

KUKATONNOH, WE ARE 1

Volume 1, Issue 4

March 2015

A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

This edition of Kukatonnoh is dedicated to dreams which in my humble opinion, is one of the most powerful tools one can possess.

A dream can be defined as an aspiration or a goal. Dreams may guide us when making vital decisions in our personal, family and education decisions. We tend to make choices that will take us one step closer to the material possessions of our dreams, to our dream jobs, to an ideal mate and to the families that some may dream of from time to time.

But what happens when we make a decision in error that thrusts us off the yellow brick road that leads to our ideal destinies? Should we lie there in despair thinking about what could have been or do we find a way to stand again, collect our thoughts and begin searching for the path that takes us back to our dreams.

We are more likely to make poor decisions in our youth. There are some youths who made a decision to not take advantage of education opportunities they were given. Here at MCFS, we do not believe that this decision should prevent these youths from having an opportunity to refocus on their dreams.

This is one of the reasons we decided to implement our Preparing Older Youths for Success (POYS) program.

You know all those things you've always wanted to do? You should go Do THEM.

To give youths a second chance at an education that will equip them with the skills they need to pursue their dreams.

In this edition you will read about a former MCFS youth who is on his way to medical school and current MCFS youths who are making great strides in our POYS program.

If you know a youth or were a youth who chose a path that detoured you from your dreams, this edition is for you. It is never too late to pursue your dreams. There is never a positive ambition that is unattainable. You can live your dream but there is a price. It will cost you focus, consistency, determination and hard work. Are you ready to pay the cost? MCFS is ready to invest, you are worth it.

-Lonnese M. Bodison

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Highlights:

- New Outreach & Job Specialist at MCFS
- Our Community Partners
- New POYS Program Components
- United Soccer Club Sponsorship Opportunities Available

CALLING ALL OLDER YOUTH

MCFS is seeking older youths between the ages of 18 to 21 for its Preparing Older Youths For Success Program (POYS).

Youths will receive individualized instruction in preparation for the GED exam.

Participants can also receive assistance with pursuing higher education, career development and job readiness skills.

****TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED****

Please contact Laraamond Nyonton at 484-461-8660 for more information.



AN OVERVIEW OF PREPARING OLDER YOUTHS FOR SUCCESS (POYS)

The Preparing Older Youth for Success (POYS) Program started over a decade ago under MCFS' Division of Education headed by Mr. Gore Kamara, the Director of Adult Education.

POYS provides GED Instruction for older youths ages 18 to 21 in Delaware County and prepares them to pass the Pennsylvania State General Education Development exam. POYS works with participants to improve literacy levels (minimum of one level), provides job readiness support; opportunities for youths to become certified in Customer Service and/or Home Health Care. Social supports/counseling is available. A new component has been added to the program, temporary subsidized employment opportunities.

POYS participants are enrolled on a rolling basis. Each participant receives up to 1 year of personalized instruction and training and one year of support after completing the program. During enrollment, participants receive assistance in planning and preparing for their long term education, personal and career goals. Light meals and transportation assistance is provided for the duration of program enrollment.

Secondary education is encouraged. Participants receive support if they wish to further their educations at a college or trade school. Participants can become certified in Customer Service.

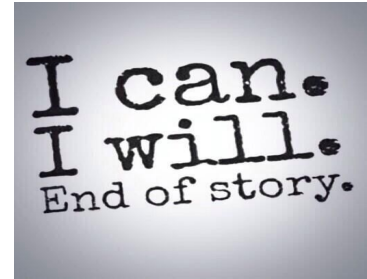
The certification class gives participants an opportunity to develop and build on

their existing customer service skills. They also review proper office behavior and how to interact with colleagues, skills that are beneficial in any career field. Job readiness training is available through POYS. Participants receive support in the areas of resume' writing, job interviewing skills, job search techniques and obtaining professional attire.

Funding for the POYS program is provided through the Delaware County Workforce Investment Board. A recent donation from the United Way allowed us to increase our capacity and serve more youths through the POYS program. Our increased capacity has been instrumental in increasing enrollment rates and implementing a new critical program component, subsidized employment.

Subsidized employment involves partnering with some local businesses providing a 30 day employment opportunity to POYS participants. MCFS subsidizes the participant's salary and insurance (when applicable). Weekly monitoring is done to ensure the participant is fulfilling their work obligations.

At the end of the trial period, the employer provides feedback on the participant's performance and has the option of offering him/her a permanent position within their company. To date, two jobs have been created through



this initiative.

For the first time in POYS program history, we have an Outreach & Job Specialist, Mr. Laraamond Nyonton (see page 3 for more information on Mr. Nyonton).

POYS is always looking for youths who are ready to pursue their education and career goals. Program eligibility is contingent on the following:

- Must be between the ages of 18 to 21
- Low Income
- Pregnant or Parenting
- Disability
- Offenders
- Homeless, Runaway or Foster Care

If you would like to enroll in POYS or are a business interested in offering an opportunity to our participants, please contact Laraamond Nyonton at 484-461-8660.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thank you to the local business owners who offered subsidized employment to our POYS participants

Tech to Go Incorporated, Upper Darby
Shabab Electronics, Upper Darby



Thank you to the following social service agencies/professionals for referring youths to our POYS program

Delaware County Workforce Investment Board, Family Management Center, Chester Children Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Adult Probation & Parole

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR POYS PARTICIPANTS

We would like to acknowledge the participants in our Preparing Older Youths for Success (POYS) Program who have earned their National Retail Foundation Customer Service Credential.

Congratulations to the following participants:

- Peter Flomo
- Guillermo Jaredes
- Malik Harris
- Lawrence Rodgers
- Raheem Harris
- Daeyan Beopleue



Peter Flomo
POYS Participant

OUTREACH & JOB SPECIALIST JOINS MCFS' POYS PROGRAM

In the spring of 2014, Laraamand Nyonton decided to attend a meeting organized by the Liberian Association of Pennsylvania (LAP). This decision would impact the trajectory of his career.

MCFS' Director Portia Kamara, who served as a co-chair of LAP 2014 Independence Day Planning Committee, was a presenter at this event. Mr. Nyonton listened as Mrs. Kamara shared the range of services offered at MCFS and the work that the agency does with immigrant families and the surrounding community. He was introduced to Mrs. Kamara by Mr. Don Dennis, President of the Liberian Association of PA. This meeting led to Mr. Nyonton volunteering at MCFS with the Preparing Older Youths for Success (POYS) program. Within two months, he was hired by MCFS in a brand new position as an Outreach & Job Specialist for the POYS program.

The POYS program, under the direction of Mr. Gore Kamara, works with youths ages 18 to 21. Participants have the opportunity to receive personalized instruction in preparation for the GED exam; earn certifications in customer service and/or home care; receive job readiness support; goal planning assistance; social support; guidance in pursuing college or trade school and opportunities for subsidized job placement. Participants receive light meals and transportation assistance.

Mr. Nyonton's personal and educational background has been extremely

beneficial to MCFS. Mr. Nyonton is a proud Liberian who earned his Bachelors Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from the African Methodist Episcopal University in Monrovia. He has Certifications in effective Communication, Customer Service & Human Relationships and Strategic Quality Planning.

Mr. Nyonton earned his Certifications through a collaborative effort between his home country and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IFC's goal is to strengthen the middle class. This is accomplished by providing Liberian Business owners with information on how to develop and sustain their businesses.

Compassion, values, hard work and discipline are attributes instilled in Mr. Nyonton by his parents. His home and community is where he experienced a sense of belong and a connection to his fellow Liberians. His current passion for empowering communities is rooted in his upbringing and is one of the most valuable attributes he brings to the MCFS family.

Mr. Nyonton has used his knowledge of business to provide new ideas on how to increase POYS enrollment. He has also been instrumental in implementing new services for the participants in our POYS program.

Mr. Nyonton has only been at MCFS for a few months and has already made a lasting impact. He has establishing new

partnerships with social service agencies in Delaware County, Chester County and parts of Philadelphia County which has contributed to increased enrollment in the POYS program. He has been successful in getting participants placed at subsidized jobs (paid internships) at local businesses which ultimately benefits residents as well as our participants. All of these accomplishments and he has just started in his position.

Ultimately, Mr. Nyonton would like to return to Liberia to finish the work he started during his affiliation with the IFC. He would like to pursue his MBA with a concentration in Finance and become an Investment Planner & Financial Advisor. His supreme goal is to be an inspiration in the lives of those who come across him. He would like others to look at his life and see he is a regular person who experiences many emotions but can see through his situations and fight his way out and continue on the path to achieving his goals. Yes Mr. Nyonton, you are a regular person, but you have the heart of a superhero.



Laraamond Nyonton at MCFS

THANK YOU WAWA



The WAWA located at 7720 West Chester Pike in Upper Darby has supported MCFS' POYS program for over a year through its hunger relief program, Second Harvest.

Our local WAWA regularly donates breakfast and lunch items to MCFS. These donations allows us to provide breakfast and/or lunch to our POYS participants, many of

whom have financial hardships that may make meal costs during program hours burdensome.

Studies have shown that a student's concentration levels are higher when they have proper nourishment. This is why school breakfast and lunch programs are instrumental to a student's success.

We are grateful to WAWA for choosing to support MCFS over the years. Their generosity has contributed greatly to the success of the Preparing Older Youths for Success Program (POYS).

Thank you WAWA!!!

HELP FULFILL M.D. DREAMS FOR A FORMER MCFS YOUTH

My name is Jack Nutugah and I have been accepted to medical school at the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine and would like your support to make my dream of becoming a physician a reality.

I traveled an unconventional journey to get into medical school. Thirteen years ago, I immigrated here from Ghana and settled in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, where I took English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and eventually graduated from Upper Darby High School with honors.

My success in high school and beyond started with the support of an Upper Darby Police Officer who was known to many immigrant youth in the community as, Officer Dave. Officer Dave introduced me to the Multicultural Community Family Services where I became involved in the weekly immigrant youth counseling support group and was a member of the youth soccer team which was composed of other first generation immigration youth.



My lack of a traditional familial support system created a resilience and the drive to pursue higher education. I have always thought of education as an investment. I grew up with a single mother who returned to Ghana due to her health condition before I completed my degree at the University of Pittsburgh. After my mother left, I worked multiple jobs to support myself and my mother. My determination helped me graduate in 2011 with a Bachelors Degree in English Writing and a Chemistry minor.

My determination and persistence has earned me admission to American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine. With your support, I hope to attain my dream of becoming a physician and leader in the movement to eradicate health-care disparity.

I am passionate about working with low-income communities, medically underserved population and those with unusual conditions that serve as a barrier to accessing personal health services. In addition, it is my intent to work with the WHO (World Health Organization) to combat global health-care issues by working to improve the health care infrastructure in developing countries.

As a student with a socio-economic disadvantage background, I have persevered in the face of adversity. I believe I can be of service to other youths with similar situations. Thus, it is my long-term goal to work with youth to inspire and mentor them to never give up working on their dreams despite life's difficulties.

I will also be applying for scholarships and federal aid to cover part of my tuition. All of your sponsorship will go towards my tuition and room and board expenses estimated at \$20,000 per semester. If you would like to sponsor me, you can visit my funding page at <http://www.gofundme.com/o017ek>.

If you would like to read more about me and my experiences, please visit my website at www.Jacknutugah.wordpress.com.

I realize that I am asking you to invest in someone who is a stranger to you. If you decide to take this journey with me, I will be sharing my milestones with you on my funding page where I will keep you updated on my academic progress. Please consider making a donation. Thank you for listening. - Jack Nutugah



MCFS is proud of Jack Nutugah's personal and academic achievements. We are honored to have worked with Jack as a youth. His testimony confirms what we here at MCFS believe, sometimes all a youth needs is some support and guidance in their times of trouble to change the trajectory of their lives.

MCFS has donated \$250 to Jack. We hope that you will join us in supporting Jack in his new endeavor.

CONGRATULATIONS JACK, future M.D.!!



COMMUNITY EVENTS

March 26, 2015 through May 8 11:30am to 2:00pm

Parents Involved Network of Delaware County Presents "Parents Empowerment Through Advocacy & Knowledge"

Location—Ichiban Buffet 825 Baltimore Pike, Springfield, PA (light meal & childcare stipend provided)

FREE 8 week educational workshop for parents/caregivers who want to learn how to become their child's best advocate with systems that serve children/adolescents in the community. For more information, contact Marylou Shirey 267-507-3796 or email mshirey@mhasp.org

March 30, 2015 through April 3, 2015

FREE Dental Care available through Children's Access Dental Program for youths ages 0 to 18 years. Services available for children who do not have insurance or who have not been seen by a dentist in over six months.

To schedule an appointment, call PCCY at 215-563-5848 x 32.

March 30, 2015 8:30am to 11:00am

Community Conversations on Emergency Preparedness

Location—Delaware County Intermediate Unit, 200 Yale Avenue, Room 172 Morton, PA

Learn about the emergency response system in Delaware County. For more information contact Robyn Slater at 610-344-5022

March 31, 2015 5:00pm to 10:00pm

Prysm Youth Center's Annual Give 20% Fundraiser

Location—The Iron Hill Brewery 30 E. State Street, Media, PA 20% of your food order will be donated to Prysm Youth Center.

Please contact Daniel Farley at 610-818-7005 to receive fundraising coupons for this event.

March 31, 2015 2:45pm to 4:15pm

The Elder's Circle—Support group for seniors age 60 and above

MCFS' Community Room, 7016 Terminal Square, Upper Darby, PA

*Transportation assistance available

April 18, 2015 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Spring Festival

Location—Cardington Park 6800 Samson Street (Corner of Heather & Samson Street)

Please join us for a day of face painting and games. Juice, Soda and Coffee will be available for purchase

April 2, 2015 1:30pm to 3:30pm

World Autism Day

Location—Community Hospital SE Conference Room, 1st Floor, 2600 W. 9th Street, Chester, PA

Come out to learn about Autism and other developmental disABILITIES through activities and resources.

Refreshments will be provided. For more information, call 610-497-7344

May 30, 2015 10:00a to 2:00pm

Keys to Homeownership - Free Workshop to get you ready for path to homeownership

Location—Upper Darby Municipal Library 501 Bywood Avenue, Upper Darby, PA 19082

Education Opportunity

The Walden School in Media, PA is offering tuition assistance through the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program. The Walden School educates children from preschool through eighth grade. For more information about The Walden School, please visit their website at www.thewaldenschool.org. For information about tuition assistance, please contact Kathy Swierczek at 610-892-8000 or send an email to info@thewaldenschool.org

In an effort to keep you updated on community events/news, we will post community events frequently on our Facebook page. Please like the Multicultural Community Family Service page on FB to stay updated.

**** If you would like your organization's event published in our newsletter or on our FB page, please email your request to multicultural@mcfsorg.com**

****Check out our new website****



Multicultural Community
Family Services, Inc.
7016 Terminal Square
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Upper Darby, PA 19082
Phone: 484-461-8660
Fax: 484-461-8678
multicultural@mcsf.org.com



Angie's list. |

MISSION Statement: The mission of the Multicultural Community Family Services, Inc. is to empower individuals, children, youth and families to gain a greater capacity to succeed in their communities.

MCFS fulfills its Vision and Mission Statements by providing services to over 1,000 Immigrants, Refugees and U.S. born citizens per year through its programs.

MCFS Programs & Services

Division of Education & Job Readiness

Preparing Older Youths For Success (POYS)
English as Second Language (ESL)
Citizenship Classes

Community Outreach Division

United Soccer Club
Building Bridges Cultural Ambassadors
The Elder's Circle—began on March 10, 2015
Music Lessons (In Development)

Division of Home & Community Based Services

Attentive Home Care (AHC)

- Approved to provide services for the following waivers: Aging, COMMCARE, Independence, OBRA

- Private Pay Accepted

AHC provides services in Delaware, Philadelphia, Chester & parts of Bucks County.

For more information on Attentive Home Care (AHC) call 484-461-4174

Multicultural United Soccer Club 2015 Sponsorship Program



Please check the box below for the Sponsorship Package that you are interested in purchasing. Please note that all Sponsorship donations are TAX DEDUCTIBLE as Multicultural Community Family Services is a registered non-profit organization.

The deadline for any Sponsorship option including a logo on a Team Jersey is July 31, 2015

Platinum Level—\$500

TWO FULL COLOR 4x4 banners with your logo, one at Marshall Road Field and one at Cardington Field in Upper Darby during our fall season (seen by all home and visiting teams/families as well as those visiting the park) PLUS 9' Sponsor Business Logo on the jersey of one team, an 8 x 10 Commemorative Team Plaque (including photo) to display in your place of business and Sponsor Business Logo proudly displayed on our Website and Facebook Page.

Gold Level—\$400

Your choice of EITHER 1) TWO FULL COLOR 4x4 banners with your logo, one at Marshall Road Field and at Cardington Field in Upper Darby during our fall season (seen by all home and visiting teams/families as well as those visiting the park) OR 2) ONE FULL COLOR 4x4 banner with your logo PLUS 9' Sponsor Business Logo on the jerseys of one team. Also included with either option is an 8 x 10 Commemorative Plaque (including photo) to display in your place of business and Sponsor Business Logo proudly displayed on our Website and Facebook Page.

Silver Level—\$300

ONE FULL COLOR 4x4 banner with your logo hung at either Marshall Road Field and at Cardington Field in Upper Darby during our fall season (seen by all home and visiting teams/families as well as those visiting the park) plus an 8x10 Commemorative Plaque (including photo) to display in your place of business and Sponsor Business Logo proudly displayed on our Website and Facebook Page.

Bronze Level—\$200

9' Sponsor Business Logo on the jersey of each team member, an 8x10 Commemorative Team Plaque (including photo) to display in your place of business and Sponsor Business Logo proudly displayed on our Website and Facebook Page.

Player Scholarship—\$100

Provide the opportunity for one qualified low-income youth to participate in MUSC's soccer program

If you have any questions or would like to sponsor MUSC in one of the options listed or in any other capacity, please contact Club Administrator, Jacob Collins at 484-461-8660 or by email jcollins@mcsf.org or musc@mcsf.org