



## UNITE AGAINST AIDS SUMMIT

HIV/AIDS in Africa & the African Diaspora  
C/O Harvard Black Men's Forum  
Harvard Yard  
4 University Hall  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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*Advisor to the president of Ghana on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS*

August 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my unwavering support for Ms. Jodie Smith-Bennett of EventFull Strategies. I believe I am particularly qualified to speak to Ms. Smith-Bennett's qualifications as I have worked with her professionally for two years on three major projects—two Celebration of Black Women events and the Unite Against AIDS Summit. Each project proved to be challenging endeavors, requiring a unique expertise of leadership and organization, which Jodie provided gracefully.

The longest interaction I had with Jodie came with the Unite Against AIDS Summit: HIV/AIDS in Africa and the African Diaspora, which took twelve months in planning. The Summit inspired a new wave of dialogue, action, and service among youth of diverse backgrounds. It addressed a range of compelling issues concerning the catastrophic HIV/AIDS crises in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and black America. This summit was unprecedented in that it facilitated the mobilization of over 700 black students and youth in HIV/AIDS advocacy.

Jodie had a range of responsibilities including fundraising, media outreach, and overseeing conference logistics. She was faced with the difficult task of working with overcommitted Harvard Students who had less the optimal schedules for an event of this magnitude, namely midterms, final exams period, and summer and spring break. Jodie displayed great leadership and organizational skills through her commitment to the project. She tactfully advised a core committee made up of eight strong egos, keeping everyone focused with a strict timeline. She was extremely meticulous, yet always had a calm demeanor which proved to be critical in assuaging nerves or fears particularly in situations where things were difficult. Jodie is truly unafraid of challenge, and dedicated to success.

I wholeheartedly recommend Jodie as an event planner. She is a proven leader who brings a unique energy and professional quality to all the projects that she undertakes. Her humbleness is admirable, which is an essential characteristic to her trade. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [owusukes@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:owusukes@fas.harvard.edu) or at 508-353-3246.

Sincerely,

*Kwame*

Kwame Owusu-Kesse  
President-Emeritus, Harvard Black Men's Forum