste (optional) for nkatekonto



METHOD

- Wash the kontomire leaves in a clean bowl and put into a saucepan
- Add a little amount of water and boil under a medium heat
- Remove after 5 minutes when it softens
- Wash the meat and put into another saucepan.
- Wash and cut onions into pieces.
- Add diced onions to meat, add seasoning and salt to taste
- Place it over medium heat
- Chop some onions and pour into a blender, add ginger, pepper and garlic and blend into a smooth mixture
- Pour the blended mixture into the meat on fire.
- Add about 4 pieces of fresh tomatoes and fresh onions
- Add a teaspoon of peanut butter
- Blend the cocoyam leaves and pour it into the soup
- Add about 4 cups of water. You can add more depending on how thick you want your soup to be.
- Remove the cooked onions and cooked tomatoes and blend together.
- Pour the blended mixture back into the soup
- Add this point, you can add the herrings or smoked fish
- Allow the soup to boil for about 15 minutes.
- Add salt or maggie cube to taste
- Add the prekese and allow it to diffuse in the soup for about 5 minutes.
- The soup is ready
- Serve with fufu



GROUNTNUT/PEANUT BUTTER SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium onions or 1 large one
- 3 very ripe large tomatoes
- A whole chicken, chopped to pieces (we like "boiler" chicken, free range, "koko ya Setswana")
- Garden eggs (optional)
- 12 okra (with ends trimmed)
- 1 scotch bonnet pepper or kpakpo shito
- Ginger
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 rosemary sprig
- 1.75l chicken stock
- 4 tbsp peanut butter
- Water to mix with the peanut butter



METHOD

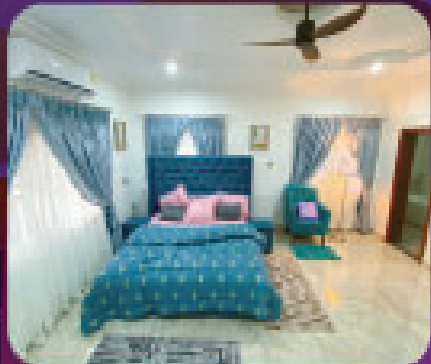
- Place the whole onion, pepper, tomatoes and chicken pieces in the pot and top with the stock. Cover, bring to the boil and reduce to simmer for 15 minutes till vegetables are soft and tender. Remove the vegetables.
- Blend the vegetables and ginger in a food processor and return to the soup. Bring to the boil then reduce to simmer while you make the peanut butter sauce. If you are using boiler chicken, it can be quite tough, so it may need extra time cooking.
- Meanwhile, make the peanut butter sauce. There are different ways of doing this, I have opted to go for what is easier for me. Scoop the desired amount of peanut butter into a saucepan and put
- Add water a little at a time. This can be quite tricky as the water instantly changes the runny peanut butter properties. I would say it is a similar experience to white sauce, when the milk is added to the flour and butter mixture. Once a smooth sauce is achieved, allow to simmer. You will find the peanut oil begins to separate from the peanut butter. When this happens, you can add the peanut butter sauce to the rest of the soup and simmer for 20 minutes till oil rises to the surface of the soup.
- Check seasoning to your taste. Serve with your favourite carbs such as boiled sliced yam, potatoes or rice, konkonte.





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