

OUCP Hosts Brain and Heart Healthy Event for Greater Newark Seniors

The Office of University-Community Partnerships (OUCP), Rutgers University-Newark, hosted its semi-annual African American Brain Health Initiative (AABHI) community engagement event, “Healthy Holiday Eating: Bringing out the Super Senior in You!” on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at the Paul Robeson Campus Center. More than 200 seniors from Newark, East Orange, and Irvington enjoyed a day of healthy meals, informational talks, demonstrations, resources and product samples.

AABHI seeks to build a national center of excellence for research and training on aging and Alzheimer’s in African Americans at Rutgers University-Newark through biomedical research. Co-directed by Dr. Diane Hill, Assistant Chancellor, OUCP and Dr. Mark Gluck, Professor of Neuroscience, Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience, Rutgers University-Newark, AABHI promotes brain health by: 1) cultivating trusting and mutually beneficial relationships with Greater Newark residents and partnerships with institutions through which to provide educational awareness and health promotion programs and activities and, 2) through research and dissemination of findings.

Research shows that African-Americans are twice as likely as others to develop Alzheimer’s disease primarily as a result of life-style and behavioral factors such as obesity, poor cardiovascular health, insufficient aerobic exercise, higher levels of stress and lower levels of education. The goals of the research are to identify the causes of the higher rates of Alzheimer’s Disease among African Americans compared to the rest of the population and to isolate interventions that can reduce these high rates and improve memory and cognition into old age. Ultimately, AABHI seeks to reduce the rate of Alzheimer’s disease among African Americans locally and nationally and to improve clinical care for Alzheimer’s patients and their families in Greater Newark.

However, African Americans are statistically less likely to participate in biomedical and other research critical to isolating characteristics to achieve these goals. Issues of trust, lack of reciprocity, and access are known to inhibit participation. The community engagement events are part of OUCP’s effort to mitigate these factors and to empower the community to take charge of their own brain health. For more than a decade OUCP has hosted the brain health community education/awareness events on the Rutgers University-Newark campus. OUCP also hosts “Lunch & Learn” forums at churches, senior centers and in low-income housing development sites, facilitated by trusted peer leaders from within the community.

December’s *Healthy Holiday Eating* event featured greetings from Lynne Patton, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Patrick Council, Director, Division of Recreation, City of Newark. Both described federal and local initiatives that support AABHI goals. Dr. Hill and OUCP Special Projects Coordinator, Deborah Flamengo presented an overview, *Pathways to Brain Health: A University-Community Partnership*, describing AABHI’s commitment to engaged community participation, community advisory board guidance and peer leadership to support the research agenda. Dr. Gluck

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEWARK
African-American Brain Health Initiative (AABHI)

Presents

Healthy Holiday Eating

Bringing Out the Super Senior in You!

Thursday, December 7, 2017
9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Rutgers University-Newark
Paul Robeson Campus Center

American Heart Association | American Stroke Association
Simple Cooking with Heart™
Healthy Breakfast & Lunch provided.
RSVP to Deborah Flamengo at 973-353-1633 or
dflameng@newark.rutgers.edu

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
Center for Molecular & Behavioral Neuroscience at Rutgers University-Newark; African-American Brain Health Initiative (AABHI); The Office of University-Community Partnerships at Rutgers University-Newark; American Heart Association | American Stroke Association; NJ Department of Health Office of Minority and Multicultural Health; Honorable Mildred C. Crump, Council President; and the Essex County Division of Senior Services

followed with an interactive talk on the *Six Steps to a Better Brain Health*. Margaret Cammarieri, Regional Vice President, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, discussed cooking tips and techniques for heart-healthier meal preparation.

AABHI Associate Director, Dr. Ashlee Shaw, described the exercise outreach component of AABHI and lead a blood-pumping demonstration for the enthusiastic attendees. Participants enjoyed a healthy breakfast featuring recipes from the American Heart Association Cookbook, *Simple Cooking with Heart* and the *Healthy Community Food and Beverage Toolkit* and were anticipating similarly healthy luncheon fare. Jessica Elicin, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Simple Cooking with Heart Ambassador and RUN alum, explained how the recipes used herbs and alternative cooking techniques to make tasty familiar foods while reducing the use of salt, fat, and sugar, as these are known to influence negative health effects. Breakfast and lunch were locally sponsored by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.

A festive mood was set for the day by Newark's own, vocalist & musician, Leisa Brown (Soft Notes provided by Le Su B). Throughout the day partners sponsored tables with displays, information and samples for the participants. They included representatives from: University Hospital, Whole Foods Market, Shoprite of Newark, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the Alzheimer's Association, Aerofarms, the American Health/American Stroke Association, and the Yarn Art Yoga Academy. Raffles of fresh vegetables, giveaways, and product samples were popular among the participants. A spring event is in planning for April, 2018.

<i>For more information about:</i>	<i>Visit our website at:</i>
African American Brain Health Initiative (AABHI)	http://brainhealth.rutgers.edu/
Office of University-Community Partnerships (OUCP)	http://oucp.newark.rutgers.edu/
Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N)	https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/

Or contact:

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