



FY2019

# Annual Report

"Making Good Health Contagious"



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The African American Health Program is funded and administered by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and implemented by McFarland & Associates, Inc.



## INTRODUCTION

In the fiscal year 2019, the African American Health Program (AAHP) continued to reduce health disparities and improve the health outcomes of Black<sup>1</sup> citizens in Montgomery County, MD. Implemented by McFarland and Associates, Inc. through a contract solicitation, AAHP continues to deliver a wide variety of programs and services to Black County residents to reduce health disparities in six focus areas: maternal and infant mortality, diabetes/heart health, cancer, sexual health, oral health, and mental health as a cross-cutting component.

AAHP approaches its work with an intimate understanding of Montgomery County's Black community, its history reaching back into the slavery era, its languages and ethnicities ushered in from the influx of Caribbean and African immigrants, the affluence and social capital afforded by its proximity to the nation's capital, and other aspects of Black life in Montgomery County. These and other factors constitute the social determinants of health, influencing risk factors and behaviors that lead to poorer health outcomes among Black County residents. AAHP contends with the reality that, compared to White residents, Black residents have a higher average rate of disease in the six focus areas and are more likely to die from preventable diseases. For example, compared to White Americans, Blacks have twice the risk of infant mortality and almost ten times greater risk of HIV/STI.

With a clear call to action and understanding that answering that call requires a multifaceted approach, AAHP deployed a strategy for health promotion and wellness that uses a public health framework as the basis for improving the health of Black Montgomery County residents throughout FY19.

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<sup>1</sup> "Black" in this document refers to persons of African descent.



### ➤ Collaboration

To realize health as a shared value and to foster cross-sector collaboration and community well-being, AAHP has forged strong relationships with faith communities, universities, private organizations, and agencies to create a sustainable network and to expand the reach and scope of services. These partnerships have been critical in optimizing AAHP's community outreach and health promotion services. Outreach was especially successful in FY19. Among its fruitful partnerships, AAHP now counts the American Diabetes Association; the American Heart Association; the American Cancer Society; the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; and the National Medical Association—all have provided tools and resources to add to AAHP's arsenal. Highly active Greek organizations such as Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity (Silver Spring Alumni Chapter) and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated (Montgomery County Alumnae Chapter), and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (Mu Nu Chapter) have helped publicize and volunteer at AAHP events. AAHP also partnered with numerous clinics and health centers in Montgomery County, such as Primary and Alternative Medical Care, Inc., Community Clinic, Inc., Muslim Community Center, and Metropolitan Cardiovascular Consultants, LLC, and more.



AAHP staff with community partners

AAHP's connections with County agencies create possibilities for more health promotion activities, events, and interventions. While the Chronic Disease Management classes at the White Oak Recreation Center and the Germantown Library have been a mainstay for AAHP, other libraries and recreation centers request classes, health screenings, and other events periodically. Partnerships with local apartment complexes such as the Enclave and New Hampshire Towers Apartments have provided new site locations for health fairs and health screenings for their residents. Likewise, AAHP's connections with barbershops and beauty salons like HairCare Express and AfriKutz also serve as conduits for health screenings, intervention opportunities, and condom distribution for staff and customers.

As AAHP becomes more recognized as a valuable health resource, an increasing number of churches, schools, and community centers are eager to promote AAHP's events and services.

To increase medical partnerships and generate more program referrals, AAHP nurses and staff made weekly visits to hospitals that account for most births, such as Washington Adventist, Holy Cross, MedStar Montgomery, Capital Women's Care, and Shady Grove Hospital. AAHP's



relationship with physicians, hospitals, and the medical community helped AAHP forge access to new clients.

### ➤ **Multi-disciplinary Teaming**

In FY19, AAHP continued to recruit, train, and mobilize a workforce consisting of passionate and dedicated professionals who were trained and committed to serving as partners in health with County residents. Because improving the health of an individual requires an understanding of the various social, cultural, physical, and economic factors that influence their health, AAHP staff includes medical professionals who are all well-versed in holistic, culturally competent healthcare. AAHP staff, interns, and volunteers have varied qualifications and skills that contribute to the achievement of client-centered health goals. Contributions from multiple perspectives in decision-making and problem-solving have been essential in developing AAHP's outreach and services.

### ➤ **Stakeholder Inclusion**

AAHP relies on the involvement of the Executive Committee and the Executive Coalition to establish program priorities and to provide counsel on service deployment and community targeting of resources. Representing a cross-section of community activists and professionals, both entities take an active role in advancing AAHP's mission—internally by informing and strengthening AAHP's strategic vision, and externally by serving as advocates and liaisons to County leaders and constituents.

Sparking the individual and collective changes needed to transform the health of Black County residents requires knowledge and an understanding of the state of Black health and the causes and consequences of Black-White health disparities. In alignment with AAHP's imperative to spread awareness on the need for AAHP's programs and services, the Executive Committee and the Executive Coalition collaborated and hosted the inaugural AAHP Data Summit, held on September 24, 2018. Attended by more than 160 government officials, healthcare providers, policymakers, and residents, the Data Summit demonstrated the importance of using data and information as a basis for action.

Throughout the fiscal year, the Executive Coalition held meetings in sync with AAHP's activities and observances. Meetings with the community included presentations on focus area topics and the development of AAHP's strategic plan, in which the Executive Committee was an active stakeholder.

### ➤ **Technology**

In 2019, AAHP continued to develop computer resources and introduce software applications to manage, deploy, and improve services and programs. For example, Microsoft Health Vault and Omron® Wellness applications were used to demonstrate how program participants could record, store, retrieve, track, and share personal health information. These tools enabled AAHP staff to efficiently utilize and track biometrics and other health data that document and quantify AAHP's efforts and outcomes while protecting the safety of participants' health information. As in previous program years, AAHP used the online tool Healthify to identify useful resources that address the

social determinants of health. The seamless integration of these software suites was instrumental in maintaining and boosting AAHP's operational capacity.

In FY19, AAHP covered a great deal of ground in developing a custom management information system which will further strengthen AAHP's operational infrastructure by making accessible more information and insights about clients and services. Ultimately, this system will measure AAHP's long-term efficacy in reducing health disparities, identify pathways for improvement and optimization of programs and services, and enable AAHP to better target demographic areas of greatest need.

### ➤ Leadership Development

AAHP equips each staff member, student intern, and volunteer with excellent training and unique insights on and experience with the health challenges of the Black residents of Montgomery County. Cultural competence training for healthcare professionals improves the field's knowledge, understanding, and skills; however, actual interactions with AAHP clients and staff from culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse backgrounds, combined with AAHP's data on disparities, is potentially far more impactful than what is learned in the classroom only.



AAHP's value to the community and success in training the next generation of healthcare professionals is evidenced by increasing requests from students seeking internships as practicums to complete requirements for undergraduate and graduate degrees from multiple disciplines. As part of AAHP's commitment to the education of others, there were 27 students, interns, and volunteers in FY19, representing a variety of health disciplines and backgrounds, including public health, nursing, psychology, social work, and the allied health professions.

In FY19, AAHP was delighted to hire a graduate of the SMILE program as its first nurse practitioner. Also, a former volunteer and summer employee was hired as an administrative assistant/database coordinator. Hiring program graduates, interns, and volunteers helps AAHP approach programming from different perspectives. It also helps AAHP build its influence beyond the tenure of its volunteers and interns well into their future careers.

## ➤ Community Education

AAHP's directive to "meet people where they are" was executed by deploying AAHP staff to provide health services in areas where larger populations of Black residents live, work, play, and worship within Montgomery County. In FY19, AAHP expanded its reach to more community centers, apartment complexes, churches, post offices, beauty salons, barbershops, grocery stores, and to more predominantly Black population areas. These efforts helped AAHP increase its profile; attract more new clients; and spread information, awareness, and resources related to health.

AAHP's educational outreach extends beyond direct connections with residents and constituents. Educating and networking with other healthcare professionals and community leaders facilitates a broader reach of health knowledge and resources.



Chronic disease class at White Oak Recreation Center

In June 2019, through Montgomery County's Office of Human Resources, Training and Organizational Development Division, AAHP supported the first Diabetes 101 program to educate County staff about the prevalence and incidence of diabetes, as well as ways to prevent and manage diabetes. To further expand AAHP's scope of influence, AAHP staff joined the Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) Conference Planning Committee and recommended the keynote speaker who delivered a powerful presentation on Black-White health disparities.

Community leaders who share AAHP's vision for a healthy Black Montgomery County have always been eager to collaborate and carry forth AAHP's messaging. Faith-based organizations, civic organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), health-based organizations such as Girl Trek, and fraternities and sororities hosted and participated in events and forums that focus on improving health outcomes for Black residents.

## ➤ Policy

Public institutions and establishments, such as schools, hospitals, restaurants, public transportation, etc., bear significant influence in health outcomes. Systemic racial inequality and discrimination within healthcare settings and in daily life continue to be major contributors to health disparities. Similarly, the extent to which a community's establishments embrace health-promoting practices strongly correlates to the health and well-being of that community. As such, AAHP's work in Montgomery County increases support for policies and practices that reduce health disparities and promote good health among Black County residents.

In May 2019, AAHP's staff participated in Montgomery County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Community Engagement Campaign and provided input in the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Policy legislation. In this engagement, AAHP co-convened and co-facilitated a meeting

with community stakeholders to discuss the availability of resources to bridge the health-related gaps in racial disparities. This session also served to educate participants about health disparities specifically within the Black community.

Throughout the fiscal year, AAHP staff developed print and digital information resources to better inform and describe the range and nature of health promotion and wellness services offered by AAHP. These resources were developed to engage County residents, County government officials, including County councilmembers, members of Congress, and other representatives. Politicians have been present at significant AAHP events; most notably, the County Executive made an impassioned speech about health disparities at AAHP's Community Day. Crediting AAHP for his increased awareness of health disparities, the County Executive expressed his willingness to work to reduce those disparities.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In FY19, AAHP developed and executed several new health promotion initiatives that advanced AAHP's mission and expanded its reach in Montgomery County. During the year, new emphasis was given to increasing services to residents across all age categories.

According to the National Council on Aging, about 92% of seniors have at least one chronic disease, and around 77% have more than one.<sup>2</sup> African American seniors are more profoundly affected by the decline in health that is often inherent with aging. According to the Alzheimer's Association<sup>3</sup>, African Americans are twice as likely to have Alzheimer's or dementia, compared to Whites. As such, in October 2018, AAHP began conducting general health classes at one of the largest active adult living communities in Montgomery County. AAHP's classes were well-received and will continue indefinitely. In FY19, five classes were conducted and included 78 participants.



In FY19, AAHP began offering dMeetings, a comprehensive course on diabetes management that enables County residents to follow instruction and complete diabetes education coursework when it is convenient for them. dMeetings participants gain access to AAHP's registered dietitian and have the opportunity to develop their personalized diabetes self-management plan. At the end of FY19, AAHP's dMeetings classes had enrolled 32 participants.

AAHP's work to improve the health status of African American Montgomery County residents also extends to populations that are often excluded from society, particularly the incarcerated. In FY19, AAHP continued engagement with the Montgomery County Correctional Facility at Boyds, MD, within the "When I Get Out" (WIGO) program. These monthly sessions provided inmates with critical education on diabetes prevention and management, oral health, and HIV/STI prevention. This knowledge will be instrumental in helping men and women live healthy and productive lives as they integrate back into society. In FY19, 180 individuals attended health promotion classes in the WIGO program.

AAHP's innovative program offerings help answer the urgent call for intensive intervention and high-quality, culturally-competent support services needed to bring Black residents to parity in health. The data summaries throughout this report, in addition to the testimonials at the end of this report, tell the story of AAHP's success. In FY19, AAHP began soliciting feedback on AAHP's

<sup>2</sup> According to the National Council on Aging at <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/healthy-aging-facts/>

<sup>3</sup> According to the American Alzheimer's Association at <https://alz.org/facts/>

services and programs; on average, AAHP's events were ranked as "excellent" by 90% of people and as "good" by 6% of people. These high rankings indicate an enthusiastic response leading to AAHP's strong positive reputation.



## FOCUS AREAS

### ❖ Diabetes/Heart Health Focus Area (Chronic Disease Management Program)

In FY19, AAHP's Chronic Disease Management Program continued to provide a wealth of health services and resources geared towards the prevention and management of diabetes and cardiovascular disease among Black Montgomery County residents. Through AAHP's sub-contract with Healing Our Village (HOV), a disease management and health education company that serves minority populations, AAHP offered culturally competent chronic disease prevention and management classes, health screenings, resources, and customized interventions to Black County residents.

As in previous years, the goals of the Chronic Disease Management program were to:

- Provide interventions to “high risk” diabetic and hypertension patients in the target population
- Screen and enroll hypertension patients into hypertension/diabetes self-management programs
- Refer patients with hypertension or elevated glucose to a primary care physician (if they did not have one) in the County, and follow up accordingly
- Initiate contact with individuals screened with elevated values and refer them to AAHP's Chronic Disease Management Program
- Conduct patient screenings using a depression survey (PHQ 9) for diagnosing, monitoring, and measuring the severity of depression using DSMIV diagnostic criteria
- Develop, implement, and expand feedback reports on hypertension and diabetes measures.

AAHP's Chronic Disease Management classes, “Kickstart Your Health,” were extremely well-received throughout the program year. Regular weekly classes at the White Oak Recreation Center and Germantown Library retained steady participation. Classes focused on topics related to diabetes, heart health, cancer, Alzheimer's, dementia, and the effectiveness of changing one's lifestyle to reduce the risk for these conditions.

AAHP continued its collaboration with Shoppers Foods & Pharmacy in Wheaton until the store's pharmacy closed in April. These classes emphasized the correlation between food and health and included guided tours of the produce, deli, and grains sections to identify healthier food options for a vegan/plant-based diet. AAHP plans to continue this initiative with another County grocery store. Conducting these classes in a highly visible public



**Food demonstration at Shoppers Foods & Pharmacy, conducted by AAHP's nutritionist**

setting has been instrumental in attracting interest in AAHP and the transformative health promotion information and resources AAHP provides.

Through collaboration with the African American Club at one of the largest active living communities for seniors in the state, AAHP conducts classes that strengthen each senior's capacity to manage their health as they age. Each class focuses on chronic disease, including Alzheimer's and dementia, and includes an exercise component and cooking demonstrations. The exceptional participation was due to the intensive outreach levels and the evangelizing of AAHP's services from successful participants.

Because good nutrition is the cornerstone of good health, AAHP's Chronic Disease Management program heavily asserts the importance of a healthy, nutrient-rich diet with cooking demonstrations and healthy food tastings provided by AAHP's nutritionist, a Food for Life instructor. Each session included an open class discussion and Q & A about food selections, preparations, and shopping. Often, a short video followed. The food/nutrition focus corresponded with that month's class topic. AAHP's Chronic Disease Management Program enrollment for FY19 was 1,028 for the four locations.

For all class locations, the average class size was 50. **Table 1** below shows class participation by location.

**Table 1. Chronic Disease Management Program FY 2019**

Participants	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Apr 2019	May 2019	Jun 2019	FY 2019 Monthly Average
White Oak	25	25	25	19	10	17	26	27	55	46	45	21	28
Germantown	69	12	12	7	13	7	**	21	33	29	39	13	23
Senior Program				54	53	**	**	**	**	92	116	64	70
Shoppers Foods	15	13	13		10				27				16

\*\* Winter Recess



To empower County residents to “know their numbers” and take action accordingly, AAHP’s Chronic Disease Management team conducts free health screenings at Chronic Disease Management classes as well as at locations and events throughout the County. At no cost, County residents can be screened for blood glucose, blood pressure, BMI (body mass index) cholesterol, and other critical health metrics.

During FY19, AAHP’s Chronic Disease Management Program reached 5,452 people, and conducted screenings, delivered services, and distributed materials as presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Chronic Disease Program Snapshot**

2,496	Blood pressure screenings
1,267	Glucose screenings
209	Hemoglobin A1C screenings
818	Counseled and supported for self-management of clients with diabetes/hypertension
208	Community outreach events (4 events per week)
112	Individuals received glucose meters and supplies and were instructed on how to use and record results
117	Individuals given BP monitors and instructed on how to record results
225	Individuals successfully referred, tracked, and referred to a primary care physician
5,452	People reached for screening and/or health education services

As mentioned previously, in FY19, AAHP launched dMeetings, an online diabetes education course instructed by AAHP’s registered dietitian. Through videos, conference calls, and one-on-one consultations, dMeetings enables County residents to access diabetes education at their convenience. Although AAHP initially faced a series of technical challenges configuring dMeetings, it now serves as a dynamic addition to AAHP’s Chronic Disease Management program. Many enrollees have responded favorably, and a testimonial can be found at the end of this report.



The Chronic Disease Management Program was very successful in improving health indicators for participants. According to data:

- 95% had a positive health or behavior change
- 99% had improved A1C levels at three-month follow-up
- 100% learned to read food labels
- 100% learned to inspect their feet daily
- 90% learned to take, record, and monitor their blood pressure
- 95% showed improvement over three to six months
- 70% had an increase in nutrition and fitness behaviors over three to six months
- 100% were screened utilizing an approved mental health screening tool

During FY19, countless participants in AAHP's Chronic Disease Management Program improved their health and transformed their lives. In the process, they became part of a supportive community that will continue to encourage them through the years. As they enthusiastically credit AAHP with giving them the tools they needed to live a healthier life, more people will follow in their footsteps by seeking AAHP's partnership.

**Table 3. Chronic Disease Management Program FY 2019**

Participants	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sept 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	FY 2019 Monthly Average
<i>Male</i>	31	55	40	33	51	3	56	55	68	36	45	66	<b>45</b>
<i>Female</i>	69	75	98	90	118	21	80	89	87	120	96	130	<b>89</b>
<i>Undisclosed sex</i>					2			14	29	9	1	17	<b>72</b>
<i>Total participants</i>	100	130	138	123	171	24	136	158	184	165	142	213	<b>140</b>
<i>% African American</i>	<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Diabetes</b>													
<i>Pre-diabetes cases</i>	9	7	13	21	25	3	5	4	2	8	11	16	<b>10</b>
<i>Diabetes cases</i>	4	11	16	27	31	5	3	0	2	2	16	21	<b>12</b>
<b>Hypertension</b>													
<i>Prehypertension</i>	21	21	25	20	27	1	0	27	52	18	14	57	<b>24</b>
<i>Hypertension</i>	45	40	33	39	43	6	17	32	40	26	41	69	<b>36</b>
<i>Uncontrolled hypertension</i>	0	1	1	2	3	0	5	6	10	0	1	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Total screened</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Elevated</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>% elevated</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>61%</b>

In January, AAHP received formal accreditation by the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) and the American Diabetes Association as a certified Diabetes Program Provider. In March, AAHP received accreditation as a stand-alone program by the AADE. This accreditation is an especially significant milestone because, for the first time, AAHP received accreditation as an organization.

In May, AAHP applied for recognition from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a designated site for the Center's Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), one of two programs accredited by both the Center for Medicare and Medicaid and the CDC. AAHP currently holds accreditation in the AADE's Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME), which emphasizes self-management of diabetes. The DPP program instead focuses on pre-diabetes and aims to halt the progression to diabetes through lifestyle changes, exercise, and food monitoring. Recognition as a DPP site granted AAHP expanded competence and certification to cover the full spectrum of diabetes pathology across all stages of diabetes, from prevention with DPP to management and control with AADE's DSME.

In FY19, AAHP staff successfully strategized on building more efficient systems and workflows that made it easier to coordinate with partners and deliver services. In August, to increase participation in AAHP's Chronic Disease Management Classes, staff began implementing a new "Inbox/Outbox" system, in which AAHP staff distributed "Outboxes" and referral forms in physician's offices and clinics; physicians and office staff then simply filled out the referral forms and dropped them into the "Outbox" for pick up by AAHP staff once per week. This new system has fulfilled its goals of making the referral process simpler and recruiting more clinically diagnosed diabetic and pre-diabetic participants for the Chronic Disease Management classes. Since introducing the "Inbox/Outbox" system, 59 referrals have been received, which led to an increase of AAHP's target population's participation. AAHP staff continues to design and implement new methods of optimizing processes. Ultimately, these innovations "oil the machines" that help make good health a reality for more and more County residents.

## ❖ Maternal and Child Health Focus Area (The SMILE Program)



AAHP's maternal and child health focus area, through its management of the SMILE (Start More Infants Living Equally) healthy Program, continued to support the health of Black mothers and infants in Montgomery County with personalized care and services for moms 28 weeks pregnant through delivery and postpartum services for mothers and their infants through their infant's first year of life. AAHP's longest-running and most recognizable program, the SMILE program addresses the startling disparity in infant mortality and maternal mortality in Montgomery County.

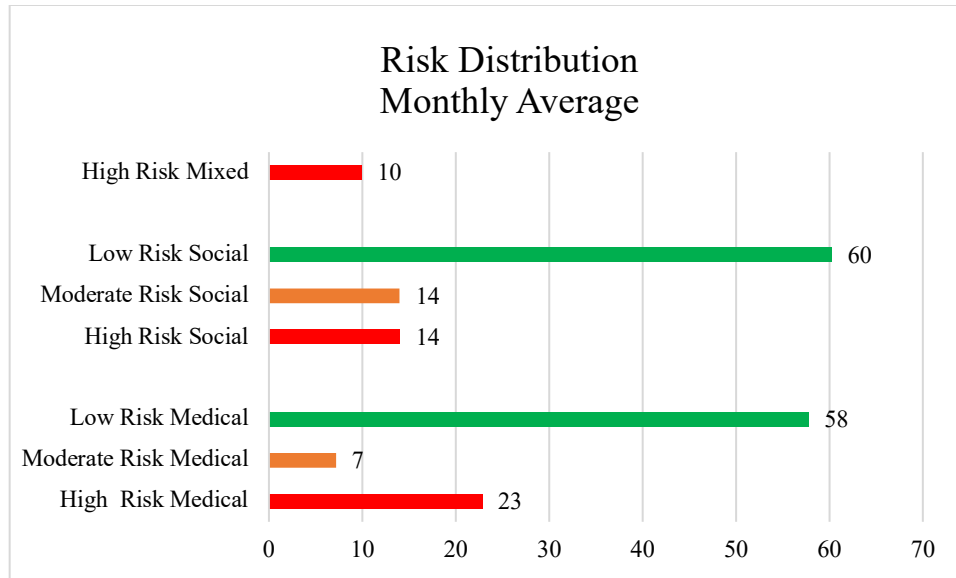
Armed with an understanding of the various determinants that influence healthy birth outcomes, AAHP's SMILE team consists of AAHP's social worker, community health workers, and nurses who take on a highly collaborative and holistic approach to customizing care for each client. By identifying the level of medical and social risk factors, the SMILE team mobilizes around each client's needs as a true partner in health. When the SMILE team encountered an exceptional case involving a mother who faced numerous and complex health, social, and psychological challenges, the SMILE team adjusted staff workloads to provide an extensive level of care and services, which helped the client deliver a healthy infant at full term. This particular case illustrates the degree of support and

dedication of AAHP's SMILE team and the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary team approach.

Because various social, medical, emotional, and environmental determinants influence birth outcomes, AAHP's SMILE Program often draws support and resources from other AAHP focus areas to supplement SMILE services. Due to the correlation between diabetes, hypertension, and obesity and poor birth outcomes, nurse home visit protocols were revised in FY19 to include screenings for blood pressure and body mass index (BMI). For example, an obese pregnant woman can be referred to a nurse or dietitian in the Chronic Disease Management Program to develop a weight management plan. Additionally, the AAHP social worker also conducted screenings for prenatal or postpartum depression based on their scores on the Edinburg Postnatal Depression Scale, a tool of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

**Chart 1** documents the risk distribution of SMILE mothers in FY19.

### **Chart 1. Pregnancy Risk Assessment**



The SMILE program monthly average caseload in FY 2019 was 150, which represented a 14% decrease from FY18's monthly average of 175. The total caseload for all mothers and children fluctuated throughout the program year, with December recording the lowest numbers and May recording the highest numbers. While an overwhelming majority of SMILE clients remained in the program and experienced favorable birth outcomes, with 88% of babies were born at a healthy weight, two babies died this program year.

**Table 4. SMILE Performance Dashboard for FY 2019**

PROFILES AND SERVICES	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sep 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Apr 2019	May 2019	Jun 2019	FY 2019 Monthly Average
<b>A) Currently Active Moms</b>	93	88	97	90	78	73	81	80	88	85	101	97	87
Prenatal (still pregnant)	21	25	33	28	18	18	23	24	30	27	40	40	27
Postpartum (Moms who have delivered)	72	63	64	62	60	55	58	56	58	58	61	57	61
<b>B) All infants</b>	76	65	68	64	61	56	59	58	59	62	64	60	63
Single births	69	59	62	60	60	54	57	54	55	58	58	36	57
Multiples	6	6	6	4	2	2	2	4	4	4	6	4	4
<b>Case Load (A+B)</b>	169	151	165	154	139	129	140	138	147	146	165	157	150

BIRTH OUTCOMES	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sep 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Apr 2019	May 2019	Jun 2019	FY 2019 Total
% healthy weight (% of total deliveries)	100%	66%	66%	100%	83%	100%	75%	100%	100%	100%	80%	83%	88%
Number of Low birth weight	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Number of Very Low birth weight	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Infant Deaths (Includes stillbirths)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0		0		2
Unfavorable Birth Outcomes (Congenital anomaly, fetal demise, miscarriage)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0				2
SERVICES	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sep 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Apr 2019	May 2019	Jun 2019	FY 2019 Total
Total Home Visits	77	67	69	101	82	76	73	70	77	78	93	91	951

Telephonic Consultations	19	21	25	22	12	5	12	11	10	9	11	8	<b>165</b>
Prenatal Discharges	1	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	<b>9</b>
Infant Discharges	11	9	5	11	16	7	7	6	6	3	12	8	<b>94</b>
Community Referrals Made	18	17	14	28	21	12	14	18	23	13	13	15	<b>206</b>
Classes/Presentations Completed	0	0	1	4	1	0	4	5	3	6	7	4	<b>35</b>

On September 8 and 9, 2018, AAHP conducted a two-day childbirth and breastfeeding class at the White Oak Recreation Center, attended by 15 expectant mothers and fathers. This class helped attendees prepare for their new arrival by providing information and insights on labor and delivery, breathing and relaxation techniques during labor, postpartum care for both mom and infant, as well as information on how mom and dad can work together to promote a healthy and supportive family.

On Sunday, May 19, in partnership with Babies Born Healthy, the SMILE program hosted “Showering through Childbirth Education,” which combined the SMILE Program’s annual community baby shower with the Spring childbirth and breastfeeding class. Attended by over 30 community members that included moms, moms-to-be, dads, and close family members, this event was the highlight of the SMILE Program in FY19. Participants attended workshops and gathered information and resources on such topics as car seat installation, acupuncture medicine, nutrition, and perinatal mental health from 15 vendors, including the Leche League and Mocha Moms. Community health workers conducted free health screenings and AAHP’s nutritionist conducted free health assessments. Most participants left with a gift, such as a car seat, clothing, or toys. Networking contributed to the spirit of camaraderie that encouraged each mom-to-be to feel more comfortable within the AAHP community.

During FY19, the SMILE Program was tasked to dispel the misconception that its programs and services are intended for lower-income women. Numerous studies indicate that poor maternal and child health outcomes occur among Black women regardless of their income, education, or insurance status, and that point was reiterated across AAHP’s publicizing channels to encourage Black women of all backgrounds to engage with SMILE. Extensive outreach and promotion help ensure that the target population perceives the SMILE Program for exactly what it is: an award-winning, high-quality program with a legacy of helping Black women in Montgomery County achieve healthy birth outcomes.

As mentioned previously, the SMILE Program received the competitive recognition of Outstanding Public Health Project awarded by the Maryland Public Health Association. The SMILE program was nominated by a representative from Montgomery County’s Fetal & Infant Mortality Review Board Action Team. The Outstanding Public Health Award was presented to Mrs. Sandra Jackson, a SMILE nurse case manager who has worked with the program for over 17 years at Montgomery County’s Fetal & Infant Mortality Review Meeting.

#### ❖ HIV/AIDS/STI

In FY19, AAHP’s HIV/AIDS/STI focus area continued to provide free and confidential HIV testing and counseling services as well as information and resources aimed at reducing the spread of HIV and other STIs in Montgomery County. Increasingly, STI awareness and testing have come into sharper focus due to the dramatic rise in STIs and the pronounced disparity rate in



Montgomery County in recent years. For example, between 2014 and 2016, Blacks had more than twice the rate of chlamydia and almost four times the rate of gonorrhea compared to Whites.<sup>4</sup>

To empower individuals with the knowledge of their HIV status, and thereby reduce the spread of HIV in communities, AAHP established and maintained connections with organizations and locations that serve populations at higher risk of HIV and STI. Progress Place, a County facility that offers assistance to the homeless population, and the Dennis Avenue Health Clinic, also operated by DHHS, are mainstays for AAHP's HIV testing and counseling services. AAHP also works closely with Montgomery College to provide HIV testing and counseling at health fairs and special events on campus.

In FY19, AAHP staff focused on identifying new sites for HIV testing services. The new Walgreens in downtown Silver Spring was identified as a prime location due to its proximity to Progress Place. Additionally, churches in the County have expressed interest in or have agreed to allow HIV testing alongside regular health screenings. The widespread availability of free HIV testing is central to preventing the spread of HIV because one in ten individuals with HIV do not know they have it and can unknowingly transmit the virus to others.

In September 2019, AAHP staff received Maryland state-sponsored training and education on PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis), a daily pill that helps prevent HIV infection, for use particularly among high-risk populations. Recent studies<sup>5</sup> indicate that only 10% of PrEP prescriptions are filled by Black MSM (Men who have Sex with Men), although HIV/AIDS is most prevalent among Black MSM. As AAHP addresses the HIV/AIDS epidemic on all fronts, expertise on the various means of prevention and protection remains paramount in educating County residents on the full spectrum of options available to them.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Health in Montgomery County, 2008-2016, A Surveillance Report on Population Health

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5110381/>

As noted previously, the rate of STIs in Montgomery County reached peak levels, while the rate of HIV stabilized. In response, AAHP began to focus more on STI prevention, including promoting STI testing and the use of condoms to prevent STIs along with HIV. To that end, AAHP began distributing information on how to obtain free STI testing through Johns Hopkins University Hospital and the University of Maryland. AAHP's HIV Navigator and community health workers also continued to collaborate with Montgomery County high schools to help youth reduce the spread of STIs.



**Table 5** provides a breakdown of HIV testing in FY 2019.

**Table 5. FY 2019 HIV Testing**

	Male	Female	Total
African Americans	184	165	349
All Others	54	38	92
<b>Total FY 2019</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>441</b>

In FY19, three individuals tested positive for HIV and were referred for a confirmatory test and linkage to care.

#### ❖ Mental Health

AAHP recognizes mental health not only as a critical, yet under-recognized health issue in its own right but also as an essential determinant of overall health. In FY19, AAHP continued to expand its outreach and education in mental health.

AAHP's most widely available mental health service is an online mental health assessment tool available on AAHP's website at <http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/aahpmontgomery>. This anonymous testing tool screens for generalized anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, substance use, schizophrenia, and recently began screening for psychosis. After testing high for a mental health disorder, participants can access a

variety of mental health treatment resources confidentially. During FY19, 537 participants accessed various online screening tools.



On December 30, AAHP achieved the highest number of mental health screenings conducted within a single month by including mental health screenings at Reid Temple as part of overall health screenings. During this event, AAHP conducted 32 combined screenings that included PHQ9 and GAD7 mental health screenings for depression and anxiety. This experience opened the door to new ways to promote the use of behavioral health screenings at community events.

As noted, because mental health can be present with other health issues, AAHP continued to expand mental health services as a pathway to managing physical health. This strategy was implemented successfully through AAHP's Brother 2 Brother Talks, which is geared towards men's health.

## ❖ Cancer

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Montgomery County<sup>6</sup> and African Americans have the highest rates of cancer compared to other demographics.

AAHP addresses cancer prevention in conjunction with the Diabetes/Heart Health focuses area's Chronic Disease Management Program's Kickstart Your Health classes. On a month-by-month basis, class sessions focus on the types of cancers that disproportionately affect African Americans (prostate, lung, breast, colorectal), the pathophysiology of different cancers, and ways that diet and exercise prevent cancer. To reduce the incidence of breast cancer among women of



African descent, all women ages 40 to 44 are encouraged to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms and women ages 45 to 54 are encouraged to get mammograms every year. In

<sup>6</sup> Source: Health in Montgomery County, 2008-2016, A Surveillance Report on Population Health

accordance with advice from the American Cancer Society, all men of African descent ages 45 and older are encouraged to talk to a healthcare provider about the pros and cons of prostate cancer testing and then decide if testing is right for them. Pamphlets are given to women and men advising them to consult their healthcare provider about mammograms and prostate cancer testing.

In FY19, AAHP expanded participation with the American Cancer Society and Cancer Coach for YOU, an organization that helps patients manage the social and psychological challenges related to cancer. AAHP also connected with Amerigroup, a firm that provides a wide range of mobile healthcare testing services free of charge, and the African Women's Cancer Awareness Association, an organization focused on improving healthcare services to African women with cancer.

#### ❖ Oral Health

AAHP's oral health focus area promotes good oral health by spreading awareness of the importance of oral health to overall health and by providing oral health information and supplies at community events and health fairs. In FY19, AAHP continued its partnership with a dentist who has more than four decades of experience providing dental care to Montgomery County residents. Throughout FY19, the dentist conducted five lectures to 82 individuals about the importance of oral health as a cross-cutting health issue that impacts almost every aspect of health and wellness.

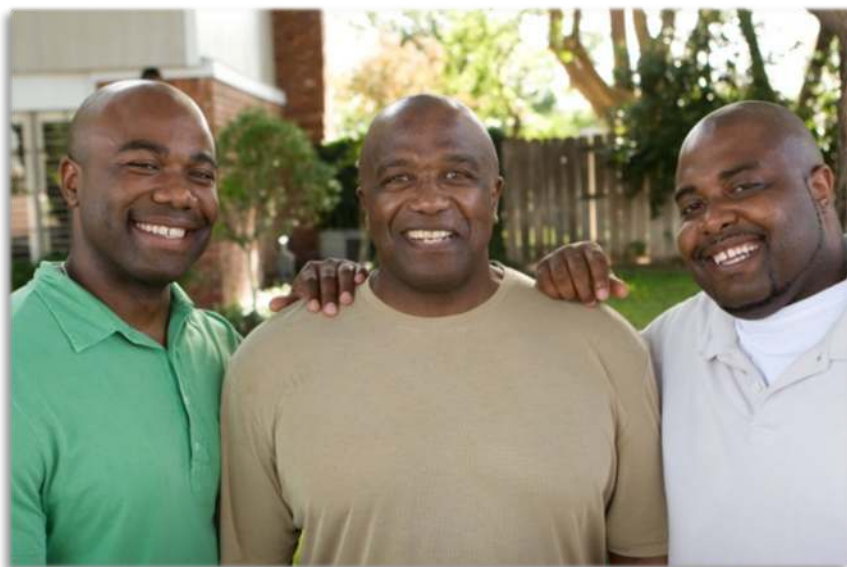




### ➤ Men's Health

The Brother 2 Brother program serves as AAHP's men's health initiative and has been groundbreaking in terms of reaching out and forging connections with Black men in the County. Black men face the most health challenges and have the shortest life expectancy of any demographic, so AAHP's work in this population is essential towards reducing the Black-White health disparity. At Brother 2 Brother Talks, Black men gather and discuss their lives and their health in a non-judgmental environment with the guidance of a healthcare professional. AAHP's Brother 2 Brother Talks are held at partnering organizations—often churches—that promote the event to their constituents, which helps to ensure that outreach and promotion are at maximum levels.

Many Brother 2 Brother participants are 45 and older, but AAHP has also successfully engaged with younger men, including high school-aged males. In January, the Brother to Brother Program conducted full health education services for 25 Black high school students enrolled in the People's Community Baptist Church's Men's Rites of Passage program. Because young males tend to perceive themselves as invincible, this exclusively male environment offered a safe space where they could confront the reality of their health and their vulnerability and be encouraged to start making healthy decisions now and continue throughout their lifetimes. Furthermore, it increased the likelihood that they will share this new knowledge with their peers, which will then increase the spread of overall knowledge about health and wellness. In FY19, Brother 2 Brother events were attended by 169 Black males at five sites across Montgomery County (Ken Gar, Colesville Baptist Church, Ross Boddy, Clifton Park, North Potomac). Health screenings were administered to 82 attendees.



### ➤ Parent Café

To provide guidance and support to Montgomery County families with children up to five-years-old, in FY19, AAHP continued a partnership with Maryland Family Network (MFN) to host Parent Café, a series of structured get-togethers designed to give parents critical tools to strengthen their families and to expand on the guidance and support provided by AAHP's SMILE Program. Parent Café events are held at the AAHP office and include a free, healthy meal and babysitting services. AAHP's first Parent Café was held on February 6, 2019 and drew 20 attendees. As Parent Cafés evolve, more emphasis will be placed on promoting group interaction and conversations between



mothers and their partners to reduce the emotional challenges that often accompany pre and post-natal care.

### ➤ Aging

FY19 saw expanded and strengthened efforts by AAHP to understand and meet the health needs of individuals 55 years of age and older.

In May, AAHP hired an aging liaison to strategize on improving service access and health outcomes for Black Montgomery County seniors. In collaboration with AAHP's Aging Subcommittee, the aging liaison will build and leverage connections with community programs to better serve Black seniors.



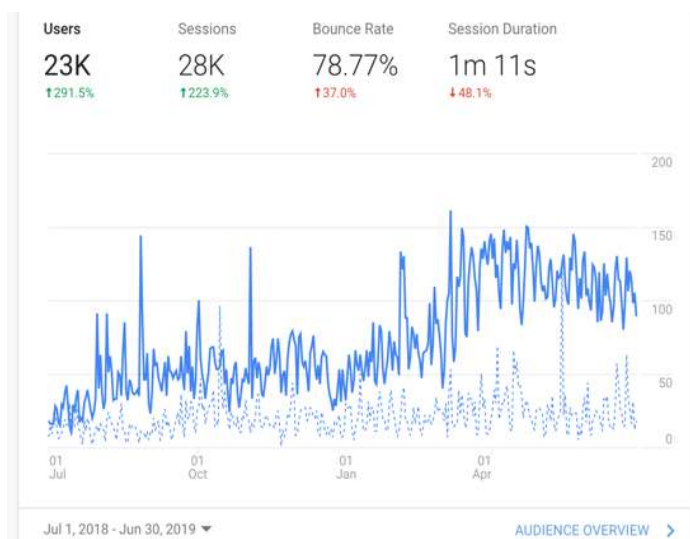
At the end of the program year, 318 aging community surveys had been completed at events and locations representing 20 different Montgomery County zip codes, ten of which had been identified as health disparity hot spots. In response to survey data indicating that housing is one of the top three healthy aging concerns for African American seniors in the County, AAHP's aging liaison established connections with several potential resource partners in the senior housing community who expressed an interest in AAHP's programming.

## MEDIA AND PROMOTION

In FY19, AAHP's website, social media channels, and monthly e-newsletter provided valuable content, updates, and resources that fulfilled its role as a source of information. In FY19, AAHP continued to solidify its digital presence and expand its audience, thereby spreading the transformative message of health promotion throughout Montgomery County and beyond.

AAHP's "digital home" at [www.aahpmontgomerycounty.org](http://www.aahpmontgomerycounty.org) experienced tremendous growth throughout the program year, with 23,000 unique visitors who accessed AAHP-related and community health information and news, event listings, event photo galleries, and other tools, resources, and publications. AAHP's website expands the accessibility of AAHP's services by offering diabetes education through dMeetings and mental health support through AAHP's mental health screening tool. Notably, AAHP's website also invites visitors to connect with AAHP staff, volunteer, or sign up for AAHP's newsletter. Visitors can also access AAHP's calendar of events and RSVP.

AAHP's website metrics for FY19 indicate a significant increase in traffic, with a 292% increase in visitors and a 224% increase in sessions, as pictured in the graphic below.



Source: Google Analytics

Health Notes, AAHP's monthly e-newsletter, added 366 new subscribers in FY19, growing its subscriber list from 1,037 to 1,403 in FY19, representing a 36% increase from the previous fiscal year. A majority of new subscribers were acquired from sign-up sheets at AAHP events, while a significant portion signed up on AAHP's website.

The following graphic outlines the AAHP Health Note's metrics for FY19.



Health Notes articles are thoughtfully researched and written and feature monthly health observance articles, health tips, news, healthy recipes, videos, and information on health issues that disproportionately affect Blacks. Health Notes also serves as the primary promotional apparatus for upcoming AAHP events, complete with links to RSVP.

Significant Health Notes articles include the following:

- “You CAN Grow Your Own Food,” published May 2019, discussed the viability of urban gardening and included suggestions and local resources for community gardening, such as Montgomery Parks and Wooten Mills Park
- “What is Moderation?” published February 2019, addressed the lack of knowledge about moderation levels and offered guidelines on the correct amount of sugar consumption to be considered moderate
- “Mindful Eating Over the Holidays,” published November 2018, offered five tips on managing weight and health over the holiday season from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and Today’s Dietitian
- “Childhood Obesity and Halloween,” published October 2018, offered suggestions on how parents and caregivers can navigate Halloween by reinforcing lessons about balance and moderation
- “My First Colonoscopy at 45,” published on February 2019 by the founder of Fit Fathers, one of AAHP’s partners, describing his motivations for getting a colonoscopy
- A video testimonial from August 2018’s “Health Champion,” who explains how AAHP’s Kickstarting Your Health class changed his life
- An informative video about how the myth of the “Black superwoman” affects the mental health of Black women, published in April 2019



Social media continues to play a vital role in AAHP’s health education efforts and in promoting AAHP’s programs, services, and events. Throughout the program year, audience and engagements grew substantially on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. To both promote AAHP events and to streamline the RSVP process, AAHP began incorporating Eventbrite, an events management platform, into AAHP’s overall social media strategy.

FACEBOOK METRICS FY19



TWITTER METRICS FY19



INSTAGRAM METRICS FY19



**African American Health Program**  
Published by CoSchedule App [?] · November 27, 2018 ·

Nationwide and in Montgomery County, African Americans face the highest prevalence of HIV and other STIs. We have the power to change that! Let's learn how health is our most important asset and how we can protect our sexual health. Join AAHP for our annual World AIDS Day Wellness Expo, "Health is the New Wealth" this Saturday, 11am - 2pm at the Silver Spring Civic Center.

RSVP: <http://www.aahpwad18.eventbrite.com> or [rsvp@aahpmontgomerycounty.org](mailto:rsvp@aahpmontgomerycounty.org)

#AAHPWAD18 #BlackMoCoVsSTIs #AgesNotACondom #WorldAIDSDay #MoCoWorldAIDSDay #SafeSex #KnowYourStatus #LiveYourBestLife #MoCoBlackHealth

#AAHPWAD18

**HEALTH IS THE NEW WEALTH**

WORLD AIDS DAY WELLNESS EXPO

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 11AM-2PM

SILVER SPRING CIVIC CENTER

African American Health Program

**980** People Reached

**107** Engagements

[Boost Post](#)

6

19 Shares

Like Comment Share

Write a comment...



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### ❖ AAHP Data Summit

On September 24, 2018, AAHP, in collaboration with AAHP's Executive Committee and Executive Coalition, hosted the inaugural AAHP Data Summit. This significant event showcased data on health indicators and social determinants that document existing health disparities in Montgomery County, according to federal, state, and County epidemiological measures and data sources. The lead researcher for the Health Disparity Hot Spot Identification Initiative (which identifies geographic hot spots within the County where severe racial disparities in health outcomes exist) presented the data, which included health-related vital records, hospital admissions, morbidity, and mortality within the County and incidence and prevalence of healthcare conditions at both the zip code and township levels. More than 160 community residents, advocates, officials, providers, and policymakers attended this event.



### ❖ World AIDS Day

On December 1, 2018, AAHP held the 2018 World AIDS Day program at Silver Spring Civic Center. Intended to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS, sexual health, and AAHP's programs and services aimed at preventing the spread of HIV and other STIs, AAHP's World AIDS Day program was attended by almost 100 County residents, stakeholders, and providers from health-related organizations and agencies. Most importantly, the event attracted a large percentage of teenagers who engaged in earnest dialogue with presenters on such topics as the use of social media for "hookups," sex-related health risks, and ways to prevent spreading diseases with the rising popularity of body art. Montgomery County's health officer was the keynote speaker. Twelve vendors set up tables and provided educational materials and health screening services consistent





with AAHP focus areas. Overall, a high number of participants were tested and/or received information regarding HIV/AIDS/STIs or other health conditions for which there are wide disparities in the County.

#### ❖ Community Day

AAHP's flagship event, Community Day, was held on April 27, 2019. This event marked two decades of service by AAHP to residents of Montgomery County. This year's theme was KNOW? and focused on the importance of knowing your health risks and health status. Significantly, this event brought together diverse County leaders and stakeholders who joined in a variety of health education and wellness activities, including lectures, food demonstrations, biometric measurements, counseling sessions, and exercise activities. The highlight was a distinguished panel that discussed the role genetics plays in individual health.



#### ❖ Health Freedom Walk

On Saturday, June 8, AAHP sponsored the 15th Annual Health Freedom Celebration Walk at the Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park in Sandy Spring, Maryland. People of all ages and backgrounds from across the County came together to reflect on and celebrate freedom and good health while walking. AAHP hopes each participant was motivated to start or continue exercising consistently. In collaboration with Health Freedom, Inc., a non-profit organization focused on supporting all Americans in building good health habits, the Health Freedom Celebration Walk is held every year to promote increased physical activity while making creative use of Maryland's integral role in the Underground Railroad. Participants visited the new Woodlawn Museum in the historic stone barn, where interactive exhibits highlight Montgomery County Blacks, the Underground Railroad, and the Quaker experience in Montgomery County. The Health Freedom Celebration Walk also featured musical entertainment, free health information, and fun for the entire family.



## STORIES & TESTIMONIALS

AAHP is driven by its mission to reduce health disparities that adversely affect African Americans in Montgomery County, particularly the County's most vulnerable and underserved African American residents. As such, AAHP develops and implements program offerings that address cross-cutting health issues and actively recruits participants and measures their progress throughout their tenure in the program. This course of action has rendered tremendous success as participant after participant meets their health goals and serves as an example of how a person can dramatically improve their health by making health-promoting lifestyle changes. In turn, as participants become healthier, they also become ambassadors of health in their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. To honor these individuals, AAHP began designating a "Health Champion" of the month to acknowledge AAHP participants who are doing their part to "make good health contagious."

### ➤ Health Champion: "Ms. P.B."

Ms. P.B. has been attending Kickstart Your Health classes at White Oak class for two years. Ms. P.B. began with questions about her kidney function and diabetes. After attending sessions over the years and making healthy food choices and exercising, Ms. P.B.'s kidney function increased from 10% to 60% and she has reduced her medication by half. She credits the adoption of a vegan diet as a significant factor in improving her health status. Inspired by AAHP's work and how it has transformed her life, and eager to share that message with others, she brought materials from Kickstart Your Health class to her endocrinologist who has copied the materials for distribution to other patients. Ms. P.B. has been very helpful in spreading the word about the class to others and has even brought several friends to join the program.

### ➤ Health Champion: "Ms. J.R."



Ms. J.R. has also been attending the Kickstart Your Health classes at White Oak Recreation Center. Ms. J.R. has struggled with hypertension for 10+ years and has made tremendous progress in improving her health, having dropped her blood pressure 10-15 points and having lost weight. She credits the chronic disease program for providing her with "an education and support network to turn her life around and be an advocate to others." Ms. J.R. has also been a very active and excellent ambassador for the program. As an added benefit, Ms. J.R.'s granddaughter, an exercise instructor, has provided heart-pumping exercise sessions to AAHP—most notably at AAHP Community Day. Ms. J.R. is frequently in attendance at AAHP events with a friend or two in tow.

Below is a testimonial from "Kathy," a dMeetings participant:

*“I recently completed the AAHPs dMeetings Diabetes Education Course. Although I had face-to-face diabetic education over ten years ago, I found this online course to be very practical and beneficial. It is a complete and comprehensive presentation of topics from eating to medicine to exercise that is extremely helpful in managing my diabetes. The self-test at the end of each unit, as well as the extensive references of new research, magazines, and newsletters, will help me continue to keep up with new research and ideas. I like the online format of the dMeetings because I could view the videos when convenient and go back over them when needed. The group follow-up phone calls were useful because we could ask questions of experts and share thoughts with each other. I highly recommend this diabetes education course, whether you are new to diabetes or have struggled with it for years.”*