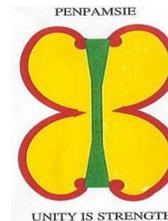


GHANAIAN ASSOCIATION OF TAMPA BAY

Non-Profit Association



PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisdom Darko
President

Kwamena Sankah
Vice President

Catherine Antwi
Secretary

Edith Boakye
Treasurer

Belinda Drapson
Organizing Secretary

Robert Ankuma
Financial Secretary

Christabel Agbozo
Public Relations

Ghanaian Association of Tampa Bay, Florida, Celebrates Ghana's 62nd Independence Anniversary and GATB's 10th Annual Traditional and Cultural Event.

The Ghanaian Association of Tampa Bay (GATB) in Florida over the weekend of March 9th, 2019, celebrated its 10th Annual Traditional and cultural event to commemorate Ghana's 62nd Independence Anniversary. The event was kicked off with a Town Hall meeting which was jointly hosted by GATB and the University of South Florida (USF), African Students Association (ASA) on the evening of March 8th, 2019. The grand Independence and cultural night followed on Saturday at the plush Holiday Inn Hotel, Westshore Tampa and a thanksgiving service on Sunday March 10th, 2019, at The Church of Pentecost, Tampa Assembly, of which His Excellency Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah Ghana's Ambassador to the United States was the guest of honor.

The ambassador was welcomed to Tampa, at the airport arrival hall by a group of Ghanaians in the community in colorful cultural ceremony. The provost and Vice president of USF Dr. Ralph Wilcox, then welcomed Ghana's Ambassador H.E. Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah to the USF campus.

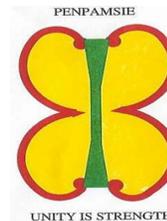
At a meeting at the Patel Center at USF, they discussed the relationships that the University of Ghana, Legon and University of Cape Coast in Ghana have established with USF over the years through the Global Academic Partnership (GAP) program which was spearheaded by Dr. Kofi Glover, the former Vice-Provost of USF.

The program which is designed to address the need for capacity-building among the faculty at the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast, the USF Ghana Scholars Program allows competitively selected Ghanaian faculty members to take time away from heavy teaching loads at their home institutions and complete the writing stage of their dissertations while at USF. Dr. Ralph Wilcox impressed upon HE Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah how successful this program has become in terms of tangible results it has yielded so far. He proposed to continue to assist Ghanaian academia to build the needed capacity that will help develop the necessary resources in moving Ghana forward.

As a research institution and a hub for scientific innovation, smart transportation technology is a leading new phenomenon that was well emphasized amongst others, of which the smart transportation technology will be advantageous to Ghana in decongesting its metropolitan cities such as Accra and Kumasi. The Ambassador accepted these proposals of which the Ghana Embassy will follow-up to draw a defined program.

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His Excellency also proposed the need for an entrepreneurial training that will assist Ghana in a more technological and practical form; from process onset, to process end, this will support the President of Ghana; Nana Akufo-Addo's vision of One-District-One-Factory. He further made an additional request to Dr. Ralph Wilcox to extend the GAP or any other scholarship program to both the undergraduate and graduate students in Ghana. The executives of the Ghanaian Association of Tampa Bay including their president, Mr. Wisdom Darko, who were present at the meeting supported these great ideas and promised their assistance and to act as a liaison where necessary.

Wisdom Darko
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Kwamena Sankah
Vice President

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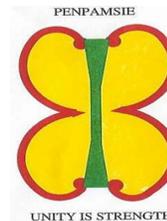
Christabel Agbozo
Public Relations

At the town hall meeting which was held at TECO Hall at USF, Dr. Ralph Wilcox had the distinguished honor to introduce Ghana's Ambassador to the United States H.E. Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah to the audience. Among the diverse attendees were Ghanaians in the community, USF faculty, students of different nationalities and local residents of the Tampa Bay area. His Excellency gave an insightful address; his remarks capturing the theme for the evening's discussion "Ghana: Beyond Aid, and the Role of the Diaspora". He impressed upon the Ghanaians in the Diaspora the importance of their contribution to the nation building effort. He encouraged them to form cooperatives or groups of likeminded people, if possible, to enable them execute projects back home in Ghana. These projects, he said, do not have to be on a large scale from the beginning. Such projects if embarked upon will add to the One-District-One-Factory agenda that has been set by Ghana's president. He emphasized that after 62 years of Independence our goal towards achieving the status of a developed nation can only start with changes which include Ghana Beyond Aid, effective resource utilization, responsible citizenry, efficient human capital management amongst many others.

During the Q & A session he addressed the concerns of Ghanaians ranging from domestic (Ghana) issues that pose some international challenges on the traveling Ghanaian as well as international issues that affect the well-being of Ghanaians in the USA at large. This conversational town hall meeting highlighted a host of problems and a host of possible solutions but above all educated the participants by giving clearer understanding to their questions. H.E. Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah encouraged all Ghanaians to register with the Ghana Embassy and update their contact information; this will enable the Embassy to disseminate vital information as well as reach out to any Ghanaians who may need assistance from the consulate or embassy.

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On Saturday March 9th, 2019, the grand durbar for the 62nd Independence celebration of Ghana and the 10th Annual Traditional and Cultural Night of the Ghanaian Association was underway with a colorful procession of Ghanaians and friends of Ghana, all dressed up in Kente cloth and other colorful Ghanaian and African fabrics. The event which was well attended had representations from the Ghanaian Association of Central Florida (GASF) and the United Ghanaian Association of South Florida (UGASF). Besides the show case of Ghanaian youth talent, the cultural exposition was breathtaking and climaxed to a peak with various Ghanaian traditional dances such as Damba Takai, Boborbo, Adgadza and Adowa.

Wisdom Darko
President

Mr. Wisdom Darko, the President of Ghanaian Association of Tampa Bay, Florida, in his welcome address and remarks, said the celebration was necessary, since the association has embarked on many worthy activities in bringing the Ghanaians in the community together. The Ghanaian heritage being very important, is rich and varied, as well as being a part of our history and culture, Mr. Darko emphasized that, since our heritage is people and community centered, it is imperative that we come together in an extended family setting to achieve our individual and collective goals considering Ghanaian culture.

Kwamena Sankah
Vice President

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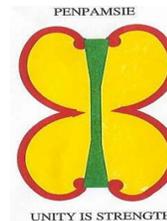
Christabel Agbozo
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Mr. Wisdom Darko also went further to talk about the association's inauguration of the Youth Educational & Mentorship Program in July of 2018. This program he said, seeks to provide mentorship to the Ghanaian youth as they stay connected with their heritage. The program provided some educational scholarship to the tune of \$3,200 to college bound Ghanaian youth who were eligible and qualified through the selection process. The Youth Achievement Award Ceremony he said, will be an annual event. The 2019 Youth Achievement Award Ceremony will be celebrated on July 13th, 2019 for which he asked attendees to support with their time and financial contribution.

The guest of honor and key note speaker, Ghana's Ambassador to the United States H.E. Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah, addressed the enthusiastic audience with a message of unity. He reminded the audience that in unity lies strength as exemplified in a gathering such as this. He touted Ghana's Independence as liberation and freedom from our colonial master and a beacon of hope that ultimately led to the independence of several African countries. His Excellency opined that as we pursue our individual goals, we must not forget the fact that our nation also needs our support in national development and though we are far away from home, we should keep our mind in check that there is a home (Ghana) that needs our attention.

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He stressed that our theme for the evening “The Role of the Diaspora in National Development” was a clear indication that our willingness to participate in national discourse was dear to our hearts. He indicated that the Embassy has a Diaspora office to assist anybody who may need more information about helping in the national development effort. He encouraged Ghanaians in the USA to utilize the Diaspora office for the necessary resources and guidance that will help in their transformation toward national development. He also encouraged Ghanaians abroad to help the Embassy keep an updated database of Ghanaians in the USA and he implored them to call the embassy and register. Among the members of the Ghanaian community was Dr. Sekou Nkrumah, the son of Dr. Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister and President of Ghana.

On Sunday the height of the weekend’s events ended with a thanksgiving service at the Church of Pentecost, Tampa Assembly, where the sermon was preached by District Pastor, Rev Daniel Otu-Jireh. He encouraged the Ghanaian community to continue to stay together as one people, support the progressive ideas of development that will continue to promote our purpose in the eyes of God and our neighbors.

-END OF RELEASE-

About Us:

The Ghanaian Association of Tampa Bay was reorganized in the year 2009, with an open membership to all Ghanaians and friends of Ghana residing in the Tampa Bay area of Florida, in the USA. The association recognizes and believes and seeks that, all Ghanaians in the Tampa Bay area must unite and pursue a common goal, that will enrich their lives, promote their heritage and culture, and maintain their friendship, and the community aspects of their social lives as such this non-profit organization was formed.

For further information, please contact

The President

Ghanaian Association of Tampa Bay

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