



NEWSLETTER

Summer | 2019

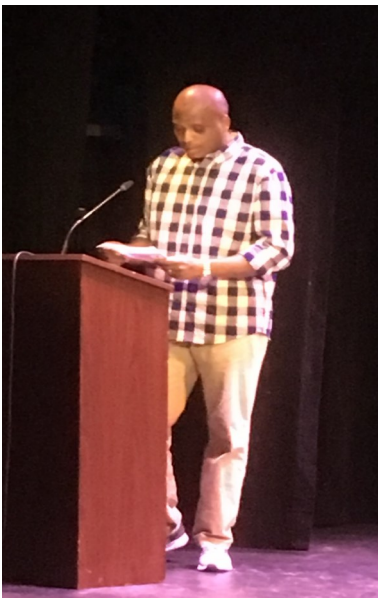
HARLEM

New Americans Initiative



CELEBRATING HERITAGE AT THE NAI

On June 11th, 2019 the YMCA New Americans Initiative hosted a city-wide celebration of immigrants in New York and their relationship to the YMCA. Students from all across the city gathered at the West Side YMCA to watch readings and musical performances from their fellow students and peers. This year, the Harlem YMCA was represented by Mohamed Papa Bakary Fall (above) and Mohamed Soumahoro (below). Both are students in our Job Readiness program. Mohamed Soumahoro prepared a speech to discuss his personal journey in immigrating to the United States and to tell the story of how he came to study English at the Harlem YMCA. Mohamed Fall performed a beautiful African dance that wowed the crowd. Both students performed admirably and we were thrilled to have them represent Harlem!



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Harlem Students at YUSA Convening

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Welcoming Week 2019

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New Americans Welcome Center Goals and Vision

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members. "

- Coretta Scott King



Harlem Students @ the YUSA Convening

On June 13th, 2019, staff from YMCA's all over the country convened in Flushing to discuss the work of the New Americans Initiative and compare practices across different associations. The entire day was inspiring and invigorating and served to remind all in attendance of the true value of programs like the NAI. We heard from a panel of diverse professionals in NYC, including Commissioner Bitta Mostofi from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Amy Torres from the Chinese-American Planning Council, Debra Means-West from WES Global Talent Bridge, Ling Xu from Flushing Bank, and Stacy K. Simon from IMPRINT. And those of us from Harlem were very proud to support two of our own students who were asked to give impact speeches to kick off the event. Elisabeth Zabre (Above) and Meliha Pupovic Hakaj (Below) both delivered moving, passionate speeches detailing their personal experiences as immigrants in NYC and their time with the YMCA. It was such a pleasure to see how far they have both come in their time with us and we're very grateful that they shared their stories!



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Welcoming Week @ Harlem YMCA

ASK YOUR NAI

Q: I take classes that are ending in September. What will I do during the fall?

A: We have a fall session just for you! Enroll September 30th!

Q: Oh no! I missed registration, now what?

A: Certain classes may still have room for new students. Stop by the office to see if you can register! If not, we will add you to our contact list for the next cycle.

Q: All the classes are full... but I want to get started NOW!

A: Join our evening Language Skills Class! It meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30-8:30 pm. Walk-ins welcome!

Q: You don't have the class I need right now. Can you still help me?

A: Yes we can! Schedule an appointment to meet with one of our case management volunteers and we'll help you search for what you're looking for.



Please join the Harlem NAI on September 19th, 2019 at 6 pm for Welcoming Week! This event will be celebrating the bridge between our immigrant and non-immigrant communities in Harlem. The festivities will include a free food and

drink from local immigrant-run restaurants, and a community resource fair featuring organizations such as Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, African Services Committee, Manhattan Legal Services, Hot Bread Kitchen, and more! Register online at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) (search for Welcoming Week @ Harlem YMCA).

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Fahima Jama



This cycle, we want to highlight a long-time student and member at the Harlem YMCA: Fahima Jama. She has been working hard for so long to become a United States citizen and now all her effort has paid off! Fahima said the following about her time at the NAI: *"Thanks to the Harlem YMCA, I have learned how to hold a conversation and properly communicate in English, and I am still improving. I have learned basic reading skills and classroom rules and etiquette. I learned how to meet new people and*

was able to engage with them and I have learned about government forms and how to properly read and sign them. I have enjoyed being a part of class and having a sense of community and am very happy to be an American Citizen." Congratulations Fahima! We're so proud of your success!



The Goals and Vision of the New Americans Welcome Centers by Dio Gica

“The goal of the YMCA is to be recognized by every New American as a “safe haven” that provides multilingual information, resources and referrals and a wide range of services... to help them attain their goals...”

Program Goal and Vision: The YMCA of Greater New York is committed to serving the immigrant population of the City, and, in response to their needs, has opened New Americans Welcome Centers to help immigrants achieve literacy, cultural competence, and self-sufficiency. In 2010, the YMCA will have opened Welcome Centers in areas where immigrant communities are most underserved. The Chinatown, Staten Island, Harlem, Prospect Park, and Bronx YMCAs have already served their communities through these centers. In line with its commitment to better serve the immigrant population of New York City, the YMCA of Greater New York is opening a sixth location to serve Queens, the Flushing YMCA New Americans Welcome Center. The goal of the YMCA is to be recognized by every New American as a “safe haven” that provides multilingual information, resources

and referrals and a wide range of services (instructional, vocational, recreational, and family support) that will help them attain their goals.

The YMCA recognizes the need to build capacity and develop support and networks among new immigrants. As of the 2000 census, more than 35% of City’s residents are foreign-born and 43% of the City’s workforce are immigrants. Nearly 70% of the total immigrant population in New York speak a language other than English. Within this group 23% do not speak English well and about 10% do not speak English at all. Most of these immigrants live in population clusters that are underserved for informational, education, recreational, vocational, advocacy and human services that the YMCA of Greater New York is in a position to provide directly as well as in collabora-

tion with other human service and immigrant agencies.

Program Components: The New Americans Welcome Centers serve as multilingual information resource and referral centers, and provide immigrant families with a wide array of instructional, vocational, recreational, family support, and social services. Instructional services include English as a Second Language, Cultural Orientation, Citizenship Preparation, Job Readiness, and Computer Literacy. In addition, some of our Centers offer Adult Literacy and GED preparation classes as well as Substance Abuse and Alcohol Prevention Counseling.

For more information on the YMCA New Americans Welcome Centers please access our website at ymcanewamericans.org.

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