

LAO NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, number 1

May 2025

stronger together

Message From the Editor



LAO Newsletter Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the LAO Newsletter!

Earlier this year, in February, we shared the exciting news that the LAO Newsletter would be making a comeback after years of dormancy. As many of you may recall, publication was discontinued due to various challenges, including limited resources and lack of sustained support. Today, thanks to renewed energy and commitment from our community, we're proud to relaunch this important platform.

You'll notice changes in the newsletter's design and format. These updates were made thoughtfully to reduce publication costs while still delivering the timely, relevant content that matters most to our readers. With your continued support and feedback, we aim to further enhance both the quality and reach of this newsletter and future digital initiatives.

Despite the changes, our mission remains the same: to provide a space for sharing news, resources, and knowledge that informs and connects our community. We're committed to supporting the LAO administration by raising awareness of its projects and programs, and by promoting local events, meetings, and activities.

This newsletter is for *you*, and we want to hear from you! Your suggestions and feedback are vital in helping us improve. Please send your thoughts or ideas to the Editor at sekou.donzo@laonewsletter.com.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to growing this platform together!

Warm regards,
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTE TO WORTHY CAUSES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

You're invited to the LAO 2025 AGM

Attendance will be in-person and virtual

Saturday
26 April 2025 3 pm - 5 pm

In-Person Venue
200-888 Belfast Rd

ZOOM Meeting ID: 81670933947 Password: 316015

Your membership dues and donations enable the association to undertake impactful projects that benefit Liberians both in Canada and Liberia. Together, we can make a difference! 😊

[Volunteer now](#)

LAO Receives City Grant to Support Community Empowerment

The Liberian Association of Ottawa (LAO) is proud to announce that it has been awarded a grant of **\$24,468.25 CAD** from the City of Ottawa's Emerging Community Need Funding program. This funding will support LAO's efforts over a 12-month period, from April 2025 to March 2026.

The Emerging Community Need Funding is designed to help local organizations address specific, timely challenges and strengthen community capacity. LAO was selected as a beneficiary in recognition of its ongoing work and commitment to underserved populations.

The grant will be dedicated to LAO's Community Engagement and Empowerment Program (CEEP), which focuses on delivering meaningful support and resources to newcomers, seniors, women, youth, and individuals living in poverty.

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Promise made, Promise Kept!

With just one year in office, LAO President Kevin Suah and his Executive Team have made significant strides toward fulfilling the promises and commitments laid out during their inauguration on April 27, 2024. Below is a summary of their key accomplishments:

- **Transparency and Accountability:** The administration has prioritized open communication, regularly updating members on major developments. Quarterly and annual reports detailing the association's progress and challenges have been published, along with regular financial updates to ensure transparency.
- **Website Launch:** The team launched an official website — Liberian.ca — as a centralized platform for news, resources, and community engagement.
- **Legal Registration and Tax Receipts:** The association has been officially registered and now provides tax receipts for donations, reinforcing its credibility and commitment to good governance.
- **Democratic Elections:** A well-organized and transparent election was held, widely regarded as one of the most successful in the association's recent history.
- **Community Building:** A series of social and recreational events were hosted to foster unity, engagement, and a strong sense of community among members.
- **Financial Growth:** The association's budget grew impressively from **\$848.08** to **\$31,272.45**, marking a major financial milestone.

Stay tuned for more updates on the team's ongoing accomplishments in our next edition!

FLASHBACK: LAO 2024 INAUGURATION



On **April 27, 2024**, the **Liberian Association of Ottawa (LAO)** hosted its highly anticipated **2024 Inaugural Ceremony and Dinner Ball** at the **Blessed Sacrament Parish Conference Hall**. The memorable evening included the formal installation of the new Executive Officers, vibrant cultural performances, a community fundraising session, and an elegant dinner ball.

Held under the inspiring theme, "**Unity in Diversity – Building a Prosperous Community Together**," the event brought together Liberians and friends of Liberia from across Canada, the United States, and representatives from various community organizations.

Distinguished guests in attendance included:

Councillor Rawlson King, City Councillor for Ward 13 (Rideau-Rockcliffe), who delivered the keynote address; the Ambassador of Uganda to Canada and Dean of the African Ambassadors in Canada; the Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Guinea in Canada; the Assistant Minister



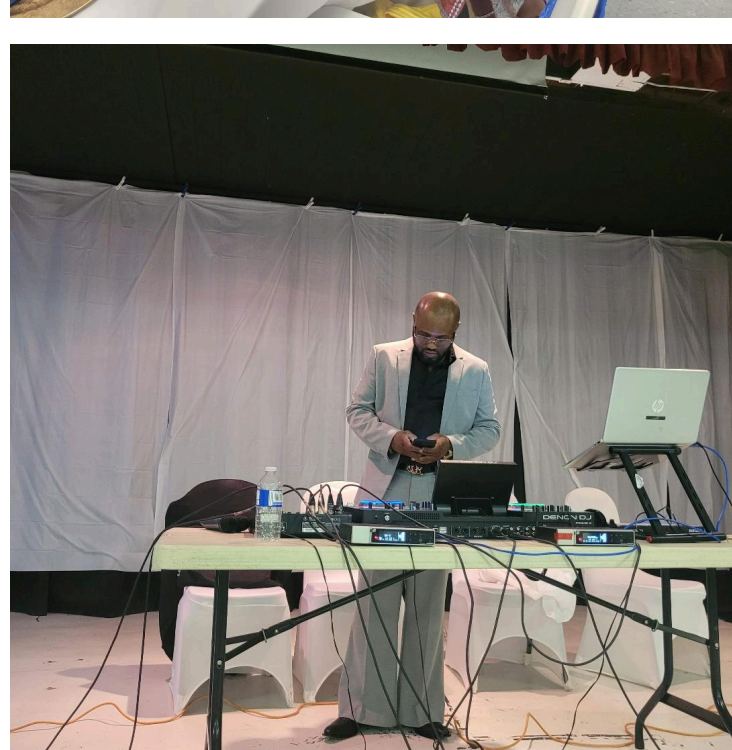
Fred Sherman, Jr. Chats with LAO President, Kevin Suah

of Foreign Affairs of Liberia; and several other

community leaders and dignitaries.

The night was a celebration of leadership, culture, and community — a reflection of LAO's renewed vision and commitment to inclusiveness, growth, and progress.

Stay tuned for a full photo gallery in our next issue!



COMMUNITY UPDATE

Draft Constitution Submitted For Review

In September 2024, the Executive Committee of the Liberian Association of Ottawa (LAO) tasked the Standing Committee on the Constitution with conducting a comprehensive review of the LAO Constitution — last revised in 2007 — and proposing relevant amendments to reflect the evolving needs of the association. After several months of diligent work, the Committee, chaired by Mr. Joseph Zarga Bright, officially presented its draft recommendations during the LAO Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on April 26, 2025. In his address, Mr. Bright commended the Committee members for their dedication and thoroughness throughout the review process. He also encouraged active participation from members in discussing the proposed changes. However, shortly after the floor was opened for deliberation, a member of the association raised a motion — citing time constraints — to postpone the debate on the constitutional recommendations. The motion was seconded and subsequently approved by the assembly. As a result, the AGM was adjourned and rescheduled to continue on May 10, 2025, via Zoom. All members are strongly encouraged to review the proposed constitutional amendments in advance of the reconvened meeting to ensure meaningful discussion and informed decision-making.

Community Contributors Recognized

The saying goes, “Give people their flowers while they’re alive,” and that’s exactly what LAO President Kevin Suah did during the recent Annual General Meeting (AGM). In a heartfelt moment, President Suah publicly acknowledged and praised several members of the association “for their exceptional contributions that continue to benefit the community”.

Among those honored were:

- Georgia Seidi and Della Weh – *Social Committee*
- Antoinette Wilson, Alieu Swaray, and Feweh Sherman – *Membership Committee*
- Julianna Jablasone – *Advisor to the Executive Committee*
- Joseph Zangar Bright – *Chair, Standing Committee on the Constitution*

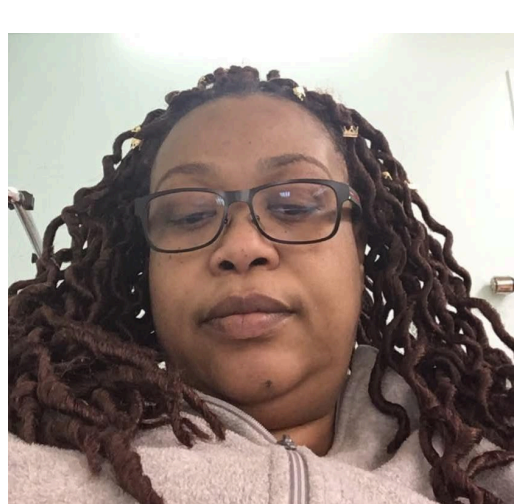
President Suah also expressed deep appreciation to the LAO Board of Directors for their invaluable guidance and support throughout his administration’s first year. These recognitions reflect a culture of appreciation and mutual respect that is helping to strengthen and unite the LAO community.

For more information on the AGM, please read the [2025 Executive Committee Annual Report](#) on LAO website

2025 AGM: A Huge Success!

The Liberian Association of Ottawa (LAO), under the leadership of President Kevin Suah, held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday, May 27, 2025. As the highest decision-making forum of the association, the AGM plays a vital role in shaping the direction of LAO’s governance and activities. While attendance was lower than expected, the meeting was still considered a major success. The Executive Committee presented its Annual Report, outlining key programs and activities initiated during the administration’s first term — from April 27, 2024, to March 31, 2025 — along with thoughtful recommendations for the upcoming term. The report highlighted notable accomplishments, including transparency initiatives, community events, increased financial capacity, and successful organizational milestones. After a detailed presentation, the report received unanimous approval from the Assembly. Mr. Samuel Quillah, Chairs of the Board of Directors, formally accepted the report on behalf of the community, commending the Executive Committee for its dedication and results-driven leadership. The AGM marked an important step forward in reinforcing accountability, transparency, and community engagement within LAO.

Community Spotlight: Honoring Sister Joyce Cole Ayodele ("Sister Nuku")

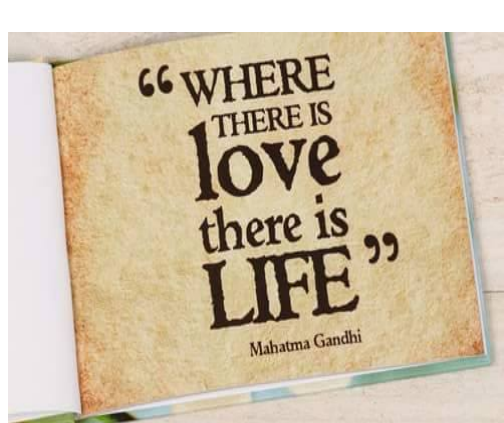


It is only fitting that we take the time to recognize and celebrate the remarkable individuals who make a lasting impact on our community. For this reason, we proudly dedicate this page to one such person — **Sister Joyce Cole Ayodele**, affectionately known as "**Sister Nuku**."

A true beacon of hope and generosity within the Liberian community in Ottawa, Sister Nuku is known for her selfless nature and unwavering support for others. Her quiet acts of kindness often go unnoticed, but their impact is deeply felt by many.

Whenever the community experiences a loss, Sister Nuku is among the first to extend a helping hand — offering emotional support, assisting grieving families, helping with household responsibilities, and leading or participating in fundraising efforts. Her actions reflect a deep spirit of compassion, unity, and service.

Over the years, she has been a vital presence at numerous events organized by the **Liberian Association of Ottawa**, playing both supportive and leadership roles. Her name is spoken with respect and admiration, particularly among newly arrived Liberians, for whom she has been a source of comfort, guidance, and support in navigating life in a new country.



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