



15th Edition, March 2009

Message from the President

It is my pleasure to welcome all the members of The African Heart Network to the first AHN Newsletter of 2009 and I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a heart healthy and fulfilling 2009.

I would like to thank Robert de Souza from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, for his work well done as the president over the past years. It was through him the AHN has come thus far. I ensure that I will do my best to fulfill the position as the new president.

This year we pledge to face the risk factors of cardiovascular disease, to have more collaboration amongst members and to broaden in-country partnerships amongst stakeholders in heart health.

I look forward to meeting you all at the Abuja 2009 Conference in Nigeria. This conference will give us the chance to gather the members of the African heart health community and to focus on how heart disease and stroke can be successfully prevented and managed.

Dr. Kingsley K. Akinroye
President
African Heart Network



New Committee 2009

President: Kingsley Akinroye - kkakinroye@yahoo.co.uk

Vice President: Habib Gamra - hgamra@rns.tn

Executive Secretary: Bola Ojo - bola@heartfoundation.co.za

Executive Council:

Elizabeth Gatumia - kenyanheart@wananchi.com

Shân Biesman-Simons - shan@heartfoundation.co.za

Ashleigh Kuttner - ashleigh@heartfoundation.co.za

Daniel Lemogoum - dlems2002@yahoo.fr

Francis Kwamin - tkwamin@yahoo.com





Editor's comment

This is the first edition of the African Heart Network newsletter for 2009 and also the first opportunity we have had to thank Robert for his many years of dedication to the executive of the AHN. Thanks Robert! Kingsley, we wish you well in your role as president of the AHN and look forward to supporting you in the years ahead.

We did report on the annual AHN conference in our last newsletter and one of the major decisions was our role in advocacy (see Bola's contribution to this newsletter) particularly with respect to tobacco use and sodium intakes. I recently saw a review which I think is well worth reading. *Journal of Human Hypertension: FJ He and GA MacGregor; A comprehensive review on salt and health and current experience of worldwide salt reduction programmes./ Journal of Human Hypertension/ (2008), 1–22.* I do have the document in Adobe form so if anyone would like it please email me and I will forward it to you.

As usual we encourage you to send contributions, ideas or constructive criticism to us so that this can be a worthwhile newsletter. We all want to know what is happening in other parts of the continent.

I look forward to hearing from all of you. Let's make the next edition a bumper one filled with newsworthy and interesting articles!

With best wishes,
Shân Biesman-Simons
shan@heartfoundation.co.za



Focus on:

The Ghana Society for Hypertension and Cardiology is professional association of cardiovascular health practitioners. Their major objectives are:

- Raise awareness of the dangers and risk factors of Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) as well as the importance of prevention and control through education and information campaigns.
- Conduct seminars and conferences to strengthen the skills of healthcare providers and to encourage the prevention of CVD in low resource settings.
- Research CVD and associated risk factors.

President: Dr Francis Kwamin
Ghana Society for Hypertension and Cardiology





In Times of difficulty - Bola Ojo

Well, 2009 arrived with a big bang....An economic downturn, bad news, dooms and glooms everywhere. As if health issues and heart disease were not grave enough, we now find ourselves having to face this additional challenge. In times of economic difficulty, where will the funding for CVD prevention be found? Will the previously secured disappear?

Following our successful meeting and workshop in Mozambique last November, the African Heart Network (AHN) is beginning the process of better positioning itself through advocacy work. In 2009, AHN will focus on three key areas: Strengthening the availability and publication of data, developing our advocacy role in the field of Tobacco and Salt and finding ways to increase our membership - all in pursuance of our fight to prevent and reduce cardiovascular disease in Africa.

These activities need human and financial resources.. In the current economic climate, CVD prevention and reduction is more important than ever before. The need to combat Rheumatic Heart Disease and support low resource communities towards improved health is likely to intensify as the impact of the economic meltdown begins to bite in Africa.

So, for AHN it is forward and upward, ensuring our work is publicised and that it keeps growing. We will continue to work towards raising our profile and building the capacity of our members to deliver effective demonstration projects that change lives. We need to listen and understand what is happening regionally and internationally. We need to work with strategic partners and identify sources of funding as well as increasing our networks.

It's going to be a challenging and hopefully fulfilling 2009.





Kenyan-Heart National Foundation Rheumatic Heart Disease Awareness Campaign in Makongeni, Nairobi

Kenyan-Heart National Foundation together with one of its grassroot partners, MAKAL (Makongeni – Kaloleni Group), organised a medical camp in Nairobi Eastlands on Saturday, 7th February 2009. The camp was supported by The Health & Development Organization. MAKAL is involved in anti-malaria campaigns in the Makongeni area in Makadara.

Makongeni is an extremely poor area. It consists mainly of slums and one room houses built by the colonial government in the pre-independence era. The area lacks clean water, proper sewage and drainage systems. This lack of resources results in a high incidence of diseases. We are already aware of two children from Kaloleni Primary School who died from complications due to Rheumatic Heart Disease.

Malaria is an issue of great concern in Kenya due to the number of children & adults that die from the disease, especially during the rainy season. It has been categorized alongside TB & HIV/AIDS for surveillance by the Ministry of Public Health & Sanitation. To combat the disease the ministry launched an anti-malaria campaign in October 2008. One of the aims of the campaign was to provide poor families with mosquito-nets treated with insecticide.

During the medical camp, the residents were assessed & treated for various ailments including Streptococcal Sore-Throat & Malaria by doctors specializing in community health from the Great Lakes University of Kisumu, Western Kenya.

The Kenyan-Heart National Foundation used the medical camp to teach the residents about RHD prevention, highlighting the importance of early diagnosis, followed by treatment with Penicillin to prevent it from progressing to ARF & RHD.

Kenyan-Heart National Foundation was represented at the function by Carol Gitahi, Project Assistant as well as two local committee members, Anne Muniu & Bernard Omondi. One of our most active and supportive trained Chiefs, Chief A. A. Abdullah, was also present. The group, which consisted mainly of women and children, was also provided with RHD information materials like sore-throat Booklets & posters. They were also encouraged to tell their neighbors and community members about the prevention of RHD & Malaria.





Call for applications - 2009

Louise Lown Heart Hero Award

The **Louise Lown Heart Hero Award** recognizes innovative, preventive approaches to promoting cardiovascular health in developing countries and other low-resource settings.

The award is administered by ProCor, a US-based global health communication network that promotes heart health and the prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) through cost-effective practices in developing countries and other low-resource settings.

Who can apply?

Applications are encouraged from community-based programs that have successfully worked to promote heart health in developing countries or other low-resource settings, through innovative, preventive approaches. To be considered, applicants must meet the criteria specified below and provide all information as requested on the application form. The Heart Hero Award is not a grant. Applicants should focus on their past accomplishments that deserve recognition, rather than future initiatives that need funding.

Award criteria

Applicants should focus on *one specific initiative* rather than an organization's entire scope of work. The initiative must:

- Build awareness or support action that promotes heart health.
- Be community-based and innovatively respond to local health needs.
- Demonstrate success.
- Be cost-effective and potentially sustainable.
- Have the potential to be adapted or replicated in other settings.
- Have been in operation for a minimum of one year.

How to apply

Send the information requested in the next page to Juan Ramos, ProCor Program Co-ordinator.

Email: jramos3@partners.org

Fax: 1 (617) 277-0347

Mail: Louise Lown Heart Hero Award
Lown Cardiovascular Research Foundation
21 Longwood Avenue
Brookline MA 02446 USA

Deadline

30 April 2009

For more information

Contact Juan Ramos, ProCor Program Co-ordinator.

Email: jramos3@partners.org

Telephone: 1 (617) 732-1318 ext. 3319



South Africa - Dress Red Campaign 2009



Dress Red 2009 was a huge success for The Heart and Stroke Foundation SA (HSFSA) and the campaign itself set the year off with a bang! Dress Red is a campaign that provides the public with the opportunity to support the fight against cardiovascular disease by purchasing a Dress Red sticker for only R5.00 and wearing red on Valentine's Day. All proceeds from the day go to the HSFSA Children's Programme, which to date has touched the lives of more than 1,9 million children from previously disadvantaged areas.

South Africa's school children embraced the initiative by purchasing stickers and dressing in red on the day. Dress Red also provided schools with the opportunity to raise some of their own funds as they received R2 from every sticker they sold. Companies also joined in the fun with many of them using the day as a team building exercise. This year's prize for the best Dress Red outfit was won by Sappi Cape Kraft. Thank you to Protea Hotels for sponsoring the prize.

The HSFSA would like to say a very BIG thank you to everyone who supported Dress Red 2009. Please continue in the fight against cardiovascular disease!



A special mention goes to Vasanthee Govender



The winning team: Sappi Cape Kraft



Nigeria - 13th Annual Charity Ikoyi Golf Tournament

The 13th annual charity Nigerian Heart Foundation's Ikoyi Golf Club tournament and dinner took place on Saturday, 18 December 2008 at the lush green Ikoyi club golf course. The theme for the day was 'Love Your Heart. Let it Beat.' The theme was chosen to inform, motivate and educate participants on the importance of developing heart healthy habits.

Participation was exclusive to club members. 170 members participated and paid a registration fee of N2, 500. The tournament ended with Ikoyi club's Schwartz Kent accepting the trophy.

The golfers were then treated to dinner while being informed and entertained by the guest speakers, Dr. Basil Okeahialam, Professor of Medicine, University of Jos, Consultant Physician/Cardiologist, Jos University teaching Hospital, Dr. Abimbola Ajayi, Assistant director/State Nutrition officer, Lagos State Ministry of Health and Dr. Yemi Johnson, a cardiologist and a member of the prestigious club.

The vice president of the Nigerian Heart Foundation, Engr. Olu yomi Adeyemi-Wilson, expressed the Foundation's deep appreciation to members of Ikoyi Golf Club 1938 and thanked Mobil Producing Nigeria, Grand Cereals & Oil Mills Ltd, Nigerian Agip Oil Company, Stanbic IBTC Bank and the supporters for the charity work they are doing for sponsoring the event. Like a good story, that has a good beginning, the events of the day came to a delightful end with the presentation of trophies & prizes to winners.

Joy Unegbu,
Manager, Communications
 AHN



**WORLD HEART
 FEDERATION**

RHDnet
www.worldheart.org/rhd

A global resource for
 rheumatic heart disease
 for health professionals
 and communities



RHDnet is an international resource for clinicians, health practitioners and policy-makers in countries where Rheumatic Heart Disease is still common. Its purpose is to promote rheumatic heart disease control through best practice including registration of people with disease and secondary prevention of rheumatic fever.

Visit the site today, join our members forum and help us to inform the community and promote best practice across the globe.

www.worldheart.org/rhd

