

Bronx Health REACH News

Making Health Equality a Reality

DECEMBER 2006

Pastors' Breakfast is a Huge Success!

By Bethany Gotkin

On Tuesday, October 24, 2006, Bronx Health REACH held a Pastors' Breakfast at the Cosmopolitan Church of the Lord Jesus. More than forty people attended the breakfast.

The Pastors' Breakfast brought together clergy from across the Bronx to discuss their critical role in improving health outcomes in the community.

Dr. Neil Calman, Principal Investigator of REACH, kicked off the event by sharing powerful data on the effects of racial and ethnic health disparities. His presentation underscored that unnecessary lives are lost and undue suffering results from different care given to people of color.

The Reverend Dr. Robert

L. Foley, Sr. of Cosmopolitan Church of the Lord Jesus and the Reverend Dr. J. Albert Bush, Sr. of Walker Memorial Baptist Church delivered



Pastor Foley and Pastor Bush speak out!

fascinating discourses titled 'A Theology of Sickness' and 'A Theology of Equality,' respectively.

In 'A Theology of Sickness,' Rev. Foley said that "faith does not demand the abandonment of common sense or the rejection of medical intervention."

In 'A Theology of Equality,' Rev. Bush discussed the importance of the "church's active involvement in the participation in social issues that address disparities and inequalities of every nature."

As a result of the Pastors' Breakfast, ten new congregations expressed interest in joining the Bronx Health REACH coalition.

Bronx Health REACH is actively recruiting new churches to participate in its faith-based outreach initiative. This expansion is supported by funds from the National Institutes of Health.

Munch Time, a participant in the Bronx Healthy Hearts restaurant program, catered the breakfast.

Third Annual Bronx Food Festival: REACH for a Healthy Heart!

By Geysil Arroyo

In October, over five hundred people sampled healthier food options at our nine restaurants and more than five hundred children visited our five bodegas to sample healthy snacks during the third annual *Bronx Food Festival: REACH for a Healthy Heart* event.

The food festival offers an

opportunity for families to learn about healthy eating and for restaurants and bodegas to demonstrate their commitment to provide healthy food to the community.

The event opened, on Monday, October 23, with special celebrations at Ocoa Restaurant and at La Sirena bodega.

Speakers included Earl Brown, Bronx Deputy Commissioner; Dr. Jane Bedell, Assistant Commissioner, Bronx District Public Health Office; and Dr. Neil Calman, President, The Institute for Urban Family Health.

Ten reporters from television stations and newspapers covered the event.

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Making Health Equality a Reality

Meet Our Coalition

By REACH staff

The Bronx Health REACH Coalition, led by the Institute for Urban Family Health, brings together 45 organizations, including health care providers, community-based and faith-based organizations. The Coalition's goal is to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes in the Southwest Bronx, where 95% of the population is Latino or black and the rates of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as the rates of poor health outcomes such as blindness and amputations, are very high.

Bronx Health REACH serves as a model for communities to address health disparities that exist throughout the state and country. The Coalition is the catalyst for a broad-based advocacy movement to eliminate racial disparities in health and health care. The diverse community represented by the Coalition is mobilizing to take action to help themselves, their families and the community at large to improve their health.

* Stay tuned! In future newsletters we will highlight coalition members for their demonstrated commitment to Bronx Health REACH *

REACH Goes to Washington, DC.

By Charmaine Ruddock



In September, Charmaine Ruddock, Project Director of Bronx Health REACH, visited Washington DC with representatives from other REACH programs across the country at the invitation of Congresswoman Donna Christensen, head of the

Congressional Black Caucus and Health Braintrust.

REACH leaders shared information with elected officials about the REACH program and the exciting progress REACH has been making to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities. Charmaine met with the staff of over fifteen elected officials to talk about our work in the Southwest Bronx.

The high point of the trip was a Congressional REACH briefing with elected officials and their staff. Congresswoman Hilda Solis from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Health Task Force, a co-sponsor of the event, spoke about REACH's leadership in addressing, nationally, the problem of racial and ethnic disparity in health outcomes.

This visit was an amazing opportunity to bring home the point that local communities can be effective in addressing health concerns when provided with appropriate resources.

Coalition Members

* Agape Love Christian Center * American Diabetes Association * Believer's Christian Fellowship * Bethlehem Judah * Missionary Baptist Church * Bronx Baptist Church * Bronx Borough President's Office * Bronx Community Health Network (BCHN) * Bronx CREED * Bronx District Public Health Office * Bronx Shepherds Restoration Corp. * Bronx Westchester AHEC * Center for Health and Public Service Research, New York University * Christ the King Catholic Church * CMS DHHS New York Regional Office * Commission on the Public's Health System * Correction Community Linkage Program (NYCDOH) * Cosmopolitan Church of the Lord Jesus * Department of Education, Region One * Department of Health Services, Lehman College, CUNY * Diabetes Prevention & Control Program, Bureau of Chronic Diseases * New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and New York State Department of Health * First Pentecostal Church of Jerome * Grand Concourse SDA Church * Health People * Healthy Heart Program * Highbridge Community Life Center * Joyce Davis Associates * MARC After School Program * Mid Bronx Senior Citizens Council * Montefiore School Health Program * Morrisania WIC * Mount Hermon Baptist Church * Mt. Hope Housing Company * National Community Center for Excellence in Women's Health at St. Barnabas Hospital * Neighborhood Self-Help for Older Persons (SHOPP) * Nutrition & Health Cooperative Extension, Cornell University * NY Lawyers for the Public Interest * Seven Light Baptist Church * Student National Medical Association, AECOM Chapter * Temple of the Living God * US Dept. of Health & Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, Region II * Visiting Nurse Service of NY (VNSNY) * Walker Memorial Baptist Church * Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCO) * World Evangelical Deliverance Center

Join the Work to Make Health Equality a Reality

Contact Bronx Health REACH: 718.588.1235 or 212.633.0800, ext. 232

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Third Annual Bronx Food Festival

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The festival was organized by our very own Bronx Health REACH and its sister organization, Bronx Healthy Hearts. These programs work closely together to ensure that our eleven local restaurants and five bodegas promote healthier food items in the Tremont and Highbridge-Morrisania neighborhoods, where the rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease are among the highest in the city.

Because of these organization's efforts, community residents are beginning to take notice of healthy choices. "Some customers decide to order more vegetables and baked dishes," said a waitress at Estrella Bella restaurant, "...and

others ask for smaller portions," she added.

Lucy Magris, owner of the L & R G Groceries bodega, near PS 64, said, "This is such a great way to promote the health of our children, the school, and the community."

Bronx Health REACH and Bronx Healthy Hearts have an all-inclusive plan to work with restaurants, bodegas, and schools, where children can be introduced to new foods and can then take their knowledge into their homes.

Anna Howard, an elementary school teacher, says, "It was about time that a program like this came along . . . the obesity and diabetes situation in this

community is endangering our children's health, and REACH and Bronx



REACH bags filled with jump ropes and healthy snack information given to children at the bodegas

Healthy Hearts are such great programs to instill good habits early in life."

Bronx Food Festival Pictures taken during the Restaurant and Bodega Kick-off Events



A small boy snacks on an apple during the bodega week kick off event



REACH staff distribute healthy food samples from Ocoa Restaurant



A woman reads promotional materials during the restaurant kick-off event

Bodega Initiative Recruits a New Vendor

By Michael Kokozos



In early September, the REACH bodega initiative grew with the addition of L & R G Groceries. This bodega, which is located near PS 64, has committed to providing low fat milk as well as promoting its healthier snacks, including pretzels and a variety of fruit.

Lucy Magris, owner of L & R G Groceries, believes it is "a small thing that she can do" to help the health of the community. Currently, four bodegas are participating in the program. REACH's goal is to recruit and expand the program

to include three more bodegas by spring 2007.

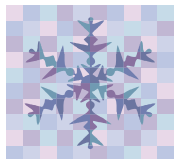
REACH chooses bodegas near the schools in which our Healthy Hearts program, the Montefiore School Health Program, and the Bronx District Public Health Office are working together to improve the eating habits of students.

The bodega campaign is intended to expand the opportunities children have to make healthy food choices. It will be a pleasure to work with PS 64 towards this initiative as we encourage families to become more knowledgeable about nutrition.



Managing The Holiday Temptations: It's never too late for a fresh start!

By Brooke Bennett



The holiday season is upon us! Big meals, decadent celebrations, holiday stress and exhaustion can push healthy eating and regular exercise to the bottom of our priority list. As many of us have heard over and over again, the risk for developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke, rises as we become more overweight and less physically active.

These two risk factors are of special significance because, for most people, they can be lowered through behavior and lifestyle changes. Other factors, such as having a family history of diabetes and belonging to certain racial or ethnic minority populations (including black and Hispanic groups) are also important indicators of risk.

Weight and physical activity level are things we can control. Making even simple changes can make a big difference to your health – especially during this season of indulgence!

Here are some **helpful tips** for managing the temptations that await us:

- Try eating a small healthy snack (a piece of fruit or cut-up vegetables) before you go to a gathering. Showing up hungry makes it harder to choose sensibly and control portions.
- Avoid temptation. After filling your plate at a buffet, leave the area where the food is located. If you are sitting at a table of food, remove your plate when you are finished so that you are less likely to take seconds.
- If there are sweets in the office break room, don't go there. If you receive sweets or fattening food as a gift, bring them to the office or to a friend's house to share.
- Take a brisk walk after each holiday party or meal. Recruit family members and friends to join you. Remember, even a few minutes of exercise is better than no exercise at all.

Lastly, don't give in to "all - or - nothing" thinking. If you "slip-up" or overindulge on a few occasions, don't get discouraged. It is never too late for a fresh start!



Health Disparity Research

We have listed several recent research papers and articles that discuss health disparities in the United States, including research about Bronx Health REACH. We hope you find these papers informative about health issues that may affect you or a loved one. These materials can be accessed online or at your local library. The first three are available on the Institute for Family Health website: www.institute2000.org.

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