

DICOTA 2014 Awards Winners

At the recent Dinner Gala event at the 2014 DICOTA Convention, we had the pleasure of announcing the recipients of awards in four distinguished categories – Youth Achievement, Business Achievement, Professional Achievement, and Outstanding Philanthropist.

The recipients were identified through a long and detailed process that included obtaining recommendations for nominees in each of the categories, compiling information into a survey that was then sent out to the diaspora to vote for the winners. There were very strong contenders for four awards. After a vote by the diaspora, the winners were identified.

Please join us in congratulating them for this momentous achievement.

.... and the Winners Are:

- ✚ **Ms. Joy Kalemera** – Youth Achievement Award
- ✚ **Dr. Lucas Shallua** – Business Achievement Award
- ✚ **Mr. Benedict Kazora** – Professional Achievement Award
- ✚ **Ms. Harriet Shangarai** – Outstanding Philanthropist Award

AWARDS CATEGORIES

Business Achievement Award

This award honors an individual for significant achievement in business through the traditional corporate route or through the entrepreneurial route. The achievement may be demonstrated over a career or by a singular achievement that has advanced the mission and objectives of DICOTA. You can nominate any individual or firm in the USA whose business activities have significantly contributed to the advancement of the wellbeing of the Tanzanian society, home or abroad, thus furthering the mission and objectives of DICOTA.

Outstanding Philanthropist Award

This award is given to an individual or firm that has invested passion, time, talent, and/or financial support through philanthropic activities that further the mission and objectives of DICOTA. Any individual or firm in Tanzania or USA whose philanthropic activities have significantly contributed to the advancement of the wellbeing of the Tanzanian society, home or abroad qualifies for this award.

Youth Achievement Award

This award is given to an individual whose personal and professional accomplishments exemplify the positive contributions young members of Tanzanian diaspora make to our communities and nation each and every day. By celebrating high-achieving youth in the diaspora, and lifting up their many accomplishments and contributions, we are able to encourage their peers to succeed. The nominee must be between the ages of 14 and 25 years of age on October 1, 2014

Professional Achievement Award

This award is given to an outstanding professional in recognition for exceptional professional achievement in her/his field and thereby furthering DICOTA's mission. The nominee must be at most 35 years old; and a Tanzanian, or of Tanzanian roots.

The Biographies of all Awards nominees are as follows:

Youth Achievement Award



Ombeni Idassi was born in Knoxville, TN on November 11th, 1992 to Dr. Joshua and Mrs. Esther Idassi.

Raised in Nashville, TN and the oldest of three, his love for learning was sparked at a young age and carried on throughout his elementary, middle, and high school years.

Moving to Greensboro, NC in 2009, Ombeni graduated from the Academy at Smith High with a Magna Cum Laude Honors. Upon graduation, he enrolled to North Carolina A&T State University where he is currently a senior Biology student.

With a pursuit towards medicine, Ombeni has obtained an automatic acceptance to the East Carolina Brody school of Medicine, gained leadership positions in the Minority Association for Pre-Medical Students and the Beta Beta Beta Biological Honors Society. Ombeni has conducted published

researches under the mentoring of Dr. Patrick Martin, a molecular biology researcher of brain tumors, breast cancers and natural products.

While Ombeni is a focused student to become medical professional in the near future, he also devotes time volunteer and give back to the community. Ombeni is the tutor coordinator for the Elimu Learning Center located on the campus of NC A&T who very much enjoys the service of aiding those who need it. His quote, "Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I may sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light," Micah 7:8.



Joy Kalemera was the Miss Tanzania USA 2013. Joy was born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and received her primary and high school education in Uganda. She graduated from Drexel University in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering and a minor in Business Administration. Currently, Joy works as a Facilities Engineer in a semiconductor based company in New Jersey.

Joy is an avid believer that education is the most important tool to turn hope and dreams into reality, a key to open doors of endless opportunity. This drives her to my advocacy for women's rights to education. As of last year, she has driven her focus towards promoting girl-child education in Tanzania. Working with these girls has been eye opening and has taught her and open her to many possibilities to improve the lives of girls in Tanzania.

To-date, Joy had donated her resources to improve the learning experience of some of the students; such as donation towards curriculum text books. She has visited and

held seminar sessions with students in some schools in rural Arusha and Dar es Salaam to share her story and journey through school as a girl, just like them! Additionally, she shared study tips to better help girls to perform distinctively in their classes with the aim of encouraging more young girls to value the opportunities available to them, to ask questions and use all of the resources at their disposal to get the answers they need. Joy believes also that her involvement in these efforts is also a great way for her to interact and bond more with the girls, learn more about their goals as well as their existing barriers; thus encouraging them to explore paths they have probably never thought of or are probably scared to pursue for various personal reasons.

As a girl in the engineering field of work, she would love to see more girls involved with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) because presently more jobs require these skills yet the number of girls pursuing these careers are still minimal. She would also like to encourage more students (both male and female) to explore and develop their skills and interests. It is okay to stumble the first time, try again because most times we are not ready to learn the first around. “Mungu Ibariki Tanzania.”

Business Achievement Award



Meck Khalfan is the CEO and co-founder of Puku LLC, a New York based company that is revolutionizing the mobile charging industry with high quality and beautiful designed portable chargers. Mr. Khalfan is a Tanzanian born serial entrepreneur and a veteran software engineer.

Mr. Khalfan is a passionate supporter of minority causes. He is an active supporter of Touch Foundation and sponsorship for Education Opportunity (“SEO”), two organizations that aim to make a difference in underserved communities. As a member of Touch Foundation, a non for profit focusing on bringing vital healthcare services to patients with the greatest medical needs, Mr. Khalfan engagement has been

related to the organization’s work to make a difference in his home country, Tanzania. As an active supporter of SEO, a non-profit organization that provides superior education and career programs to young people from underserved communities to maximize their opportunities for college and career success, Mr. Khalfan’s family commits a meaningful contribution annually.

Meck is a graduate of University of Massachusetts – Amherst with BSc in Computer Science and Mathematics.



Dr. Lucas D. Shallua is the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Mount Eagle College in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Established and licensed in February 2010 by North Carolina Community College System, Mount Eagle Institute offers certificates and Diploma in over 12 programs mainly in Health Care and Allied Health fields. Over 2500 students have graduated since its establishment.

Dr. Shallua and his wife Dorothy, founded Mount Eagle Health Care in 2012, a health care agency committed to offer quality nursing care, in-home aide, companion, sitter and respite care. Its services range from medical to non-medical, long-term or short-term, to people of all ages, meanwhile providing an alternative employment opportunity to our graduates. Mount Eagle Health Care currently provides employment to about 200 individuals who most of them graduated from Mount Eagle College.

Dr. Shallua co-founded Mount Eagle Foundation, non-for-profit organization Section 501(c)(3), with IRS exempt status, the philanthropic arm of the operations, it provides scholarship funding opportunities to students, assists in fundraising activities and soliciting donations to further the missions of the college and the proposed university.

Minnay Educational Services and DVD4Learning Inc, online companies were also established by Dr. Shallua in 2004. They provide educational resources such as academic books, DVDs and other multimedia, customizable e-learning platforms for colleges and universities and support to individual students, academic institutions, professors, educators, trainers, hospitals and libraries in North America and 44 countries worldwide. These educational resources have impacted more than 1 million lives around the globe with convenience, flexibility and affordability.

Dr. Shallua also founded Baobab Volunteering Services Inc a USA based and registered not-for-profit volunteer organization geared towards providing volunteering opportunities abroad. Currently, Baobab Volunteering Services has philanthropic projects in 10 developing countries of Eastern and Southern of African Continent with arrangements to place volunteers throughout the year. Volunteers from around the world can have firsthand experience in variety of projects in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho; we are working with other African Countries to be able to place volunteers in the entire continent.

Dr. Shallua is a trained veterinary doctor and surgeon, holding a doctorate degree in the medical field and related discipline of cellular biology, anatomy and endocrinology. Prior to coming to the United States, Dr. Shallua practiced as a veterinary surgeon in Eastern and Southern Africa as well as taught veterinary medical students in Tanzania, Eastern Africa. Also, he was the Executive Director of Community Based Organization geared at assisting San Communities (aka Bushmen) in Southern Africa towards self-sustainable projects, for 5 years.

Dr. Shallua is married to Dorothy for 17 years; together they have three young children, Emmy, Joshua and Dora. He believes and advocates practical ways that exemplifies faith in the marketplace. He is a dynamic public and motivational speaker professing and urging his audience to establish clear vision for their lives, pursue challenging dreams in the areas of their passion, seize opportunities as they present themselves and strive for excellence in whatever they do. He conducts speaking engagements in the community, businesses, churches, universities and small interest groups.



David Mushi is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of GeeksPlus, an IT solution provider company established in 2010. As the business developer, sales and marketing person in chief, David helps GeeksPlus to provide a wide range of IT Services for small businesses.

David is a seasoned IT professional with long project management experience for projects in a wide range of applications, such as Microsoft Windows, Cisco Networking, Information Technologies Systems Security, Linux, Hardware and Software configuration. With GeekPlus, David has provided systems consultancy services in design, configuration, implementation and support thus securing reliable computer systems for

businesses as part of the company's MSP level.

As young man, David was amongst the 12 young students from Tanzania to receive and attend a Millennium Young People's Awards in October 1999 in Honolulu, Hawaii for an exceptional commitment to the goals of social justice and environmental conservation in the country. He also received an International Students Award for community services at Guilford Technical Community College. David was the first Chairman of Union of Tanzanians in North Carolina (UTNC); previous UNTC Secretary and the current UTNC Treasurer.

David holds an Associate Degree in Computer and Telecommunication Technologies from *Guilford Technical Community College* and several certifications in the field of information technology including but not limited to MSE (CompTIA) Network +, Server +, Security +.

David is a believer in participatory community development projects, networking in businesses and socialization. He is a member of the chamber of commerce in Alamance County. As team leader he believes in collective strength and power of numbers ... "UMOJA NI NGUVU" in Swahili. He is a married and a father of two boys.

Professional Achievement Award



Ben Kazora: Originally born in Tanzania, Ben Kazora received his childhood schooling in the whole East Africa region. This exposure to various languages and cultures, gave him a strong understanding to the region's socio-economic make-up, as well as, the geopolitical climate, thus leaving him with strong ties to East Africa.

Upon his arrival to the United States, Ben began his road to higher education at Purdue University, located in Indiana, where he obtained his BSC in Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology. When an Engineering position with Verizon Services was offered to him, Ben relocated to Dallas, Texas. Once in Dallas, his pursuit for education continued; first by attaining a MS in Electrical Engineering at the University of Texas, then a MBA at

Texas A & M University. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in Systems Engineering, which he anticipates to complete by 2015.

In the decade Ben has lived in the U.S., his accomplishments continue to grow. His interest in business and technology, coupled with his childhood up-bringing, has made him deeply passionate about the economic development of the Eastern African region. Having lived on both sides of the Atlantic, Ben recognized a void that required attention. Naturally motivated and with a desire to make social impact, Ben has been working diligently to encourage economic growth, enhance trade relationships, and facilitate the exchange of technology and knowledge, primarily through the utilization of the Eastern Africa Diaspora.

As a co-founder and President of the Eastern Africa Diaspora Business Council (EADBC), Ben is able to actively participate in advocating for change and growth for Eastern Africa. In addition to his involvement with the EADBC, he is also the President of the Tanzanian Community of Dallas, a Board Member of the African Leadership Council and Council of International Leaders, served on the Executive Leadership of the Dallas Ugandan Community, and on the Advisory Board of the non-profit organization, Humanitarian Hands Charities. He is also an active member of the Uganda North America Association (UNAA) and Diaspora Council of Tanzanians in America (DICOTA), and attends the Rwanda and Kenyan Diaspora events.



Esther Idassi is the founder of Elimu Empowerment Services (EES). EES addresses the quality of life challenges faced by refugee individuals who are new to the country. As the Director of the Elimu Learning Center, an after school program serving K-12 refugees and immigrants students in the Guilford County.

As a first generation immigrant herself, Esther holds dear issues that affect immigrant community. Esther serves as a committee member of the Welcoming Greensboro Initiative that worked with Greensboro City Council to unanimously pass a resolution declaring Greensboro to be a "Welcoming City", part of a national movement to create more welcoming and supportive communities for immigrants and refugees.

Also she is collaborating with Guilford County Schools providing Advocacy, Interpretation and Translation for Swahili, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, French and Arabic speaking parents and

students.

Esther had partnership with City of Greensboro Human Relations Office to provide Fair Housing Rights workshops targeting refugees. Esther has helped over 150 refugees from the Africa with educational and social support opportunities available in Guilford County Schools and the community. Also she has worked to help parents of refugee children in the Guilford County School System understand their roles to better the education and academic growth of their children.

She is a member of International Advisory Committee of the City of Greensboro Department of Human Relations and serves as a board member of North Carolina African Service Coalition.

Esther holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Accounting from the University of Phoenix Nashville Campus and a diploma in Automated Accounting from Knoxville State Tech School. She also holds a Certificate of Bookkeeping from Dar-es-Salaam School of Accountancy. Esther has received numerous other certificates of recognition and attendance including but not limited to Change Agent from Impact Greensboro Leadership Program; Leadership from Education Alliance of Guilford County; United Way Board Development Project and a Certificate of Accomplishment in Women in Office Program from Institute Of Political Leadership. Currently she is attending a Fellow Program at Institute Of Political Leadership.

Esther is married to Dr. Joshua Idassi and together have three children Ombeni a senior Pre-Medical major at NC A&T State University, Jacob a Junior at Academy at Smith and Lydia a seventh grader at Penn-Griffin School of Performing Art.

Outstanding Philanthropist Award



Reverend Andrea Mwalilino, originally from Tanzania, serves as the pastor for the Swahili Congregation at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A ministry that caters for all Swahili speakers and people from east African countries who now live in the Twin Cities area.

Reverend Mwalilino holds Masters in Pastoral Care and Counseling from Luther Seminary of St Paul, MN; Masters in Organizational Management from Bethel University of Saint Paul, MN; Bachelors of Divinity from Makumira Seminary in Arusha, Tanzania; and an Advanced Diploma in Social Work from the Institute of Social work in Dar es salaam, Tanzania.

In addition to serving as a congregational pastor in Tanzania, Pastor Mwalilino interned with "congregation under development" MN Swahili Christian Congregation under the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) - Minneapolis Area Synod. Following his internship, Pastor Mwalilino worked with the same synod of the ELCA to as a mission developer responsible for turning the fellowship community into a congregation. In 2013, the MN Swahili Christian Congregation was recognized by the ELCA as a full congregation under the Minneapolis area synod.

Pastor Mwalilino takes pride in leading a congregation of more than one hundred registered members. Also for the first time this year, the congregation confirmed nine new young adults, while it continues to baptize an average of four children every year. This is a great achievement for the Swahili speaking diaspora community in Minnesota as it strives to make positive impact within the state and the country as a whole.



Emil Muta Augustine is a multi-talent security consultant focusing in investigation and language interpretation. A proven leader, Emil moved to the United States eleven years ago and he is the owner of Tanzania Language & PI Service Company in Washington State.

Emil holds Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Mzumbe University Tanzania; Certificate in Immigration Laws and Citizenship from Police Academy, Moshi, Tanzania; Certificate from FBI Citizen Academy; and Private Investigation Certificate from Washington University. He is Certified Court Interpreter in Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California and Federal Court since 2004.

Career wise Emil currently works as a freelance interpreter/ translator and a private investigator. He has previously worked as a program coordinator in integrated living services; a public prosecutor with Tanzania judicial system and an immigration investigator with the Ministry of Home Affairs of the government of the Republic of Tanzania.

Emil is an active member of the community and public. He is a member of the Seattle Chapter of FBI Citizen's Academy Alumni Association; member of the Rotary Club of Sea Tac; past president of Tanzania Community in Washington State; current Chairman of Board of Tanzania Community in Washington State and member of East African Community Advisory Council in Seattle, WA.

As a member of Malaria Eradication program of the Rotary International, Emil has actively participated and constantly advocated for the 2012 malaria eradication project establishment in Tanzania. With his fellow Rotarians and by providing mosquito nets , malaria test kits and home fumigation, cases of malaria

have dropped to 38% in Mtwara, Lindi, Dar es salaam, Pwani, Morogoro, Tanga, Mwanza and Kagera from 62% when program began.



Harriet Shangarai came to the United States in 1998 in pursuit of higher education. She worked to support her education and education of a young boy she had sported in her village.

Due to prevalence of HIV/Aids in Tanzania and growing number of orphans in her former school of Mawenzi, Harriet took the lead in providing tuition and board for 5 students at list for a year. She also carried a mission for advocacy close to her heart.

As an attendee of a fundraising event organized by Nasa colleagues to benefit Doctors without Borders, Harriet took brought into forefront the plight of Orphans in her former school, Mawenzi. Before the dinner event was over, it was decided that all the funds raised for Doctors without Borders will be allocated to the Mawenzi Secondary School to sponsor students.

In 1989 while still in high school, Harriet joined the fight against HIV/Aids by teaming up with the family of Dr. Van-Meus from Holland and formed (KIWAKKUKI) “Kikundi cha Wanawake Kilimajaro cha Kupambana na Ukimwi.” Harriet volunteered in KIWAKKUKI as a translator, youth educator and composer of HIV/Aids related songs and puppet show stories. KIWAKKUKI has 25 years of progressive success in fighting against HIV/Aids in Tanzania and works with many other organizations around the globe.

As a first generation immigrant, Harriet was exposed to many challenges beyond her reach. Determined to save the life of her father for instance, whose health had deteriorated due to diabetes, Harriet purchased her first medical book for \$ 2.00 from a thrift store and later enrolled into a nursing program. With guidance from a doctor and knowledge from books, Harriet provided total care for her father at home, from Antibiotics-IV therapy, diabetic management and wound care to finally see her father was out of diabetic medications, clear of wounds and in good health.

In May 2013, Harriet graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Nursing from Washington Adventist University. Knowing the significance of knowledge, especially Health Education in our society, Harriet opened a Swahili health education Blog “NESIWANGUBLOGSPOT.COM”, dedicated to Swahili speakers in an effort to create awareness and understanding of their health. Currently, NESIWANGUBLOG has close to 9,000 viewers across the world.

As a registered nurse, Harriet always participates in local events to provide health education especially to African Diaspora communities and highlights barriers to good health such as cultural and beliefs, life style choices, lack of knowledge and accessibility of healthcare services. Harriet speaks to motivate and create awareness of immigrant’s inequalities and call for a unified voice.

In April 10th 2014, Harriet teamed up with Dr. Carol, Jagdeo from Washington Hospital Center and recruited other healthcare workers including Tanzanian and provided the First health care screening for the Tanzania Community. Harriet continuous to attend public meetings locates community resources and information which she shares through phones, social media and blogs.