

THINK. EAT. ACT. MOVE. Africa

DC MAYOR'S OFFICE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS'
HEALTH OUTREACH & EDUCATION INITIATIVE:
PROMOTING HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR DISTRICT RESIDENTS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

February 2013 – June 2013

WHAT IS T.E.A.M Africa?

Think. Eat. Act. Move Africa (TEAM Africa) is a culturally targeted health engagement and education campaign designed to promote wellness, and connect the District's ethnically diverse African communities to vital health services. From the end of February, the official launch, until June, the initiative will engage DC residents through a multi-pronged health program which combines - a) a social media awareness campaign, b) roving mini-workshops on health literacy, mental health, fitness and nutrition, and c) mobile testing and mini-resource fairs - all packaged for delivery in multiple languages and locations for effective reach into the District's linguistically and culturally diverse communities. These efforts will culminate in an 'African Wellness Fete' on June 1st with a fun-filled celebration promoting individual and community health.

WHO IS T.E.A.M Africa?

TEAM Africa is part of OAA's Outreach and Education Program initiated in partnership with a 13-member TEAM Africa Coordinating Committee made up of key stakeholders: DC government representatives, health professionals, community-based organizations and health advocates.

MAYOR GRAY'S HEALTH PRIORITIES

- ❖ Expand access to quality health care;
- ❖ Reduce HIV/AIDS infection and increase the life span of those living with HIV/AIDS;
- ❖ Reduce infant mortality;
- ❖ Improve access to healthy food – farmer's markets, community gardens and grocery stores;
- ❖ Expanding nutrition education and increasing access to healthy foods;

T.E.A.M Africa HEALTH INITIATIVE GOALS

- ❖ Increase health awareness by providing necessary health screenings, activities, materials, demonstrations, and information to the District's African community;
- ❖ Increase awareness of local, state, and national health services and resources;
- ❖ Motivate positive health behavior changes;
- ❖ Teach self-care practices;

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Sometimes you have to hear information more than once to internalize it. Throughout the life of this initiative, TEAM Africa is committed to remind residents over and over again to **Think** about ways of improving their health, **Eat** healthy foods, **Actively** seek care and health resources, & **Move** to integrate fitness into their daily lives. Using social media platforms, TEAM Africa will work to inspire and inform residents and additionally engage ethnic media outlets to echo these messages and promote relevant health-related resources, events and programs and workshops throughout the city.

ROVING WORKSHOPS

TEAM Africa is partnering with a diverse group of African community-based and faith-based organizations in the District who are joining the initiative as host partners who will take one or more of the following workshops to their membership or congregation based on their identified needs and priorities.

Workshop 1:

Health Literacy and Wellness: Harnessing Culture for Community Health

The Health Literacy & Wellness workshop aims to bridge the gap between the health literacy skills of African immigrants and the demands that the health care system places upon them. Designed to be delivered in multiple languages, this interactive workshop will first introduce various health literacy concerns in a culturally relevant storytelling segment, followed by a dialogue with health professionals discussing experiences in accessing healthcare. The discussion will:

- ❖ Examine how culture can be used to promote a more healthy lifestyle and less risk taking behaviors such as non-compliance, stigma, and lack of trust of modern medicine
- ❖ Inspire a cultural shift in how African immigrants relate to health, medicine and wellness
- ❖ Equip participants with information and tools for navigating the healthcare system

Participants will leave this workshop with new ways of thinking about health, and practical knowledge on how to identify key health and wellness resources in the District of Columbia.

Workshop 2:

Cooking Your Way to a Healthy "African" Diet

How do you balance the dual cultural challenge of keeping African heritage foods alive while living in America? In this interactive session, participants will have a chance to gain knowledge on developing a balanced & healthy lifestyle which preserves their African food culture. Led by nutritionists and chefs, participants will have a chance to taste recipes for healthy yet flavorful African and American meals. Why is this important? Weight gain presents health risks when African immigrants encounter cheap, low-quality food and develop bad eating habits. Little attention has focused on the changing eating patterns of African immigrants in the United States and the nutritional effects of their new diet. This workshop will:

- ❖ Discuss traditional and American food choices in African households
- ❖ Inspire participants to eat fresh foods and homemade meals, by avoiding high fat and sugar foods
- ❖ Conduct demonstrations on how to prepare easy and healthy African meals.

Participants will walk away with increased awareness about their eating habits, discover new approaches to cultural recipes, and learn ways they can access and use healthy ingredients for cooking African foods.

Workshop 3:

Reality or Myth? Breaking the Silence on Mental Health

The way language is used to conceptualize mental illness is essential to its understanding and treatment. This workshop aims to bring to the surface issues of mental health in the African community by incorporating concepts of mental health that can help the community translate Western concepts of mental health to African concepts and vice versa in a culturally relevant frame showing that although the terms and treatments may be different the aspects of illness are the same. Led by professionals and practitioners in the field, this interactive workshop will accomplish this by:

- ❖ Sharing/collecting stories and testimonies on perceptions of and experiences with mental health
- ❖ Educating through relatable examples on the illness, symptoms & treatment options to dispel myths and stereotypes
- ❖ Providing resources where participants can get further information and ongoing culturally competent support

Participants will leave this session with greater comfort and tools for discussing mental health in their individual, family and communal lives. They will also walk away with a resource map for how to access services and complement treatment with culture and tradition-based support networks in their community.

AFRICAN WELLNESS FETE

Workshops, Activities, Testing, Screenings & Resource Fair

One of the primary goals of the TEAM Africa Initiative is to link the District's ethnically diverse African communities to health services and resources. In addition to its social media campaign and the 6 roving workshops which TEAM Africa plans to take to African communities all around the city in March, April and May, the initiative will culminate in an African Wellness Fete which will be held on June 1, 2013. This Fete (or Festival) will be a fun-filled day of intergenerational learning and connecting through workshops, educational activities, fitness and movement exercises, testing, screenings and a comprehensive resource fair. TEAM Africa is working with government agencies, hospitals, clinics, community-based health service providers, and faith-based organizations to make testing, screening and resources available to the District's African community.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

TEAM Africa Launch Reception:

Thursday February 28th, 6:30-8:30pm – Etete Restaurant - 1942 9th St NW Washington, DC 20001

6 African Wellness Workshops Coming to a Neighborhood Near You in:

March * April * May 2013

African Wellness Festival

Saturday, June 1, 2013