

TALKING DRUMS

FALL/SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER



Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) 

65 MAYALL AVENUE, NORTH YORK, ONTARIO, M3L 1E7

CONTACT: INFO@GCAOCANADA.ORG • WWW.GCAOCANADA.ORG

PRESS CONFERENCE FOR CONTINENTAL AFRICAN HOUSING SOLUTION (TORONTO CANADA)



WHO WE ARE

The Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario is a non-profit umbrella organization for all Ghanaian-Canadian individuals, faith-groups, professional and social organizations in Ontario established to promote and improve the well-being of its members.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide social, cultural and educational programs to Ghanaian-Canadians in Ontario to enhance the living standards of members.

VISION STATEMENT

A strong, inclusive, vibrant and sustainable community that provides support services to enhance the well-being of Ghanaian-Canadians in Ontario.

There was a press conference held in downtown Toronto for the continental African Housing solution, a project to help create affordable housing for African Canadians. There were community leaders, politicians and housing representatives to collaborate on finding the project and how to move it further to support the African communities. GCAO is a partner in this initiative to create Affordable housing incorporate into our heritage Centre project.

The initiative's focus on the affordable housing model centered on traditional African values of community, family and culture is being highlighted by the Ghanaian Canadian Association of Ontario in partnership with the Rwandan Canadian Healing Center (RCHC) and other African partners.

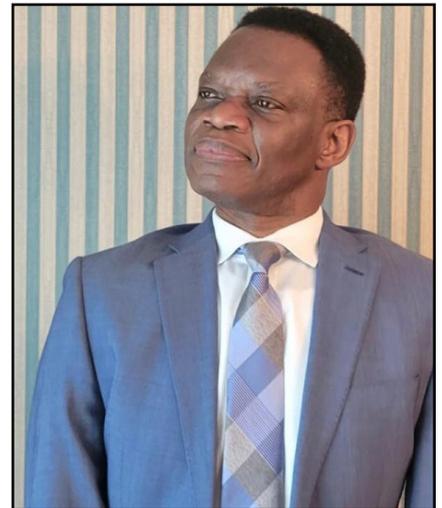
The program is called the African Canadian Affordable Housing – Solutions Lab Project. This is to help Africans living in Canada to access affordable housing looking at the traditional African village for African descent who have not been able to experience it.

Written by: Juliet Opoku (GCAO Vice President)

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Let me take this opportunity to thank our community members, associations, churches, and faith-based groups for uniting in an unprecedented way in supporting each other for the past two years in the heat of the pandemic.

We are not completely out of the woods yet, but there is hope in the horizon. During this pandemic, one thing I have learnt repeatedly is having people around you to lean on, talk to, interact with, is beyond monetary value. The beautiful coinage in South African language 'UBUNTU' comes to mind... humanity to others or 'I am what I am because of who we are all are'. The world would continue to have disasters, viruses, wars and economic down turns impacting lives. We cannot predict the future but what is within our control to some extent is to strive to prepare the best we can by saving for rainy days, immerse yourself in the community, build relationships and participate in your community programs.



The Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) aka Ghana Union which I happen to have the privilege to serve humbly is growing and thanks to you; community members, our talented and amazing young people, our immovable and dynamic women, our resilient and powerful men, our enduring and relentless seniors and faithful and all encompassing faith-based groups.

We are now at an inflexion point to either leave an enduring legacy for generations to come or leave nothing for posterity. I think we have one in a lifetime here in Canada, for first time, to stand up and be counted in realizing our Ghanaian-Canadian Heritage Center (GCHC) aka Community Center. We need every available resource to realize this goal –knowledge, money, time - and I am counting on you to do your bit. A little sacrifice from our strong 70,000 Ghanaian-Canadians will get us there. In the coming months you will be called upon to contribute a little bit and I am counting on you to respond for the goal of leaving something for our children to call home. Nobody is going to do for us Leading our community is a privilege to serve our fellow man and there many volunteers and leaders working many hours weekly serving to make things happen. With their commitment and dedication, we re able to deliver programs.

The GCAO Resource HUB is now open, and we invite you all to make use of the space for programs and services offered – Seniors Engagement, Youth Services, Women Programs, Homework Club, Language Services and many more. It is going to be a rewarding and fun summer of re-igniting our strategic vision.

Let me leave you with our mantra – 'Together We Build, The Time Is Now'
God Bless!

E. Duodu - (GCAO President)
Your Humble Servant

GHANA INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY FLAG RAISING CEREMONY IN BRAMPTON, ONTARIO

In celebration of Ghana's 66th Independence celebration in Toronto, a flag-raising event was held in Brampton on March 6th, 2023. The event was attended by a cross-of-section Ghanaians.

The Ghana Consulate General and the entire Consulate Staff attended the event. The Mayor of Brampton, Patrick Brown, his chief of staff Bradshaw Frances Bradshaw, and the Brampton City Councilor attended the event.

The Mayor in his speech lauded the Ghanaian Community in Brampton for their contribution and the Mayor wants the flag-raising event to be an annual event. A reception was held by the city staff after the flag-raising.

Written by: Emmanuel Duodu



HOMework CLUB CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAYS



The Homework Club of the Ghanaian Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) organized a Christmas giveaways for kids in the Toronto Ghanaian community. The event which took place at the GCAO Hub, 65 Mayall Avenue in North York on Sunday, December 18, 2022 was sponsored by The Toronto Star Corporation. The Homework Club is devoted to teaching participants (mainly children between the ages of 6 years and 16 years) the Ghanaian Language-Twi and Culture as well as Mathematics every Sunday from 3 pm to 5 pm. It has an average participants of 15 children and 5 adults including 2 non-Ghanaians and 4 volunteers headed by Mr. Eyiah who is a veteran Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

The Christmas giveaways (boxes of items that included some mints, clothes and toys) event brought together about 20 students with the parents was supervised by Mary Akuamoah Boateng who is the VP1 of the GCAO.

Report By: Joe Kinglsey Eyiah (*Homework Club Principal*)

MODERN BATIK WINTER WORKSHOP



Four students of the Ghanaian Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) Homework Club were selected to do an advanced modern batik workshop this winter. The workshop which was online started in November, last year and ended in February, 2023. The four students involved were Theresa, Alexis, Edna and Emmanuel. David Kibuuka, a renowned modern batik artist formerly based in Canada instructed the students through zoom every weekend from Uganda where he is now residing. The students' creative works were photoshopped for final presentation by Ms. Lorena Andrade, a fashion designer/artist based in Toronto.

ONTARIO PREMIERE DOUG FORD VISITS GCAO HUB



Under the auspices of STEM learning, the Premier of Ontario visited the Youth Taking Flight organization supported by Michelle Minott, within the Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) alias Ghana Union HUB at 65 Mayall Avenue, North York. Michelle Minot welcomed the Premier and walked through a slides show highlighting the amazing work accomplished by the youth in STEM and drone flight technology.

The Premier commended the work being done at the HUB and encouraged young people to focus on STEM because of the huge potential for the 21st century and highly paid jobs in Ontario. The Premier joined the youth in the science LAB to showcase the amazing work done.



The Premier met the cross-section of the leaders of GCAO , among them Emmanuel Duodu (President of GCAO), and Mary Akuamoah Boateng (Vice President), who were on site to welcome the Premier. On a side conversation with the Premier and his team, GCAO leaders brought to their attention the Ghanaian-Canadian Heritage and Resource (GCHRC) project and the support needed for the project. GCAO was asked to follow up with the leaders on the project details.

Written By: Emmanuel Duodu



GOLDEN AGE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



December 6 came to standstill with our seniors' end of year party organized by the seniors' leadership committee. The purpose of this gathering was to bring Ghanaian-Canadian seniors in the community to come together to celebrate and engage with other seniors. This day brought over 70 seniors congregate at Manhya Hall from 2pm – 7pm to dine, play games, dance and share experiences. The Master of Ceremony, Anna Aidoo ushered the program with her silky voice, and followed with gospel music by DJ Vince. Our seniors danced and sang along waving their white handkerchief to celebrate, as it has been a while since they last gathered.

Many activities climax the event accompanied with good dancing display from our seniors. Thanks to our various donors for the event, Raffle tickets were given and winners went home with many goodies. Awards were presented to our seniors who participated in programs throughout the year.

Thank you to New Era Supermarket, Endless Possibilities, Dollar Haven, Central Market, Supreme Travels, Lotus Funeral & Cremation, Manhya & DJ Vince, Kotoka Catering, Paulina Grant, Esther & Rosemond (Decorators), I am here Foundation, and GCAO Vaccine Ambassadors, for their support towards the success of the Christmas Party.

Written By: Mary Akuamoah-Boateng



GCAO WOMEN'S WING EVENTS RECAP

Between January- March 2023, GCAO's Women's Wing hosted in-person events and online webinars such as Finance education & Empowerment with Ms. Mary May Hughes and the Co-founder of Mortgage Outlet; Keep Fit Program & Stress Management: zumba (a bi-weekly online program); Black History Month Celebration; Education related events; and Girls & Women Empowerment webinar. These, as well as future events, will always be determined by the needs of our community members, the necessity to provide information & resources, and empower our fellow Ghanaian women to improve their lives.

We value collaboration with members of our community and potential external partners, so these events were held with various stakeholders. For instance, the zumba event was hosted by our own Ms. Anna Adoo, the finance education and empowerment was facilitated by Ms Mary May Hughes and the Co-Founder of Mortgage Outlet. The Black history month event was co-hosted between the North York Women's Centre (NYWC) & GCAO's women's wing.

These events were well attended, both online and in-person. We have received anecdotes that community members find them informative, resourceful, and a great way to network with other professionals, find personal and professional mentors.

The Women's wing will continue to work under the leaders of the Ghanaian Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) to enrich the Ghanaian community.

Written By: Evelyn Boachie



 **GHANAIAN-CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO (GCAO)**
IN COLLABORATION WITH
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES AND LIVING A BALANCE LIFE INC.
HEALTH & WELLNESS
ZUMBA AND STRESS MANAGEMENT TALK
EVERY SECOND & LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
STARTING JANUARY 14, 2023 : 10AM - 12PM

JOIN US ON ZOOM
Meeting ID: 822 4843 1234
Passcode: 028199



YOUTH WING UPDATES

Developing programs and support with meaningful positive engagement for youth has many benefits. The Youth planning group that focuses on youth ages 18-24 held various activities throughout the year to address key issues faced by youth such as:

Exam De-Stress Fest

Recognizing that exam season was rapidly approaching for post-secondary students and acknowledging that the pressure to perform well in these exams was overwhelming and can affect mental health, they created a safe space for young people to decompress, relax, and communicate with others experiencing similar circumstances. Individuals were able to converse with their peers about exam season success strategies or simply rest if they so desired.

Sankofa Mmomudwan

This program was hosted on Instagram live where they highlighted Ghanaians in the community and had a live and brief chat about what they do and why they do what they do. The IG series was called “Sankofa Mmomudwan.” Sankofa Mmomudwan is a two-part meaning [1] ‘go back and get’ using the past to build the future and [2] unity and togetherness. The aim of this series is to go back to our roots collectively and come together as a united community in the diaspora.

Excellence in the Community

During the Black History Month, we invited youth and young people to keep reflecting on what comes next and whether recognizing the work of and amplifying the voices of our compatriots in the diaspora and the Black community at large stops after Black History Month finishes or if it should be celebrated beyond that. We want to amplify the voices of those in our community and celebrate achievement wherever possible.

Jump Start Your Journey

The aim of this program was to equip youth and young people with the skills and tools necessary to jumpstart their financial journeys now, rather than later and ultimately pave the way for them to understand what it takes to be financially literate in this time.





**GHANAIAN-CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
PRESENTS**



T **GHANAIAN-CANADIAN YOUTH** **TABLE TENNIS** **PROGRAM**

APRIL - JUNE 2023

Parents can sign up their children for this **FREE** program

LOCATION: 10 BELFIELD ROAD. ETOBICOKE

TIME: 3 - 6 PM (SUNDAYS)

TO REGISTER:

EMAIL: INFO@GCAOCANADA.ORG 

TEL: 647-895-5073 

- DRILLS
- LESSONS
- TRAINING
- PICK-UP GAMES
- TOURNAMENTS



SPONSORED BY:

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FOR BLACK
COMMUNITIES**

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GCAO LAUNCHES MEN'S WING GROUP

GCAO Men's Wing was launched on March 25, 2023, with the following objective and focus areas in mind.

Objective: To create a safe space where all Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaian men of all ages and generations can come together to discuss, learn, teach, mentor each other, and build community.

Focus Areas:

Mental Health and Complete Well-being: This will be achieved through regular programs via workshops from experts in the field of Mental Health, Therapy, Psychology, etc. Debunk myths and cultural practices around mental health, emotional vulnerability, and physical exercise. Furthermore, we will aim to create a resource hub where interested persons can access help at any time.

Financial Education (Investment, Life Insurance, Estate Planning, Taxes, Educational Funds, Business Tips): We hope to achieve this by bringing in Financial educators and creating a network of Ghanaian Canadian professionals to share their experiences and relate the information to a more cultural context for maximum grasp.

Passing Down Culture and Tradition to the Younger Generation: We hope to facilitate conversations that will uncover the reasons behind the disconnect between the older and younger generation. We hope to build a stronger bond through these conversations so that culture and tradition can be passed down and keep our Ghanaian languages, traditions, culture, and many more vibrant and alive.

Marriage & Relationships: We will explore how we can continue to build good marriages and relationships and find better ways to mitigate some of the challenges. We hope to frequently have joint sessions with the Women Wing to understand each other's perspective and work on a solution together.

Proactively stem gender violence: Educate men on the signs of gender violence and proactively address them.

Reported by: Emmanuel Duodu



Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAY (Spring Cleanup Project)

 DATE: MAY 27TH 2023

 TIME: 10AM - 12PM (est)

 LOCATION: CHALKFARM
PARK (2230 JANE ST.)

CONTACT: 905-903-9045 | 416-357-7237
EMAIL: INFO@GCAOCANADA.ORG

ORGANIZED BY



SUPPORTED BY



Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO)

PRESENTS

Fundraising Dinner & Dance

(Ghanaian-Canadian Heritage Center Project)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH 2023

TIME: 7PM - 2AM

TORONTO PEARSON CONVENTION CENTRE

(2638 Steeles Ave E. Brampton.ON)

- ✓ Admissions: \$170 (Early bird before August 31st)
- ✓ Regular Price: \$200 (After August 31st)
- ✓ Pairs: \$300

 For tickets, sponsorships and other information:

 647-718-0724 | 416-877-1794 | 905-903-9045

 info@gcaocanada.org | gcaocanada@gmail.com



Follow Us



@GCAOCANADA

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

GCAO offers supportive services and programs for the Ghanaian community within the GTA and beyond. Services include settlements/welfare related issues, newcomer, homework/after-school programs, seniors and women's programs.

We also provide support in the following areas: Translation/interpretation services and help with preparing government and other official applications. Our team is fluent in various Ghanaian languages including Twi, Fante, Ga, Hausa, Ewe, Dangbe. Information/referral services, including supportive, advocacy services /guardians.

Homework/After-School Programs

The Homework Club, one of GCAO's first programs, is an after-school program that is designed to provide elementary to high school students (aged 6 years to 18 years) support in completing their homework as well as developing other skills. The program is run by registered teachers, as well as retired teachers and community members who have experience working with children and youth.

For more information, contact education@gcaocanada.org

Youth/Young Adult Group

GCAO's Youth Wing oversees the initiatives for both the youth and young adult generations. Our mission 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.

For more information, contact youth@gcaocanada.org

Seniors Programs

The "Golden Agers" Seniors Group, was created to give the seniors in our community a space to learn and laugh, but also share knowledge and experiences with others. Our goal is to enable our aging population to remain vital, healthy, and connected to their community. We seek to enhance the lives of all seniors who need assistance to live safely and independently in their own homes.

If interested, contact seniors@gcaocanada.org or 647-202-2594.

Women Programs & Services

The Women's Wing is aimed at supporting Ghanaian women of all ages, working together to eradicate poverty, violence, lack of self-confidence, and foster creativity, cultural heritage, and leadership among women. The Women's Wing is committed to empowering women, thereby strengthening families and transforming our community and beyond.

For more information, contact women@gcaocanada.org

Health & Wellness

The Health Education Team offers a wide range of education and strategies to increase the lifespan among the community, as well as connecting various people to resources and support programs. This program is led by Ghanaian health professionals as well as partnerships with existing healthcare services that specialize in healthcare among Ghanaians.

If interested, contact health@gcaocanada.org or 647-202-2594

Welfare and Compassionate Group

Our mission is to listen, empathize, assess, and triage our members to the appropriate services, doing so in a culturally-sensitive and non-judgmental manner. We aim to serve as instruments of solace and relief to the Ghanaian community.

For more information and resources, contact welfare@gcaocanada.org

GCAO Youth Advisory and Action Council (GAYAC)

The purpose of this council is to develop strategies in partnership with Ghanaian youth and their families, to assist youth in need of support, and to advise the GCAO executives on current youth issues in the community.

It's core values and principles are predicated on the belief that Ghanaian youth (aged 13 to 29) are bestserved when they are surrounded by positive peer influences and able to develop strong, stable and positive relationships with adult role models.

If interested, contact Mr Duodu: president@gcaocanada.org

Ghanaian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Ghanaian Canadian Chamber of Commerce is to assemble and create a platform of Ghanaian professionals and business entrepreneurs across Canada, to collectively engage and address business and other public issues, that results in opportunities for success. The Chamber of Commerce plays an integral role in the economic growth and development in Ghana and Canada.

If interested, contact Mr Odoi Yemoh: gccc@gcaocanada.org | website: canadagcc.ca

Diaspora Engagement Think Tank

An anchor of GCAO that promotes critical analysis of policies and community challenges, advocating to support Ghanaian Canadians to meet the growing needs of different population demographics, residing in Canada or wishing to return to Ghana.

If interested in joining, contact Dr. Victor Awafo: info@gcaocanada.org




GHANAIAN-CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO


ONLINE LEARNING

JOIN OUR VIRTUAL HOMEWORK CLUB

Activities include motivational talk,
Mental math dealing with basic concepts
in math, Cultural and Language
Instruction (Twi), Fun Activities (online
physical activities)

**All students from
Kindergarten to
Grade 12 are
welcome**

 **EVERY SUNDAY**
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

To register, call any of the numbers below

 **647-283-3865 | 647-456-6675**
416-316-0244 | 705-794-8154

WWW.GCAOCANADA.ORG

 **@gcaocanada** 

 **gcaocanada@gmail.com**

GCAO HOLDS A SUCCESSFUL COUNCIL MEETING

Members of the Ghanaian Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO) Council attended a crucial council meeting on Saturday, April 16, 2023 at the GCAO Hub, 65 Mayall Avenue in Toronto.

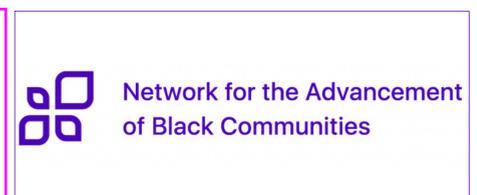
The meeting which was called by the Executives of the GCAO reviewed the constitutional role of the GCAO Council and its way forward to ensure grassroots participation of Ghanaians in Ontario for the effective community development. During the discussion Mr. Emmanuel Duodu, the Executive President of GCAO referred to the Council as the main parliament for GCAO and stressed that the Council ought to be constituted properly with its own leadership.

An interim committee of 5 distinguished members was appointed at the meeting to plan for an effective Council and to meet with the Executive to reveal the way forward for the Council.

Written By: Joe Kingsley Eyiah



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS



**THANK YOU FOR READING THE FALL/SPRING 2023 EDITION
OF OUR NEWSLETTER. PLEASE SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING
LIST FOR MORE NEWS AND UPDATES**

This Fall/Spring 2023 Edition of this newsletter is published by Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO).

Comments, articles & suggestions should be directed to the editors.

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