



Profile



Presidential Candidate 2018: Margaret Itauma

Houston Chapter

Akwa Ibom State Association of Nigeria, USA Inc. (AKISAN)

MISSION STATEMENT

TO HELP AKISAN REACH ITS POTENTIAL THROUGH THE USE OF TRANSPARENT, ETHICAL, AND PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES AS MANAGEMENT TOOLS

VISION STATEMENT

TO MAKE AKISAN THE PREMIER NON-PROFIT, NON-POLITICAL ASSOCIATION THAT REPRESENT THE INTEREST OF ALL ITS MEMBERS, WHEREVER THEY MAY RESIDE IN USA

Background

Raised from a Christian home; a family that has always been devoted to service to humanity, a strong believer and supporter of family values. Blessed with two teenagers, we are members of Lakewood Church.

Education

Obtained a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona, 2014.

Graduated from School of Nursing, Eket, Akwa Ibom State in 1988 with a Diploma in Nursing as a Registered Nurse (RN). Served as a Class Representative 1987-1988

Started and finished my secondary education at St. Francis Secondary School, Ikot Ataku, Eket from 1977-1982. While as a student in high school, I was privileged to benefit from a four year scholarship program from Cross River State Government. Served as the Girls Senior Prefect (GSP) 1981-1982.

Profession

Chose the noble profession of Nursing and worked with various hospitals for about thirty (30) years. Currently, employed by St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital/Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Heart Institute in its Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CICU)

Advocacy/Community Service

An active member of Akwa Ibom State Association of Nigeria USA, Inc. (AKISAN), Eket Development Congress USA Inc. (EDC) and Akwa Ibom Women Association (AIWA). Always passionate to serve; serving in various committees, building coalition and advocating for my community within the city of Houston and beyond.

Role of Engagement with AKISAN Houston (Local) Chapter

- i. Coordinator Beauty Pageant 2009
- ii. Chairman Fund Raising Committee 2015
- iii. Publicity Secretary Fundraising Committee 2017. As the Publicity Secretary for Houston Chapter at its 2017 Fundraising event, deployed all social media to advertise its events. Witnessing the largest turn out in its local chapter event and raised a substantial amount.
- iv. Member/Secretary Board of Trustee

- v. v. Member Constitution Review Committee

Role of engagement at the AKISAN National Level

- i. Co-chair and Judge, Beauty Pageant 2000 convention, Houston
- ii. A member of the National Planning Committee 2009 convention in Detroit, Michigan
- iii. Electoral officer National Convention in Baltimore, 2010
- iv. Co-chair Beauty Pageant, Philadelphia Convention 2015
- v. Volunteer AKISAN 2016 Medical Mission to Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
- vi. Member Fund Raising Committee 2017 National Convention, Atlanta

Leadership Role with Eket Development Congress (EDC)

- i. Treasurer for EDC, Houston Chapter 2007 - 2008, 2015 – present.
- ii. National President Eket Development Congress, USA (EDC), 2008-2012 (2 Terms)

Accomplishments/Restructuring Eket Development Congress

- i. National Registration of EDC with the District of Columbia
- ii. Call for the Development of the association's website: www.eketusa.org
- iii. Creation of a new Chapter in Washington DC to serve our East Coast community
- iv. National Board of Trustees (BOT) was constituted during my tenure
- v. Hosted two (2) National Conventions: 2010 and 2012 in Houston
- vi. Filing of the association's 501 (c3) status with the IRS
- vii. Volunteer Medical Mission, March 2018

Relocated to America and settled in the city of Pascagoula, MS in 1991. Then barely seven months into my stay, attended my first AKISAN National Convention in Atlanta to identify with my people and its culture. Driven by passion to serve my community; joined AKISAN Tyler Chapter in 2000 due to a lack of a chapter in my own home state. Later in 2008; few years after settling in Houston, joined AKISAN Houston chapter and have been an active member for the last 10 years.

Committed to community works, attended 17 AKISAN National conventions and in the last 3 years, I have also attended all National Council business meetings, where deliberations and resolutions affecting AKISAN are handled. Today, I have a firm grasp on building rapport with different members from other chapters and creating new and dynamic methods of expanding networks.

Recognition/Awards

- Nursing Employee of the year 1997, Singing River Hospital, Pascagoula, MS
- African Women in Leadership Organizations (AWLO) Award. 2016
- Community Service Award, AKISAN Houston Chapter, 2017
- Nigerian Arts, Fashion and Beauty (NAFB) Award, 2018

Manifesto

Current State of AKISAN as an Organization

AKISAN remains the granddaddy of Nigerian socio-cultural organization in the USA. Remains by far the largest, most organized and respected nonetheless AKISAN is not perfect. I am convinced there is always room for improvements.

Over the years, AKISAN has evolved from a small student organization to this highly sophisticated organization. In the last 15 years it has experienced tremendous growth in membership however; it has been very obvious that while we have struggled to cope with this enormous spurs we as an organization, have not been effective in creating a sustainable strategy to reap the benefits of this growth.

Not that we do not have the talent, structures or mechanism to adopt rather we have failed in:

- A) Engaging the skilled and talented individuals in our organizations
- B) We have failed to use our best intent to run the organization but rather allow emotions to derail us.
- C) We have failed in sharing and communicating information with general memberships
- D) We have failed in continuity between administrations

Why run for the highest office?

“The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others.”- Albert Schweitzer.

Each year, AKISAN members attend AKISAN National convention; pay for flight tickets, convention registration fees, hotel accommodation and cultural night tickets. In addition, make donations to sustain the organization, of which most of the funds are spent to cover convention costs with nothing tangible to show, often reports a negative balance.

I am motivated to run to bring dynamic leadership and financial stability to AKISAN by:

- Developing partnerships/Corporate sponsorship at convention/event
- Conserving funds for projects by implementing approved budgets of the association.
- Ensuring our accounts are audited, filed and reported to general membership as required by the constitution.
- Using audited financial report for grant writing.
- Encouraging activities/initiatives that are targeted towards our goals and objectivities as a nonprofit.
- Establishing multiyear strategic plan to guide our programs and operations

Team Houston recognizes the task and challenges ahead. While we do not claim to have the magic wand, we are optimistic that by continuing to listen, engage all, welcome all, respect all, execute per the mandate, recognize talents and provide the platform for our general membership to express views and support our cause, we will be very successful.

Therefore to move AKISAN forward, team Houston will develop a framework with a variety of evolving and flexible strategies. Each of which would enable us adjust established projects, gain success and continuity of key projects over time regardless of leadership changes.

Value Proposition

Productive Annual Convention

Ensure programs that bring value to AKISAN are promoted at the Annual Conventions; centered on the best interests of Akwa Ibomites in the United States. Businesses in the United States will be invited to present opportunities that will benefit our AKISAN community.

Create Affordable Conventions for Families

Akwa Ibomites in America, support businesses, such as Airlines, Car Rental Services, Hotels, Banks, Departmental Stores, and Money Transfer Agencies etc. Each financial year, these corporations make donations to support charitable organization and write it off as taxes. AKISAN can also solicit convention sponsorships/donations from these corporations to offset convention costs on its members. With this income strategy for AKISAN; convention registration will be reduced, therefore creating affordable convention for AKISAN families so we can celebrate them rather than placing undue burden on them.

Empower and Expand the Role of Strategic Planning Committee

Strategic Planning Committee is a standing Committee in the constitution that has not been utilized.

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- i) The Association shall have standing and/or ad-hoc committees to deal with matters and issues as the National Council or the National Executive Committee may see fit to create. Standing Committees shall include: Constitution Review, Beauty Pageant, Newsletter/Publicity, Strategic Planning, Book Project, Scholarship, Emergency Trust Fund and any others.
- ii) Apart from the members of the Emergency Trust Fund committee which is stipulated elsewhere in these by-laws, committee members shall have a three year term from the date of appointment to the committee, renewable for another consecutive term. No committee member may have more than two consecutive three year terms.

If elected, I will create a Strategic Planning Committee that will be empowered to work with the National Executives and Board of Trustees to follow through with our long term projects. This will be a pathway for continuity and unity in accomplishing our set goals.

Accountability

Ensure proper quarterly financial account is given to all chapters, the National council, Board of Trustees and an annual financial report to the National Convention. If elected as President of this organization, one of my first steps in ensuring transparency and accountability will be to propose that, AKISAN elected Auditor audits my administration account quarterly and make the report available to all members.

Independent Funding

Ensure AKISAN is operated as a business; by adopting best practices in non-profit organizations in the USA, striving in maximizing its potentials to benefit from its 501(c3) status relative to grant proposals. Audited financial report will be posted on akisan.org website for donors to see how their money is being spent. Transparency in our accounting will encourage donors to donate to our various charitable projects.

Youth Empowerment/ Leadership and Networking

- Promote youth network across USA, support programs of their interests, respect their views and engage them in leadership roles as they are our future leaders.
- **Scholarship:** Support youth scholarship programs for tertiary education to orphans and the underprivileged both in the USA and Akwa Ibom State.
- **Skills Acquisition Program/Long Term Goals:** Support our youths to acquire skills that would make them useful to themselves and the society. Such skills would include not limited to Sewing, cosmetology, painting, roofing, mechanics/driving and integrated farming to benefit our youth in Akwa Ibom State.
- Intervention programs to support our youths in Crisis such as Teenage Pregnancy and substance abuse.

Ibom Cultural Center

AKISAN has been in existence for thirty years, conducting conventions and fund raising every year within United States without money to build a place we can call Akwa Ibom Center. This center will be a place to conduct our events, archive our cultural artifacts, educational resources, and a center to learn about our cultural heritage/languages. Will continue to pursue the noble objective of establishing a community center, to create a legacy of ownership for our community.

Community Building and Shared Governance

- Create effective mechanism and structure to enhance collaboration and partnership for efficient project implementations
- Engage chapters in building a shared vision
- Educate members in day to day activities and functions of the organization

Volunteer Corp

- Establish AKISAN Volunteer program to allow greater involvement and participation in areas of interest. This will be a program to assist our home communities like education, entrepreneurship etc.

Constitution Amendment

1) National Election by Delegate

The current voting of the National President by delegate/delegates in AKISAN creates a loophole in our voting system. Member lists submitted by chapters to the Secretariat during election year has not been vetted effectively. To protect the integrity of this great organization, if elected, I will propose constitution amendment to reflect “1 chapter 1 vote”.

2) Term of Presidency

The current two year (one term) presidency is not enough to execute significant projects in AKISAN. If elected, I will propose a constitution review committee whereby, a president or past president can re-run for a second term subject to an audited financial report of his/her tenure and such account is approved by the National Council.

Conclusion

It is the believe of team Houston that if we demonstrate small but incremental success, our association will be able to raise substantial funds and also be in a better position to enter into partnership with specialty agencies to implement further projects. Being able to show results will help us attract and retain talented members and volunteers to continue delivering much needed services for the communities we serve.

Team Houston will continue to seek ways to reduce cost and reduce the financial burden of running a convention on our members.

We will continue to build on our successes and learn from our past mistakes to make AKISAN the most trusted and admired African socio cultural organization in the world.

It is no secret that when we work together, elect leaders with integrity, we create the best ideas and achieve the best results.

AKISAN needs a leader that will connect with its members regardless of their ages, listen to their views and integrate concerns in the planning and building of this organization, I am that candidate.

Team Houston respectfully ask for your vote and support.

Akwa Ibom isongo!

Elect Margaret for dynamic leadership and progress.

