



CouncilNews

A Publication of the Arab American and Chaldean Council | Summer 2009

ACC 30th ANNUAL CIVIC AND HUMANITARIAN AWARDS GALA

DETROIT MARRIOTT RENAISSANCE CENTER
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2009 ~ 6PM

Celebrating 30 Years of Growth and Promising Futures

ACC will host its 30th Annual Civic and Humanitarian Awards Gala at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center at 6 p.m. Oct. 17. Every year ACC sets the stage for a unique and prestigious event to honor extraordinary individuals and organizations who are visionaries in their respectful areas of work.

This year, ACC is celebrating 30 years of service. Through leadership, growth, responsibility, and commitment

over the past three decades ACC has grown to become the premier non-profit human service organization providing services to the Middle Eastern and mainstream communities in Southeast Michigan.

Proceeds from the gala will benefit ACC's specialized refugee programs and services. Due to the tremendous influx of

refugees to the State of Michigan, ACC is experiencing an overwhelmingly high demand for services. ACC aims to gear these newcomers towards responsible citizenship, the potential employment market, and stability in their life.

ACC is privileged to have Ambassador Houda Nonoo, Ambassador of the King-

dom of Bahrain to the United States, as its most honored guest. Ambassador Nonoo has worked to improve working conditions in factories, raise awareness of the rights of women and children, campaigned for family and domestic law, and raised awareness of the plight of domestic workers.

The evening's honorees have been chosen based on their contributions to the city and their dedication to rebuilding communities and lives across Detroit.

This year's 2009 honorees are: US Senator Debbie Stabenow, Lt. Governor John D. Cherry, Attorney General Mike Cox, Mayor Dave Bing, Manuel "Matty" J. Moroun, and ACC Board Member Walid Khalife.

Meteorologist Chuck Gaidica, WDIV-TV Channel 4, will emcee the evening's program.



EMCEE
Chuck Gaidica
WDIV-TV Channel 4



HONORED GUEST
Ambassador Houda Nonoo
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain



LEADERSHIP AWARD
U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow
State of Michigan



STATE LEADERSHIP AWARD
Lt. Governor John D. Cherry
State of Michigan



STATE LEADERSHIP AWARD
Attorney General Mike Cox
State of Michigan



CITY LEADERSHIP AWARD
Mayor Dave Bing
City of Detroit



ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD
Manuel "Matty" J. Moroun
President & CEO, CenTra, Inc.



ACC BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR
Walid Khalife
Gold Corp Inc.

ACC JET Clients Take Wing To Flight

Aspirations that were once impossibilities and pipe dreams that have now been fulfilled are stories that many of ACC JET (Jobs, Education, and Training) clients will surely share with their children for years to come.

In Detroit, on W. 7 Mile, just west of John R, the in-house ACC/JET slogan is: "JET is not a punishment, but rather an opportunity" for those receiving state cash assistance via the city funded program. To continue to receive their monthly cash, clients must participate in the JET program with the ultimate goal of becoming self-sufficient.

"The mission of our staff is to not only work with clients to assist them with seeking employment, but also to encourage them to take advantage of the free trainings with career goals in mind, as well as community service opportunities that could possibly lead to employment," said ACC President Dr. Haifa Fakhouri.

When client Rachel Warts sat in week two, job-readiness class, she admits to once aspiring to become a police officer but, as fate would have it, hard times dampened that possibility for this mother of five. "I took the ACC JET slogan to heart and registered for the free paralegal class since I've always loved to read and still had a legal field interest." Today, with a 3.6 GPA at Lawton Schools, Warts is looking forward to graduating this October. "A year ago, I would never have imagined that I would soon be graduating as a certified paralegal. ..I'm not as proud for myself as I am for the example that I've set for my children," an emotional Warts comments.

For 17 months, client Donna Wheeler served time in Huron Valley Correctional Center. "The only thing on my mind during this

difficult time was that once I came home I was going to do the right thing," recalls this mother of seven. "My number one objective was to further my education and lend a helping hand to those in need." Within one month of JET participation, Wheeler enrolled in Operation Able which is a computer office training program for individuals 40 years and older. Like the energized bunny, Wheeler is still determined to fulfill her commitment to help others. She will soon volunteer at Phoenix Friendship House in a community service capacity assisting the mentally disabled.

As for client Tyronica Miller, "I've always envisioned myself working in an office." When this mother of four started her JET community service at Chosen Generations Community Center, she worked various jobs including janitorial, until one day she discovered a small unoccupied office. "That's my office," she recalls saying to herself. Determined to fulfill a dream, she approached her immediate supervisor with a proposition. "I gave him many reasons why the Center needed an administrative assistant and that the space was perfect for me to perform those duties." The proposition soon became a reality. Miller has since kicked her ambition up a notch and is now being considered to sit on the center's board. "A board position allows me to have a voice for people just like me."

JET client Reva Spikener admits that her purpose soon extended beyond the many benefits of the program. This mother of four came



to JET after her husband could no longer work due to an un-diagnosed illness. When Spikener came to the JET program, she was already enrolled at Marygrove College. "I already had my head on straight, but it was the many opportunities to mentor and motivate others in the program, setting an example that if I could take a challenging situation and turn it into a positive situation for me and my family, so could they," recalls Spikener, who will graduate this year with a major in English and a minor in Math.

JET client Ieisha Tyson was on the verge of being triaged (a process that determines if a client will lose their benefits due to non-compliance in JET). "The fear of losing my cash which was my only source of income was the reality check that I needed," recalls Tyson. Tyson quickly realized that she had to make some changes. "I had to step my game up." The game plan included going to Goodwill Industries to get her GED, which she will receive in January, 2010. The game has now gone into overtime. On August 24th, Tyson will start classes at Wayne County Community College in the Registered Nursing Program. "The first motivation in my life is my two children, but it was the JET program that motivated me to take advantage of some opportunities that would make a difference in the lives of me and my children. . . I'm not the person who I was when I first came to JET"

In a city that is facing many challenges, it's refreshing to know that a city funded program is making the difference in the lives of others.

This past June, the ACC JET office expanded its 4,000 sq.ft. first floor with five new offices to accommodate additional clients. This expansion also includes seating room for motivational, survival, and life skills workshops for clients. Business and community leaders, entrepreneurs and those clients who have overcome adversity are just a few who will also host scheduled workshops.



Group Golfs for Scholarships

By Natasha Dado, Arab American News: Community News

The Arab American and Chaldean Council (ACC) presented its 7th annual golf outing and scholarship award dinner at the Shenandoah Country Club.

The event raised funds for scholarships that went to deserving high school students who excel in academics but are in need of financial support for college.

"We hold this event so the youth can accelerate in life. This helps them move in the right direction. We are for the youth and continuing their education," said Haifa Fakhouri, ACC president and CEO.

Lou Anna K Simon, president of Michigan State University and General Barry R. McCaffrey, chairman of the board of directors for Global Linguist Solutions, served as honorary chairpersons for the event.

"We want these scholarship recipients to gain public recognition. We are going to hold them up as an example. They are hope for the future. They're the best young people in after hour programs like ACC's Seven Mile program. In some 20 years,



these kids will grow up to become huge community leaders like mayors. It's about time we see Arabs visible and gaining recognition in work places like the CIA," McCaffrey said.

Recipients of the scholarships included Randa Abdullah, Amira Abi-Haidar, Amir Alawneh, Jessica Ayoub,



Mohamad Chbib, Tevon Conrad, Zein El-Zein, Hala Hachem, Rina Sadik, Vanessa Shaya, and Jaleesa Wrench.

"It feels good to win the scholarship. That money is really going to help," Rina Sadik said.

ACC board member Salman Sesi said that in addition to the help students receive from the annual event, it raises awareness of the social services ACC offers the public.

Thank You Sponsors!

ACC and its Board of Directors would like to thank the following companies and individuals for their generous support. Your generous donations ensured this year's award recipients the opportunity to pursue a higher education.

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Arab-American oasis presents hopeful sign

By Mary Kramer, Crain's Detroit Business

Thirty years ago, Jordanian immigrant Haifa Fakhouri talked some fellow immigrants into giving her \$40,000 to start the Arab American and Chaldean Council.

Today, the nonprofit offers human service, cultural and employment training programs in three counties. But the centerpiece of the council's work is a four-building oasis along a stretch of Seven Mile Road between John R and Woodward Avenue in Detroit.

For years, I'd heard of the council's dream of creating a strip rivaling Mexican-town or the Arab strip of shops and restaurants along Warren Avenue in Dearborn. Last week, I finally toured the four buildings, and I see how close that dream is to reality.

The four buildings — used for after-school learning and recreation, health clinics, adult workforce courses, English-as-a-second-language courses and a cultural/arts showcase — represent \$16 million of the \$36 million the ACC projects it would need to complete its goal.

The council's programs serve both new immigrants and Detroit residents

with workforce and computer training. Already, through contracts with the city of Detroit, 1,400 clients have gone through training.

"We're diversity in action," Fakhouri says proudly.

In addition to Seven Mile, the ACC works with immigrants in Detroit's Warrendale neighborhood on the Dearborn border, in Southwest Detroit and in Hamtramck, where the immigrant mix includes newcomers from Iraq, Sri Lanka, Croatia and Bangladesh.

On Fakhouri's wish list is the ability to raze burned-out and boarded up homes on the blocks within eyesight of the Seven Mile complex. Detroit is plagued by such eyesores, but prioritized demolition could help ACC's redevelopment plans.

If such eyesores are razed, Fakhouri and Isa Hasan, who runs neighborhood development for the council, hope to find partners who will work on new housing in the neighborhood. They're talking to



the Rev. Marvin Winans, whose Perfecting Church is less than a mile to the south.

Meanwhile, the ACC is gearing up for an influx of 12,000 new immigrants — mostly Iraqis approved by Homeland Security to move to Michigan before Dec. 31.

In the 2000 census, were it not for immigrants moving into Michigan, the state would have had a population loss. In 2010, immigrants probably won't save our numbers; fewer people mean a lot of things, including reduced representation in Congress.

But immigration may yet be the answer to our future because Southeast Michigan's elaborate mix of ethnicities and nationalities can help draw new residents.

Working together in serving the community

In response to the need of a local charity, the Arab American and Chaldean Council donated a 14-passenger van to the Chaldean American Ladies of Charity (CALC). The van is being used to provide transportation to newly arrived refugees in need who have settled primarily in Sterling Heights, Warren and Troy.

ACC is proud to support the efforts of the Chaldean American Ladies of Charity. With the continuing influx of refugees, ACC believes it is important for community organizations to collaborate in order to meet the growing need for services.



ACC participates in community focus groups

The ACC continues to be at the forefront in representing the interests and hopes of the members of the communities we serve. Represented by Mr. Isa Hasan, the ACC has been an active participant in various community focus groups convened by corporate America:

The DTE Community Advisory Group was formed to be a sounding board to carry the concerns of our clients to the corporation and to suggest ways in which various utility delivery concerns can be tackled for the benefit of all.

Fifth Third Bank Community Advisory Forum (CAF) has been holding quarterly meetings to address the Justice Department's mandate of the Community Reinvestment Act. More recently, the CAF has been addressing mortgage foreclosures and inappropriate lending practices that resulted in the economic doldrums we are currently facing.

The ACC will continue to participate in these groups for we believe that we can articulate the concerns of the community in these challenging economic times.

Macomb County: ACC works to enhance employability

In response to the growing need and request for services ACC opened its first employment and training program in Macomb County in May 2009. In collaboration with Michigan Works!, ACC's Macomb County Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program works to enhance the employability skills and language efficiency of clients to help increase their probability of securing employment. Made up of two main components ACC's Macomb employment and training program provides English as a Second Language (ESL)/Vocational ESL (VESL) and job readiness skills training.

The ESL and VESL components of the WIA program focus on the necessary terminology and skills needed for daily survival and employment. Curriculum components include: basic language skills, community services, consumer economics, employment skills, and how to deal with everyday life issues, such as health, housing, and transportation.

Through job readiness and employability skills training ACC staff familiarize clients with the general expectations of the workplace, demonstrate the essential behaviors and attitudes needed to compete successfully, provide orientation to the labor market, and assist in developing occupational goals, basic literacy skills, and practical life skills enhancements. Readiness services include, but are not limited to: intake assessments, individual and group orientation, career counseling, job readiness training, employability skills training, resume writing, and job search.

To learn more about ACC's Macomb County employment program call (586) 939-7550 or visit the office at 34596 Dequindre, Sterling Heights, 48310.



ACC Hamtramck Office Moves

ACC's Hamtramck Office has out grown its current facility and will be moving to a new larger location in order to meet the increasing demand for services.

The Hamtramck Office is now located at: 9019 Jos Campau, Hamtramck, MI 48212. Programs at this location include behavioral health, employment and training, ESL, youth services, and WIC.

For additional information please contact our dedicated Hamtramck staff at (313) 875-4686.

ACC "Back to Work" Job Fair exceeds expectations

Community members were lined up outside ACC's Hamtramck office, located at 8740 Jos Campau, eager to participate in ACC's "Back to Work" Job Fair. The job fair was attended by 15 employers, 341 job seekers, and representatives from other Michigan Works Agencies.

Due to the community partnership between ACC and the neighborhood businesses, job seekers were able to utilize additional parking in front of the stores and businesses on Joseph Campau. The employers were pleasantly surprised by the high turn-out and impressed by ACC's smooth flow of traffic and crowd management.

Feedback from the event was unanimously positive. Employers and jobseekers were eager to know when the next job fair will be scheduled. ACC is proud to serve the communities of Southeastern Michigan, especially during these difficult economic times.

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State Legislators Tour ACC

Over the past few months ACC has welcomed state legislators to its Seven Mile Campus. In addition to providing background history and information regarding programs and services, ACC administrators discussed the current challenges faced by non-profit community organizations during today's tough economic climate and how the recent increased influx of refugees to Michigan affects programs and services.



(left to right) ACC President and CEO Haifa Fakhouri, ACC Chairman of the Board Abe Munfakh, and Representative Hugh Crawford, District 38.



Congressman Gary Peters with students from ACC's substance abuse program.



State Senator Bill Hardiman greets youth program participants as he tours ACC's Network Clubhouse.



During the tour of ACC's Seven Mile facilities State Senator Roger Kahn had the opportunity to see ACC's Job Education and Training (JET) program computer lab in action.