

PHILLY SOUTHWEST

VIEW

PHILA AFRICATOWN

Building Legacy and
Economic Growth
for the African
Diaspora

Ama Addo

REMEMBERING JOSEPHINE BLOW

The Mayor of Chester
Avenue and Heart
of Southwest Philly

Kou Dolo

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A Beloved West African
Gem Returns to Philadelphia

UNCLE MUSA'S *Grocery*



African, American, Asian
and Carribean Foods



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Vol 8 Issue 4 Oct-Dec 2024

Editor
Kou Dolo

Staff Contributors
Belinda Church
Wonder Guannu
Youssef Kromah
Ama Addo

Design
Omena Leah Okprima

Cover Artwork
Omena Leah Okprima
Kou Dolo

Executive Director & Founder
Voffee Jabateh

General Inquiries

Executive Assistant
Barbara Kinch

ACANA Health Department/Director
Dr. Nettie Johnson

ACANA CDC/Director
Musa Trawally

ACANA Immigration & Legal
Cornelia Weathers

Contact Information

African Cultural Alliance of North America
5530 Chester Ave. Philadelphia, Pa 19143
Phone: 215-729-8225
Fax: 215-729-8202
Email: acanaphila@gmail.com

For PHILLY SOUTHWEST VIEW inquiries:
kdolo@acanaus.org
Phone: 302-367-0608



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WOMEN, CHILDREN AND IMMIGRANT
FAMILY ISSUES

EDITOR'S NOTE



KOU DOLO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

TOGETHER, WE RISE

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to Volume 4, Issue 8 of Philly Southwest View. Southwest Philadelphia is more than a neighborhood—it's home. It's a place where resilience, creativity, and a shared history of progress bring us together. In this issue, we celebrate the people, businesses, and initiatives that make our community thrive.

As State Representative Regina Young declared at the 2022 launch of Africatown Restaurant Week, "Southwest Philly is on the rise." Our cover honors the late Josephine Blow, affectionately known as "The Mayor of Chester Avenue," for

her decades of unwavering service. Her leadership, advocacy, and deep care for Southwest Philadelphia have left a lasting legacy of unity and empowerment.

We also spotlight Mont Brown, a Southwest Philly native who has made his mark in music and fashion. Now, he's giving back—uplifting the neighborhood through initiatives like the Stop the Violence Kickback Block Party and mentoring young talent.

This edition features the inspiring story of Jake's Steaks, led by Taisha Jones, a business bringing fresh energy to our culinary scene. We also highlight the transformative Phila Africatown project, which is driving economic growth and cultural preservation. Stories like these remind us that Southwest Philly isn't just a location—it's a movement fueled by creativity, determination, and an unshakable sense of belonging.

Through service, innovation, and unwavering commitment, we are not only preserving Southwest Philly's legacy—we are shaping its future.

As you explore this issue, be sure to check out page 24 for a special visual journey through our community—you may just spot some familiar faces and cherished landmarks that make Southwest Philly feel like home.

Together, we rise.

XOXO

A handwritten signature of Kou Dolo in black ink.

KILIMANDJARO RESTAURANT: A BELOVED WEST AFRICAN GEM RETURNS TO PHILADELPHIA

HOW THE GRAND REOPENING OF A SENEGALESE CULINARY INSTITUTION IS REIGNITING WEST PHILLY'S FOOD SCENE

By Kou Dolo



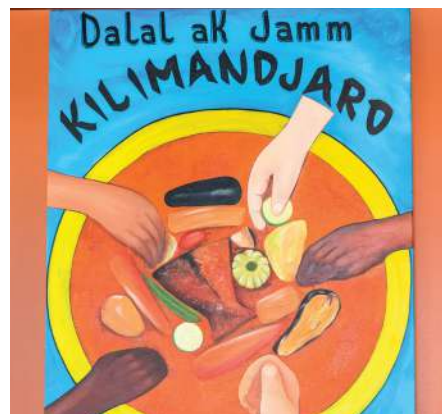
Every neighborhood has its culinary landmarks—the kind of places where the food nourishes not just the body but the spirit of the community. For West Philadelphia, Kilimanjaro Restaurant has been one of those iconic spaces. Known for its authentic Senegalese dishes and welcoming atmosphere, the eatery has served as a cultural bridge, bringing the flavors and traditions of West Africa to the heart of Philly. After closing its doors in 2019, Kilimanjaro's absence left a noticeable void. But now, in 2024, the beloved restaurant is back, better than ever, with a grand reopening that marked the start of an exciting new chapter. On September 12, Kilimanjaro officially reopened at its new location: 4301 Chestnut Street. It was more than just an event—it was a celebration of resilience, community, and, of course, incredible food. Here's why Kilimanjaro's return is about much more than what's

on the plate—and why it deserves a spot on your dining bucket list.

A Grand Return to Chestnut Street

For almost 15 years, Kilimanjaro called Chestnut Street home, serving up comforting dishes that transported diners to the streets of Dakar. Its closure in 2019 was a blow to the community, but owner Youma Ba, a Senegalese-born entrepreneur, was determined to bring it back. Now located just a few doors down from its original spot, at the corner of 44th and Chestnut, Kilimanjaro occupies a sleek, newly constructed space on the ground floor of a modern apartment building. The redesigned restaurant combines contemporary elegance with touches of West African charm, creating a space that feels both fresh and deeply rooted in culture. Upon entering, diners are greeted with a painted message on the wall: “Dalal ak Jamm Kilimanjaro

Restaurant”, which translates to “Welcome in Peace.” Warm orange and brown hues dominate the interior, complemented by bright yellow chairs that give the room a vibrant, inviting energy. Beautiful hardwood floors and large glass windows complete the look, flooding the space with natural light and connecting the interior to the bustling street outside.



OCT-DEC ISSUE

Driving down Chestnut Street one night, I saw the warm glow of Kilimanjaro through those large windows. The room was alive with diners—friends, families, couples—all enjoying meals and laughter. The energy was contagious, and the sight of the packed dining room added so much beauty and life to the street. The restaurant's inviting ambiance seemed to spill onto the pavement, making the neighborhood feel just a little brighter. It was a moment of pride—a reminder of the incredible resilience and vibrancy of this West African gem. "We're excited to bring Kilimanjaro back to the neighborhood and look forward to welcoming our loyal customers and new faces to experience the vibrant flavors of West Africa" said Ba. The re-grand opening event wasn't just about unveiling this stunning new space—it was about reconnecting with the community. Residents, food lovers, and cultural leaders gathered to celebrate the rebirth of a cherished institution. As part of the planning team and serving as the media contact for the event, I saw firsthand how much energy and love went into making the evening a success. From the beautifully redesigned interior to the enthusiasm of the attendees, Kilimanjaro's return was a true celebration of resilience and pride.



A Taste of Senegal: Kilimanjaro's Signature Dishes

If you've ever dined at Kilimanjaro, you already know the magic that awaits on your plate. For those who haven't yet had the pleasure, let's just say you're in for a treat. The restaurant's menu is a culinary journey through Senegal, filled with bold, comforting, and unforgettable flavors. Known for its authentic approach to West African cuisine, Kilimanjaro has earned a reputation for dishes that leave a lasting impression. The grilled red snapper, for instance, is a masterpiece of simplicity and technique—perfectly seasoned, expertly charred, and served alongside the iconic Jollof rice, a West African staple that's as rich in history as it is in taste. Another standout dish is the lamb shank, slow-cooked to tender perfection in a deeply spiced sauce that

reflects the heart and soul of Senegalese cooking. Pair it with sides like sautéed vegetables, fried plantains, or cassava, and you have a meal that's equal parts nourishing and celebratory. Of course, no visit to Kilimanjaro would be complete without a taste of its refreshing beverages. The bissap, a vibrant hibiscus tea with a sweet-tart kick, and the fresh ginger juice, with its fiery, invigorating flavor, are both perfect complements to the restaurant's bold, flavor-packed dishes. These menu favorites are a testament to Kilimanjaro's mission: to share the vibrant spirit of Senegal through food. Whether you're a lifelong fan or a first-time diner, the restaurant promises a meal that feels like both a feast and an invitation to connect with West African culture.



Why Kilimanjaro's Return Matters

The reopening of Kilimanjaro isn't just about food—it's a story of resilience and community pride. For years, the restaurant has been a cultural hub for West Philadelphia's African diaspora, serving as a gathering place for friends, families, and cultural celebrations. Its absence was deeply felt, but its return is being celebrated as a victory for the community.

"The reopening of Kilimanjaro symbolizes resilience and growth within our African business community" said *Stanley Straughter*, Chairman of the African Business Council of Greater Philadelphia. "It's a reminder of the vital contributions immigrant communities make to the culture and economy of

our city." The sentiments were echoed by *Jannie Blackwell*, Chair of the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs. "Kilimanjaro has always been a cornerstone of our community, offering not just food but a cultural experience. We are thrilled to see it return."

The grand opening is also part of a broader conversation about the growing recognition of African cuisine in the global culinary scene. As diners worldwide begin to embrace the bold flavours and rich traditions of West African cooking, Kilimanjaro's return feels especially timely, putting Philadelphia on the map as a destination for authentic Senegalese dining.



Experience Kilimanjaro for Yourself

If you're looking for a dining experience that combines extraordinary flavours with a welcoming, community-focused atmosphere, Kilimanjaro is ready to greet you with open arms. Whether you're a seasoned fan of West African cuisine or someone eager to explore it for the first time, the restaurant offers an experience that's both delicious and culturally enriching. Kilimanjaro is now open for lunch and dinner at 4301 Chestnut Street.

So, what are you waiting for? Pull up a chair, order the red snapper, and let Kilimanjaro take you on a journey through the bold, vibrant, and comforting flavours of Senegal. And when you go, tell them their friends at Philly Southwest View sent you.



ANNOUNCING A NEW PROGRAM AT ACANA

ACANA LAUNCHES A CULTURALLY SPECIFIC PROGRAM TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

THE ASEV PROGRAM (ACANA SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROGRAM)


Supported with funding from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)


ACANA, in collaboration with WOAR (Philadelphia Center Against Sexual Violence), will provide:

- A community-based, trauma-informed education and prevention service on sexual harassment, abuse, and assault to refugee and new immigrant women resettled from sub-Saharan Africa and residing in the greater Philadelphia area. This peer-led outreach will be culturally and linguistically sensitive.
- Immigrants and refugees will receive assistance in accessing services as victims of sexual assault, harassment, and abuse. This program will provide translation services and accompaniment to sexual abuse victims as they navigate the process of participating and seeking help from the civil and criminal justice systems.

Program Activities:

- Promote community awareness and engagement on The Impact of Sexual Violence
- Conduct Educational workshops on zoom and in-person
- Provide translation and accompaniment to WOAR by trained peer educators/navigators
- Provide access to printed and online resources on sexual violence, prevention, and more.

Please call ACANA  215-729-8225, Ext. 105. (Barbara Kinch)

Or visit us  5530 Chester Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa 19143



10 EDUCATION TIPS FOR ADULTS FOR 2025

by Dr. Stephen Jones

We are about to end another decade and it's time to pursue education at its highest level. For centuries education has been the foundation for the growth of a successful society. So, what is your education plan for 2025. Sitting on the sideline will not bring you the education that you need. Today you can take online courses or sit in on a class. Opportunities abound in corporate offices across the country. For example, Peirce College sends an instructor to a corporate facility to teach. You can prevail over the situations that have limited you in the past. Just go to college and meet with an admissions officer. There are 10 education tips to follow:

- 1 Get up and get started on your goal every day. Make it measurable.
- 2 Make a commitment to end your procrastination
- 3 Organize your schedule so that you can easily fit classes onto the schedule
- 4 Talk to a new person every week about their profession
- 5 Ask one of your teachers to serve as a mentor who keeps you on track
- 6 Take a computer class to enhance your technology skills
- 7 Become a part of a social network such as LinkedIn and join various education groups
- 8 Identify a friend who will encourage you as you pursue your education dream
- 9 Attend educational seminars on a college campus.
- 10 Download educational digital books and listen to them on your laptop, iPad or cell phone.

What are your education goals for 2025? If you believe that you will succeed you are on your way to achieving, your goal. You can make 2025 your education year just by following through on your commitments. Too many students start with a goal that is too big at the beginning of the year. Try to select a course or training program that you will enjoy for your first class. Your instructor will see your enthusiasm for their course, and they will find it easy to devote their time to helping you. You can use 2025 to discover how the world all around you is full of opportunities to create your future. Dr. Stephen Jones is author of the "Seven Secrets of How to Study, the Parent's Ultimate Education Guide," and the Ultimate Scholarship Guide at [Http://www.DrJonesBooks.com](http://www.DrJonesBooks.com) or email your questions to stephenjones@rcn.com.

How An American Woman Built Her Dream Home in Guinea



For many Guineans living abroad, owning a home in Guinea is a lifelong dream. Jobomax Homes has made that dream a reality for over 10 years now. They have helped not only Guineans but Ghanaians and Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora build high-quality homes. In this interview, we meet Marie Soumah, a Guinean-American and the first to purchase a Jobomax Homes property in Guinea. She shares her journey and explains why Jobomax Homes is the trusted choice for Guineans in the diaspora investing in their future.

Can you share your name and a little bit about yourself and background? Were you born in Guinea? How long have you lived abroad?

My name is Marie Louise Soumah, I was born in Senegal, but I'm from Guinea. I studied in Guinea and I finished my university in Guinea. I came to the United States in 1989 because I followed my husband here.

What do you do? Where do you currently reside in the United States?

I own my own business, an assisted living facility in Maryland called Monique's home Inc. I named it after my mother. I am licensed in the state of Maryland for 5 residents. I have lived in Maryland since 1990.

How did you first become acquainted with Jobomax Homes and what made you consider them? What made you decide to build with them?

I found out about Jobomax Homes because every year, the Guinean community has a soccer game where all the Guinean communities in the United States come to one state. So that year, it was in Maryland.

So I went for the game with my husband and I saw the stand of Jobomax Homes. I approached them and I took the flyers. I talked with, at that time, Mr. Doumbouya.

When you are an African and you live in the USA, you send money all the time to build a house but they don't do anything for you. So I had lost a lot of money with family members and friends because they never built anything for me. So it was an opportunity for me to go through Jobomax Homes and get a house. They really helped me because Mr. Doumbouya encouraged me, and Robert, Jonathan – they all followed me. They came and helped me for the first step and then it was approved.

So you have had an experience where you send a lot of money but don't get a building?

Oh yeah, a lot of money! No, with my family I didn't get any building after sending money. I bought land in my city, but there was no house because when I sent the money they didn't build it. But when I put my trust in Jobomax Homes, my first house was built.

How would you describe the process with Jobomax Homes? Was it a smooth experience or did you encounter some challenges?

The process was not bad. I had the credit from them to purchase the house and make a deposit. My brother was in Gombayah, so I called my brother and told him to go and see the house that Jobomax Homes had built for me.

And my brother went there and he saw the house and he said, "That's a house for a President! This house is immaculate, this house is a nice house!"

When did you start building your house and how long did you wait for your house to be completed?

They don't take time to build houses. The house was done quickly! After I first spoke to them, in less than 6 months the house was done. And that was the first house they built in Guinea, in 2015.

What features or amenities do you believe Jobomax built homes and communities have that make them appealing to you?

The houses are strong! The designs are nice! My house had three bedrooms and two full baths inside the house. Then the kitchen, living room, and dining room. It's very nice. And they have another house outside where they have a bathroom outside, a kitchen outside, and a little place to stock stuff.

When will we see you in Guinea again in your lovely home?

Every two years, I am in Guinea. I was supposed to be there this year, but I couldn't because I did not have a worker for my business. That's why I'm still here. Anytime soon, I will go to Guinea. I just bought the house for retirement so right now I have a tenant in the house.

How would you describe the Jobomax Homes community?

The community is very nice. When I went there for the first time, we did a cookout and you know Africa, how we do it. I invited the youth of the community, the Imams, the Sage of the community, all the neighbors and it was a big feast. It's a beautiful and friendly place.

What advice would you give individuals in the diaspora thinking about home ownership on the continent? And what would you have done differently?

Jobomax Homes is the best way to build in your country. It is the best way to realize your dream of owning a home in

your country. Jobomax Homes gives you peace of mind. You just do your deposit, they don't push you and they understand you. When there is hardship, you can call them and talk to them. For example, you can tell them this month was a bit hard so you're going to make payment next month. They understand you, as long as you don't go overboard.

Are you satisfied with your experience with Jobomax Homes? Is there anything you'd change about your experience?

I am very satisfied with them. They are so social, they are so human, they are so humble to me. Because for me, I am a little bit difficult. It is hard to satisfy me but with Jobomax Homes, it was not like that.

What would you tell other individuals in the diaspora who are interested in building their homes in Africa but are unsure, especially because they have had negative experiences?

I encourage everybody to go with Jobomax Homes. They are good. They are hardworking too and the houses are built well. Because if you plan on building yourself, you'll send money and even hire people, who may steal. But with Jobomax Homes, you will not experience any of that. You have peace of mind with them.

Learn more about how to get started on your Jobomax home project in Guinea, Ghana or Sierra Leone. Scan the QR code below to see our current availability and pricing. Mention ACANA or Philly Southwest View and get a \$1000 discount on your home purchase.*

** Must pay deposit and sign contract by March 31, 2025 to qualify for \$1000 discount.*



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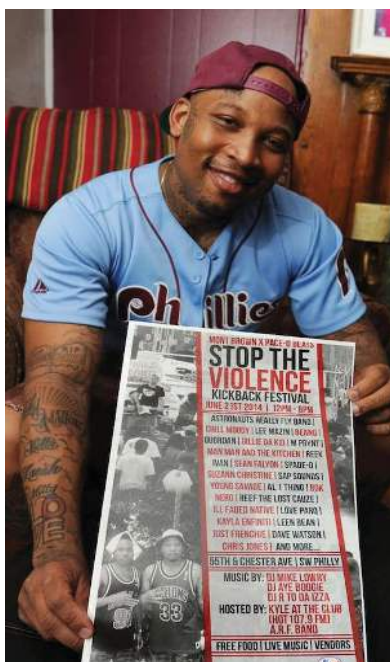
FROM SOUTHWEST TO STARDOM AND BACK: MONT BROWN ON MUSIC, FASHION, AND GIVING BACK

By Youssef Kromah

Southwest Philadelphia is a neighborhood steeped in culture, resilience, and an unmistakable energy that reflects its people. Few embody this spirit better than Lamont “Mont” Brown. Born and raised on the 1400 block of South 55th Street, Brown’s journey from a creative kid with big dreams to a trailblazer in music, fashion, and philanthropy is a testament to perseverance, passion, and purpose.

Raised by his devoutly religious grandparents, Brown grew up surrounded by faith and service. His grandmother, a minister, and his maternal grandmother, a Jehovah’s Witness, laid the foundation for his values, instilling in him the importance of giving back and remaining grounded. These lessons became the compass that guided

“Southwest Philly has so much talent and potential,” we just need the platforms and resources to let it shine.”



him, even as he ventured into the often cutthroat industries of hip-hop and fashion.

For Brown, Southwest Philly was a vibrant, tight-knit community, but it wasn’t without its challenges. The neighborhood, once a haven for working-class families, was deeply affected by the drug epidemic and violence of the 1980s. These struggles hit home for Brown, whose father, Leroy “Bucky” Davis, was a promising boxer who succumbed to the allure of the streets and the grip of the Junior Black Mafia. His life ended tragically, leaving a profound impact on his son.

Despite the hardships, Brown’s infectious optimism and relentless work ethic propelled him forward. Influenced by the music of Bad Boy Records, Jay-Z, and Mase,

and the fashion of Ralph Lauren and Pharrell Williams, Brown cultivated a creative vision that blended sound and style. In the 2010s, he broke into the music scene with the hit “Stupid Crazy Dumb Stupid” and led the alternative rap-rock band Astronauts Really Fly (ARF). His music wasn’t just catchy—it was personal. Songs like “All I Had” reflected the struggles and triumphs of his life, including his mother’s incarceration and his father’s death. But Brown’s dreams weren’t limited to personal fame.

While many artists use success as a way to leave their hometowns behind, Brown felt a pull to return. “Things don’t happen for my community,” he said, describing the lack of opportunities in Southwest Philly. That realization became the driving force behind his work to uplift his neighborhood.



In 2010, he launched the Stop the Violence Kickback Block Party, an annual event designed to bring peace, joy, and opportunity to Southwest Philly. Now in its 13th year, the block party has become a beloved community tradition, featuring live music, free food, school supplies, and activities for kids. More than just a celebration, it's a platform for young talent, providing aspiring artists, designers, and creatives with a stage to showcase their work—an opportunity Brown himself wished he'd had growing up. "Southwest Philly has so much talent and potential," Brown said. "We just need the platforms and resources to let it shine." The Kickback Block Party isn't just about entertainment—it's about healing and hope.

For Brown, the event is a way to rewrite the narrative of Southwest Philly, highlighting its resilience, creativity, and community spirit. It's also a reflection of his belief in discipline and hard work. As an artist and repertoire (A&R) representative at Columbia Records, Brown mentors young creatives, emphasizing the importance of preparation, professionalism, and perseverance. "Talent is just the beginning," he tells them. "What makes the difference is your grind and your discipline." Brown's contributions to Southwest Philly haven't gone unnoticed. In a ceremony honoring his impact, the City of Philadelphia ceremonially renamed his

childhood street "Mont Brown Way." The renaming is a reminder of his journey and a symbol of his commitment to the place that shaped him. "It's humbling," Brown said of the recognition. "This block is where I learned everything—how to dream, how to hustle, how to overcome. To have it carry my name is an honor, but it's also a responsibility. It reminds me that there's still so much work to do." At 36, Mont Brown has come full circle. From navigating the challenges of a tight-knit yet turbulent community to achieving success in music and fashion, he has always remained true to his roots. His story is one of resilience, vision, and a deep commitment to service.

Whether through the Kickback Block Party, mentoring young artists, or advocating for performing arts programs, Brown is using his platform to create opportunities for the next generation. Southwest Philly shaped Mont Brown, and now he's shaping it in return. His journey from Southwest to stardom and back is proof that success isn't just about personal achievement—it's about uplifting others and leaving a legacy of hope, creativity, and community. For Mont Brown, the work is far from over, but the impact he's already made is undeniable. Southwest Philly's story is still being written, and Mont Brown is making sure it's one filled with inspiration, resilience, and love.

IMPACT MAKERS

By Belinda Church



If you've been up along the commercial corridors in Southwest Philadelphia, including Baltimore, Chester and Woodland Avenues, you may have noticed some new additions to the streetscape- ACANA's IMPACT MAKERS banners! Twenty banners have been hung along the commercial corridors in Southwest Philadelphia to honor people who have positively influenced the Southwest Philadelphia communities. From national figures like, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to our own local heroes, these banners recognize those who have given so generously of themselves to shape our past, inform our present and guide us toward a promising future. An upcoming Phase 2 of the project will include the addition of more banners in the future as well as QR codes that will be added to the poles under each banner to take viewers to additional information about the lives and accomplishments of the featured Impact Makers.

A GUIDE TO THE CURRENT IMPACT MAKER BANNERS →

IMPACT
MAKERS

KENYATTA JOHNSON
PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL
PRESIDENT 2024

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENYATTA JOHNSON**

Philadelphia City Council President Kenyatta Johnson was elected to City Council in 2011 to represent residents of parts of Center City, South Philly and Southwest Philly. Before his tenure in City Council, Kenyatta Johnson was a PA State Representative and a staunch anti-violence activist and founder of the organization Peace Not Guns. He consistently demonstrates his commitment to community development such as revitalization of commercial corridors such as Woodland Avenue, support for minority-owned businesses, job training and job creation, homeownership opportunities, and public safety in his district and throughout Philadelphia and his leadership has been integral to the revitalization of our community.

IMPACT
MAKERS

JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
(1992-2020)

**JANNIE L. BLACKWELL**

The name Jannie Blackwell will forever be associated with West and Southwest Philadelphia. You can't talk about one without the other. Mrs. Blackwell currently serves as Vice Chair of the Philadelphia Democratic Party and Chair of the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs, an organization that she established in 2005. She is most known for her over 28 years of service as a Philadelphia Councilmember who represented the 3rd Councilmanic District, encompassing West and part of Southwest Philadelphia. She was elected to City Council in 1991, the seat made available by her husband, Lucien Blackwell's election to the United States Congress. To date, they are the only couple to both have been sworn into public office on the same day. Through decades of public service, Jannie Blackwell has led the charge on many issues including affordable housing, equitable access to economic opportunities and much more, with the two issues closest to her heart being education and homelessness. Her name and image grace walls of community spaces, homeless shelters, murals and affordable housing facilities. Have a meeting at Philadelphia Housing Authority(-PHA)? It might be held in their Jannie L. Blackwell Conference Room! Jannie L. Blackwell is a Philadelphia icon who has lived by her motto that, "Politics is an open-ended opportunity to make life better for others."

IMPACT
MAKERS

REP. JOANNA MCCLINTON
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**HOUSE SPEAKER, REP. JOANNA MCCLINTON**

Joanna McClinton was elected to the PA House of Representatives in 2015, representing the 191st District, composed of neighborhoods in Southwest Philadelphia and Darby and Yeadon, Delaware County. She has held various leadership roles in the state legislature including Majority Leader, Minority Leader, House Democratic Caucus Chair and currently serves as House Democratic Leader/Speaker- making her the first woman to hold this position since the PA House of Representatives was established almost 250 years ago. As someone who was raised in the church and trained as a lawyer, Rep. Joanna McClinton brings a wealth of knowledge, legal prowess, compassion and coalition building skills to the various issues affecting our communities. House Speaker McClinton in one of Philadelphia's dynamic new generation of leaders and a rising star in local and state politics.

IMPACT
MAKERS

REP. JORDAN HARRIS
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**REP. JORDAN HARRIS**

Since 2012, PA State Representative Jordan Harris has been representing his constituents in South and Southwest Philly. He is known for his commitment to criminal justice reform, especially his authorship and co-sponsorship of PA's Clean Slate Law that establishes the automatic sealing of certain criminal records and has become the model for similar bills in different states as well as federal Clean Slate legislation. In addition to various criminal justice reforms, Representative Harris has fiercely supported public education, job creation, affordable housing and community development. Representative Harris is known for his ability to build consensus and coalitions and has held positions of distinction within the PA House of Representatives including Whip of the Democratic Caucus and his current role as House Majority Appropriations Chairman.



VOFFEE JABATEH

Voffee Jabateh is a lifelong community advocate. A native of Liberia, West Africa, Voffee Jabateh co-founded the African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) in 1999 to assist African and Caribbean immigrants who lacked sufficient access to social benefits, education, health care, economic development opportunities and cultural events. As a former social worker and entrepreneur he understands the needs of underserved communities and small businesses. Under Mr. Jabateh's leadership as CEO, ACANA has expanded to become one of Southwest Philadelphia's most trusted community organizations serving all of its residents regardless of national origin with programs that include health and mental health services, immigration services, benefits assistance, financial counseling, English classes, ACANAFest African music festival, commercial corridor management and community development. Additionally, Mr. Jabateh, as head of ACANA, has been pivotal in the Philadelphia Africatown initiative- a rebranding of Southwest Philadelphia to honor the black and brown residents- both African Americans and African and Caribbean-born residents, and to draw much needed investments dollars to the community to support affordable housing, supports for small businesses, and job creation.



REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a pivotal leader in the civil rights movement, advocating for racial equality and justice through nonviolent protest. He played a central role in organizing events such as the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech, calling for an end to segregation and racial discrimination. Dr. King's leadership helped lead to the passage of landmark legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1965. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his efforts to combat racial inequality through peaceful means. King's legacy continues to inspire movements for social justice and equality around the world.



MAYOR CHERELLE PARKER

In 2023, Cherelle Parker was elected Philadelphia's 100th Mayor and the first woman to ever hold this position. Her previous 10 years of public service as a PA State Representative and subsequent 6 years as a member of City Council more than prepared her for her current role. She has laid out her plan to make Philadelphia the "safest, cleanest and greenest city in the nation" and she has swiftly enacted various innovative and ambitious policies to get the job done.



PRESIDENT BARAK OBAMA

44th President of the United States, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and most notably our first and to this date, only Black President. His tenure began while the country was reeling from the collapse of the housing market, failure of major banks and the significant economic recession. President Obama passed significant legislation to stabilize the economy and working families. He was responsible for the Affordable Care Act, that provided means for many previously uninsured residents and families to obtain health insurance. He campaigned for President on the message of HOPE and for his many accomplishments, of which he has many, for a lot of us his greatest legacy is that of HOPE. He represents the idea that when we dare to hope, even for things that we have never seen before – like a black U.S. President!!! – we can do what people said we never could.



COUNCILMEMBER JAMIE GAUTHIER

Philadelphia City Councilmember representing the 3rd Councilmatic district, which comprises West and part of Southwest Philadelphia. Since taking office in 2020, she has championed policies aimed at environmental justice, housing equity and affordable housing development, public health, support of small and minority-owned businesses, and youth. She has consistently pushed to ensure equal access to City services, that communities have input on the policies that effect their lives, and that residents can remain in the neighborhoods they've lived and worked in for so many years.

IMPACT MAKERS



SENATOR ANTHONY H. WILLIAMS
STATE SENATOR



SENATOR ANTHONY H. WILLIAMS

PA State Senator Anthony Hardy Williams has been representing residents since his election in 1998, filling the seat vacated by the retirement of his father, Senator Hardy Williams. He represents the 8th senatorial district that includes parts of West and Southwest Philly as well as a parts of Delaware County. Within the PA Senate, Senator Williams has held numerous influential positions and chaired many significant committees, including the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. Through decades of service, Senator Williams has advocated for education reform, economic development, healthcare access and social justice.

IMPACT MAKERS



SABOOR MUHAMMAD
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST



SABOOR MUHAMMAD

Saboor Muhammad was a community activist and educator. He is one of the original founders of Southwest Philadelphia District Services (SWPDS), a community organization made up of men from all walks of life, united in their commitment to the residents and especially the youth of the Southwest Philly neighborhoods. Under Saboor's co-leadership, SWPDS hosted various programs and giveaways, including their annual Kwanzaa program that showcased the talent of neighborhood youth. Anyone who knew Saboor knew that he devoured knowledge and was especially keen on the topics of Black History and Health. The only thing he loved more than absorbing knowledge, was the opportunity to pass that knowledge along to the youth he tutored, other young people, and anyone willing to listen. His legacy of teaching continues with a SWPDS program called Community Classroom, that he helped establish and that still takes place every Friday and serves as a place to learn and engage.

IMPACT MAKERS



HON. STANLEY STRAUGHTER
CHAIRMAN, AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN
BUSINESS COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA



STANLEY L. STRAUGHTER

Stanley L. Straughter is a prominent community leader and advocate in Philadelphia, known for his tireless efforts in improving the lives of underrepresented populations. A specialist in International Business Development with over 40 years of experience in international development, he has lived and worked in several countries on the continents of Africa, Central Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and Russia. He is Chairman Emeritus and a founding member of the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs and the African and Caribbean Business Council of Greater Philadelphia. Mr. Straughter dedicated much of his career to fostering economic development and job opportunities for minority communities in Philadelphia and around the world. He was instrumental in founding the Pennsylvania Association of Black Public Administrators (ABPA), working to elevate African American representation in public service. Mr. Straughter has served as a senior advisor and worked directly with the late Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, Founder and Chairman, OIC International and the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH). Mr. Straughter participated in the design and implementation of programs in which OIC International provided training, agricultural and economic development to countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Throughout his career, Stanley Straughter has been respected for his leadership, vision, and commitment to social justice and equity.

IMPACT MAKERS



REP. REGINA YOUNG
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES



REP. REGINA YOUNG

PA State Representative for the 185th District elected in 2021 after years of service as a Community Organizer. Rep. Young and her husband, Steve Young, founded Empowered CDC a nonprofit community-driven organization operating out of Southwest Philadelphia with programs for youth, seniors, home repairs, violence interruption and community development. As State Representative she fighting to ensure quality education, job opportunities, and a higher quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.

**IMPACT
MAKERS**


DR. MINNIE MOORE-JOHNSON
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST


DR. MINNIE MOORE-JOHNSON

Dr. Minnie Moore-Johnson, a long-term resident of Southwest Philadelphia has been serving the vulnerable residents of her neighborhood and others around the city for over 30 years. As Founder and CEO of Concerned Parents, Inc., Dr. Minnie Moore-Johnson has provided thousands of meals to residents of all ages and walks of life, including her annual Thanksgiving Dinner for seniors. Her organization partnered with the Pennsylvania Prison Society to provide volunteer opportunities to returning citizens, even becoming a part-time Life Skills Educator, then a full-time Jobs Developer training formerly incarcerated residents for various employment opportunities and helping them secure jobs with decent pay and full benefits. Dr. Minnie Moore-Johnson became the most sought after Job Developer in the State of Pennsylvania and her success with this program led her to create and teach the only certified Job Development course at Temple University to train ex-offender programs, social workers, job developers and probation/parole officers how to successfully assist returning citizens in becoming gainfully employed. Dr. Moore-Johnson has devoted her life to serving her Southwest Philadelphia community.

**IMPACT
MAKERS**


REV. DR. EVELYN C. GRAVES
EVELYN GRAVES MINISTRIES
ICON & TRAILBLAZER


REV. DR. EVELYN C. GRAVES

Dr. Evelyn Graves was a faith leader and community activist in Southwest Philly and Yeadon, PA. Her desire to combat the gang violence she was seeing in the 1960s and 70s led her to establish many programs including Evelyn Graves Ministries Church, Evelyn Graves Drama Productions, Day Care Center, Academy and Summer Day Camp. For over 50 years, Dr. Graves, through her programs, has fed, clothed and educated youth, homeless, drug addicted and other vulnerable community residents. The drama program that began in 1971 in Kingessing Recreation Center has performed around the country and overseas. Dr. Graves has earned countless awards including honors from Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. The City of Philadelphia has designated a portion of Chester Avenue near 55th Street as "Dr. Evelyn Graves Way" in honor of her and her many contributions to our community.

**IMPACT
MAKERS**


DR. TOM REID
TRAILBLAZER


DR. L. TOM REID

Dr. Reid was a lifelong community leader and activist. He was elected as a Committeeperson for the 3rd Ward in Southwest Philadelphia at the age of 21. He served as Chief of Staff to and was mentored by the late Senator Hardy Williams. Dr. Reid founded the esteemed Crisis Intervention Network, along with Bennie Swans, Larry Rawls and Randall Sims, to reduce gang violence in the city. In 1999, Dr. Tom Reid founded the drug and alcohol recovery program, Southwest Nu-Stop Recovery and Education Center that operated for over 20 years, helping thousands of men and women obtain and maintain their sobriety. Throughout the years he established and assisted numerous programs and organizations providing recovery, education, housing, recreation and vocational training to returning citizens. He even provided staff jobs to ex-offenders through his NOMO Foundation. Dr. Tom Reid's legacy of activism and compassion has left an indelible mark on the Southwest Philadelphia community.

**IMPACT
MAKERS**


ANTHONY MANGO
TRAILBLAZER



BERNARD AUGUST
TRAILBLAZER


ANTHONY MANGO & BERNARD AUGUST

Anthony Mango and Bernard August were partners in Mango & August Real Estate that is still located at the corner of 56th and Chester Ave. They were astute businessmen but also known for being gentlemen who cared about more than just money. During the years when many of the white residents were leaving Southwest Philly, immigrants from Asian and African countries began moving in. Many landlords refused to rent to these newly arrived residents, but Mango & August did not discriminate. Many of the African immigrant residents of Southwest Philadelphia and Delaware County still speak fondly of Mango & August Real Estate for giving them the opportunity to provide a safe and warm home for their families in their new home of Philadelphia.

REMEMBERING JOSEPHINE BLOW: THE MAYOR OF CHESTER AVENUE AND HEART OF SOUTHWEST PHILLY

By Kou Dolo

All Photos Courtesy: Edith Sugie Dixon

Southwest Philadelphia has lost a legend. Josephine Blow, affectionately known as “Mrs. Josephine” and “the Mayor of Chester Avenue,” passed away at the age of 90 on November 20, leaving behind a legacy of unwavering service, love, and grit. For over four decades, she was the beating heart of the community, a force of nature who embraced everyone, no matter their background, with open arms and a no-nonsense attitude.

Mrs. Josephine wasn’t just a resident of Southwest Philly; she was its lifeblood. Her gift shop on Chester Avenue, which she ran for nearly 50 years, became a cornerstone of the community—a place where people felt seen, supported, and connected. She was the kind of person who knew everyone’s name, listened to their struggles, and offered whatever help she could, often without being asked. Her passion for inclusion and her deep commitment to embracing people of all backgrounds were shaped by her own family history.

“

“I WILL MISS WALKING THE CORRIDOR AND SEEING HER INTERACT WITH PEOPLE—SHE EMBRACED EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR NATIONALITY OR WHERE THEY CAME FROM” – VOFFEE JABATEH, CEO OF ACANA



Below: Mrs. Blow loved stuffed animals! Here she is holding a stuffed reindeer being given away at the 12th District's annual holiday party for needy children.



PHILLY SOUTHWEST VIEW 20

Mrs. Josephine was the child of immigrant parents who migrated from Jamaica in search of a better life. Growing up, she witnessed firsthand the challenges her parents faced and the strength it took to build a life in a new country. This experience instilled in her a fierce sense of empathy and a lifelong mission to welcome and support everyone, regardless of their nationality, race, or origin. She understood the importance of community, and she worked tirelessly to ensure that no one ever felt left out or forgotten.

"Mrs. Josephine was grandma to every child," said Voffee Jabateh, CEO of the African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA), where she served as a dedicated board member. "She was a no-nonsense woman who babysat countless children in the community without ever asking for payment. I will miss walking the corridor and seeing her interact with people—she embraced everyone, regardless of their nationality or where they came from. You could tell she truly loved what she did."



Josephine Blow (left) joins fellow members of the 12th District Police District Advisory Council (PDAC) to give an award to captain's aide Katrina Giddings (right) on Community Day.



Josephine Blow (right) with Mrs. George Fencil at the 2015 George Fencil Awards, given to Philadelphia's top police officer, 2015 (Officer Joe Young).

Known for speaking her mind, Mrs. Josephine was never one to shy away from the truth. She didn't just care about her community—she fought for it. Whether serving as block captain for several Chester Avenue streets, advocating for struggling families, or mentoring others, she led with strength, compassion, and an unshakable belief that anything was possible. "For the 20 years I knew her," Mr. Jabateh shared, "I never heard her say, 'This is impossible to do.' That can-do attitude is something I learned from her, and it's something I'll always carry with me."

Her influence stretched far and wide, from local businesses to recreation centres like Francis J. Myers and Kingsessing, where she worked to create safe spaces for children and families. Her leadership on community boards, including ACANA and the Southwest CDC, further demonstrated her lifelong dedication to building a stronger, more united Southwest Philly.



Pennsylvania House Speaker Joanna McCClinton and Josephine Blow receive awards from members of the West Philly Journal at Oak Tree Health in West Philadelphia.



Josephine Blow addresses residents at the monthly Community Workshop at the 12th Police District in Southwest Philadelphia.



From left to right: Retired 12th District community relations officer Joe Young, Sgt. Ronald Davis, Josephine Blow, Police Officer Adrian Hospedale, the late Dorothy Roberts, Christine Riddick at a Valentine's Day celebration in the roll call room at the 12th District in Southwest Philadelphia.

To many, she was a mentor; to others, she was a friend; and to all, she was a symbol of resilience. Whether she was walking the streets of Chester Avenue, lending words of encouragement, or holding community leaders accountable, Mrs. Josephine was always there—steadfast and unyielding. Her presence commanded respect because it

came from a place of genuine care. Southwest Philadelphia will undoubtedly feel her absence. The corridors of Chester Avenue will be quieter without her voice, her laughter, and her indomitable spirit. But as we mourn her loss, we also celebrate her life and the countless ways she made this community stronger. Mrs. Josephine taught us to embrace one another, to

speak up for what's right, and to believe that no challenge is insurmountable. Rest in peace, Mrs. Josephine Blow, the Mayor of Chester Avenue. Your spirit, your love, and your legacy will live on in the streets you walked and the people you embraced. Southwest Philadelphia is better because of you, and we will carry your memory forward.

PHILA AFRICATOWN: BUILDING LEGACY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

By Ama Addo



In the heart of Southwest Philadelphia lies a vibrant Afro-Diasporan entrepreneurial community—a diverse network of business owners with shared African heritage and cultural influence. This includes local African-American Philadelphian business owners and entrepreneurs from countries such as Trinidad, Liberia, Mali, Jamaica, Ghana, and beyond, all contributing to a thriving commerce scene. With an estimated 1000 businesses in the area, Southwest Philadelphia's fabric has the framework to become a collective powerhouse.

The African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) has pledged to drive the development of Southwest Philadelphia, and bridge the gap between the diaspora, with the **Phila Africatown project**.

Phila Africatown is a hub for the African diaspora, located in Southwest Philadelphia. It will provide services that promote business exchange and development, celebrate culture and performing arts, give skills and employment training, support trade between Africa, Caribbean and the US, deliver technical assistance, lessen the digital divide and bring lodging/hotels to the area.

The ultimate goal of the Phila Africatown project is to eliminate poverty, increase business ownership and develop Southwest Philadelphia as a tourist destination point for global communities to experience. Initiatives include real estate, Philadelphia African Restaurant Week, the ACANA festival, the

“The need for change bulldozed a road down the center of my mind”
-Maya Angelou



Tsehaitu Abye of African Communities Together, Yves Marie Desir of Crayons for Haiti, Brother Rashie-Abdul-Samad of ACAF, and Ama Addo of Perfect Place Real Estate at ACANA after Phila Africatown Town Hall event.

African and Caribbean Business Council of Greater Philadelphia's (ACBC) Business Forum, a digital business directory, and more.

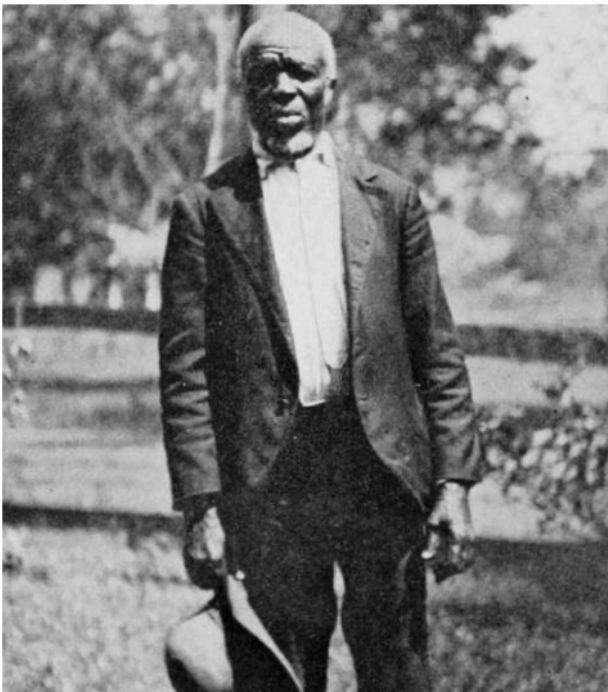
The original Africatown, located in Mobile, Alabama, is known for being the settlement town where the last illegally trafficked Africans were brought in the United States. In Zora Neale Hurston's novel 'Barracoon: The Story of the Last Black Cargo', Cudjoe Louis, born Oluale Kossola in Benin, recounts his life growing up in Benin and being trafficked from Ouidah, Benin to Mobile Alabama, where he was enslaved for a period of time. In 1866, after being freed, Louis formed 'Africatown' in Mobile, Alabama, with other freed Africans brought alongside him via the Clotilda slave ship. Similar to the Phila Africatown, Alabama's

Africatown survived and thrived because African descendants owned businesses and real estate, supported each other, and leveraged fluid business exchange. The Phila Africatown project will provide a foundation for the African diaspora to thrive as a collective, and exemplify the importance of culture as a medium for economic growth. It also has the potential to **promote Black economic independence, ownership and create stronger business infrastructure in the region.** Through creating pathways for local entrepreneurs to access networks, capital and resources to thrive, Phila Africatown could play a major role in closing wealth and entrepreneurial gaps for underserved communities.

City officials have supported the progress that Phila Africatown brings. Congressman Dwight Evans, for example, says “Africatown is a vibrant space in Philadelphia for the African diaspora to thrive culturally and economically. I’m proud of ACANA’s leadership in making this vision a reality.”

Africatown’s Africa Center is in development and will feature a healthcare center, a childcare center, business office space, and a restaurant. Located at 55th and Chester Avenue, it will serve as a vibrant hub for the community, offering essential resources, services, and opportunities for connection and growth.

Stay tuned for the Phila Africatown project’s progress via their website <https://philaafricatown.org/about-us/>, and contact me for a free commercial or residential real estate consultation at www.amarealestateagent.com.



(Cudjoe Lewis, 1841 - 1935. Photo via Picryl.)



Ama 'Real Estate Agent' Addo

Ama Addo is a real estate agent, writer and communication strategist based in Philadelphia. As a Ghanaian-American, Ama is intrigued by the intermingling of culture, history, and business as a catalyst for economic empowerment. Check out her stories at asieduasimprint.com, and contact her for a free residential or commercial real estate consultation at www.amarealestateagent.com or 609-831-2247.



SOUTHWEST PHILLY
A VISUAL JOURNEY OF OUR COMMUNITY

SINGLE MOTHERS REDEEMING THE TIME

Wonder K Guannu, MSW



Time is one asset that we cannot get back. Is always on the move, eager to reach the next day. For single mothers like Sarah, each day unfolds as a whirlwind of duties and responsibilities that often feel weary. The pressures of managing household tasks, work commitments, and parenting can create a tidal wave of demands that crash down at every turn, leaving her feeling overwhelmed. Yet, within this chaos, Sarah clings to a flicker of hope for a brighter future. The journey of redeeming her time might seem like an uphill battle, but with the right mindset and a strategic approach, she discovers that achieving balance and fulfillment is not only possible but also within her grasp.

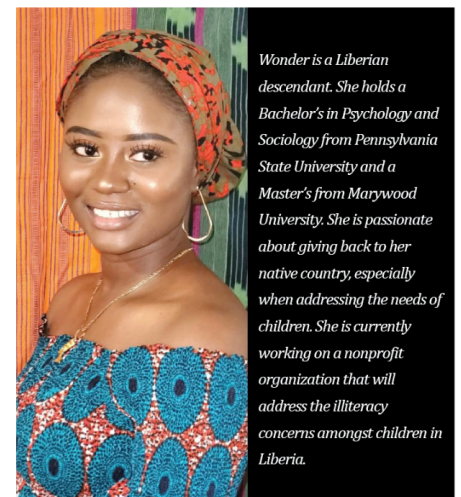
Last year, during the mid-fall season, Sarah embraced her responsibilities with newfound determination. She meticulously organized her tasks, creating a system that allowed her to focus on what truly mattered in her life. Understanding the importance of self-care, she intentionally carved out

time each day to nurture her physical and emotional well-being, indulging in activities that rejuvenated her spirit. In her pursuit of personal growth, Sarah actively sought out opportunities to learn and acquire new skills. Whether it was enrolling in a class, reading insightful books, or engaging in creative projects, she was committed to expanding her horizons. Moreover, she recognized the value of spiritual practices, weaving them into her daily routine. This time for reflection deepened her connection to her life.

Having taken the first step on her journey, Sarah meticulously crafted a well thought out schedule designed to help her manage her various responsibilities with greater efficiency. This well-structured plan serves as a vital tool, allowing her to track how she spends her time while pinpointing areas that may require adjustments. As she thoughtfully allocates time for her professional duties, the demands of childcare, and essential household chores, she also makes a conscious effort to carve out moments just for herself. Each day, Sarah approaches with eager anticipation, ready to tackle the challenges that lie ahead. With a determined spirit, she navigates her responsibilities, making thoughtful choices that enable her to make the most of her time.

Recognizing that procrastination can be insidiously damaging to her goals, she consciously steers clear of any temptations that might lead her astray. Being intentional in her time management is crucial; she precisely plans her days, prioritizing tasks that align with her aspirations. Distractions lurk around every corner, threatening to

derail her progress, but Sarah remains vigilant and focused on her journey. Life often presents unexpected twists and turns that test her resilience and commitment. Rather than succumbing to these challenges, she faces each one with determination, knowing that they are mere stepping stones on her path. By staying true to her goals and maintaining her momentum, she continues to move forward, unwavering in her pursuit of success. Sarah dedicated a portion of her time to thoughtfully assess her progress, ensuring that she was moving purposefully toward her goals. To her, redeeming the time wasn't about the relentless grind of work; instead, it encompassed a harmonious blend of fulfilling her responsibilities and carving out precious moments for rest and spiritual renewal. By living with a clear sense of intention and concentrating on her life's purpose, Sarah was not just marking time—she was seizing every opportunity to deepen her faith and extend her hand to help others. She recognized that the world is waiting for her unique contributions and the impact she can make.



Wonder is a Liberian descendant. She holds a Bachelor's in Psychology and Sociology from Pennsylvania State University and a Master's from Marywood University. She is passionate about giving back to her native country, especially when addressing the needs of children. She is currently working on a nonprofit organization that will address the illiteracy concerns amongst children in Liberia.

Wonder K. Guannu

A CLEANER SOUTHWEST PHILLY: THANKS TO MAYOR PARKER & THE TCB PROGRAM!

PSWV Staff

Hey neighbors, have you noticed that our business corridors have become a little cleaner? Thanks to Mayor Cherelle Parker and the Taking Care of Business (TCB) Program, led by the Philadelphia Department of Commerce, our commercial districts are becoming more welcoming and vibrant for both residents and business owners.

Recently, the TCB Program hosted an **expo** to provide local organizations and community leaders with opportunities to engage in the city's cleaning efforts. The event featured informative sessions for cleaning companies and organizations citywide, outlining how they can participate in and benefit from the program. ACANA is actively involved in this initiative, which manages the **Woodland, Chester, Elmwood, and parts of Baltimore business corridors**.

ACANA's dedicated **Cleaning Ambassadors** work tirelessly to keep these corridors clean and inviting. Their hard work was recently highlighted when



L to R our editor in chief Ms. Kou Dolo along with owner of Chocolate City Hair Salon on Woodlnd Avenue in SW Philly Ms. Mariame Tadjiddine Corridor manager during a tour of the business corridors



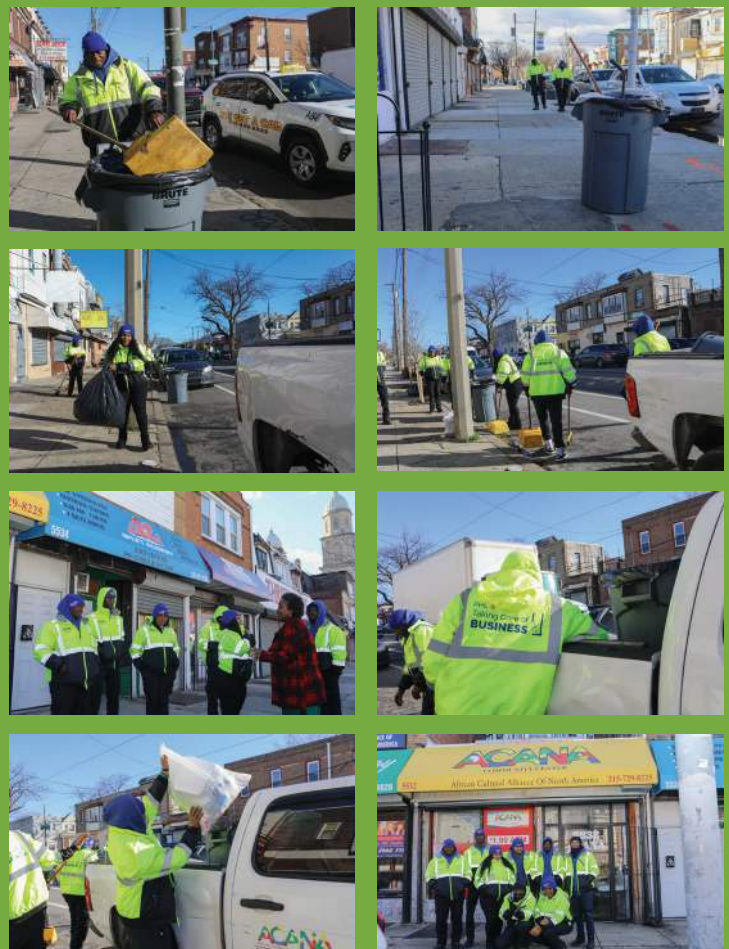
L to R our editor in chief Ms. Kou Dolo along with owner of Sekpeh Prosperity grocery store in SW Philly on Elmwood Avenue and Ms. Mariam Tadjiddine Corridor manager during a tour of the business corridors

the Commerce Department shadowed **Ms. Mariame Tadjiddine**, Commercial Corridor Manager, along with the team, to experience firsthand the dedication and hard work that goes into keeping our corridors clean. Their commitment to keeping Southwest Philadelphia's commercial districts well-maintained is a testament to the success of the TCB Program.

We encourage you to **acknowledge the Cleaning Ambassadors** when you see them working hard to keep our streets clean. Their efforts contribute significantly to maintaining the beauty and vitality of Southwest Philadelphia.

We also appreciate **Mayor Cherelle Parker** and the Department of Commerce for their leadership and commitment to this initiative.

Check out the photos of our Cleaning Ambassadors in action!



PHILADELPHIA NATIVE TAISHA JONES BECOMES CO-OWNER OF JAKE'S STEAKS, BRINGING QUALITY CHEESESTEAKS TO SOUTHWEST PHILADELPHIA

PSWV Staff



“

“WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF THE BEST CHEESESTEAKS IN PHILADELPHIA, NO ONE EVER MENTIONS SOUTHWEST PHILADELPHIA,” BUT WE HAVE A LOT TO OFFER, AND JAKE'S STEAKS IS HERE TO PROVE THAT.”

Southwest Philadelphia just got a little tastier. Taisha Jones, a proud Philadelphia native, has become the co-owner of Jake's Steaks, a newly reimagined cheesesteak shop located at 5550 Chester Avenue. Along with her business partners, Jones saw a golden opportunity to bring high-quality cheesesteaks to a community often overlooked in the city's rich culinary scene.

“When people think of the best cheesesteaks in Philadelphia, no one ever mentions Southwest Philadelphia,” Jones said. “But we have a lot to offer, and Jake's Steaks is here to prove that.”

The decision to purchase and revamp the business stemmed from a shared vision among the new ownership team to address a gap in the neighborhood's dining options. Known for its vibrant culture and tight-knit community, Southwest Philadelphia has long deserved its spot in the conversation about the city's iconic food offerings.

Jake's Steaks promises not just a great cheesesteak but also a dedication to quality, flavor, and community. Jones and her team aim to create a welcoming space where locals and visitors alike can enjoy an authentic Philly experience without having to leave their neighborhood.

With plans to host community events and highlight local flavors, Jones hopes to make Jake's Steaks more than just a cheesesteak shop—it's poised to become a hub for the Southwest Philadelphia community.

“Cheesesteaks are a part of Philadelphia's identity, and its time Southwest Philly gets the recognition it deserves,” Jones said.

Jake's Steaks is now open for business at 5550 Chester Avenue. Whether you're a cheesesteak aficionado or a curious newcomer, Jones invites everyone to taste what Southwest Philadelphia has to offer.

ACANAFEST 2024: A SPECTACULAR CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

PSWV Staff



The **16th edition of ACANAFEST**, held on **August 4, 2024**, was nothing short of **spectacular!** This year, due to **ongoing construction at the Great Plaza at Penn's Landing**, the festival found a new home at **Cherry Street Pier**—where it will return in 2025 for another **vibrant cultural celebration**.

This **annual festival**, a beloved highlight of the summer, once again proved why it remains a **community favorite**, drawing an **incredible crowd** and delivering **unforgettable moments**. The event was proudly sponsored by **ACANA, Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, PECO, and DBHIDS**, and expertly organized under the leadership of **Ms. Kou Dolo, Editor-in-Chief of Philly Southwest View Magazine**, and her dedicated team.

From **live music** to **interactive games**, **vibrant vendor stalls**, and **captivating performances**, ACANAFEST 2024 was a **true feast for the senses**. Attendees explored a dazzling array of **exquisite clothing**, **handcrafted jewelry**, **stunning artwork**, and **unique souvenirs**. And for the food lovers? An **incredible selection of delicious dishes** ensured that no one left hungry! The festival provided a **platform for local businesses, artists, and performers**, showcasing the rich **African and Caribbean cultural heritage** that makes Southwest Philadelphia such a dynamic and diverse community.

The festival reached a **fever pitch of excitement** as attendees eagerly awaited the **headline performance** by **Afrobeats legend, Awilo Longomba**. His **electrifying stage presence** and **high-energy beats** had the crowd on their

feet, dancing and singing along to every hit. It was a performance that left a **lasting impression**—one that had to be **experienced to be believed!**

Looking Ahead: ACANAFEST 2025

If you missed this year's festival, don't worry—**ACANAFEST returns on August 3, 2025, at Cherry Street Pier!** Be sure to mark your calendars for another **incredible celebration of African and Caribbean culture, music, and community spirit**.

Now Accepting Vendor & Artist Applications for ACANAFEST 2025!

Exciting news! **ACANAFEST 2025 is now accepting applications for vendors and local artists** who want to showcase their talents and products at next year's festival. If you're interested in being part of this **dynamic cultural experience**, reach out to **Philly Southwest View Magazine** to **secure your spot!** This is more than just a festival—it's a **celebration of culture, business, and community**. We can't wait to see you next year!

Check out highlights from this year's event and relive the magic!

#ACANAFEST2024 #ACANA #CherryStreetPier #CulturalCelebration #CommunityVibes #VendorOpportunities #ArtistShowcase





OCT-DEC ISSUE



ARTS & CULTURE



PHILLY SOUTHWEST VIEW 30



OCT-DEC ISSUE



ARTS & CULTURE



31 PHILLY SOUTHWEST VIEW



OCT-DEC ISSUE

ARTS & CULTURE





PRAISES FOR JENNIFER BENNETT: COMMEMORATING PERFECT PLACE REAL ESTATE'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

PSWV Staff

On Saturday, 10/16, Perfect Place Real Estate held an event celebrating its 15 year anniversary. But it was more than an awards banquet, but a showcasing of the interconnecting bonds of community, family generations and the African Diaspora.

Perfect Place Real Estate's office is located in a modest building along the 52nd St. corridor and like its owner, Jennifer Bennett, it has lived many lives in the heart of a West Philadelphia community that is rapidly changing. Hearing Jennifer Bennett speak is also hearing her philosophy about community and

entrepreneurship naturally bubble up- she can't help it. If you listen, you hear themes repeated- entrepreneurship, family, community, and Pan-Africanism.

Introducing her ex-husband and father of her child, might have been an awkward moment for some, but for her it was an opportunity to share the literal fruits of her labor and connections. She beams as says she didn't get the food we were all anxiously waiting for, free but at a discount. Her former beau smiles cheekily and ensures us it was free.

The intergenerational feeling of the event felt intentional, babies were in the crowd, her grandchildren filtered through calling out to their maumau as they passed by mid-speech. They were not treated as an interruption but a part of the festivities.

Her grandson even shared about his tie dye shirt making business which has ad in the anniversary booklet distributed at the event.

Unable to resist giving other black owned businesses a moment to shine, each business owning guest shared their pitch.



But perhaps, what was the most moving thing to see was the through line to someone she says saved her life and loved her in a way the felt akin to family, to seeing her young mentees, folks she supported through difficult times, speak about their Non-profit. At one point she looked into Lina's eyes and said, "When I met you, I thought you could do anything, and I still feel that way."

Jennifer is not only a talented realtor and community member, she is also a gifted storyteller, who can delicately weave stories of struggle and difficulty while simultaneously making case for mutual connection and investment.



We heard about her difficult times after establishing Perfect Place Realty Estate and how a chance meeting with the owners of ACAF, an Afrocentric store led her to making a documentary film about the collective that included owner brothers who established it.

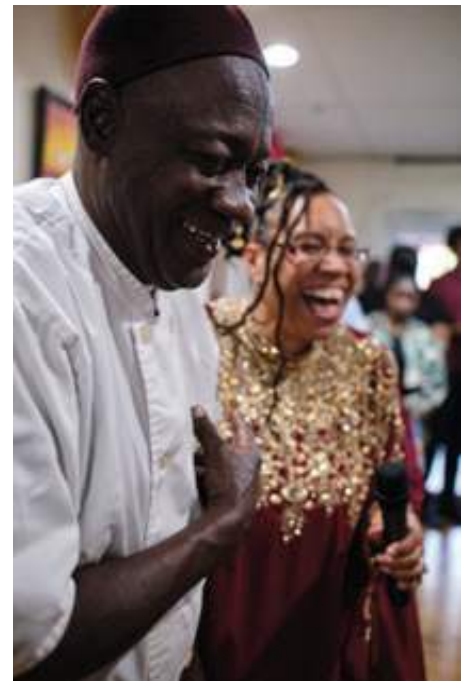
She shouts out the daughter of someone who could not be present and how his advice on how to navigate an interrupted real estate deal through a city program changed her life. She couldn't help but tell the story of how one of her current agents on the team called his sister to help the non-profit arm purchase the building, officially called the Baobab Centre. Though the Baobab Centre is on 52nd in

West Philly, Southwest Philadelphia was also in the building, with Voffee(sp) from ACANA sharing about the funding of Africatown, the intersections of needs in the African, Caribbean and African American community.

Jennifer's own family has connections to Ghana and Niger. The latter being the birth country of her ex husband (insert name) who also runs Small Pot, which provided the delicious meal. For most, receiving a citation from the city would have been the highlight of the afternoon. But for Jennifer Bennett that was not the case.

Basking in the glow of the weaved connections that include her; her family, her community and her future seemed to provide her much more joy and satisfaction. A testament to the triumph over the years of struggle and hard work, as if to say, we made it... together.

Much more than a celebration, this was the shining of a bright star on 52nd, a place brimming with the connections and vision that models what being a thriving family owned business means to Philadelphia.



AFAHO HEALTH SCREENING DAY AND OPENING OF AFAHO HEALTH CENTER

PSWV Staff



The African Family Health Organization (AFAHO) hosted its annual Fall Health Screening Day, drawing over 160 community members to an event focused on wellness and preparedness for the colder months. Over 65 flu vaccinations and nearly 40 COVID-19 vaccinations were administered, along with the distribution of 150 fresh food bags to families in need. A highlight of the event was the introduction of a Stress Management & Wellness station, where attendees had one-on-one conversations with AFAHO's licensed clinical counselor. The station received overwhelming praise, with one participant sharing, "I would do every day if I could," underscoring the event's positive impact. Building on its mission to improve health outcomes for underserved populations, AFAHO opened the AFAHO Health Center, a new clinic dedicated to providing healthcare services for uninsured individuals. Located at 875 Main Street, Darby, PA, the center offers culturally sensitive and holistic wellness care to the community.





OCT-DEC ISSUE

EVENTS



OCT-DEC ISSUE

EVENTS



39 PHILLY SOUTHWEST VIEW





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PHILLY SOUTHWEST VIEW MAGAZINE AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our publication primarily serves Black and Brown communities, including immigrants and local small business owners, local institutions, and elected officials, with an age range of 21-75 across all genders. Our readers are deeply engaged in topics like finance, social services, education, housing, health and wellness, self-development, poverty reduction, entertainment, and politics. They are working-class individuals, entrepreneurs, and business owners who value family, community involvement, and safer neighborhoods.

CIRCULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

With a robust circulation of 7,000 print copies and over 20,000 digital distributions, our magazine reaches readers through community and business corridor distributions, local government officials at community events, and a substantial email list of over 20,000 clients in Philadelphia.

AD PLACEMENT OPTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Please see the attached rate sheet.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Our magazine is published quarterly, focusing on themes relevant to our audience's interests and needs.

CORE EDITORIAL THEMES

- 1. Trade and Commerce:** Highlighting local and immigrant-owned businesses, trade opportunities, and economic development initiatives within our community.
- 2. Health and Wellness:** Covering a broad spectrum of topics from mental health support to physical wellness programs, tailored to the needs and interests of our readership.
- 3. Arts and Culture:** Showcasing the vibrant arts scene within our community and the city of Philadelphia, including local artists, cultural festivals, and art education programs.
- 4. Women and Children:** Addressing issues and opportunities relevant to women and children in our community, including support services, empowerment programs, and family-friendly activities.
- 5. Education:** Highlighting educational resources, innovative learning initiatives, and success stories from schools and educational programs across the community.
- 6. Financial Wellness:** Providing readers with information on financial planning, savings strategies, investment opportunities, and resources for financial assistance.
- 7. Community Development:** Highlighting projects and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life in underserved communities. Projects such as urban planning, public spaces enhancement, environmental sustainability, and community-led initiatives.

SPECIAL OFFERS AND PACKAGES

Please see the attached rate sheet.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For advertising inquiries, please contact:

- Kou Dolo
- Phone: 302-367-0608
- Email: kdolo@acanaus.org

UNIQUE POSITIONING

Our magazine stands out for its focused engagement with Black and Brown communities, offering content that resonates deeply with our readers' interests and lives. We provide advertisers unique access to a diverse, dynamic audience passionate about improving their lives and their communities. Through our targeted themes, we create an environment where ads are more than just placements; they're contributions to the ongoing dialogue about growth, wellness, and success in our communities.

Advertisement may now be purchased online at phillysouthwestview.com

Specialty Pages Inside cover \$500 Inside back \$500 Back cover \$600				
	FULL PAGE Inside 8.725 x 11.125 (Includes .125 bleed)	HALF PAGE Vertical 4.25 x 11.125 Horizontal 8.725 x 5.5	QUARTER Vertical 4.25 x 5.5 Horizontal 5.5 x 4.25	EIGHTH Vertical 2.15 x 5.5 Horizontal 4.25 x 2.75
	1 issue \$400 4 issues \$1440	1 issue \$200 4 issues \$720	1 issue \$150 4 issues \$540	1 issue \$75 4 issues \$270

*Price shown reflects 10% discount for 4 consecutive issues, paid in-advance

Contact name	<input type="text"/>	Contact Number	<input type="text"/>
Business Name	<input type="text"/>		
Mailing Address	<input type="text"/>		
Town, State & Zip	<input type="text"/>		
Email	<input type="text"/>		

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Signature

Please mail check payment with this form to: ACANA, 5530 Chester Ave. Philadelphia Pa. 19143 (Do not mail cash)
 Credit Card Payments Can be Made to acanaus.com/paypal

ADVERTISING AND CONTENT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

March issue
 June issue
 September issue
 December issue

February 15th
 April 15th
 July 15th
 October 15th



DESIGN SERVICES AVAILABLE

Submission of professional print-quality artwork is preferred. We accept pdf, png, jpg, gif or eps format, electronically. Philly Southwest View will design simple eighth-page ads at no charge, however, any other size ad requiring design or ads that are not camera ready, will be billed an additional \$95. Please provide required fonts, high resolution logos and style preference choices, otherwise, the designer has sole discretion for all font and layout decisions. Submit online at phillysouthwestview.org or email kdolo@acanaus.org

Philly Southwest View is published four times a year as a 40-page, glossy 8.5x11 magazine.

All advertising submissions and content are subject to review and approval by the Philly Southwest View editorial staff.

ACANA, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD (SOUTHWEST PHILLY)

African Cultural Alliance of North America Inc.(ACANA)
5530 Chester Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143
(215) 729-8225 ext 105
<https://acanaus.org>

1. Free Tax Preparation for individuals and small businesses
2. Food Distribution-Distribution of fresh vegetables, fruits and proteins to all Philadelphians in need. Bi-weekly, Fridays 12PM-3PM. Please call to request.
3. Women's Financial Literacy Program- Women learn to get their money right, learn to make their personal and family budget, learn to develop saving habits and how to take their credit score to the next level.
4. Benefits Applications- Applications for public assistance such as SNAP, Cash and Medicaid can be submitted by one of our Benefits Specialists from our office as well as applications for PA Rent Rebate, Rental Assistance, LIHEAP, and other programs.
5. Health Screenings- There are some conditions that a person can have for some time before we even realize it. For this reason, ACANA provides free testing for blood pressure, blood sugar levels and HIV. Referrals are made to outside resources for individuals who present other conditions or challenges.
6. Mental Health Case Management- Provides access to free community based mental health resources such as counseling services

and others.

7. Social Media for Business Growth- Provide training for small and medium businesses on how to use social media platforms to grow their business.

Southwest Philadelphia Community Development Corporation (SWCDC)
6328 Paschall Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19142
Phone: (215) 729-0800
www.southwestcdc.org

Assistance for: Mortgage Assistance (HEMAP), Home Purchase Counseling, Property Tax Delinquency, Tax Lien Counseling, Tenant Counseling, Afterschool Programs, Summer Camp, Financial Workshops, Rental Assistance, Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF), Rent/Tax Rebates, LIHEAP, utility assistance. Also make referrals for: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Tax Services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program(SNAP)

CITYWIDE SERVICES

LEGAL

Community Legal Services (2 Locations)

1424 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 981-3700

1410 W. Erie Avenue (at Broad Street)
Philadelphia, PA 19140
Phone: (215) 227-2400

Free Legal assistance for low income Philadelphia residents for problems with: Welfare, SNAP benefits, Medical Assistance, Social Security, Veterans Benefits, Unemployment Compensation, Homeownership/deeds/tangled titles, Property Taxes, Bankruptcy & Debt Collection, Probate, Lawsuits (defendants only), Employment, Landlord/Tenant, Child welfare allegations, Loans and Consumer Scams, DHS cases, Criminal Records, and more.

Philadelphia Legal Assistance
The Cast Iron Building
718 Arch Street, Suite 300n
Philadelphia, Pa 19106
Phone: (215) 981-3800

Free Legal assistance for low income Philadelphia residents for problems with: Welfare, SNAP benefits, Medical

Assistance, Child Support (plaintiffs only), child custody, Protection from Abuse Orders (Plaintiffs only), Unemployment Compensation, Homeownership/deeds/tangled titles, Property Taxes, Bankruptcy & Debt Collection, Probate, Lawsuits (defendants only), Divorce, Child welfare allegations, and more.

Senior Law Center
Two Penn Center
1500 John F. Kennedy Blvd, Suite 1501
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215)988-1244 or (877) 727-7529
Website: <https://Seniorlawcenter.org>

Legal services for seniors aged 60 and over. Assist with problems such as

Housing: landlord/tenant matters, evictions, homeownership matters, mortgage foreclosures, tax foreclosures, sheriff sales, clearing title to property/tangled titles, deed transfers, real estate and inheritance taxes, other housing problems facing older homeowners and tenants
 Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation: prevention of elder abuse, family violence, financial exploitation, defiant trespass, other family law problems
 Grandfamilies/Kinship Care: custody and support for grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship caregivers, grandparent visitation
 Advance Life Planning: simple wills, healthcare and financial powers of attorney, advance health care directives, living wills; administration of small estates; Medicaid estate recovery counseling. Most life planning services are provided by volunteer pro bono attorneys in partnership with SeniorLAW Center
 Consumer Protection (limited services): consumer fraud, home repair contractor problems, unfair sales practices, collection and debt problems, property

damage, utilities, warranties and contracts, other consumer problems

AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania
1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19107
<https://www.aidslawpa.org>

Call (215) 587-9377 or (267) 520-0024 and leave a message. All call returned within 8 business hours. They also make home and hospital visits.

Free legal services to PA and South Jersey residents living with HIV. Services available for Compassionate Release for Inmates, Confidentiality of HIV-Related Information, Criminal Records Resolution, Criminalization of HIV, Discrimination Against People Living with HIV, Financial and Consumer Debt, Housing and Utilities, Identification Documents and Name Changes, Immigration, Public and Private Benefits: Income Replacement and Health Care, Standby Guardianship, Testing Protocols, Unemployment Compensation, Wills, Living Wills, Power of Attorney

Philadelphia VIP
<https://www.phillyvip.org>
All inquiries should be made online through the website.

This organization inspires and supports attorneys to provide free legal representation for individuals and small businesses who cannot afford a lawyer. They assist with issues such as: eviction, mortgage foreclosure, probate, deed transfer, quiet title, estate planning, debt collection defense, name change, income tax issues, tort and auto accident defense, divorce, custody, spousal and child support, guardianship, adoption,

HOUSING

Heater Hotline Program
Energy Coordinating Agency(ECA)
Call 215-568-7190
Or send message through ECA website at ecasavesenergy.org

Makes emergency repairs to heaters or replaces heaters if they are beyond repair:

Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP)
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging(PCA)
Phone: (215)765-9040
<https://www.pcacares.org> (program can be found under Housing Resources)

Makes minor repairs in homes owned by residents aged 60 or older

Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP)
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging(PCA)
Phone: (215)765-9040
<https://www.pcacares.org> (program can be found under Housing Resources)

Makes minor repairs in homes owned by residents aged 60 or older

Adaptive Modifications Program
City of Philadelphia Division of Housing and Community Development
1234 Market St., 17th Floor,
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 448-2160
<https://phdcphila.org>

Properties can receive improvements that make it accessible to people with permanent physical disabilities.

Basic Systems Repair Program
City of Philadelphia Division of Housing and Community Development
1234 Market St., 17th Floor,
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 448-2160
<https://phdcphila.org>

It provides free repairs to eligible owner-occupied homes in Philadelphia. They work on electrical systems, plumbing, heating, structural issues and roofing.

Restore, Repair, Renew: Philadelphia Neighborhood Home Preservation Loan Program
Clarifi
Phone: (215) 866-5200
Email: rrr@clarifi.org
<https://www.clarifi.org>

This program helps Philadelphia homeowners access low-interest loans to make home improvements.

Low-income senior citizen Real Estate Tax freeze
City of Philadelphia Department of Revenue
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd,
Concourse
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 686-6442
www.phila.gov/senior-freeze

Under the Real Estate Tax freeze, the amount of property tax you pay each year will not increase, even if your property assessment or the tax rate changes. If your tax liability decreases due to a lower property assessment or a tax rate decrease, the amount of Real Estate Tax you owe will also be lowered to the new amount.

PARENTS & CHILDREN

WORKREADY Youth Summer Work Experience Program
Phone: (267)502-3900
<https://www.workready.org>

This program offers paid work experience to youth ages 12-24. Apply through June because work experiences take place July to August.

Incentive-based programs are targeted towards young people, 12-24, with little to no previous work experience. Young people can earn up to \$595 in incentive-based programs. Wage-based programs are targeted towards young people, 14-24, with previous work or leadership experience. Young people earn \$9 per hour in wage-based programs.

Southwest Family Service Center
Catholic Social Services of Philadelphia
6214 Grays Street
Philadelphia, PA 19142
Phone: (215)724.8550

Information about WIC services for pregnant moms and children, Food Pantry, Diaper Pantry, BenePhilly Services, Rent/Utility (When available), Lady's Locker (feminine hygiene pantry) Parenting Programsto make home improvements.

FOOD

The City of Philadelphia has put together a list of different types of food giveaway sites- 1. Food Sites (all residents eligible, no ID or proof of income needed) that provide supplemental food for households 2. Senior Meal Sites provide meals for adults 60 and over. There are hundreds of sites doing food distribution throughout the City, including many that are not included on this list. To see the list of sites please go to: <https://www.phila.gov/food/> A few of the food distribution sites in Southwest Philadelphia are:

Resurrection Community Church
6200 Dicks Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19142

Wednesdays, 9:30am – 3:30pm

Southwest Family Services Center
6214 Grays Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19142

Thursdays, 10am – 2 pm

Ezekial Baptist Church
5701 Grays Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Thursdays, 9am – 11am

New Testament Church of God
935 S. 53rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Saturdays, 12pm – 3pm
 Sundays 12pm - 2pm

Eastwick United Methodist Church
8325 Lindbergh Blvd
Philadelphia, PA 19153

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, 9am-1pm

SENIOR SITE

Southwest Senior Center
6916 Elmwood Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19142
(215)937-1880

Call to sign up for meal delivery

MENTAL HEALTH

Black Women's Health Alliance of Philadelphia
www.pbwha.org
1324 West Clearfield Street, North Philly

Formed in 1983 by a coalition of 100 Philadelphia women, the Black Women's Health Alliance seeks to improve healthcare and reduce health disparities for Black women and their families. Their programs include "Prime Time Sister Circle," which is a support group focused on stress management, fitness, and nutrition, as well as family leadership and teen dating violence prevention.

Black Women Wellness

www.app.acuityscheduling.com

Local fitness instructor and motivational coach Lauren Leavell hosts Black Womxn Wellness events, a virtual space for Black womxn and femmes to openly chat, laugh, and connect. The next upcoming event on June 10th is free, and

you can sign up here. You can also follow Leavell's Instagram for future events, which are paid, but always have scholarships available.

Hike & Heal

Led by local wellness pro Brandi Nicole, Hike & Heal hosts private and group healing circles (and hikes, when it's safe to do so) focused on self-care and empowerment. This week's group event, "Hopeful and Healing Hours," is curated specifically for Black women to navigate current emotions and experiences via breath work, meditation, journaling, and mindful movement. You can sign up for free here.

My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Cares

www.mbkcares.com

MBKCares, a support network for area residents, began in 2007 when founder Ihsan Hines lost his younger brother, Atif, to suicide. In pre-COVID times, the nonprofit hosted free monthly community nights in Cobbs Creek to discuss mental health and suicide prevention/awareness. Currently, MBKCares has been running weekly virtual conversations, ranging from parenting and finances to veterans and art therapy.

Oshun Family Center
505 Old York Road, Jenkintown

www.oshunfamilycenter.org

Oshun Family Center helped found Philadelphia's Maternal Wellness Village, a group of birth workers (including doula, lactation, and infertility services) that support and "empower communities throughout the African Diaspora." Additionally, the center is currently raising funds to provide free therapy to the Black community in and

around Philly. The services will be particularly aimed at supporting anyone who is currently experiencing emotional distress and trauma.

Radical Therapy Center
3828 Lancaster Avenue, 1st Floor,
Philadelphia

www.radicaltherapycenter.com

Located in West Philly, Radical Therapy Center serves as a safe, empowering space for clients who are marginalized. All their social workers are people of color, and prioritize understanding their own and clients' experiences from a lens of structural oppression and liberation. The team can help you navigate an array of issues, like micro-aggressions, trauma resolution, grief, panic, and diet culture.

Black Mental Health Alliance

www.blackmentalhealth.com

The Black Mental Health Alliance supports and empowers America's Black community with mental health programs, educational forums, and referral services.

Psychology Today therapist database

www.psychologytoday.com

This directory of counselors and therapists can be filtered and sorted by location, specialization, type of therapy and insurance.

Inclusive Therapists
www.inclusivetherapists.com

This database helps you find therapists whose practices center on marginalized populations, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; the LGBTQ+ community, neurodivergent people, and people with disabilities.

OCT-DEC ISSUE

Melanin & Mental Health www.melaninandmentalhealth.com

Melanin & Mental Health is an online organization connecting Black and Latinx communities with culturally-competent clinicians. Their podcast, "Between Sessions," centers on mental health issues in communities of color.

Therapy for Black Girls www.therapyforblackgirls.com

Therapy for Black Girls is a nationally-recognized online space dedicated to supporting Black women's and girls' mental health. Here, you can find a therapist (in your area and virtual), listen to their podcast, connect with other Black women.

National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network

www.nqttcn.com/en

This healing justice organization seeks to provide mental health services and resources for queer and trans people of color across North America.

Sista Afya www.sistaafya.com





Though Chicago-based, Sista Afya is offering teletherapy and online support groups for "Black women across the African Diaspora." Their resources page is a great tool for navigating mental health conditions, payment strategies, and supportive apps and hotlines.



Empowering Communities. Enriching Lives.

The African Cultural Alliance of North America, Inc. (ACANA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Southwest Philadelphia. For over 25 years, we have been serving our community and Philadelphia at large. Through innovative programs and culturally tailored services, we empower families, small businesses, and individuals to thrive.



5530 Chester Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143 | (215) 729-8225 | www.acanaus.org |    

OUR SERVICES

Community Development:

Africatown Philadelphia, small business support, and corridor revitalization

Cultural Inclusion:

ACANA Fest, African Restaurant Week, and cultural preservation efforts, Recording Studio, Murals Arts and Restaurant Tours, Youth Basketball Program

Health Services:

Free health clinic, Free Vaccination, wellness programs, Mental Health, Public Health Programs, Community Health Training for Collage and Profession Schools, Health Research (Community-centered Health research initiatives)

Legal Services:

Immigration Legal Services, Citizenship & Naturalization, Adjustment of Status, Family-Based Petitions, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Employment Authorization, Removal Defense, Asylum, VAWA Petitions (Violence Against Women Act), T & U Visas (for trafficking and crime victims), P Visas (for athletes and artists)

Social Services:

Free Benefits Assistance powered by The Promise (United Way): SNAP food assistance, Medicaid, TANF, Long-Term Care, Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, Mortgage Assistance, Free Tax Preparation

Education & Workforce Development:

ESL programs, Citizenship Preparation, Digital Literacy, and skills training