

# Illegals uneasy in U.S.

Continued from page 2A

back of your head all the time, all the time."

And so is stress. "If you ask me whether I ever relax 100 percent, I would say, 'No.' On a scale of one to 10, I would say I sometimes get to an eight... You hear a knock on the door and you think it's the INS, but it's just a firefighter. When you see police officers outside your building, you think they might be escorting the INS. When you see somebody new on your job, you think it's someone to put you in shackles."

Because of her immigration status, Michele agreed to tell her story to the NNPA News Service only under conditions of anonymity.

She came to the U.S. with a friend on a visitation Visa, planning to stay only six months. During those six months, she found a job and an apartment on the East Coast. She has held the same job ever since, sharing her secret with only a few of her co-workers and her employer. She says her boss has chosen to risk keeping her because she is a faithful worker and they know it would be extremely difficult for her to obtain other employment.

Her life away from the job revolves around window-shopping, reading in the park, going to movies and relaxing in her home. At times, she has to guard her language, like when she's on the bus.

She's heard another passenger say, "I would have a seat if these illegal immigrants would just get off the bus." Michele says, "It hurts. It hurts. It breaks my heart. And we can't even say anything back."

Shanta Ramson, a Washington lawyer who specializes in immigration, explains: "There is no law in place right now. Right now, there is no law on the books

that can help her."

Recent immigration reforms have failed to pass Congress, including a reform proposed by President Bush that would allow the 11 to 12 million undocumented workers in the U.S. to gain temporary legal status.

Michele's biggest dream is to go to college in the U.S. and earn a business degree. But, being illegal, she couldn't even qualify for student aid.

"We want better jobs, we want to go to college, we want opportunity, we want a piece of the pie too," she says.

And that's not all Michele wants. She wants freedom to visit home to visit relatives, including a 15-month old nephew.

"I wish I could see him in his young tender age, where you can hug him and kiss him and bite up his cheeks," she says, smiling.

She regularly speaks to her mother by phone. Once, she came to visit and Michele delighted in her mother's company for weeks, but the airport departure was unbearable. "We cried so hard. I cried long," she recalls.

Experts say that not all immigrants are treated equally. Those from Haiti, for example, encounter more difficulty obtaining legal status in the U.S. than others, such as Cuba.

Donald J. Hernandez, professor of sociology at the University of Albany and an expert on immigration and diversity, says the difference in treatment is more about the United States' relationship with that particular nation than it is about race.

"It really is very country-specific. Cuba has been a favored country because of the cold war," Hernandez says. "People from Trinidad and Tobago have not had that favor, per se because they have not had that geo-political

importance."

Ramson, the immigration lawyer, says marriage to an American could open the door to begin application for legal status. But Ramson emphasizes, that is only in cases of "good faith marriages; not for fraudulent purposes or to circumvent the immigration law."

Americans view Trinidad and Tobago as a vacation or retirement destination with palm trees, coconut milk, mangos, and beaches with blue water. Though Trinidad and Tobago is one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean, largely because of its oil and gas reserves, its per capita income is only \$10,440 a year. The prospect of a better standard of living for immigrants - legal and illegal - is one of the attractions of the U.S.

The worse case scenario, if Michele ever gets deported, she must wait as many as 10 years before being eligible to apply for a Visa.

"I want hope. I want hope. If God would just open up the windows of heaven and say that there's a new start, I want to be free so I can come out and soar like an eagle," she says. "You try your best to kind of like blank it out. But you can't blank it out because you never know what is going to happen when enforcement comes."

## Reunion

Continued from page 1A

In addition to Earle Village's reunion, Stay Alive Past 25 will remember the families of violent crime victims at the park. The family fun day starts at 8 a.m. with volleyball and basketball tournaments as well as rappers and steppers.

For information on the reunion, call Malik Tillman at (704) 890-0408 or 334-0393. For Stay Alive Past 25, call (704) 353-1246 or 719-4416 to register.

## Ill. funds slavery study

CHICAGO DEFENDER

CHICAGO - State legislators are hopeful that a study to be released in the spring will provide a clear picture of the negative effects of the transatlantic slave trade on Black Americans.

At a news conference last week, community leaders and five black legislators announced the establishment of the Illinois Transatlantic Slave Trade Commission.

A 2005 joint resolution funded a \$400,000 grant to the Center for Inner City Studies of Northeastern Illinois University, where elected officials and members of the 25-member commission discussed their plans improve the lives of those historically disadvantaged due to the slave trade.

The commission includes Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich, state legislators and researchers and scholars from all over the country. "We want to find out what really happened to African Americans and what vestiges of slavery remain with us today," said Anderson Thompson, director of research for the project.

The study will address the impact of politics, economics, education and societal issues on the Transatlantic slave trade and slavery by examining the institution of slavery from 1619 to 1865, federal and state government support of slavery and discrimination by law in the public and private sectors against free Africans.



**NOW OPEN**  
CALL NOW FOR APPOINTMENTS!

2540 West Arrowood Rd.  
Suite 110  
Charlotte, NC 28273  
Ph: (704) 588-9997  
Fax: (704) 588-9499  
www.alfamedicalclinic.com  
Se Habla Español



Francis Obeng, MD  
BOARD CERTIFIED

Dr. Francis Obeng and the staff of Alfa Medical Clinic will like to welcome you to Alfa Medical Clinic, where we provide treatment that puts you first.

We strive to provide the highest quality of care for adults, 18 years and above. Our services include internal medicine (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, asthma, etc.), Urgent Care, Sports Physicals, Employment Physicals, Minor Trauma, Disability Determinations, Occupational Medicine, Allergy Testing, X-Rays and Nerve Conduction Studies, as well as in-house Laboratory Testing.

We are conveniently located at 2540 West Arrowood Road, in Suite 110, just off South Tryon Street or I-485 in Charlotte NC, behind the B-L, Lowes and Wal-Mart.

Our office is open Monday through Friday from 9am until 6pm, and on Saturdays from 9am until 1pm to accommodate your schedule. New patients and walk-ins are welcome. Most insurance companies accepted. Also, for your convenience, we accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and debit cards, as well as checks and cash.

We also have a Spanish interpreter for your convenience.

Dr. Francis Obeng is a Board Certified physician of internal medicine. Dr. Francis Obeng completed his residency program from the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, Harlem Hospital New York.

Dr. Obeng has worked in the Charlotte area and its environs for 5 years now and has tremendous experience in primary care and urgent care. Dr. Francis Obeng has a passion for medicine and has been recognized for providing medical services for various communities. He is pleased to be a part of the Steele Creek area.

## Think you can't afford a Mortgage?

Think again. At First Citizens Bank, we understand the importance of owning your own home. That's why we offer superior client consultation and affordable mortgages through the North Carolina Housing Finance loan program, especially designed for first-time home buyers. With below-market interest rates, reduced closing costs and reduced private mortgage insurance, you can finally own the home of your dreams.

To learn more, call or stop by your local

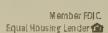
First Citizens branch today.



Founded in 1898



firstcitizens.com 1.888.FC.DIRECT



Member FDIC  
Equal Housing Lender  
Member credit approval applies. Maximum income limits apply. Check with your local mortgage banker for the maximum income limits in your area.

## FIRST LEGACY

FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Legacy of Service

### BASIC SERVICES

- ▶ Share-Draft Accounts (Checking)
- ▶ Share Accounts (Savings)
- ▶ Overdraft Protection
- ▶ Certificates of Deposit
- ▶ Individual Retirement Accounts
- ▶ Credit Cards
- ▶ Debit Cards
- ▶ Money Orders
- ▶ Travelers & Gift Cheques
- ▶ Wire Transfers

### LOANS

- ▶ Auto/Truck Loans - New & Used
- ▶ Share-Secured Loans
- ▶ Unsecured Loans
- ▶ Home Equity Loans
- ▶ Mortgage Loans
- ▶ Tuition Assistance Loans
- ▶ Christmas Loans
- ▶ Gap Insurance
- ▶ Credit Disability/Life Insurance
- ▶ Extended Warranty Insurance

### ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- ▶ Direct Deposit
- ▶ Payroll Deduction
- ▶ Internet Banking
- ▶ Online Bill Pay
- ▶ Audio Response Teller/24 hrs.
- ▶ Tiered Share Dividends
- ▶ Quarterly Newsletters
- ▶ Christmas Club
- ▶ Summer Savings Club
- ▶ FREE Notary Services & NADA Car Valuations
- ▶ Drive Up Window/Night Depository

## JOIN TODAY!

All it takes to become a member of First Legacy is a joining fee of \$10 and a minimum deposit of \$20 to open an account. Once you are a member, you are eligible to take advantage of the many outstanding financial products and services provided by the experts at First Legacy Federal Credit Union.

MAIN OFFICE:  
2540 West Arrowood Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28273  
704-375-3781

FULL-SERVICE BRANCHES: SATELLITE OFFICES

2540 West Arrowood Rd., Charlotte, NC 28273  
 704-375-3781  
 2540 West Arrowood Rd., Charlotte, NC 28273  
 704-375-3781  
 2540 West Arrowood Rd., Charlotte, NC 28273  
 704-375-3781

WWW.FIRSTLEGACYFCU.ORG