

Men's Health Initiative

Using Community Based Approaches to Combat High Blood Pressure and Colorectal Cancer

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER 2011

Updates:

- MHI Offices have moved to the Verizon building on East 30th St. See back for new contact info!
- We have now reached **456** participants in the Men's Health Initiative!
- We are now partnering with the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health in Brooklyn!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Updates	1
Success with Soup	1, 3
Barbershop Spotlight	1-2
CDC	3
Future and Past Events	4

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

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



Mr. Wright & Ms. High, respectively the cook and coordinator for the Union Baptist Feeding Program

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

Barbershop Spotlight: Jay's

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 are some of the comments that some of your clients have made about the project?

Earl: Well, most of them seem to think that it is a good thing that we're doing a service to the community, and they appreciate it.

Jay: Some customers come in, and they don't realize that their blood pressure is so high.

But they didn't realize that eating certain things can raise their blood pressure. So, when they come here and you do the study with them, they probably change their eating habits. [Your study] has helped them because it made them aware of what things to eat and what not to eat.

Jonatta: How do you guys feel about your roles as ambassadors for the community?

Jay: I think that it is good that we can do some type of good besides just make money in the neighborhood because there are a lot of black guys that don't like going to the doctor. So, you bring the doctor to where they most likely come, and it helps.

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)

FAITH-CRC's Success with Soup (cont.)

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."

And the doors of the Union Baptist Feeding Program opened on October 8th, 1989, manned entirely by a staff of dedicated volunteers that has grown to a group of 18. As if offering food and clothes were not enough, they now provide valuable health education as well. When asked why the church does the wonderful work it does, Ms. High humbly replied "I believe this is what God asks of us."

We thank Ms. High and Union Baptist as well as those at First Baptist of Brownsville, Bedford-Central Baptist, and Upper Room for answering their call, feeding the hungry, and assisting us with our project.

Nnaemeka Echebiri
Research Coordinator

"I believe this is what God asks of us."

**-Ms. High,
Feeding Program
Coordinator at
Union Baptist**

Who Funds Us Anyway?

The Men's Health Initiative is funded in part by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that was made available through the efforts of President Barack Obama and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Recovery Act was passed in order to stimulate the economy and create new employment opportunities. The Recovery Act made \$275 billion available for federal contracts, grants and loans, part of which currently funds our research efforts. We are honored to say the dollars are being well spent! To find out more information about the Recovery Act or to track how the funds are being spent, visit www.recovery.gov.



In July, representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) visited the Center for Healthful Behavior Change, home of the MISTER-B and FAITH-CRC projects. They were pleased with the progress and impact that both studies have made on the community. To date more than 1500 men over the age of 50 have been screened for high

blood pressure, and we have enrolled more than 380 men into our projects. We have partnered with more than 20 churches, 40 barbershops, and 6 mosques. The two projects have also screened thousands of women and men younger than 50. The impact on the community has been phenomenal.

The Men's Health Initiative thanks its partners and friends in the communities it services and looks forward to expanding on these relationships in the future. Great work, MISTER-B and FAITH-CRC!

Jordan Plumhoff
Project Manager, FAITH-CRC

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

If you or someone you know would like to be a participant in one of our studies or host events at your venue, please contact us at this number.



Billy Guzman, screening blood pressure at Aqsa Mosque, in Harlem

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!

