Men’s Health Initiative
Using Community Based Approaches to Combat High Blood Pressure and Colorectal Cancer
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FAITH-CRC’s Success with Soup

FAITH-CRC aims to partner with churches, mosques, and other faith-based organizations to promote heart healthy lifestyle changes and colonoscopy completion among its older Black male members. Though there is no shortage of predominantly Black churches in New York City, our team here at NYU has encountered some obstacles in recruiting men from these churches. Contrary to what many say about Black men, many of these men actually do go and see their doctors. Indeed, the rate for colonoscopy completion among men screened in churches has been higher than the rate among those we meet in barbershops and on the street. We know that Black churches have traditionally been a staple in Black American culture, playing a large role in the Civil Rights Movement and giving rise to many prominent public figures and spokespeople for Black America over the years. It is thus no surprise that a number of Black men we encounter in churches are socially aware, and in the same vein, on top of their health. A laudable virtue indeed, this trend has at the same time presented a bit of a dilemma for FAITH-CRC, as the study excludes men who have had prior colonoscopies.

Nonetheless, FAITH-CRC has been able to find several niches in the faith-based community, one of which has been the soup kitchen. As well as food pantries, clothing drives, and other outreach programs, many churches provide for those less fortunate. By allying with these programs, we have been able to focus our efforts on populations in most need, and offer an additional, vital service to many.

Jay’s Barbershop, located on 145th Street between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd in Harlem, is our featured barbershop for this month. As one of the most dynamic fixtures in the neighborhood, Jay’s has gone to great lengths to promote and support our MISTER-B Project. Research Coordinators, Billy Guzman and Jonatta Moore sat down with owners Jason "Jay" Green and Earl Thompson to discuss the effect of the project in the community, Black men’s health, and the role Jay’s played in promoting this initiative.

Billy: What has this project meant to your barbershop and your community?
Barbershop Spotlight: Jay’s (cont.)

Earl Thompson (left) and Jay Green (right), co-owners of Jay’s Barbershop

Jay: For me it has helped a lot of men that don’t normally get their blood pressure checked. It has brought awareness to them. And, it has helped business.

Jonatta: How do you feel about your barbershop being our most popular site?

Jay: It is good to know that. But more importantly, this has been helping people become more aware of their blood pressure status and their health overall. It is helping people, so that is a good thing.

Billy: What advice would you guys give to your clientele about colon cancer and hypertension?

Earl: Watch your diet. Go get it checked.

Jay: Get it checked! I’m going to go get mine checked tomorrow. Yes, I’m getting a colonoscopy tomorrow. I’m 34, but I’ve got a history of cancer in my family, so they want to check to make sure nothing happens. In case I do have it, they can take care of it right now.

Jonatta: Tell us about the history of your barbershop in the community.

Earl: This is the first time that we have had anything like this in the barbershop. It feels good.

Jay: He thinks of himself as a conscious barber, so this kind of coincides with what he believes in.

Jonatta: Why do you think most men were attracted to the screening events at Jay’s Barbershop?

Jay: First and foremost, they come to get a haircut. When you tell them what you’re doing, they’re interested in learning more about trying to stay healthy. They trust the people in the barbershop, so when you associate yourself with the barber, they think it’s not so bad because they trust what their barber says.

Billy: How would you guys describe your experience working with the NYU MISTER-B project?

Jay: It helped a lot of people become aware of their high blood pressure status. Overall, it was a good experience. I would definitely do it again.

Billy Guzman & Jonatta Moore
Research Coordinators

Storefront of Jay’s Barbershop
(145th bet. 7th and Lenox Aves)
who often have limited or no access to healthcare. Furthermore, those who regularly receive these services are often just as much a part of the church community whether they are members or not. We’ve had particular successes at Union Baptist Church and First Baptist Church of Brownsville, two Brooklyn churches that host weekly soup kitchens, pantries, and clothing drives. Ms. Olivia High, one of the soup kitchen coordinators for Union Baptist and a health educator for our project, stressed the importance of their program, especially now:

“There is a great need especially in the Bed-Stuy community. With the economic times being what they are we are noticing more and more need as more new people show up to our doors each week. There has been a 10-15% increase in the number of people using our services recently. Since our doors have opened, this has been one of the worst times of hardship I have ever seen.”

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Where We’ll Be This Month

TJ’s House of Syles  **Mon/Fri 12pm-5pm**  
244 Malcolm X Blvd, Brooklyn

Black Success Barbershop  **Mon/Wed 10am-4pm**  
729 Pennsylvania Ave, Brooklyn

Master Builders Barbershop  **Wed/Fri 10am-4pm**  
195A Ralph Ave, Brooklyn

Helping Hands  **M,W, Th,F 11am-3pm**  
Various Locations in Brooklyn

NYU Medical Center

Center for Healthful Behavior Change  
NYU School of Medicine-Department of Medicine  
550 1st Ave VZ 632C  
New York, NY 10016

Phone: (646) 501-2593  
Email: helen.cole@nyumc.org  
Or jordan.plumhoff@nyumc.org

Where We’ve Been

**MISTER-B**

**Harlem**
- Denny Moe’s Superstar Barbershop, Levels, Master John’s Barbershop, Mosaic Cuts, RW’s Barbershop, Joe’s Barbershop, Sam Gore’s Unisex, Your Modern Barbershop, Riverside Church Barber School, Jimmy’s Unisex, Jay’s Barbershop, Sho Nuff Unisex, Harlem Masters, T.R.Y. Star, Teams Housing Center, N.A.N. Health Fair, Central Harlem Senior Center, Harlem Week

**Queens**
- Urban Haircutters, House of Many Styles, Lawson’s Barbershop, Hopkins’ Barbershop, Hughes Next Millennium Cuts, Mr. Rooney’s Barber Lounge, Queensbridge Cutz, Tony’s, Sam’s, Signature Cuts, Hollywood Barbershop

**Bronx**
- There’s Hope Barbershop, Med Guinea Bronx Mosque

**Brooklyn**
- Pomoja House Men’s Shelter, Gethsemane Health Fair, Helping Hands Food Program, Breevort Concert Series

**FAITH-CRC**

**Harlem**
- Southern Baptist, Church of the Master, Aqsa Mosque

**Queens**
- Presbyterian Church of St. Albans

**Bronx**
- Yankasa Assoc Mosque, Nurudeen Islamic Charity, West Bronx Mosque

**Brooklyn**
- First Baptist of Crown Heights, Bedford Central Baptist, Salam Wal Khair Mosque, First Baptist of Brownsville, Union Baptist, Powerful Praise Tabernacle, Pleasant Grove, Power-Up Faith Fellowship, United House of Prayer for All People, Calvary Baptist, Grace Episcopal, Bible Faith Tabernacle, Christ Church, Friendship Baptist, Upper Room

We’d like to thank these venues for all their support!