

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY ONE "BODY" AT A TIME

Wellness Program of the African People's Education & Defense Fund, Inc. July 2004
1327 Dr. ML King (9th) Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705 (727) 821-2437

The Extreme Danger of "Extreme Makeovers"



By Cassandra Floyd, APEDF Wellness Program

I remember, when I was a kid, doing things like putting a towel on my head and pretending it was my long and flowing hair. I also recall the first time I got a perm put in my head when I was 8 years old and feeling like I had gone from ugly to beautiful in a matter of minutes. It's funny what you can recall that at the time may be seemingly small but have long-term affects on a person's entire psychological development.

Girls are beat over the head with images of Barbie and supermodels. Children are force-fed unrealistic images of beauty, and then are confronted with the reality that more than 38% of them are over weight. Puberty strikes most viciously, to impact on an already confusing set of circum-stances. Girls want to look like Tyra Banks or Beyonce, but instead they have pimples and funny shapes.

Here you also have a society that for decades has taught young, non-white girls that "lighter is better and prettier." In a desperate attempt to gain acceptance from those in power, young black women find themselves at an early age straightening their hair;



some use skin lightening cream; others bleach their hair.

All of this is now being impacted by a new stream of reality television shows that play on the psychological vulnerabilities of young people (women, mostly). Now the situation has become even more desperate, causing women of all ages seeking out extreme plastic surgery and other types of body modification to transform them into more socially acceptable figures.

I recently saw a new reality show called "Extreme Makeovers" where women, who are self-proclaimed ugly people, are given the opportunity to become completely different people. One Sister found out she had won and got to go to California where to top plastic surgeons in the industry were waiting to make her lifelong dream come true.

In the initial meeting with her doctor she told him she wanted a thinner nose, thinner lips, laser surgery on her face, breast implants, a tummy tuck, cosmetic teeth work, and lifted cheek bones! When she came from under the knife ten hours later, she looked like a totally different person. This is a 37 year old, mother of 5 children. I was sick to my stomach. What kind of message did she send to her three girls who have noses just like hers? *(Continued on Page 7)*

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Uhuru Furniture & Collectibles in Philadelphia Holds 10th Anniversary Community Appreciation Block Party



On Sunday, June 20th, 2004 Uhuru Furniture & Collectibles in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania celebrated its 10th year anniversary with a Community Appreciation Block Party on Spruce Street, which was closed to traffic between 13th and Camac Streets for this special event of the African People's Education & Defense Fund (APEDF).

Throughout the day, customers, neighbors, and friends enjoyed entertainment, workshops, and speakers on stage, shopped for African crafts and collectibles offered by vendors, took advantage of Uhuru Furniture's 10% off sale, and had the opportunity for Father's Day brunch at Valanni Restaurant.

Popular Philadelphia auctioneer Barry Slosberg (pictured right) started the day off by appraising antiques, collectibles and treasures that customers brought for the "Uhuru Antiques Roadshow." A second stage featured a workshop by Matt Clark, who demonstrated professional reupholstery of an antique oak rocking chair with a beautiful mohair fabric.



Highlights of the jam-packed cultural program featured the African highlife band Jojolo from Nigeria (pictured left); a dynamic display by ASCAB studio of the Brazilian martial art Capoeira, based on African hunting methods and resistance to slavery; the soulful saxophone of John Elliott; local poets Ewuare Osayand and Katurah; original folk singer Kenn Kweeder; and the unique children's balloon sculptor Jim Burkardt.



Ruby Gittlesohn, Uhuru Furniture store manager, hosted the event and presented Appreciation Awards to several volunteers, shoppers, donors and friends. Ironiff Ifoma, APEDF president, spoke on the crucial mission of the organization in addressing the vast lack of economic development for African people. "I always want to thank our volunteers and donors to Uhuru Furniture who enable APEDF to serve the community by selling the furniture to put resources back into our programs that are so necessary for our community."



Uhuru Furniture volunteer Sriram Raharaman



"Team Uhuru": Amy May, Ruby Gittlesohn and Jay Finken, raised \$1,000 from pledges for APEDF at the annual Broad Street Run in Philly



Kamau Becktemba, President of the local International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement spoke on the campaign to stop the city's land grabs which are stealing African people's homes for gentrification of the African community. Al Alston of the African American Business & Residence Association, also spoke on the work in Brewerytown to stop displacement and to bring resources and economic development to this long-standing African community.

Since the block party, so many customers have come into Uhuru Furniture & Collectibles commenting on how much they enjoyed the day that we are planning to make it an annual event! Thanks again to everyone who participated in making it a success.

All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym Guide to Great Fitness



1327 - 9th Street So.
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824-5670

Economic Underdevelopment and Lack of Quality Health Care Claims the Life of Young African Man Alvin Lumpkin, 22

*By Damon Reio, Manager,
All People's TyRon Lewis
Community Gym*

Young Alvin Lumpkin died June 6, 2004 of complications from cancer at the age of 22.

His death came as a result of the consistent deprivations of economic development and healthcare in his community--the African community. Alvin represents the tendency that African people are confronted with in the U.S where we are diagnosed with and die from many curable diseases and ailments at higher rates than white people.

Due to the lack of health institutions, education centers, and medical insurance, we are hindered from genuinely taking control of our health. As a result, preventable and curable diseases such as a benign tumor will often go undetected until it is too late and becomes a malignant cancer.

Alvin Lumpkin lived several houses away from the All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym. Like most African workers in the community, I would often see him walking to and from the bus stop, coming from and going to work, doctor check-ups or any particular business of the day. He was often accompanied by his wife and children.

Though I already knew of his condition, the circumstance in which I met Mr. Lumpkin was quite contradictory and outrageous on part of the city government. Despite his illness, constant visits to chemotherapy, and physical limitations such as being recommended to avoid sunlight or strenuous work, he was ordered to perform community service by the City of St. Petersburg for a minor violation.

Other non-profit institutions were insensitive to his illness, and made it difficult for him to complete his hours at their facility. Alvin came to APEDF to perform community service; this is how I learned of the deeper contradiction that Alvin and other unfortunate Africans are confronted with in terms of preventable and treatable diseases.

Several years ago, Alvin Lumpkin constantly complained of extreme stomach pains. Because he lacked medical insurance, his symptoms were overlooked by several doctors and local hospitals in the area. He was given antibiotics and told that he was suffering from ulcers or other conditions. Despite obvious physical transformations such as his abdomen swelling larger than the rest of his torso, medical professionals continued to overlook his conditions until it was too late.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CANCER

Friday, July 30th at 6:30pm
APEDF Wellness Center
1327 ML King St. So. St. Pete
727-824-5670 for more info

When his complications could no longer be ignored, doctors found several malignant tumors in his stomach. Alvin's poverty and socio-economic status imposed on him and his community was the determining factor in his demise.

I witnessed Alvin transform from warm, vibrant and independent, to a skeleton weighing less than 90 pounds in the last week of his life, confined to a respirator in his room, only able to watch television as I sat there with him.

To get to the root of why Alvin passed away at an early age from this deadly disease, we have to look at the social and economic conditions in the African community. African people are diagnosed and die from preventable diseases at a higher rate than white people because of the absence of quality health care clinics, hospitals and other institutions that can educate and address health related issues to the community.

(Continued next page)

APEDF 3rd Annual African Power Pushes Struggle for Health



June 5, 2004 was the 3rd anniversary of the opening of the African People's Education and Defense Fund (APEDF) Wellness Center, which includes the All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym and Healthy Groceries Etc. at 1327 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street So.

It also marked the 3rd annual African Power Weightlifting Expo and Health Fair – an entertaining and educational event to address the grave disparities in health and healthcare faced by the African community. This year's event was successful thanks to the support from the community, through sponsorships, volunteers, and participants.

Everyone left with a better understanding of the importance of health for African people and taking control of their own health. Many people left having received health screenings and information not usually available to them. And those who came from outside of St.

Petersburg left with a commitment to host health fairs and weightlifting expos in their areas to promote health consciousness in the African community.

The Fair began with a discussion on resolving the problems of poor health of African people. APEDF Wellness Coordinator Bakari Olatunji from Oakland California, who hosted the event, explained that African people lack economic development in our communities. As a result, we do not have healthcare institutions in our communities that will address health related issues and educate people on how to prevent certain diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.



In addition, 46% of the U.S population does not have health insurance and therefore most Africans are unable to get proper healthcare from outside of their communities. Consequently, Africans are diagnosed and die from preventable health ailments at higher rates than whites. He urged us all to challenge this contradiction and struggle to build institutions and projects that will support our interests in building a healthier community.



Next, there were several health information presentations on the main stage. Lorenzo Robertson spoke on issues of sexual health and sexually transmitted diseases. Earl Solano, an African acupuncturist interested in working in impoverished communities, introduced his instructor Dr. Cho (pictured below,

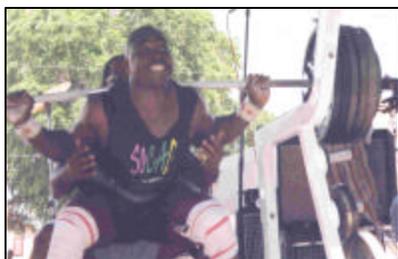


second from right), who spoke on the history and uses of Chinese medicine and therapies. A representative from Westcare Drug Treatment Center spoke on the interaction of drugs and alcohol and their affect the progression HIV/AIDs. She related statistics that show the highest incidents of AIDs in the entire city of St. Petersburg is incidents in zip codes 33705, 33712, and 33711 – predominately African communities.

Throughout the day health informational booths and free services were provided by groups and institutions such as the Sickle Cell Disease Association (pictured left), Accupuncture and Herbal Therapies (below, far left), Amazon Herb Company Distributors Mr. & Mrs. Starr (below far right), Westcare Drug Treatment Center (below, second from left), Planned Parenthood, the FL Dept. of Health Hepatitis and Liver Disease Prevention and Control Program, Pinellas County Health Dept. Office of Minority and Multicultural Health, Bayfront Medical Center, and the American Red Cross. The Chapter of Black Nurses (pictured above, and testing blood pressure of Bakari Olatunje) provided screening for hypertension, blood sugar, and cholesterol. Florida Blood Services was on hand accepting blood and bone marrow donations. There was a tremendous amount of information and concern for improving the health of our community.



For entertainment, the Uhuru Band (pictured right) kicked it off performing live rhythmic tunes such as “For the Love of Money” and “Before I Let Go” as DJ Kidd entertained the crowd with a wide range of music from “old school” to rap and hip hop. People attending the event also had the opportunity to enjoy great healthy foods such as grilled fish, vegetables and salad as an alternative to the fried, high in sodium foods that most people include in their diets.



At 1:00pm came the highlight with the exciting state-wide Power Lifting Exhibition. Lifters competed in the squat and bench press. Rudy Gordon from Palatka Florida (pictured left) won the “best overall lifter” award with a bench press of 355 lb. and a 550 lb. squat after battling it out with Gym Manager Damon Reio on his heels with a 350 lb. bench press and a 500 lb. squat. Parnell McCloud bench pressed 450 lbs. as Nate Washington from the Tyron Lewis Gym finished with a lift of 405 lbs.



Elaine Chambliss (pictured left), a first-time female lifter from the TyRon Lewis Gym bench, pressed 165 lbs. and finished with a 240 lb. squat. Two young competitors, brothers Hunter and Kamran Joyer (pictured right), ages 10 and 13, bench pressed 135 lbs. and 225lbs. respectively. In addition, 54 year old Master’s lifter Tommy Jenkins from Palatka Florida wowed the crowd with a bench press of 365 lbs.



The 3rd annual African Power and Health Fair was a great event that gave everyone an appreciation of the advantages of exercise and a consciousness toward health for the African community. It brought the African community its supporters together. The events were organized and occurred as a result of the people’s desire to host a health fair in our community. Businesses throughout the city sponsored the event by buying advertisement space in our souvenir booklet and donating food. Supporters of the TyRon Lewis Gym and APEDF Wellness Program donated and volunteered. Health institutions and organizations provided their services and resources for free health services to the community.

The health fair was also successful in that we are able to expand the APEDF Wellness Program outside of St. Petersburg borders. People from other areas such as Clearwater and Bradenton expressed a deep interest in the fair to be hosted in their areas. We plan to host a health fair and power lifting exhibition in Oakland California and Palatka, Florida in the near future.

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Thanks again to all our sponsors, volunteers and participants who helped make the African Power Health Fair a success.

The Power of Carbs

Carbohydrates are of the highest importance in our everyday life. This macronutrient is responsible for providing our cells with the fuel necessary for the production of energy. In addition, carbohydrates are responsible for the transportation of other nutrients to our muscles.

Without carbs our body loses its number one source of energy. To achieve an optimal and safe weight loss, you must burn more carbohydrates than you consume. In addition, it is important to avoid simple carbohydrates high in sugar. Follow these two rules and you can have your "carbs" and eat it too.

What happens to carbs that don't turn into fat?

When you consume more carbohydrate calories than your body burns off, the excess calories are stowed away within your body in the form of fat. The body steps up the rate at which carbohydrates are burned for energy when 1) you burn more carbs than you consume through exercise; or 2) eat less simple carbohydrates before they are converted into fat.

Weight loss is not complicated and should not be done through drastic measures such as adopting the Atkins or any other low-carbohydrate diet.

Calorie-Cutting Tips

Counting calories is not necessary when trying to lose weight because it can become boring and easily cause you to give up on your diet. Making simple changes to your everyday lifestyle may be the answer to achieving your weight-loss goal.

- Before going to a party, eat a low-calorie snack to defuse the temptation to eat high calorie foods later.
- Keep high calorie foods out of your house.
- Don't cut calories too drastically; you'll feel deprived and may succumb to overeating and binges. In addition, your body automatically preserves fat when it feels it is starving itself.
- Limit your alcoholic drinks; alcohol calories add up.
- Drink water at meals; juice and soda are high in sugar calories.
- Look out for white flour and sugar on food labels.
- Avoid cookies, crackers and other packaged processed foods that are rich in simple carbs.
- Foods such as broccoli, squash, asparagus, and lettuce are low in carbs.

From: *Energy Times*, June 2004, p. 34, 36

Alvin Lumpkin, Continued from Page 4

Quality food stores that have foods high in nutrition items are also dearth in the black community. We have to go outside of our community to buy quality foods with nutritional value such as fruits, vegetables, and fresh meats. Many people do not even have the luxury of transportation!

Instead, fast food restaurants, unsanitary meat markets, and convenience stores are abundant in the African community. As a result, the foods that many people consume are extremely high in sodium, fats, hormones, and carcinogens, which set in motion the onset of hypertension, obesity, and cancer.

In St. Petersburg, African people represent 25% of the total

population, but constitute over 73% of the people who live on or below the poverty level. Considering over 46% of people residing in the US do not have health insurance, African people make up the largest proportion in this percentage. As a result, most people do not have the *luxury* to go to a doctor to get a physical check up or receive immediate attention on a matter.

Alvin Lumpkin lived and died in "Midtown"— the African community of St. Petersburg. He was one of 73% of African people who live in poverty, lack economic development in the community, and did not have the ability to receive genuine healthcare.

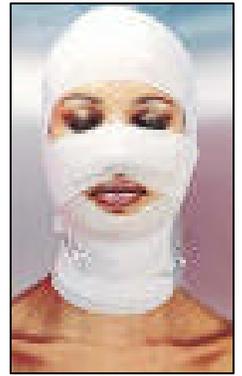
As a community, we have to make a demand for genuine economic

development. With the circulation of capital in our own hands, we can determine the fate of our own community through food, clothing, housing, healthcare, and education.

The African People's Education and Defense Fund is a non profit organization whose mission is to defend the human and civil rights of the African community and address the grave disparities in education, health, and economic development.

If you are interested in receiving information on cancer and other diseases that affect the African community send \$1.00 for postage to the All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym, 1327 ML King St. So. to receive a free 2004 *African Power & Health Fair* booklet, or call (727) 824-5670.

Extreme Makeovers, Continued from Page 1



This type of total body modification is dangerous physically and mentally. It sends the wrong message to our young people and to all of us. It says that black is not beautiful; that you can't be too black; that something is wrong with a big nose and a big bottom. Our babies will inherit our lack of self-worth.

Many surgeons in the field have concerns about the dangers affiliated with doing multiple surgeries at once. Some women in these shows are under the knife for up to twenty hours, having up to fourteen procedures done at one time. According to Dr. Marc Duprer of Visage Clinic, the longer a patient is under anesthetic and the more procedures done at once, the higher the risks and the more dangerous the surgery becomes.

"Extreme Makeovers" holds a beauty pageant competition with a panel of judges afterwards. Plastic surgery, intended for private, minor physical changes, will not change a person's feeling of self-worth.

"It is barbaric, the whole premise of changing the way they look completely...is the antithesis of plastic surgery; it's turned plastic into a freak show," says Dr. Frank Lista, spokesperson for the Canadian Society for Aesthetic (Cosmetic) Plastic Surgery.

"They take these poor people who thought they were ugly before and pit them against one another and then they lose," Lista says. That is bound to do more psychological damage." Another doctor equates it to "psychiatry with a scalpel."

In the 1960's, Hollywood promoted women like Twiggy as the image of beauty to be emulated. So women became anorexic and bulimic to look like a starving, 105 lb. Twiggy. Now, instead of starving, a woman simply need have her stomach stapled, her tummy tucked, massive liposuction, or any other number of invasive procedures to lose weight.

It seems like no one advocates hard work, proper diet, and exercise anymore. Not only will these things help you lose weight and keep it off, but they will also help you to transform a negative self-image.

Want to Write for Healthy Connections Newsletter?

Healthy Connections is a monthly newsletter that reaches over 1500 readers to address issues of health and economic development in the African community.

If you want to advance the struggle for the quality of health and economic development or have an interest in writing an article relating to either health or economic development please submit your article by email to: healthyconnections@hotmail.com

or write: Healthy Connections, 1327 Dr. ML King St. So. St. Petersburg, FL 33705

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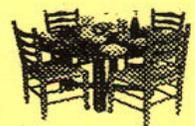


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