



Mr. Saladi Shebule is a Somali-American who hails from the Lower Juba region in southern Somalia. He left the country with his family after a civil war erupted in the early 1990s to settle in one of the most populated refugee camps in the world, Dadaab Refugee Camps, situated in northeastern Kenya.

Mr. Shebule and his family relocated to Buffalo in the summer of 2004 with no formal education. However; deep down, that did not matter to him because he knew he had to work hard to live a successful life. There were many times he felt extremely frustrated and helpless, but through hard work, determination, and a great deal of patience, he persevered and graduated from high school and furthered his education by earning a bachelor's

degree in Political Science from Daemen College.

After graduation, Mr. Shebule accepted a position with *Baker Victory Services* as a mental health specialist where he provided support and services to children, adolescents, and families. In this capacity, he planned and directed clients in areas of social programming and activities. He also trained various clients in the area of living skills such as: decision making, personal control, interpersonal communication, and problem solving.

Within his career, Mr. Shebule also worked with the *Coalition for Economic Justice* (CEJ) as a community organizer. At CEJ, he led the *POWER* (Protecting our Workers from Exploitation and Retaliation) Act and the Participatory Budgeting campaigns. He moved policies that increased the ability of all workers to transform their working conditions through organization and collective action.

Furthermore, Mr. Shebule interned and was later hired to work for the *City of Buffalo* to then Common Council President David Franczyk. He also interned with *Erie County Family Court* in the Juvenile Delinquency Services Team unit.

Mr. Shebule also served as a director for the *Somali Bantu Community Organization of Western New York*; a small and uprising grassroots non-profit community-based refugee organization. Under his leadership with the organization, more community reforms were initiated and implemented. His reform work included adding new board members with expertise in education, healthcare, accounting, and other expertise needed for the advancement of the organization. Board members received training in fundraising, fiscal management and governance so they could work effectively with his initiatives. After the training, a short term strategic plan was developed and implemented.

Perhaps his proudest initiatives when working as a director for the organization was his development and implementation of an after school program and a summer program for struggling Buffalo Public Schools students. The programs provided homework assistance, academic skills building, mentoring, and social integration.

Finally when working with the organization, Mr. Shebule led to organize the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Somali Bantu Community Day (Somali Bantu History Month) in the City of Buffalo. Several

city dignitaries attended the event. The event brought together all people from Somalia (after a long displacement in the diaspora) to celebrate their cultures and traditions in the City of Buffalo, while thanking city and state officials for resettling them in the region.

Mr. Shebule is currently working in the *Buffalo Public Schools* to continue to support the learning of a variety of students, including many newcomers like refugees and students with interrupted formal education.

Mr. Shebule is a result-oriented and always delivers high quality work. He is passionate about continuing to build upon his successful work to help improve the quality of life for our college students as well.