Six Churches Join the BRANCH Out Partnership

In November 2007, the BRANCH Out partners submitted a new grant proposal to the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program. This project, Nurturing Healthy Youth Leaders through Faith-Based Partnerships, will expand BRANCH Out’s efforts to increase leadership capacity and address health needs of local youth through mentoring programs with lay health advisors. The new project, if funded, will involve all the original BRANCH Out partners as well as new churches.

We are enthusiastic about continuing to work together to advance health in Milwaukee and are happy to be joined by six additional churches in these efforts!

New Partners:
- Cross Lutheran Church
- Holy Temple First Born Missionary Baptist Church
- Christ Tabernacle Church of God in Christ
- Christ Tabernacle Ministries
- Liberty and Truth Ministries
- New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church

The BRANCH Out partners would like to extend a warm welcome to all our new partners!

Faith and Wellness: A BRANCH Out Celebration!

On March 29th, the partners will join together to celebrate the conclusion of the current BRANCH Out project and highlight our achievements over the past three years.

The celebration, to be held at Parklawn Assembly of God, will include a luncheon and entertainment for CHAT team members, pastors, and other individuals who have helped to make BRANCH Out a success. Each church is providing entertainment from their church. We anticipate a wonderful inspirational afternoon to cap off the third year of the BRANCH Out program.

Think Spring!
March is National Nutrition Month

“National Nutrition Month is a time for sifting through the complex food and nutrition information to get to know the “real facts” for developing a healthy eating plan that can be used for a lifetime,” says Yvonne D. Greer, MPH, RD, CD, Nutritionist Coordinator, City of Milwaukee Health Department and nutritionist consultant to the Branch Out Program. “A registered dietitian can translate the science and tailor it into advice that fits an individual consumer’s needs. Working with Branch Out has provided the church population access to accurate nutrition advice from Graduate Level Dietetic Interns from Mount Mary College Dietetic Internship Program, as well as myself, which has been successful in improving nutrition knowledge and reducing health risks through self management skill building related to healthy food selection, reading the “Nutrition Facts” food label, food preparation, and safe food handling. New healthier recipes have been introduced and it is such a pleasure to hear that they are being incorporated into the church menus and special events.” (See “Spinach Dip Specialty” Recipe)

Eating well can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. Eating well means eating a variety of healthy foods in the right amounts so your body gets the nutrients needed to maintain good health. Including a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins into each meal will help ensure that your body gets the right amount of the essential nutrients. Eating too many saturated fats and sugars can lead to excess weight gain and chronic disease.

Small changes can add up to big results. For improved health, try these few tips during National Nutrition Month and throughout the year:

- Eat smaller meals including a vegetable as the center of the plate, with smaller meat and starch servings. Include at least one serving of fruit and vegetable with every meal.
- Drink more water between meals; try veggies or a handful of nuts for a snack and fresh fruit for something sweet.
- Reduce your intake of deep fried foods and cancer-causing trans fats found in processed foods and baked goods.

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Featured Recipe: SPINACH DIP by Yvonne Greer

Ingredients:
1 (10 ounce) package of frozen chopped spinach
1 cup (8 ounces) mayonnaise
1 cup (8 ounces) low fat (1%) OR non fat cottage cheese, blenderized
1 package vegetable soup mix & dip (e.g. Mrs. Grass or Korrs)
3 stalks of green onions with bulbs, chopped

Thaw spinach in refrigerator overnight (or under cold running water). In large strainer or colander, rinse spinach thoroughly with cold water. Press spinach down firmly to squeeze out all excess water. Place in large mixing bowl.

Add chopped green onions and package of vegetable soup mix & dip to spinach. Stir until well mixed.

In electric blender, add cottage cheese and blenderize until completely smooth.

Add blended cottage cheese and mayonnaise to spinach mixture and stir until completely mixed.

Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving (overnight for best results). Serve with wheat crackers, carrot or celery sticks. ENJOY!

FREE TRAINING—Learn to Check Blood Pressure

Julia Means from Ebenezer COGIC is planning FREE training sessions in April to teach BRANCH Out partners to check blood pressure. They can train groups as few as 5 or as many as 20 at one time. CHAT Team members are encouraged to attend and to recruit church members who would like to learn this valuable skill.

The more people who are trained in detecting high blood pressure, the healthier our churches and communities will be!

To register, please call Julia Means at (414) 840-8893.
Medical Students to Partner with BRANCH Out

Four first-year medical students from the Medical College of Wisconsin attended the February BRANCH Out meeting to discuss their ideas for becoming involved with BRANCH Out efforts.

The students are interested in working with the BRANCH Out partners to increase health awareness in our community. The students would like to develop a program in which they partner with an existing community organization, determine the health topics of interest for community members, plan and then deliver health presentations to members of the community.

The program, which will be sponsored by the American Medical Student Association, will begin by teaming with two churches and will begin in mid-2008.

HEALTH SPOTLIGHT—Blood Disorders: Symptoms and Support

About 785,829 individuals are living with blood cancers. Blood cancers are not a ‘death sentence’ so being alert for symptoms is important in order to get medical care. For example, one of the symptoms of many blood cancers is fatigue. Fatigue can be caused by anemia, a treatable blood disorder that can sometimes be associated with blood cancer. Other symptoms are easy bruising, frequent infections, a painless bump, or heavy sweating at night. If a family member or friend is experiencing any of these symptoms, you can help by encouraging him or her to see a doctor to be checked for anemia or other medical conditions.

For people diagnosed with blood disorders, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) offers many support services. LLS offers support groups, financial aid, and the First Connection program where blood cancer patients can talk with another person who has gone through cancer treatment for the same type of blood disorder. Support groups and financial aid are other ways that LLS can help individuals with blood cancers. Additional information about blood disorders and services of LLS can be found online at www.lls.org, or by calling the Information Resource Center (IRC) at (800) 955-4572.

Spring Into Action!

The snow is melting and spring is in the air. Now is the perfect time to start to include more activity into your daily routine.

Exercise has many health benefits; it makes us feel good, helps us to lose weight and is a key to preventing many chronic diseases including: cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

Here are a few tips from the American Heart Association to begin an exercise routine:

• Pick rhythmic, repetitive activities that challenge the circulatory system, and exercise at an intensity appropriate for you.
• Pick activities that are fun, suit your needs and that you can do year-round.
• Wear comfortable clothing and footwear appropriate for the temperature, humidity and activity.
• If you decide that walking is a great activity for you, choose a place that has a smooth, soft surface; that does not intersect with traffic; and that’s well-lighted and safe.
• Find a companion to exercise with you if it will help you stay on a regular schedule and add to your enjoyment.
• Take time to warm up and cool down while exercising. Make sure you stretch slowly.
• Start exercising at a low intensity (especially if you’ve been mostly sedentary), and progress gradually.
• If you plan to be active more than 30 minutes, then try to drink some water every 15 minutes, especially when exercising in hot, humid conditions. As you age, your sense of thirst tends to decrease and you can’t completely rely on your internal sense of thirst.
BRANCH Out Partners:
Center for Healthy Communities, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin
City of Milwaukee Health Department, Adolescent Community Health Program, Nutrition Initiatives
Holy Cathedral Church of God in Christ
Christ Temple Church of God in Christ
Ebenezer Church of God in Christ
Greater Bethlehem Temple Church
Mason Temple Church of God in Christ
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Parklawn Assembly of God

This partnership project is funded by the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, a component of the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Upcoming Events!

Mark your calendars for the following upcoming BRANCH Out and Milwaukee area health-related events:

Saturday April 26—Blood Drive, 10:00am—2:30pm at Holy Cathedral Church of God in Christ

Saturday May 10—Women of the World Conference, 8:00 am—Noon at the Italian Community Center. Registration is FREE

Wednesday July 16—Blood Drive, 2:00pm -7:00pm at Citation del of Praise Church, 2715 N. Martin Luther King Drive

Wednesday April 16—National Start! Walking Day

Saturday September 27—Blood Drive, 10:00am—2:30pm at Holy Cathedral Church of God in Christ

Saturday August 23rd—Health Fair, 10:30am—2:00pm at Holy Cathedral Church of God in Christ

Nutrition Month (from page 2)

- Read food labels and reduce the amount of added sugar, corn syrup and salt in the diet. Use fresh herbs and spices to season food instead.
- Go easy on the salt, sugar, alcohol, saturated fat and trans fat.
- Preserve the nutrients and colors in veggies. Cook them quickly by steaming or stir-frying.

For more tips, recipes and nutrition information, visit the following websites:

- www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
- www.mypyramid.gov
- www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/chdblack/cooking.htm
- www.foodchamps.org