

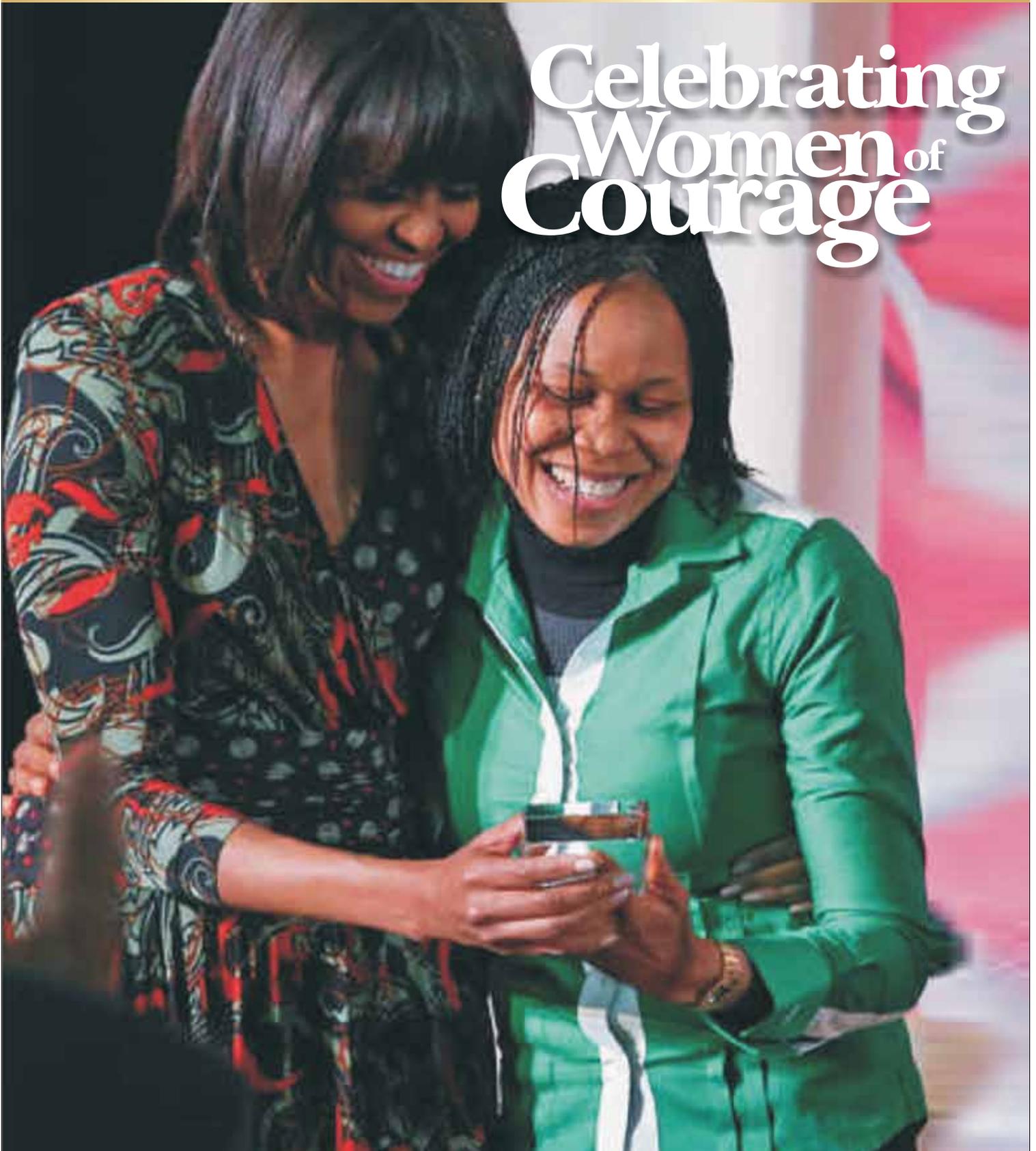
CROSSROADS

March/April 2013 Special Edition

Vol. 21
Number 4

A Newsletter of the U.S. Mission in Nigeria

Celebrating Women of Courage



Celebrating Black History Month



To celebrate Black History Month, the U.S. Mission in Nigeria hosted two talented American performers -- “YungChris” Thomas and James “Cricket” Colter -- who taught Hip-Hop dance and master classes to several youths and school students in primary and tertiary institutions including students of Nasarawa State University, El-Amin International School, American International School and Abuja Children Center, Karu, Abuja.

Each February, Black History Month honors the daily struggle, hope, and triumph of millions of American citizens over the most challenging obstacles. *(Photo: top, pupils of El-Amin International School and participants at the grand performance at the Rockview Hotel, Abuja, below).*





Terence P. McCulley
U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria

of *CROSSROADS* highlights such struggles and is dedicated to women who have shown uncommon courage in the face of adversity.

With a single moment, and with the simplest of gestures, some of these women have helped change the world. Rosa Parks defied injustice by refusing to give up her seat. Josephine Okei-Odumakin remains a fearless, fiery champion of democracy and human rights, and Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani girl shot by extremists, is a heroine for simply wanting to go to school. All of these women fall under this group of courageous women. This is our Women History Month special.

According to the World Economic Forum, countries where men and

women are closer to enjoying equal rights are far more economically competitive than those where the gender gap has left women and girls with limited or no access to medical care, education, elected office, and the marketplace. This is why the United States believes gender equality is critical to our shared goals of prosperity, stability, and peace. No country can get ahead if it leaves half of its people behind.

Other stories in this edition include the opening of an American Corner in Enugu, South-East of Nigeria, and a new clinic and maternity center for the Tokbet community through the Ambassador's Self-Help program. Each story is compelling. Enjoy!

Ambassador Terence P. McCulley

Dear *CROSSROADS* Readers: The great abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglas once said "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." This edition

CROSSROADS

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

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Inside This Issue

Celebrating a Woman of Courage	4
Josephine Odumakin: A Fearless, Fiery Champion	6
No One Should Live in Fear of Violence.....	7
Rosa Parks: Slight in Stature, Mighty in Courage	8
Human Rights Ambassadors	10
Now Open Tokbet Clinic	12
American Corner Enugu Opens	14
Eko Atlantic Project Breaks Ground	16
Women's Rights are Human Rights	17
American Dance Experts Thrill Abuja Audience.....	19
EducationUSA and Information Resources	Backpage



Top: Women's rights advocate Dr. Josephine Obiajulu Odumakin (with mic), leading a protest on Women Arise. Below: Joe, (right), shares the stage with other leaders at the Kill Corruption campaign.



Celebrating a Woman of Courage

By Joke Omotunde

She stood taller than her height as she walked down the aisle to receive her award, standing on the same podium with Secretary John Kerry and First Lady

Michelle Obama. Who wouldn't be? Dr. Josephine Obiajulu Odumakin, President of Campaign for Democracy (CD) of Nigeria, is the first Nigerian woman to receive this prestigious award – the U.S. Secretary of State's International

First Sergeant, Afghan National Interdiction Unit (Afghanistan)
Samira Ibrahim, Coordinator, Know Your Rights (Egypt)
Julieta Castellanos, Rector, National Autonomous University of Honduras (Honduras)

Women of Courage Award, which annually recognizes women from around the globe. These are women who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women's rights and empowerment, often at great personal risk.

On Friday, March 8, Secretary John Kerry along with First Lady Michelle Obama honored ten extraordinary women with the "Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award" at a ceremony in the Dean Acheson Auditorium of the U.S. Department of State. Since the inception of this award in 2007, the Department of State has honored 67 women from 45 different countries. Dr. Odumakin of Nigeria joined nine other remarkable women from across the world to receive the 2013 awards. These women have shown leadership, courage, resourcefulness, and willingness to sacrifice for others, especially for the rights and empowerment of women and girls. The award recipients are:

Malalai Bahaduri,

Elena Milashina, journalist, human rights activist (Russia)

Fartuun Adan, Executive Director, Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre (Somalia),

Tsering Woesser (Wei Se), Tibetan author, poet, blogger (China),

Razan Zeitunah, human rights lawyer and Founder, Local Coordination Committees (Syria),

Ta Phong Tan, blogger (Vietnam), Nirbhaya “Fearless,” champion for justice (India).

The honorees began their visit to the United States in Pittsburgh, where they participated in a press forum at Chatham University on March 4, as well as meetings with organizations such as the Women and Girls Foundation and Gwen’s Girls. According to Dr. Odumakin, the recipients learned much from their meetings and discussions with the various Department of State and White House officials, Members of

Congress, NGO leaders, Foundations and Members of Congress that welcomed them. Additionally, they were at Women and Girl’s Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania where they met Ms. Jui Joshi, Director of Philanthropy, Ms. Rona Nesbit Executive Vice President, and Ms. Judy Ruskowski where they discussed, “The impact of NGO’s working to empower young women

and encourage them to engage in the political process.”

Other places visited include:

- Chatham University, Pittsburgh, where women are taught to speak up and stand up for their rights.

- University of Pittsburgh Law School where they discussed women’s issues like the pregnancy discriminatory act, parenting and a lot of other issues like equal rights to equal pay for women.

for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Ann Stock told the award recipients “the best protection anyone can have is exceptional courage.” She affirmed the U.S. Government will continue to encourage the recipients in their struggle to empower girls and women. Ms. Stock advised the recipients to use their wealth of experience garnered at all these meetings and places visited during the award ceremony to empower more and more girls and women in their home countries.

Following the award ceremony,



Women of Courage Award: Standing from left to right, Mrs. Teresa Heinz Kerry, First Lady Michelle Obama, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, and U.S. Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman pose for a photo with the 2013 International Women of Courage Award Winners, including left to right, Second Lieutenant Malalai Bahaduri of Afghanistan, Dr. Josephine Obiajulu Odumakin of Nigeria, Elena Milashina of Russia, Fartuun Adan of Somalia, and Julieta Castellanos of Honduras, at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., on March 8, 2013

- Gwen’s Girls Inc., also in Pittsburgh where they discussed the empowering effect on young women and meeting their gender specific needs.

- International Museum of Women
- Various government security agencies and international human rights organizations
- U.S. Assistant Secretary of State

the honorees travelled separately to cities across the United States to engage with American people through an International Visitor Leadership Program. They visited Indianapolis, Jackson Hole, Portland, San Francisco, and Tampa. The women then reconvened in San Diego to reflect on their visit and to discuss ways to work together to improve the lives of women and girls around the world. ❖

Josephine Okei-Odumakin: A Fearless, Fiery Champion of Democracy and Human Rights

Dr. Joe Okei-Odumakin traversed courageously where brave men fear to tread. She is consistent not minding the hazards to her person in a society where critical voices are loathed by a seemingly unjust system which rewards the crooked.

Dr. Joe was born in Zaria on July 4, she grew up in Ilorin and started her schooling at St. Barnabas Primary School, Ilorin where she obtained the first school leaving certificate. She thereafter moved to Queen Elizabeth Secondary School, Ilorin where she passed her West Africa School Certificate. She pursued her A' levels at the School of Basic Studies, Kwara State Polytechnic and proceeded to the University of Ilorin where she got a BA.ED English and Education in 1987. She returned to the same university and bagged her M. Ed in Guidance and counselling and her Ph. D (History and Policy of Education) in 1996.

Dr. Joe Okei-Odumakin has over 25 years experience in human rights work in Nigeria. She cut her teeth in activism as the Secretary of Women in Nigeria (WIN), Kwara State from 1988 – 1991 and the Coordinator of Women in Nigeria (WIN), Kwara State branch 1991 – 1996; Chairperson, Rethink Nigeria (1987 – 1992) and Chairperson, Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, Kwara State branch (1990 – 1996). Her foray into human rights activism was recognized



Dr Joe Okei-Odumakin - President, Campaign for Democracy, (left), at one of the Save Nigeria Group protests over the withdrawal of Fuel subsidy.

nationally at a period former Head of State and military President Ibrahim Babangida's dictatorship was baring its fangs and locking up critical and opposition voices in the society.

Three significant occasions stand out as landmarks in the course of Dr. Odumakin's march to this award:

- Dr. Odumakin along with others in the Campaign for Democracy and several other human rights groups fought the military head of state, Ibrahim Babangida to forcefully step aside and retire from office in 1993. This followed his seemingly unilateral decision to annul an internationally acclaimed 1993 general election won by late M.K.O. Abiola. A coalition of human rights activists was formed named the National Democratic

Coalition (NADECO) on May 15, 1994 made up of Nigerian democrats, who called on the then military head of government, Sani Abacha to step down in favor of the winner of that election. Dr. Odumakin was always at the fore front of every protest march and campaigns against this military dictatorship. She became one of the targets of the administration as she was arrested and detained for not less than seventeen times at different locations including Division B Police Station Ilorin; Police Headquarters Ilorin; SSS Headquarters Ilorin; SSS HQ Maitama Abuja; Panti Police Station Lagos; Kirikiri Prisons in Lagos; and Alagbon Close in Lagos.

- More recently, in 2010, Dr. Odumakin joined another group, The Save Nigeria Group (SNG) which protested the long absence

of former President Musa Yar'Adua from office without handing over to his vice, then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. Following the series of protests, President Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as acting president before the demise of Yar'Adua.

- In 2012 the same Save Nigeria Group which Dr. Odumakin and the likes are members fought the Federal Government of President Goodluck Jonathan to a standstill to reverse the decision of the Federal Government to remove oil subsidy. For a whole week, the group was resuming at a park protesting until the total reverse of the decision was taken.
- On other occasions, Dr. Odumakin and her group commemorated the oil subsidy street revolt with another this time, against the culture of corruption in the country.
- In all these, Dr. Odumakin's

spirit was never daunted.

She became the Assistant General Secretary of Campaign for Democracy in 1994. She was the General Secretary of the body from March 1996 – July 29, 2006 (10 years) and became the President of the same organization in July 29, 2006. She is also the Executive Director of the Institute of Human Rights and Democratic Studies, the President of Women Arise for Change Initiative; Chairman, Task Force of the Citizen Forum, Spokesperson, Coalition of Civil Society Organizations and President, Centre for Participatory Democracy (CPD).

She has received several awards at the national and international levels including the “Hero of Democracy and Good Governance”, “The Defender of Women’s Rights”, “Icon of Democracy”, “Advocate for Good Governance”, “Role Model of

the Year”. “Champion of Women Empowerment,” and “Beacon of Hope Award.”

Two prominent international personalities, Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka described her as “a tireless fighter whose frail bearing, bellies an inner strength and resilience purpose, a veteran of affirmative marches, of crude arrests and detentions, baton charges and tear gas who have lent luster to the struggle for justice and human dignity, who remain an inspiration of men and women, old and young”.

And at the celebration of Ambassador Walter Carrington's 80th birthday commemoration in Lagos, the Ambassador in recognition of her efforts in sustaining democracy in Nigeria described her as “a fearless, fiery champion of democracy and human rights.” ❖

No One Should Have to Live in Fear of Violence

On March 7, President Obama signed a bill that both strengthened and reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The Act ensures victims and survivors can continue to be provided the vital resources they deserve. Also, teens and young adults now have better access to prevention and intervention programs that will help break the cycle of violence. Thanks to this bipartisan agreement, thousands of women and men across the United States who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking will be able to access resources they need in their communities to help heal from their trauma. In addition, thousands of law enforcement officers will be



President Barack Obama signs the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013,(VAWA).

better equipped to stop violence before it starts, and respond to calls of help when they are needed.

“No one should have to live

in fear of violence, especially in her home, and VAWA affirms that belief,” said President Obama. ❖

ROSA PARKS: *Slight in Stature, Mighty in Courage*

The National Statuary Hall inside the U.S. Capitol was once the meeting place of the House of Representatives. Now it's home to a collection of statues and monuments -- two from each state -- representing some of the defining figures in America's history. Below are excerpts of President Obama's remarks at the dedication of a statue honoring Rosa Parks.

“...Today, we celebrate a seamstress, slight in stature but mighty in courage. She defied the odds, and she defied injustice. She lived a life of activism, but also a life of dignity and grace. And in a single moment, with the simplest of gestures, she helped change America -- and change the world.

Rosa Parks held no elected office. She possessed no fortune; lived her life far from the formal seats of power. And yet today, she takes her rightful place among those who've shaped this nation's course. I thank all those persons, in particular the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, both past and present, for making this moment possible.

A childhood friend once said about Mrs. Parks, “Nobody ever bossed Rosa around and got away with it.” That's what an Alabama driver learned on December 1, 1955. Twelve years earlier, he had kicked Mrs. Parks off his bus simply because she entered through the front door when the back door was too crowded. He grabbed her sleeve and he pushed her off the bus. It made her mad enough, she would recall that she avoided riding his bus for a while.

And when they met again that winter evening in 1955, Rosa Parks would not be pushed. When the driver got up from his seat to insist that she give up hers, she would not be pushed. When he threatened to have her arrested, she simply replied, “You may do that.”



President Barack Obama touches the Rosa Parks statue after the unveiling during a ceremony in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Feb. 27, 2013. Helping with the unveiling, were, from left: Sheila Keys, niece of Rosa Parks; Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev.; House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio; House Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.; Assistant Democratic Leader Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C.; and Elaine Eason Keys.

And he did.

A few days later, Rosa Parks challenged her arrest. A little-known pastor, new to town and only 26 years old, stood with her -- a man named Martin Luther King, Jr. So did thousands of Montgomery, Alabama commuters. They began a boycott -- teachers and laborers, clergy and domestics, through rain and cold and sweltering heat, day after day, week after week, month after month, walking miles if they had to, arranging carpools where they could, not thinking about the blisters on their feet, the weariness after a full day of work -- walking for respect, walking for freedom, driven by a solemn

determination to affirm their God-given dignity.

Three hundred and eighty-five days after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, the boycott ended. Black men and women and children re-boarded the buses of Montgomery, newly desegregated, and sat in whatever seat happen to be open. And with that victory, the entire edifice of segregation, like the ancient walls of Jericho, began to slowly come tumbling down.

It's been often remarked that Rosa Parks's activism didn't begin on that bus. Long before she made headlines,

she had stood up for freedom, stood up for equality -- fighting for voting rights, rallying against discrimination in the criminal justice system, serving in the local chapter of the NAACP. Her quiet leadership would continue long after she became an icon of the civil rights movement, working with Congressman Conyers to find homes for the homeless, preparing disadvantaged youth for a path to success, striving each day to right some wrong somewhere in this world.

And yet our minds fasten on that single moment on the bus -- Ms. Parks alone in that seat, clutching her purse, staring out a window, waiting to be arrested. That moment tells us something about how change happens, or doesn't happen; the choices we make, or don't make. "For now we see through a glass, darkly," Scripture says, and it's true. Whether out of inertia or selfishness, whether out of fear or a simple lack of moral imagination, we so often spend our lives as if in a fog, accepting injustice, rationalizing inequity, tolerating the intolerable.

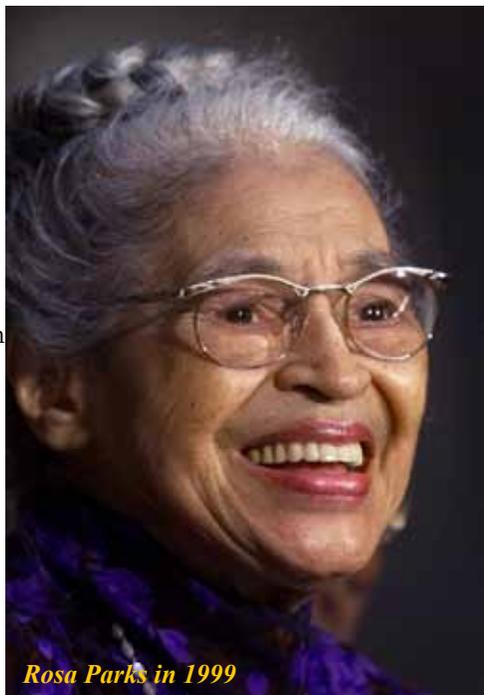
Like the bus driver, but also like the passengers on the bus, we see the way things are -- children hungry in a land of plenty, entire neighborhoods ravaged by violence, families hobbled by job loss or illness -- and we make excuses for inaction, and we say to ourselves, that's not my responsibility, there's nothing I can do.

Rosa Parks tell us there's always



President Barack Obama sits on the famed Rosa Parks bus at the Henry Ford Museum following an event in Dearborn, Mich., April 18, 2012. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

something we can do. She tells us that we all have responsibilities, to ourselves and to one another. She reminds us that this is how change happens -- not mainly through the exploits of the famous and the powerful, but through the countless acts of often anonymous courage and kindness and fellow feeling and responsibility that continually, stubbornly, expand our conception of justice -- our conception of what is possible.



Rosa Parks in 1999

Rosa Parks's singular act of disobedience launched a movement. The tired feet of those who walked the dusty roads of Montgomery helped

a nation see that to which it had once been blind. It is because of these men and women that I stand here today. It is because of them that our children grow up in a land more free and more fair; a land truer to its founding creed.

And that is why this statue belongs in this hall -- to remind us, no matter how humble or lofty our positions, just what it is that leadership requires; just what it is that citizenship requires. Rosa Parks would have turned 100 years old this month. We do well by placing a statue of her here. But we can do no greater honor to her memory than to carry forward the power of her principle and a courage born of conviction. ❖

Editor's Note: Rosa Parks is also named after the U.S. Embassy EducationUSA and the Information Resource Center in Abuja.



Megan Ahearn, U.S. Embassy Political Officer, (right), coordinating discussion on Human Rights with students from secondary schools in Abuja.

Human Rights Ambassadors

By **Bella Anne Ndubuisi**

“A right is not what someone gives to you; it’s what no one can take away from you,” was the ultimate take away message for thirty five students from four secondary schools in Abuja during a one day Human rights workshop organized by the U.S Mission, Abuja. The workshop was organized in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Youth Action Initiative (YAIA), and Human Rights Volunteer Initiative (HURVI) on February 12, 2013.

The December 10, 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) by the UN General Assembly sets out a broad range of freedoms to which all men and women worldwide are entitled to without distinction. Every year since then, the global community commemorates this day through programs and events aimed at educating people on human rights and the importance of upholding

these rights within their community. In her address, Political Officer, Megan Ahearn, reminded the students that their role as human rights ambassadors is to educate themselves, their families and friends on issues of human rights. She began by sharing her experiences as a young human rights ambassador in the United States. As a student, Megan was able to organize fellow students in her secondary school human rights club to demand a wage increase for their cafeteria cook who at the time was being paid below the minimum wage. After mounting pressure on the school authorities, they were successful in getting the school to increase the wages of their cafeteria workers. Megan reminded the students that every individual, once born, is entitled to human rights and those rights cannot be taken away from them. She encouraged the students to use the opportunity the workshop presents to learn and understand the rights contained in the UNDHR. She

highlighted the importance of children starting at an early stage to promote and defend human rights in their schools and in at their homes. Megan also highlighted the importance of becoming human rights ambassadors by speaking out when they see their rights or the rights of others being violated.

The Executive Secretary of NHRC was represented by Mrs. Ifeoma Nwakama, Head of Human Rights Education. In her remarks, Mrs. Nwakama educated the students on the role of the Commission in creating an enabling environment for the promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights. She also informed the students of the Commission’s goal of working with schools to establish human rights clubs which will serve as an avenue for educating students on issues of human rights.

Two young lawyers and program managers at HURVI, Cynthia

Mbamalu and Samson Itodo, who are also 2012 International Visitor Leadership Program Alumnus, were facilitators at the workshop. Cynthia led an interactive session on fundamental human rights where she educated the students on the history of human rights which dates back to the Magna Carter. She informed the students on the history of UNDHR which was a direct response to the gross violations of human rights that occurred during World War II. Cynthia explained to the students that as a member state of the United Nations, Nigeria adopted the provision of the UNDHR in chapters three and four of its constitution. She highlighted those provisions and shared real life examples with the students.

Samson began his session on “My duty as a citizen” with a history and political quiz. He posed several questions to the students in order to gauge their understanding of their role



carrying out their duties.

At the end of the sessions, the students had the chance to put all they had learnt during the workshop into practice. It was a great opportunity to tie together all the concepts learned. They were given a scenario in which a journalist was kidnapped and brutalized for a story he published in a newspaper against a prominently

After 15 minutes of interaction and debate across the groups, it was interesting to hear the students present their work. The groups unanimously agreed the journalist’s right to privacy, speech, and movement amongst other freedoms had been violated. They also identified the Ministry of Information, Nigerian Police Force, and Ministry of Justice as key institutions that can take action against those responsible for the offense against the journalist. The workshop was a great learning opportunity for the students. The students went away with so much more information on human rights and the role they can play even as young adults in the promotion and protection of Human rights.

“...It gave me more inspiration to protect the rights of various citizens that are weak, it made me know more about my rights, it gave me confidence and has automatically turned me to an ambassador of Human rights,” said a student from Pacesetter College, Wuye.

Students were encouraged to use all means available to them including social media to educate their peers on human rights issues and to remember their right to swing their arms end where other people’s noses begin. ❖



as a citizen. Samson highlighted the six obligations of a citizen as stated in section 24 of the Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution: obedience, allegiance, mutual respect, voting at elections, payment of taxes and helping public officials in maintenance of law and order. He challenged the students to become better citizens by effectively

placed personality. The students were asked to identify the basic rights of the journalist that had been violated and to write a letter to the appropriate authority concerned demanding action. The participants were divided into five groups of six and the students within each group were to work together on the activity.



Community leaders and women of Tokbet welcome U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Jim McAnulty (dressed in traditional hat) to the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Tokbet Community and Clinic and Maternity Center in Plateau State.

Now Open

Tokbet Community Clinic Thanks to Ambassador's Self Help Program

By Michael Kiselycznyk

On January 12, 2013, the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Jim McAnulty travelled to the Tokbet community in Plateau State to commission the Tokbet Community Clinic and Maternity Center. The Clinic is the product of a joint venture between the Tokbet Community Development Association and the U.S. Ambassador's Small Grants Program.

Members from the community, including government officials and village elders, gathered in the hundreds to welcome McAnulty and his delegation, which began

with a presentation of traditional song and dance. In his remarks alongside leaders of the community, the DCM congratulated the Tokbet Community Development Association, and the Tokbet community at large, on the completion of such a meaningful project.

“With the support of the local community, the leadership of Chairman Henry David Katniyon, and a grant of 890,000 Naira from the U.S. Embassy, the Tokbet Community Development Association has built a clinic that aims to serve up to 15,000 locals,” he said. Following his remarks, community leaders adorned

McAnulty in the ceremonial attire of a Tokbet leader in honor of his visit. Wearing a rope sash and traditional attire, McAnulty and the community leaders lead a dance procession to the clinic and presided over a ribbon cutting ceremony. In the words of one community leader who paraphrased U.S. Vice President Joe Biden when the health care reform bill was signed last year, the opening of the clinic was a “big deal.”

The visit concluded with a tour of the new clinic, which will provide vital health services, including maternity care, HIV/AIDS testing, counseling services, and treatment, to the local community. The clinic will also provide pre-natal check-ups

for women, which is particularly important since these services had previously not been available to the Tokbet community. The DCM highlighted this clinic is an example of the U.S.'s ongoing effort to implement of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which also contributes funds to the Embassy's Small Grants program.

This project represents the importance of community initiatives to provide better health services to its people and the U.S. Embassy's ongoing commitment to invest in Nigeria's people. For over two decades, the U.S. Mission to Nigeria, through the Ambassador's Small Grants and Special Self-Help programs, has partnered with local NGOs throughout Nigeria to fund small community-based development projects that include a significant local



U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Jim McNulty prepares to commission the Tokbet Community Clinic and Maternity Center on January 12.

contribution in land, labor, capital and expertise. Through these programs, the U.S. Mission to Nigeria is able to assist small development projects which are self-sustainable and improve the living conditions of people within their local

communities. These projects have included classrooms, health clinics, community centers, food processing mills, boreholes, latrines, textbooks and classroom furniture, and even laboratory equipment. ❖



Jim McNulty inspects facilities at the Tokbet Community Clinic and Maternity Center.

American Corner Enugu Opens



U.S. Ambassador Terence McCulley (left) and Dr. Johnson Achebe jointly commission the new American Corner Enugu on March 8. Photo by Ben Okpogor.

March 8th is commemorated annually as the International Day of Women. This year, while women across the globe were celebrating the successes and challenges of women all over the world, a small community, Ogui, in Enugu state was celebrating the opening of an institution that will play a key role in enhancing U.S contacts with Nigerian institutions within the South-East region. That institution is the American Corner Enugu.

On March 8, 2013, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Terence McCulley signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Dr. Johnson U. Achebe, Chairman Board of Trustees John and Lucy Book Café, the host Institution for the American Corner Enugu. This was followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony after which the Ambassador officially declared the Corner open to the public.

In his address, Ambassador McCulley encouraged the community to take advantage of the resources

that will be available at the Corner. He said the Corner is free and open to everyone—ordinary citizens, students, non-governmental organization representatives, business people, artisans, and government officials.

“Whether you hope to study at a U.S. university, do business with American companies, reach out to colleagues and counterparts in the U.S. for an exchange of ideas and knowledge, or simply learn more about America, you will be welcome here,” said Ambassador McCulley.

American Corners are jointly sponsored partnerships between the Public Affairs Section of the U.S embassies or consulates and host-country institutions. In addition to providing books, magazines, music, and electronic database with accurate information about the United States, American Corners also hosts programs for the local community on thematic areas including black history, women history, human rights, democracy and governance, etc. There are currently

Locate an American Corner Near You

American Corners are partnerships between the U.S. Embassy and the host institution. The Corners are the first places to visit when you have questions about the United States. The goal of each Corner is to provide general, substantive and accurate information about the United States to interested parties. Materials in the American Corners cover a wide range of subjects pertaining to the United States, such as its policies, society, education and culture. Free, open access is provided to all materials.

ABUJA

American Corner Abuja
Chief Bola Ige Information
Technoogy Center. C/o National
Center for Women Development,
Opposite Central Bank of Nigeria
CBN, Abuja.

Telephone: 0703-165-0015

Email: acabuja@amcornersnigeria.info

Library Catalog URL:

<http://librarything.com/catalog/acabuja>

BAUCHI

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

Telephone: 0802-362-2461;

0803-967-0833

Email: acbauchi@amcornersnigeria.info

Library Catalog: <http://bit.ly/acbauchi>

CALABAR

American Corner
Cross River State IT Village

over 400 American Corners in locations around the world.

American Corner Enugu is the eleventh (11th) American Corner in Nigeria and the first in the South East region. Strategically located at no 53 Udoji street, Ogui New Layout, Enugu, a highly populated area of the city and surrounded by academic institutions, it will join already existing Corners in Lagos, Ibadan, Calabar, Port Harcourt, Jos, Kano, Bauchi, Maiduguri, Sokoto

(Mrs.) Nancy Achebe expressed her appreciation to the U.S government for its partnership and promised to make the Enugu American Corner the most robust Corner in the country.

The occasion was very colorful and entertaining and brought together members of the community, from librarians, medical professionals and students to artisans, community leaders, and representatives from Nigerwives. It also featured cultural

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Library Catalog: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/accalabar>

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Library Catalog: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/acibadan>

JOS

American Corner Jos

University of Jos

11, Murtala Mohammed Way

Beside University of Jos Township

Campus, Jos.

Telephone: 0803-718-4414; 0802-986-

5140

Email: acjos@amcornersnigeria.info

Library Catalog: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/acjos>

KANO

American Corner Kano

Kano State Library Board

Murtala Mohammad Library

Complex Nasarawa, Kano.

Telephone: 0803-914-2919

Email: ackano@amcornersnigeria.info

Library Catalog: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/ackano>



U.S. Ambassador Terence McCulley (left), signing the MOU to commission American Corner Enugu on March 8. Photo by Ben Okpogor.

and Abuja to provide access to current reliable information about the United States through books collections, the internet and local programming.

The American Corner Coordinator and International Visitor Leadership Program Alumnus, Dr.

dance performance from “The Pammy Udu- Bunchy” cultural dance troupe. Everyone present was happy that American Corner has come to stay. Ambassador McCulley expressed the U.S Embassy’s commitment to support the Corner with resource materials. ❖





Eko Atlantic Project Breaks Ground

Ambassador Terence McCulley, (left), welcomes former President Bill Clinton to the Atlantic Project ground breaking. At center is U.S. Consul General Jeffrey Hawkins. Embassy photo by Dehab Ghebreab

By Dehab Ghebreab

If all goes according to plan, a new city: Eko Atlantic City will soon emerge in Lagos. On Thursday, February 21, former President Bill Clinton, President Goodluck Jonathan, Lagos Governor Babatunde Fashola, Executive chairman of Eko Atlantic Ronald Chagoury and other dignitaries broke ground for the Eko Atlantic Project in Lagos. To begin construction, the Eko Atlantic Project has recovered five million meters of the necessary two kilometers of coastline lost due to erosion in the past 100 years.

In 2009, the Clinton Global Initiative recognized the Eko Atlantic as one of the most inspiring and ambitious civil engineering projects in Africa. And now, in 2013, former President Clinton participated in the ground breaking ceremony of this mega project in Lagos with Ambassador Terence McCulley, Consul General Jeff Hawkins, and others from the Mission also in attendance.

Eko Atlantic is a public/private partnership. South Energyx Nigeria Limited, a subsidiary of the Chagoury Group, is the primary

planner and developer of the city. Eko Atlantic is protected by the Great Wall of Lagos, which will endure the most severe tidal surges. The Eko Atlantic will have business, retail, hotel, residential, and school districts. By the end of the project, nine million square meters of land will be developed, equivalent to the skyscraper district of Manhattan in New York City. ❖



Adefunmilayo Tejuosho, member Lagos State House of Assembly making contributions to gender-based violence discussion in Lagos. Embassy photo by Ayodele Durodola.

Women's Rights are Human Rights

By Bene Uche, Cultural Specialist

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Consulate Lagos in collaboration with ACTS Generation, a Lagos based NGO held a one-day event to kick off the U.S. Mission's 16-Day Activism Against Gender-based violence. An enthusiastic audience comprising members of civil society, the media, and gender violence victims participated in the discussion, held on November 25, to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Every year since 2000, the international community has marked the date to reaffirm its commitment to the principle that violence against women is a

violation of human rights.

In her welcome remarks, Rhonda Watson, Public Diplomacy Officer, noted gender violence was not just a Nigerian issue but a global issue which cuts across borders and impacts on all people and societies. She noted President Obama has stressed how important it is to develop concerted efforts to end domestic violence against women and girls. Likewise, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has declared that, "Women's rights are human rights." Violence against women renders them undervalued and vulnerable.

Laila St. Matthew-Daniel, Keynote Speaker and Executive Director of Acts Generation Organization gave an overview

of the current African situation with special focus on Nigeria. She identified ignorance, lack of knowledge on legal rights, customs and traditions and stereotypes as some of the causes of gender violence in Nigeria. Mrs. Matthew-Daniel recommended a review of the current constitutional section on gender abuse.

Mr. Lanre Olusola, a Coach for victims of Trauma, highlighted the destruction caused to victims of abuse through an exercise on "the mind, soul and spirit." He noted abuse can be against either males or females and in all cases, the impact was psychologically, emotionally and mentally devastating. There should be collective efforts by all urging parents to pay special attention to

the upbringing of their wards.

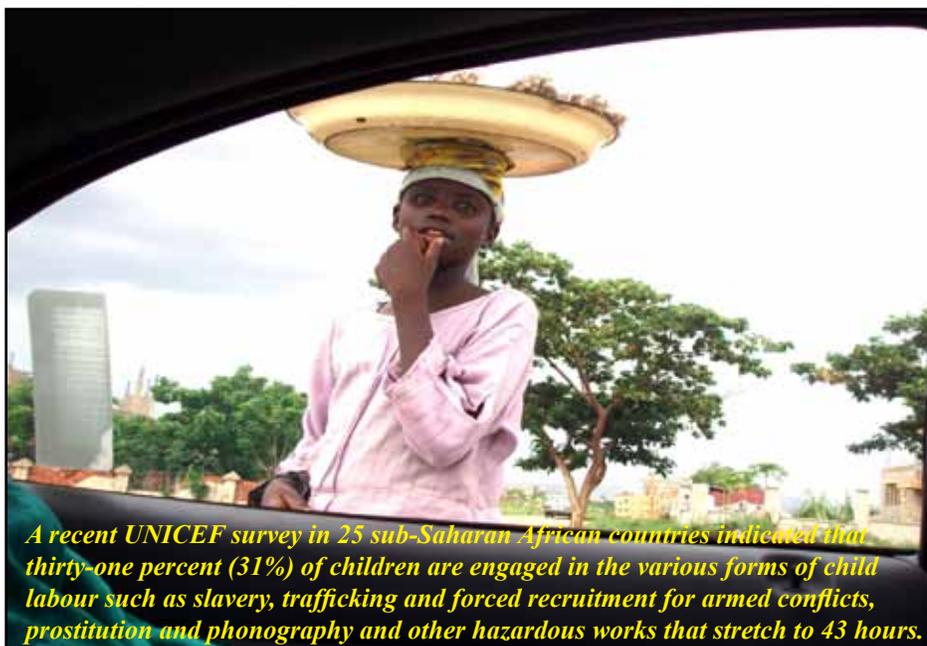
Hon. Adefunmilayo Tejuosho, Deputy Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly, who fought for the bill on gender violence in Lagos, shared how she got the male members of the Lagos State House of Assembly to work with her in getting the bill passed. Mrs. Tejuosho also spoke on the legal implications of the bill, the Shelters for women in Lagos State and how the process had helped keep families together.

A victim of gender violence (who does not want her name in print) shared her real life experience which brought tears and emotion out of the guests. She spoke of the

tasked and given a chance to be educated.

The Q and A session raised issues of concern on how the police handle reports of gender violence and abuse. Some of the Civil Society members clamored for a more supportive role from the police, asked for more platforms on gender violence to include a broader spectrum of men in different levels including those in leadership positions. Finally, a more concerted effort was advocated to have more awareness and information spread on different media platforms to create awareness on the signs of gender abuse.

Where to go for help



A recent UNICEF survey in 25 sub-Saharan African countries indicated that thirty-one percent (31%) of children are engaged in the various forms of child labour such as slavery, trafficking and forced recruitment for armed conflicts, prostitution and phonography and other hazardous works that stretch to 43 hours.

constant beatings she received, and the emotional and psychological pain she went through and how she finally got up the courage to leave.

Ester Ajayi-lowo, an Administrative Assistant with the Consulate Medical Unit gave insight on how parents could play a more important role in preventing child abuse in addition to ensuring that support assistants are not over

and the importance of more states having legislation passed against gender abuse were some of the recommendations from the discussion. Key participants agreed to form a coalition to fight the scourge of gender abuse. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, ended with the International Human Rights Day on December 10. ❖

U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally

This Strategy was developed by the Department of State and USAID in coordination with other relevant U.S. Government departments and agencies following the President's Executive Order directing agencies to prioritize this issue in their implementation of U.S. foreign policy.

The Strategy outlines a comprehensive, multi-sector approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence through:

- Increased coordination of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts among United States Government agencies and with other stakeholders;
- Enhanced integration of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts into existing United States Government work;
- Improved collection, analysis, and use of data and research to enhance gender-based violence prevention and response efforts; and
- Enhanced or expanded United States Government programming that addresses gender-based violence.

An estimated one in three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence experienced by women globally. Other forms of violence include human trafficking, sexual violence, including when used as a tactic of war, and harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and “honor” killings. ❖

American Dance Experts Thrill Abuja Audience

Two American dance experts, Yung Chris and James “Cricket,” along with over thirty local dance professionals thrilled Abuja audiences with a performance held at Rockview Hotel Abuja on February 22. The event was organized to mark this year's Black History Month with the theme "Celebrating connections through dance." Over 250 Nigerians, including youth, women, public officials, alumni of USG exchange programs, and fans and friends of the local dancers attended the concert.

The grand performance was organized to showcase U.S. culture and to promote youth engagement

and empowerment. The U.S. dancers also learnt some African dance genres during their week-long stay in Nigeria. This program supports the U.S. Mission's goal of engaging the youth as the dancers reached out to over 2,000 youth at both public and private schools in Abuja and rural communities through dance classes.



Earlier in the week, in Keffi, the dynamic duo of Yung Chris and James “Cricket” conducted a two-hour dance class with theater arts students of Nassarawa State University Keffi where various techniques of hip hop dance were displayed by the experts. A joint performance or dance-off with their students to test their dancing ability was held. The Vice Chancellor of the university, an alumnus of American Studies, shared his program experience with the audience and urged the trainees to utilize the skills they learnt and perfect them if they want to succeed as students of theater arts. ❖

Photos: YungChris with AISA students (top); Cricket and YungChris performing in Abuja, (below).



EducationUSA/Information Resources

Abuja -- Lagos

Do You Want to Study in the U.S.?



The EducationUSA Advising Centers in Abuja and Lagos provide quality, timely, accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions for persons wishing to study in the U.S.

For more information about EducationUSA and study opportunities in the United States, please visit:

<http://www.educationusa.state.gov>

Educational Advising Centers Locations:

Abuja:

Embassy of the United States of America,
Plot 1075 Diplomatic Drive, Central District Area,
Abuja. Telephone: 234-09-4614251/4241/4257; Fax:
234-09-4614334/4010; E-mail: eacabuja@state.gov.
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/educationusa.abuja>

Lagos:

U.S. Consulate General, Public Affairs Section,
2 Walter Carrington Crescent; Victoria Island-Lagos.
Telephone: 01-460-3400/2724/2725/3801/3802
E-mail: lagos@educationusa.info



Growing Business Using Social Media

Young, sassy and upcoming entrepreneurs involved in social networking and program development participated in a technology

focused one-day workshop on March 20. Japheth Omojuwa, a blogger and tweeter of repute, and Francis Onwumere of Prowork, provided valuable insights into the features. Read more at: http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/pe_03202013.html

The resources highlighted below are available at the Information Resource Centers in Abuja and Lagos. To Register as a member, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/ircregistration> and for all enquiries, please write to: ircabuja@state.gov (North) and wylagos@state.gov (South).

Women's History Month, 2013



President Barack Obama delivers remarks during the Women's History Month reception in the East Room of the White House, March 18, 2013. Standing at right are First Lady Michelle Obama and Amanda McMillan, who introduced the President.

Presidential Proclamation

For more than two centuries, our Nation has grown under the simple creed that each of us is created equal. It is a notion that makes America unlike any other place on earth -- a country where no matter where you come from or what you look like, you can go as far as your talents will take you. Read the full remarks at <http://1.usa.gov/13wbZdb>



Using Social Media to Grow Your Business

Social media offer businesses a variety of tools to inform existing customers and connect with new ones. Business owners can use social media to cultivate customer loyalty, raise awareness about products and services, and reach new customers and

markets — all from the comfort of a home or office. Read more: <http://1.usa.gov/10diwlu> (online). Download a copy at: <http://1.usa.gov/10OoDjM> (pdf)

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