



Promoting Successful Aging
in Detroit and Beyond

HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER SPRING '09

7th Annual Healthier Black Elders Health Reception

Make Good Health Your Priority

WHEN: Tuesday, June 2
9am-2:15 pm

WHERE: Bert's Warehouse Theater
Eastern Market
2727 Russell St.
Detroit 48207

COST: FREE

Registration
Deadline Friday,
May 15

Registration closes when we
reach 800 guests, so call us now
at 313-577-2297 and say...

*"I'd like to register
for the Healthier Black
Elders event."*

- Give the following information to our event organizer:
Your name
Current mailing address
Phone number
- You will receive your ticket about 10 days before the event, You must bring your ticket in order to attend.
- Every person in your party must have their own ticket.
- Be prepared to have a fun-filled day of friendship, health education, exercise, music and nutritious food, plus dozens of healthcare agencies offering free health screenings.

The best way to live a long and healthy life is to take care of yourself: eat well, get regular health screenings, exercise a few times a week, and stay involved with friends and community. The 7th annual Healthier Black Elders Health Reception is the perfect way to do all of these things in one day. This Detroit tradition has helped

thousands of seniors start good health habits that last a lifetime. On June 2, at Bert's Warehouse Theater in the historic Eastern Market, you can be one of them.



Guests get a vigorous work-out while sitting in their chairs at the 2008 event.

Created through the combined efforts of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and the Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State University, the Healthier Black Elders Reception reaches hundreds of Detroit's older African Americans with innovative ways to exercise, to monitor their health and well-being, and to tap into musical and artistic creativity. Dr. James Jackson directs the U-M portion of the center and calls the event a positive force in the community. "The need for improved health outcomes among African

Americans is great," he said. "They are at much higher risk of many serious health problems. This event encourages doctor's visits and health screenings to help prevent these problems."

As always, the Health Reception is free and geared toward people age 55 and older and their caregivers. Doors open at 9:00 am, so guests can visit

CONTINUED ON PG. 6



HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER (HBEC)

University of Michigan and Wayne State University's Center for Urban African American Aging Research:
A National Institute on Aging Grant Program



LIVE AND LEARN: Series Educates Seniors throughout Detroit

Healthy male aging, addictions, home healthcare agencies, caregiver stress, and preventing falls: These are just a few of the topics covered recently at educational seminars conducted by the HBEC. This year, the Center's Healthcare Consumer Learning Series has reached 250 older adults at six Detroit locations with a potent message of prevention and treatment to improve aging in African American men and women. Series organizer Ms. Patricia Rencher has tailored HBEC's approach to fit the needs of neighborhoods and host organizations.

"Many groups have come into these areas and told people what they should know," Dr. Lichtenberg, director of the Institute of Gerontology said. "Our improved approach is to pull together the folks who are committed to senior programming and ask them what information is of interest to them. These planning teams sent us in new directions that increased our audience and impact."

One new idea that proved successful was separate programs for men and women. *African American Men Celebrate Aging* at Presbyterian Village of Brush Park gave attendees access to medical experts in prostate health, sexuality and overall male aging, prompting discussion and questions. The Detroit Medical Center provided lunch, which allowed guests to interact further with each other and the experts. One attendee said he appreciated having a safe place to ask questions and talk about his fears.

Another popular session was *Aging Gracefully* at the LaSed Senior Center, which provided free blood pressure and glucose screenings and drew 63 members of the Latino community. Presenta-

tions were delivered in English and Spanish. "Our primary focus is on African Americans," explained Ms. Rencher, "but older Latinos are an underserved group, too, and benefit greatly from health information and guidance."

The added value of the learning series format is that groups are smaller, experts are credible,

information is accurate, and guests are encouraged to ask questions. "In a doctor's office, people can be too intimidated to ask questions," Ms. Rencher said. "Our series is relaxed, informal and fun, yet provides easy-to-understand experts to answer questions," added HBEC Director Dr. Olivia Washington. "We create a learning environment that is not threatening or intimidating."

In addition to educating seniors who may be overlooked by other service providers, the program encourages guests to consider becoming part of non-clinical, non-invasive research conducted

by accredited universities. African Americans are under-represented in research populations. The HBEC's mission is to increase representation. "Our ultimate goal is to demystify research and encourage older adults, especially African Americans, to participate," Dr. Washington said. "Research will help us uncover why certain illnesses impact us at an alarmingly disproportionate rate, and find the treatments that work best for African Americans."

If you or your organization would like to host a Healthcare Consumer Learning Series, please contact Ms. Rencher at 313-577-2297, ext. 351. Venues must be in Detroit, handicapped accessible, and accommodate at least 40 people comfortably.



ABOVE: Dr. Adamo demonstrates good balance and safe walking. LEFT: Dr. Washington, performs free blood pressure screenings on interested guests.



Volunteers Energize HBEC Programs

A special team of advisors and volunteers helps to bring better health to Detroit's seniors through their commitment to the Healthier Black Elders Center. Their ideas and energy make a positive difference in much of its work, from the educational forums HBEC sponsors at Detroit faith-based organizations, community and senior living centers to its large annual health event in June. "Very little of what we do could be accomplished without volunteers," said Dr. Olivia Washington, director of the HBEC. "They are our hands and eyes in the community. They bring invaluable ideas and strategies to us and help us make them real. They are worth their weight in gold."

HBEC offers three ways to help: the Community Advisory Board (CAB), Senior Aides, and event volunteers. These are a few of HBEC's special volunteers:

Dr. Joanne Benton holds a master's degree in health education and a Ph.D. in metaphysics, and taught for many years at Highland Park Community College. She was a major in the U.S. Army stationed at Walter Reed Medical Center. She now manages a women's shelter in Detroit and, through her vocational training center, has trained nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses. Dr. Benton has been a CAB member for several years. This year, due to her expertise in healthcare and community service, she will sit on the question-and-answer panel at the June 2 event.

For nine years, **Joyce Keener** has been a CAB board member and volunteer, responsible for supervising lunch service to the hundreds of HBEC guests. She is also the owner and founder of Human Potential Consultants, a multi-state employment rehabilitation agency that helps urban adults find and keep meaningful work. Joyce was nominated in February for a Community Champion Award from Molina



Enjoying the HBEC event are (L-R) John Villa, Dr. Ethel Ambrose and Allena Robinson



Volunteer Sandra Epps donates face-painting Healthcare.

Tyrone Carter and **Loretta Akers** are new members to the advisory board. Tyrone retired recently from the Detroit Police Department. He is committed to keeping his Detroit neighborhood safe and accessible for all of its residents, especially older adults. Ms. Akers is a communications student at Wayne State who is interning under Dr. Washington in the planning and promotion of this year's health reception.

“ Very little of what we do could be accomplished without volunteers. They are our hands and eyes in the community. ”



Meal service volunteers (L-R)- Stephanie Donaldson, Regina Dubose, Anwar Najor-Durack, Larry Pickett

John Villa is the oldest member of the Senior Aides and has built strong relationships between HBEC and the Latino community in which he has been an activist and leader for several years. A retiree from General Electric, he now sits on the board of directors of Adult Well Being Services, the American Red Cross and Matrix Human Services among others.

CAB members are African American and meet quarterly. Though no term of service is required, members like Chester Johnson have been on the board for many years. The valued CAB members are **Patricia Baldwin, Pennie Brantley, Prudence Burrell, Precious Everett, Joann Labostrie, Jonnetta McLeod and JoAnn Smith-Taylor**. Members help to plan the annual event's program, menu and marketing. They provide feedback on past events to make future events more meaningful and accessible. They also review all HBEC materials distributed to the public, contribute ideas to the Healthcare Consumer Learning Series, and sit on the Participant Resource Pool oversight committee. CAB members often start as volunteers or Senior Aides or can be referred by other members or organizations.

—Olivia Washington, Ph.D.
Director HBEC



CAB Member Pat Baldwin

The Senior Aides represent 10 sectors of the Detroit community and act as ambassadors to their neighborhoods. Our other esteemed Senior Aides are **Dr. Ethel Ambrose, Dorothy Bell, James Bridgforth, June Clark, Charles Jackson, Eugene Odom, Allena Robinson and Narvell Stotts**. These volunteers spread the HBEC message of good health and preventative care to family, friends and neighbors. They return to the HBEC with information about what seniors in their community need and want. They often start as event volunteers who want to become more involved with HBEC throughout the year.

The volunteer corps is comprised of 50-60 persons who provide hands-on help for the HBEC Health Reception. They act as registration staff, escorts, waiters and waitresses, set-up and clean-up crew, guides and all-around assistants. They help to set a positive tone for the day's event and insure that the needs of all guests are met in a friendly way.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities with the HBEC or the Institute of Gerontology, contact Karen Daniels at 313-871-0735 or visit the HBEC tab at www.IOG.wayne.edu

Good-bye to a Good Friend

by Karen L. Daniels

Please join the Healthier Black Elders Center in expressing its sadness at the loss of Mr. William Haithco II, a dedicated member of the HBEC Community Advisory Board who passed away on March 4, 2009, at the age of 52.

Mr. Haithco was born in Saginaw and attended Western Michigan University where he majored in psychology. In 1982, he moved to Detroit, married and had two children. For approximately 20 years, he managed and administered group homes for the physically and mentally challenged.

During the last nine years, Mr. Haithco was actively involved with organizations devoted to assisting and advocating for seniors citizens. He worked as a Senior Advocate and Community Liaison for several local home healthcare agencies, volunteered as an Ombudsman for the Citizens for Better Care (Detroit) and donated significant time and energy at several HBEC outreach events.



Mr. Haithco discusses health concerns at an all-male learning series.

He recently received a congressional award for his community work and generous spirit of giving. This spirit lives on in his selfless decision to become an organ donor.

Donations can be made in his family's behalf to the American Heart Association or the American Diabetes Association.

*Are you 60 or older and
a native speaker of English?*

We Need You for
a Word Recognition and
Memory Study

Your participation in the study will take approximately 2 hours. You will be given **\$25** in exchange for your participation. We also will pay for your parking.

**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Institute of Gerontology

*If you would like more information,
contact Dr. Lee Wurm at
1-313-577-0771 or lee.wurm@wayne.edu*

MCUAAAR Co-Directors Recieve High Honors

James Jackson, Ph.D., has received the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award from Wayne State University for his service and accomplishments in minority research, education and health. Dr. Jackson is director of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and co-directs the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR) with Dr. Peter Lichtenberg. The Healthier Black Elders Center is a product of the MCUAAAR outreach efforts. Dr. Jackson will be honored at a May 6 alumni gala on Wayne State's campus.

Peter Lichtenberg, Ph.D., received a special tribute and citation from the State of Michigan for 10 years of exceptional service to the Michigan Dementia Coalition and to the health and well-being of older adults. In March, he was also selected as the Anthony V. DeVito II Memorial Award recipient presented by the University of Michigan Geriatrics Center for excellence in geriatrics education, and outstanding service and dedication to older adults.

DELIVER BY MAY 28, 2008
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Institute of Gerontology
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Good Health is Earned, Not Given CONTINUED

health screeners and vendors until 10:20 am. A formal program follows with remarks from WDET radio personality Jay Butler (“Jay’s Place” on Saturday nights, 101.9 FM), and Detroit Police Chief James Barren who also is a Wayne State graduate with a doctorate in counseling. Chief Barren has helped garner additional volunteer support from the National organization of Black Law Enforcement, or NOBLE. A panel consisting of experts in older adult health will take questions from the audience. Ernie Clark, former Detroit Lion, next leads the audience in muscle-building chair exercises to work up an appetite before lunch is served.



Police Chief Barren

Afternoon entertainment includes an oil painting demonstration by James Gibson, an award-winning landscape artist whose paintings hang in the Florida

Governor’s mansion and in the home of the king and queen of Spain. Hustle dancing (open to all guests) and live jazz music by the Charlie Gabriel Band, with Marcus Belgrave and Joan Bow, close out the afternoon. “Healthy habits don’t have to be tedious or boring,” said Dr. Olivia Washington who directs the Healthier Black Elders Center through the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research at Wayne State. “Healthy choices can be fun choices,” she said. “We want to show people a variety of effective ways to take care of themselves.”

Last year the event provided 683 free health screenings and identified 160 seniors who needed follow-up healthcare for their problems. “Without this Health Reception offered free and held in the heart of Detroit, these attendees might have gone undiagnosed,” said Institute of Gerontology Director Dr. Peter Lichtenberg. “Today’s economy makes it even harder for older adults to afford the care they need,” he said. “We are grateful to have found an effective way to help.”