

NEWS AND UPDATES

Highlight on Small Grants Recipients: The FAITH! Nutrition Education Program

Over the next year, the UHI will highlight each of our small grants recipients.



Left to Right: Brian Buta, Deneen Hamlin, and LaPrincess Brewer

The FAITH! Nutrition Education Program is a faith-based initiative designed to promote good nutrition, diet, exercise, and overall healthy living behaviors within the African American community. The program, created through a partnership between LaPrincess

Brewer and Brian Buta, graduate students at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Deneen Hamlin, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, and Rev. Michael Palmer of the New Friendship Baptist Church in East Baltimore, consists of a three-part series featuring interactive nutrition education sessions, healthy cooking demonstrations, and video presentations on healthy eating.

Since the FAITH! Kickoff Event in May, there has already been two educational sessions at the New Friendship Baptist Church. The first, in June, included informative lectures on diabetes control and complications and a video presentation on healthy eating. The day wrapped up with a healthy cooking demonstration by a local Baltimore chef, Rodney Madison. The menu introduced the group to soul food favorites with a healthy twist like collard greens with turkey bacon, granny smith apple-potato salad, and baked fried chicken.

The most recent educational session, held in mid-July, featured Johns Hopkins registered nurse, Jeanne Charleston, who presented a talk entitled, *Everything You Need to Know About High Blood Pressure/Hypertension, But Were Afraid to Ask*. The second guest speaker, Dr. Deidra Crews, a Johns Hopkins Nephrology Fellow, delivered a talk, *Let's Talk About Kidney Disease!* Ms. Brewer said that participants were very engaged because over half had a medical history of

hypertension or knew someone with the disease. She added that the presentations were very interactive and participants asked questions on topics ranging from risk factors to organ donation.



Chef Rodney Madison's healthy cooking demonstration

Each person also learned healthy ways to eat "on the go" with a bag lunch from Cosi restaurant. Participants could choose from tuna, grilled chicken or lean turkey sandwiches on whole grain bread with a garden or fruit salad and baby carrots. Ms. Brewer said that everyone was grateful for an alternative to conventional fast food restaurants and that it was evident that church members had already started practicing healthy eating and cooking techniques. She said that church members talked about how they were increasing fruits and vegetables and using salt substitutes and fat-free ingredients in their usual meal preparation.

"For example, during the church's annual Vacation Bible School this summer, the culinary ministry used appropriate serving sizes, healthy substitutes for low-fat, low sodium meals, and recipes from the *FAITH!fully Cooking with Flavor!* cookbook," said Ms. Brewer. "Members have also taken strides to promote healthy eating at home and within their communities. Participants did not totally realize the direct effects of sodium on their health until after our talks on chronic disease and nutrition."



Rev. Michael Palmer speaks to the congregation about the importance of good nutrition.

While the FAITH! Nutrition Education Program sessions will conclude later this summer, the FAITH! Team has provided resources to the congregation to help them continue to eat healthy. The

FAITH!fully Cooking with Flavor! cookbook includes all of the recipes from the program and the "FAITH! Pantry" is a healthy snack shop within the church that offers information about nutrition, recipes, and other resources to promote a healthy lifestyle. In addition, participants received a manual entitled *We've Come This Far by FAITH! Nutrition in Action*, which provides information on all topics discussed in the educational sessions.

Ms. Brewer says that the FAITH! Team hopes to branch out to other churches within East Baltimore to disseminate nutrition education and further develop partnerships with the surrounding community. She says that "the success of our pilot program at New Friendship has proven that it will have a substantial impact on promoting healthy eating."

For more information about the FAITH! Nutrition Education Program, contact LaPrincess Brewer, lbrewer@jhsph.edu.