

## Akwabaa Hartford! An African Fashion Show

On the last Thursday evening in February, At the Center for Contemporary Culture Georges Annan-Kingsley led more than 20 fellow African immigrants in a fashion and cultural immersion of 11 of the 54 Countries of Africa.

Even though most of us are aware that Africa is a continent and not a country, we still know very little about it and the great diversity that it encompasses. That changed for many of those present.

The festivities began with an introduction by Homa Nacify, Hartford Public Library's Chief Adult Learning Officer, welcoming all those present. Homa, along with Nancy Caddigan, Intercultural Liaison for the library, has been very instrumental in bringing about the partnership with AHNA that has resulted in the Welcoming



Committee. It was created specifically to connect members of the immigrant and refugee communities with members of the welcoming community, and this Multicultural Fashion Show was an example of that partnership.

After Homa's introduction, Lina Osho Williams, Youth and Family Services Manager at the Library spoke about the many and varied cultures of Africa that so many of us in the West know so little about. She even recited a poem on the subject by way of introduction. Then, using videos showing many of the great cities and rich culture of each of the countries as a backdrop, and accompanied by music also from each of the countries, several models walked the runway showing the beautiful clothing, both traditional and contemporary for each country. The Countries included Somalia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Morocco, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Togo, Congo, Nigeria and South Africa. Each of these countries has modern cities including Mogadishu, Accra, Addis Ababa, Bamako, Rabat, Abidjan, Freetown, Lome, Brazzaville, Abuja and Johannesburg of more than a million people and each with all the amenities one would find in Europe or America.

The event was very well received and is expected to be just one in a series from this very vibrant part of our Hartford immigrant community. For more photos of the event, go to <https://goo.gl/photos/dQqP2Ua27Kipor3f6>