

**age
friendly**
CENTRAL BROOKLYN

THIRD CHAPTER LIVING



Photocredit: nycinsiderguide.com
July 4th in NYC Brooklyn Bridge

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A PUBLICATION OF AGE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE



SURVIVING A PANDEMIC



BY DONNA WILLIAMS

Notes from Editor in Chief



Life completely changed in March 2020 when Governor Cuomo declared the P.A.U.S.E. It remains to be seen if we will fully return to our way of life before the pandemic. Though wearing a mask, washing our hands, and practicing social distancing are still part of daily life, we are doing so much better than this time a year ago.

Today we are in a good place. The COVID-19 vaccine is available for anyone who wants to take it; the MTA is running 24/7; schools, workplaces, restaurants, stores, sporting events and more are opening up. And we have a new administration in the White House!

Looking back, I credit my involvement with Age Friendly Central Brooklyn Inc. (AFCBI) for helping me through the pandemic.

When I retired in 2017, I knew I wanted to be actively involved in Bedford Stuyvesant, the community where I was born and raised. Unexpected surgery in 2018 put that notion on hold until I attended my first Age Friendly meeting in 2019 where I volunteered to work on the Anniversary Luncheon. I've been hooked on AFCBI ever since.

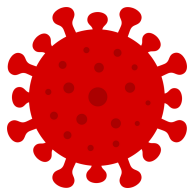
I've come to realize that in the early months of the pandemic, the time spent working on our newsletter, **THIRD CHAPTER LIVING**, with Stefani and the Editorial Board provided the social engagement I sorely needed.

Brainstorming ideas with the Economic Empowerment Cohort Group; setting and achieving goals with the Executive Board; applying for grants; and serving as the distribution hub of information has been fulfilling. Simply put, AFCBI gave me something worthwhile to focus on during the pandemic for which I will always be grateful.

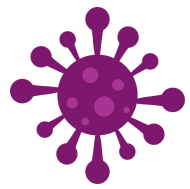
In this issue of **THIRD CHAPTER LIVING**, Marlienne Christian returns as a guest writer describing what it was like to participate in a clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine. While Editorial Board members share their story about getting – or not – vaccinated.

In addition, we look at diabetes, the medical condition, along with obesity, most cited when talking about COVID-19.





COVID-19 TRIAL



BY MARLIENNE CHRISTIAN

In early November 2020 NYU Langone sent out an email inviting persons interested in volunteering to be part of a clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine. Since March of 2020, the hospitalizations and death from this virus had wrought catastrophic blight to the world and painfully to my beloved central Brooklyn community.

I pondered risks versus safety, and examined reasons for considering myself for a clinical trial. Facing each day with hope in the wake of new morbidity and mortality relative to COVID-19 was becoming a challenge for me. A sense of helplessness was insidiously taking root within me. I tarried with the thought of volunteering for a while. Then I shared my thoughts with my family. No one agreed. "Why do you need to do that?" "They don't know how these chemicals work," "They always want to experiment- they cannot be trusted." I listened and retreated.....for a day. I let my family know I needed to be a part of a solution and I was going forward.

In December 2020 I participated in a 3-hour intake consisting of a medical history, a physical and bloodwork, read, listened to explanations of and signed several releases. I was informed of contingency and emergency medical protocols for any adverse reactions and incentives. I met the potential medical team. Subsequently, I was accepted.

Weekly calls for safety monitoring, an on-line weekly study diary, labs and in person visits make up the study fields. This 2-year trial began as a blind study with me nor the medical team knowing if I was receiving the vaccine or a placebo.



I received my first injection on December 28, 2020. I returned for my second injection on January 25, 2021. I was unblinded and learned I was given the trial vaccine. While the trial vaccine has been approved by the World Health Organization, it is not yet approved in the USA.

The study ends December 2022. Thus far I have been fueled with optimism, satisfied with my health and quickened in my spirit of the rightness of my decision.

MY COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

BY SELMA JACKSON



The top contraindications for COVID-19 are anaphylaxis and bleeding issues! Both are health concerns for me, but I decided to take the vaccine. Getting an appointment was the next hurdle! It didn't matter what time of day I tried, everything was always full.

I received a call to participate in another COVID-19 webinar and I stated it was of no value to me if there was no appointment. The caller gave me a contact to register for the vaccine and if I got an appointment would I attend the webinar? I said yes. Not only did I get an appointment, but it was for the next day!! The webinar was canceled, but I got what I needed!

After receiving the vaccine I waited 20 mins to make sure there were no reactions and I came home to rest. The next day I felt better until about 1pm, 24 hours later! I started feeling unusual and when I looked in the mirror I saw swelling of my eyelids and my cheeks! I realized it was the beginning of an anaphylaxis attack, which is my reaction to sulfa, but was assured it was not used in the vaccine and I had never had a reaction to vaccines.

I took Benadryl hoping to catch it early enough, as the allergic reaction is similar to seafood! Next my throat was swelling. I called EMS and after a five hour emergency visit, I came home with a five day steroid pack. The day after completion I started swelling again. I took Benadryl again and it subsided.



Two days later swelling again and again I took Benadryl. To say the least, by this time I am very concerned but thankful to be alive!

I reported the incident to the medical program that administered the vaccine. The CDC advised no second dose. My primary care doctor was not satisfied with that and referred me to an allergist who reviewed my allergy history and suspects I am allergic to the mRNA compound in Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. He agreed with the CDC no second dose.

DIABETES

BY LORRAINE GAMBLE-LOFTON



Back in late 1981, finding myself besieged by sebaceous cyst after sebaceous cyst I checked in with my then primary care physician. When she examined me, it made her gasp. She questioned me about my diet to which I confessed most of my wayward ways. I owned up to all the food I ate, all of it.

At work I drank four 16oz Pepsi's daily, at home I would continue by drinking a two-liter Pepsi and a huge bottle of lemonade and whatever else I could find. Along with my increased thirst came more frequent urination which at night limited the amount of sleep I got so I was exhausted every morning. The doctor did blood work then sat me down and gave me "the" talk. "I want you to give up the soda for two weeks. Then come back and we will figure out what the story is."

Upon my return she gave me the frightening diagnosis of diabetes. I was truly happy that my blood sugar had decreased, but I knew that I was still in trouble because of my family's history with diabetes.

What is diabetes and what can be its impact on your life? Well, Type 2 Diabetes, which is what I have, is usually found in people who are over forty-five and overweight. It is a disease which occurs when your blood sugar is too high and your body does not have enough insulin to process it.

Down the road another endocrinologist warned me saying "Diabetes is a mean, heinous disease; it kills in pieces."

Meaning that if I did not change my evil ways I might be subjected to neuropathy, blindness, heart disease, amputation, kidney disease, stroke and an ultimately: untimely death. I have three of these five and a couple unmentioned.

Here are a few things that you can do to help yourself avoid this cavern: pay closer attention to your diet, you can't eat like you did at twenty, exercise regularly, partner with your PCP (Primary Care Physician), and love yourself which will help you make wiser choices.



THE CORONA VACCINE

BY GLENDA PATTERSON



The reason I have not taken the vaccine yet is I have reservations. Fifteen months ago there was no vaccine in sight and the head of contagious diseases Dr. Fauci said at the time it would take three years to develop a vaccine.

Well, the vaccine was developed in three months under Operation Warp Speed. This was decided by the President of the United States at the time. That is one reason I am skeptical the vaccine was made too fast and not enough time to be adequately tested. According to Dr. Fauci, testing the vaccine takes years. We did not have that pleasure of testing the vaccine for years to see exactly how it will affect us in the long run.

Then I started thinking about the Tuskegee Experiment. How Black men were injected with syphilis without being told what was done to them. They were not informed of what was happening to them. They were having all kinds of things happening to their bodies and had no idea it was from the injection. That was done to Black men in America.

I have spoken to several individuals who have taken the two-dose and they had no real complaints just soreness of the arm.

I would like to end my article by saying I am still thinking about taking the vaccine it will be the one-dose shot. The vaccine does not prevent COVID-19, what it does is prevent you from getting severely ill and being put on a respirator in a hospital.

I was supposed to write about the pros and cons of the vaccine. I decided to just give my opinion on how I feel about the vaccine.

Thank you Age-Friendly family for allowing me to write for our newsletter.

Keep Smiling!



MY SLANT: COVID 19, THE VACCINE

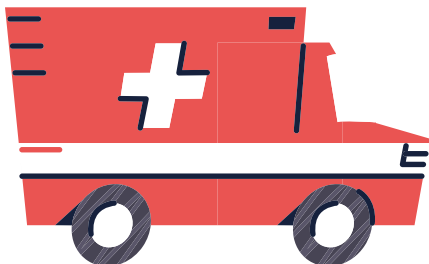
BY LORRAINE GAMBLE-LOFTON



The year 2020 found most of us somewhat trapped by a mysterious airborne disease. The Corona virus also known as COVID19, put a significant strain on our lives world-wide. We were shut down, locked down. We lost family and friends and others who we never knew. Like many others, I hid out in my house, I was determined that I was not going to get this thing. Well in the beginning we talked about hope, thinking that it would all be over by summer. It did not happen, however, there was now fevered talk about a vaccine, at last a cure.

It was now fall and still no vaccine.

At the end of October my friend came by and saw that I could stand a break, so off we went. We walked down the steps, he went to get the car; I fell and broke my tibia. The ambulance got me to the hospital and four days later, I get stuck in a nursing home for three and a half months.



Like everything else, the nursing homes were on lockdown because of the virus. After all the stories about all the seniors dying in nursing home, I was terrified and prayed for the vaccine on a regular basis. Finally, my prayer was answered. The nursing home administrator asked the patients who would want to sign up to be vaccinated. I think that I was first.

Finally January 27th was here. That was my date for the first dose, February 10 the second. Others were afraid, I was more afraid of the virus than the shot. When the day came, I got dressed and bravely went to see the vaccine folk. I sat there in my wheelchair, the nurse came over and before I knew anything, it was done and over. No pain, no temperature, none of the things that I had been warned about. I'm good. I was scheduled to go home on February 13 my second shot, February 10. When done, like my former experience, SUCCESS! Do not be afraid.



Lorraine Gamble-Lofton

DIABETES IN THE FAMILY

BY SELMA JACKSON

As long as I can remember the McNeely household lived with diabetes. My father and all of his five siblings developed Type 2 diabetes. Despite my mother's best efforts my father would not follow a restricted diet. So what happened next was drastic but saved my dad's life. Everyone followed the restricted diet--no sodas, no kool-aid, no canned fruits and vegetables. My mom made everything with fresh produce and controlled the sugar content. She also learned how to sweeten desserts for diabetics in the 1950's!!



I continue many of those habits today. My one weakness is desserts, which I make from scratch. I can't resist my cakes, brownies, cookies, pies, etc. So to minimize my craving I make them and share with my neighbors! I get to enjoy my favorite desserts without over indulging.

But a couple of years ago I showed signs of pre-diabetes. I immediately went into action motivated by how ravaging diabetes can be. Both my father and his oldest sister lost their legs and ultimately their lives from diabetic complications. All of my dad's siblings lives were shortened by this disease!

I joined a class on diabetes prevention which is a combination of exercise, weight control, limiting fat and carbs intake and then looking at salt and sugar intake. On that year long program you're required to lose 10% of your weight. Initially, I was in opposition to that until I realized it would reduce me to my pre-pregnancy weight! So far, two years later my weight fluctuates slightly but with following the plan my A1C tests have stayed below 5.7! Just to give you a sense of what the program did. When I joined the program my A1C was 6.4, in 6 months it was reduced to 5.8 and at the end of a year it was 5.5! During the pandemic it has hovered around 5.7, but I am always paying close attention. It requires a commitment to yourself to maintain a healthy life style. After all isn't that what Age-Friendly is all about!



MY VACCINE JOURNEY

BY DONNA WILLIAMS



I've always been one to take the flu shot especially when my mother was alive and we were living together. Her doctor believed if I got the flu shot, it would help keep her safe. Fortunately, I've never had an adverse reaction to the flu shot. I even got a shingles shot in 2016 when someone close to me was stricken.

I have a history of getting vaccinated, so for me, it was never a question if I would get the COVID-19 vaccination. The bigger questions for me were how, when and where I would get the COVID-19 shot.

Initially, not in any rush, I was rather laid back about getting the vaccine. But because of constant calls from a friend and colleague I decided to go online and set up an appointment.

But before doing the online route, I had a conversation with an Age Friendly sister who told me Interfaith Medical Center was taking walk-ins. The next morning by 7 am, my friend and I were at Interfaith. The hospital lobby was packed. Needless to say, no social distancing was being practiced.

Folks were wearing masks, but still there was a guy who was coughing and another who kept pulling down his mask to talk on his phone. I managed to nab a seat, filled out the form and proceeded to wait until our numbers were called.

We waited about 90- minutes before joining a line that snaked down the hall towards the vaccination area.

We were about to get the Pfizer vaccine. I read that Pfizer had a slightly higher efficacy rate than Moderna and that more people had experienced side effects after the second dose of Moderna than Pfizer. I wasn't complaining.

We got the shot, waited the required time - no reaction - and then headed home. For the second dose Interfaith had us wait on line outside of the hospital letting in small groups at a time. Thankfully, it wasn't too cold as we waited on line for an hour. The same nurse gave us our second shot. Aside from feeling tired and having the munchies, we were fine.



THE DOCTOR TELLS YOU YOU'RE PRE-DIABETIC. NOW WHAT?

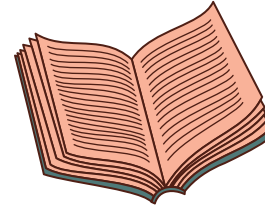
BY DONNA WILLIAMS



When I mentioned to a friend, who has diabetes, that my primary care physician (PCP) told me my Hemoglobin A1c 5.8 puts me in the pre-diabetic range, her immediate response was “go see a nutritionist”.

My mother had diabetes, along with a host of other medical conditions. I would prick her finger each morning to determine her glucose level. She didn't inject insulin, but did take medication to keep her blood sugar under control. How do I avoid what my mother endured? I went to a nutritionist over a year ago before the term pre-diabetic was ever uttered to me.

Recently, I took a weeklong webinar entitled Essential Diabetes created and hosted by Dr. Brian Mowll. One of the webinar presenters was Tony Hampton, M.D., a Black doctor and author of Fix Your Diet Fix Your Diabetes



Dr. Hampton's book is filled with lots of useful information including how incorporating dietary changes and intermittent fasting can lower your blood glucose level.

What I've learned from friends, the nutritionist, my PCP and Dr. Hampton's book is that the solution to reversing/controlling diabetes is in my hands.

It begins by fixing my motivation and belief systems; then gaining knowledge about diabetic conditions and food labeling; and finally making a low-carb diet and exercise a lifestyle choice.





Dr. Kizzmekia "Kizzy" S. Corbett, PHD

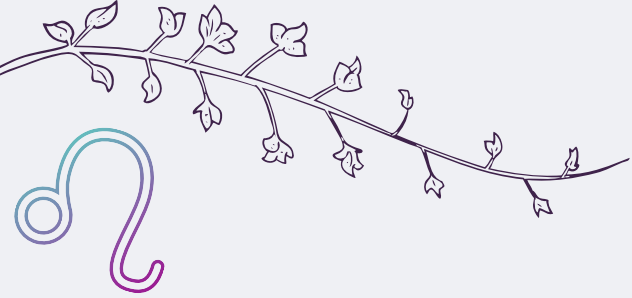
Immunologist Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett is a research fellow and scientific lead at the National Institute of Health. She is one of the scientists who in early 2020 helped to develop an mRNA-based vaccine for COVID-19. Developed in collaboration with biotech firm Moderna of Cambridge, MA, the Moderna vaccine is one of the two COVID-19 vaccines shown to be effective by more than 90 percent.



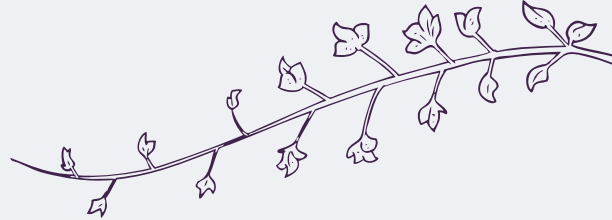
Quote from Dr. Corbett

"This overarching mistrust of the medical institution, in general, is something that is being highlighted now because of the dire circumstances of which we're in. But it is not news to me, because I'm Black and I have a Black family and I am well-read on the history of injustice when it comes to medicine in the Black community."





July



July is the seventh month in the Julian and Gregorian calendar and has 31 days. The month was named by the Roman Senate in honor of Roman General Julius Caesar who was born in July.

A Happy Birthday Shoutout to these Ladies:



JULY 4 - DIANNE MANAGO

JULY 9 - LINDA LAVERPOOL


JULY 11- OLAYEMI ODESANYA*

JULY 14 - LORRAINE GAMBLE LOFTON

JULY 21 - PATRICIA WASHINGTON





Quick Facts about July:

Birthstone: Ruby 

Flower: Larkspur or Water Lily

Zodiac signs:

 Cancer (Crab): June 22–July 22

Leo (Lion): July 23–August 22 



Events in July!



Designed to get you moving (juicy joints!), Tameeka Nicole combines conscious breathing, meditation, and mindful movement while sitting in a chair!

10:15am-11am. FREE

Classes are virtual for now: Emergesoul.com

Elder Wednesday Luncheon
Wed. July 28, 12 noon
In-person. Restaurant: TBD



ACCESS TO CARE FORUM *for Seniors*

JULY 31ST • 11AM TO NOON
BEDFORD STUYVESANT RESTORATION PLAZA 1360 FULTON STREET BROOKLYN NY 11221

DISCUSSION AROUND
MEDICARE, AARP SERVICES,
HOMECARE SERVICES
COVID-19 AND MEDICAID &
MLTC PROCESS.



**Olayemi is responsible for the newsletter cover design and layout*

