

Unity Fellowship Church Movement

HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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UFCM EXTERNAL DEPARTMENT



HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE

TO SUPPORT THE WHOLISTIC HEALTH OF UNITY FELLOWSHIP
CHURCH MOVEMENT AND THE COMMUNITITES THEY SERVE.

UFCM House of Bishops - Beatitude Zachary G. Jones - Sr. Bishop Jacquelyn D. Holland - Bishop Harris Thomas (Emeritus)
Bishop Benita Ramsey (J1) - Bishop Kevin E. Taylor (J2) – Bishop Dorothy Parrish-Harris (J3)

DISCLAIMER: The Unity Fellowship Church Movement's Health Innovative wants our readers to know the views and testimonials shared are that of our writers. Please consult your medical providers with health concerns.

IS THERE A HEALTH ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ADDRESSED
THROUGH THE UFCM HEALTH & WELLNESS IINITIATIVE?
PLEASE SEND IT TO: gjerrilee@gmail.com

WELCOME TO WELLNESS

This is your first step to healthier living. Unity Fellowship Church Movement Health and Wellness Initiative encourages you to move in the direction of self-care, self-love, and wellness.

JUNE

JUNE 2025 HEALTH INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

A SALUTE TO THE MEN AND MALE IDENTIFIED IN OUR LIVES



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR...

As the LGBTQ Community continues to fight for social justice so that every voice can be heard it is important to make sure the LGBTQ hearing impaired community has a seat at the table and a place in the crowd. There are many lessons learned from the hearing-impaired community that can improve our social and healthful wellbeing. Hearing impaired persons are more visually aware when they are driving, more focused and less likely to be distracted by a cell phone. They look you in the face when communicating. Facial expression is a major part of their communication process. They pay attention when communicating and are more in tune with their bodies and their health.

Although there are hundreds of sign languages around the world, sign language itself is the fourth most popular language in the world. American sign language is more similar to French Sign Language. Technology is important in the hearing-impaired community; over time it has improved communication between hearing and non-hearing people. Deaf Culture is a social belief system, in which being hearing impaired is viewed as a type of human experience as opposed to a disease or disability and are involved in all areas of our society. There is an additional PRIDE in the hearing impaired because they believe they are carefully chosen and not as persons who need to be fixed.



MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

June is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month. Its goal is to raise awareness about the mental health challenges faced by men and eliminate the stigma surrounding mental illness in the male population. It is a time to encourage open conversations, promote support systems, and emphasize the importance of seeking help when needed.

Men are disproportionately affected by mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. They are also unlikely to seek professional help for mental health issues because of societal expectations of strength and self-reliance. This can put men at higher risk to die by suicide, further emphasizing the need to address mental health in men.

What can be done to raise awareness and promote more men to take care of their mental wellness?

- ❖ Challenge the stigma. Dispel the idea that showing emotions or seeking help is a sign of weakness.
- ❖ Encourage open communication. Encourage the men in your life to talk about their feelings and life experiences. If it affects their day-to-day wellness encourage them to seek mental health professionals.
- ❖ Offer support. Provide resources including support groups, hotlines and mental health professionals.
- ❖ Educate about mental health. Increase awareness about common mental health conditions, symptoms and available resources.
- ❖ Encourage Self-Care. Promote healthy lifestyle choices such as exercise, good nutrition and quality rest.
- ❖ 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline- 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org
- ❖ National Institute of Mental Health nimh.nih.gov
- ❖ Anxiety and Depression Association of America- adaa.org



MAJOR HEALTH ISSUES EFFECTING MEN

Preventive Health Care at the top of the list to maintain wellness.

- ❖ Heart Disease- the leading cause of death in men globally and in the United States. The importance of regularly scheduled health exams cannot be stressed enough for men of any age. Young men to be aware of any health issues they think only apply to older men, and to catch any serious health issues early. Diet, exercise and lowering stress levels are important preventive measures.
- ❖ Cancer- prostate may be a small gland in the male reproductive system, but can be a big concern. It is a slow growing disease that usually appears later in life, but it is suggested that men be screened beginning at age 40. (younger if there is a family history). Early detection improves the chances of a positive outcome. Testicular cancer is more common among younger men. Screening as early as 15 years is suggested as well as a monthly self-exam. Colon cancer screenings should begin at age 50 unless otherwise indicated.
- ❖ Diabetes-many people don't even know they have elevated blood sugar until testing confirms it. Left untreated, the high blood sugar that comes with diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke or damage to kidney function or eyes. Regular checkups will keep you informed of blood sugar levels and present early detection. Lifestyle changes, such as good nutrition and exercise are excellent preventive measures.



TRANSGENDER HEALTH CORNER

“During Mental Health Awareness Month in May we honored the brilliance, care, and imagination of trans and non-binary people who are already building new worlds of healing.” Together with [@translifeline](#), we're lifting up the truth we've always known.

CARE is collective. SAFETY is shared. IMAGINATION is resistance. YOU are not alone. We've always taken care of each other. Let's keep going.

TRANSGENDER LAW CENTER

The Transgender Law Center is the largest American transgender-led civil rights organization in the United States, established in 2002. They were originally California's "first fully staffed, state-wide transgender legal organization" and were initially a fiscally sponsored project of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

The Transgender Law Center is a trans-led organization that advocates self-determination for all people. Since 2002 they have been organizing, assisting, informing and empowering thousands of individual community members towards a long-term, national trans-led movement for liberation. They champion the rights of all transgender and gender-nonconforming people to make their own choices and live freely, safely and authentically/ Prioritizing BIPOC, disabled, HIV+ communities, they advance community-driven strategies that harness trans knowledge, power, and joy to ensure that we do not only survive but thrive at all ages and phases of life.

[Transgenderlifeline.org](https://transgenderlifeline.org)



#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

They say safety comes from control, punishment, and power. But we've learned otherwise.

Safety is a room where we're not questioned.
A group chat that checks in.
A friend who says, "You don't have to explain."
A partner who bakes your favorite treat.
We create the safety we deserve, together.



Transgender Law Center

#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

Community care saves lives.

More than half (**54%**) of transgender and nonbinary young people reported that their school was gender-affirming. Those who did reported lower rates of attempting suicide.

LGBTQ+ young people who reported living in very accepting homes had **significantly lower** rates of attempting suicide compared to those in less accepting households.

Source: The Trevor Project, 2024 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health



Transgender Law Center



#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

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Transgender Law Center

#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

Imagination is not escape.
It's strategy.

When the world tells us what's possible,
we imagine more —
and then we live it into being.
This is how trans people survive.
This is how we win.



Transgender Law Center

#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

We've always taken care of each other.

Because systems won't.
Because solidarity will.
Resources and support are here.
We are here.
You are held.



Transgender Law Center

#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

This Mental Health Awareness Month, we honor the brilliance of trans and nonbinary people who imagine new ways to heal.

We are the proof that a softer, freer future is already blooming.

Need support? Call **Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860**

Help us build it: **transgenderlawcenter.org/donate**
translifeline.org/donate

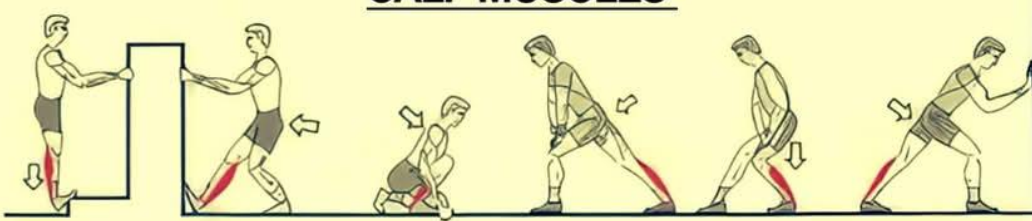


Transgender Law Center

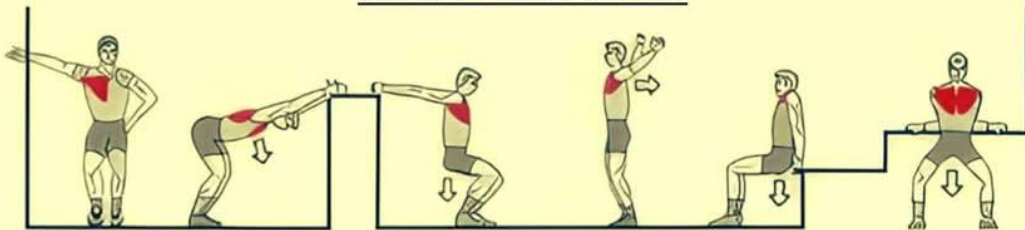


FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

CALF MUSCLES



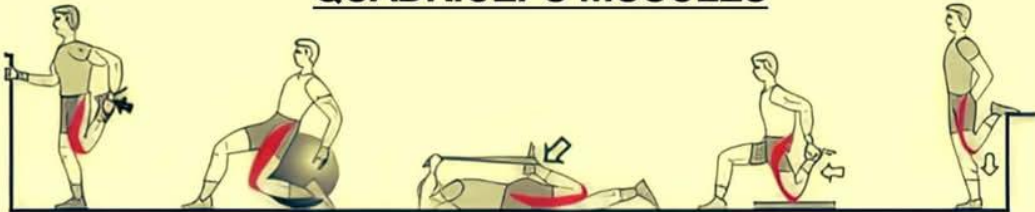
CHEST MUSCLES



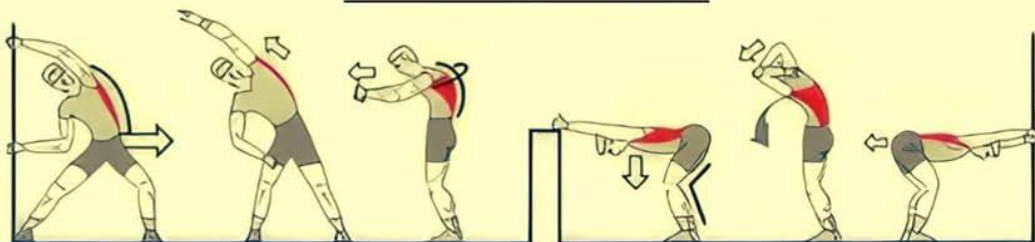
HAMSTRINGS MUSCLES



QUADRICEPS MUSCLES



LATISSIMUS DORSI



LET'S GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Bring back the open and honest conversation about HIV/AIDS

Stop the Stigma



In 2025 the number of new diagnoses of HIV is on the rise with young people between the ages of 18 and 34 years, a new generation. 41% of the people living with HIV/AIDS are 55 and older. (CDC). Effective HIV medications are increasing the number of older people living with HIV/AIDS. The decrease in HIV/AIDS education and awareness, and the slowing down of the information highway, can be contributed to the increase the number of newly diagnosed cases.

The medical treatment for HIV/AIDS has improved over the years and as a result people may have become complacent. “ If I contract HIV I can just take a couple of pills.” Let’s give them something to talk about. Bring back an open and honest conversation about HIV/AIDS as a part of preventive healthcare.

Interview with:

Reverend Robert Arrington, Pastor & Founder of Unity Fellowship of Charleston, S.C. Director of Nehemiah Social Justice Center, Community Leader, Faith Work Published.
www.faithworkpublishing1.com www.ufccharlestonsc.org

What are some of the reasons for the rise of HIV in young people between the ages of 18 and 34 years?

There are several reasons. First many young people no longer see HIV as a death sentence, so the sense of urgency has faded. Second, they’re not hearing about HIV on a regular basis from schools, media, or even faith institutions. Lastly, there is a lack of understanding about the risks and consequences. The conversation has grown quiet, and that silence is costing us.

Why do you think HIV education and information has been less publicized over the years?

HIV is no longer seen as a pressing threat, a social justice issue, or even a health disparity by many medical or social institutions. One major reason is that the church still struggles with how to talk about sexuality and spirituality. They fail to see that for some sex is a spiritual act. Then COVID-19 arrived and pulled focus and funding. But now, we're seeing the consequences of that shift. HIV rates are rising again.

Is the stigma of HIV/AIDS still prevalent? If so why?

Yes, the stigma remains, though I prefer not to use the term "AIDS" because it carries so much of that stigma. HIV still evokes fear and shame. For example, in Charleston, I've seen people avoid saying the word "cancer" when planning a funeral, treating it like a shameful secret. The same happens with HIV, which gets associated with queerness, promiscuity or drug use. That stigma is rooted in misinformation, fear, and most of all, religion. Houses of Faith often fuel stigma by condemning rather than understanding. Yes it is still happening.

What are some of the fears people have about being tested?

Many people of color still do not trust the medical system, understandably so, given the legacy of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and other medical abuses. There is also a fear from myths, such as HIV being created in a lab or coming from Africa, that still linger. And then there's the personal fear: some people just do not want to know about HIV or their status. They are not emotionally ready to deal with the possibility of living with a chronic illness. That fear is heavy, and stigma reinforces it.

What are the barriers you face in the South when promoting HIV testing and education?

Religion is the biggest barrier. Many churches believe that if they talk about HIV, they are also endorsing sex or homosexuality. In 2025, many still see HIV as a "gay" disease and tie it in to sin. Language is another barrier. How we talk about HIV matters. It must be inclusive and affirming. But ultimately, the biggest barrier is fear. Fear of living with HIV. Fear of dating with it. Fear of how it affects everyday life. Fear of getting tested and knowing the results.



Why don't Houses of Faith address this health issue more?

Because Houses of Faith still are not comfortable with talking honestly and openly about sex and sexuality. Until faith leaders can speak honestly about it, without projecting shame or judgement, we will continue to ignore HIV. That applies to all faith communities. Faith leaders need to set aside their own biases and fears, a begin to address the realities of HIV.

Why is the stigma of HIV so difficult to overcome?

This question is personal to me. I've lived with HIV for nearly 40 years, and while I've overcome the stigma in my own life, I still feel it when dating. The stigma is hard to bring because too often faith and community leaders have used HIV to label people as sinful or unrighteous. People hide their status out of shame. Misinformation and not being willing to learn the true facts about HIV make it difficult to overcome the stigma. information, stigma will continue to thrive.

Why should those living with HIV be at the table when discussions about prevention, and testing take place?

Because we are the reason the table exists. Who better to speak about stigma, testing and daily life, with HIV, than those living with it? Our voices matter. We can inform grant recipients, nonprofits, and advocates about what we truly need. Unfortunately, many long-term survivors have become silent and continue to take their medication. We need to encourage them to find their voice again and speak out, because our presence at the table remains essential.



NUTRITION CORNER



A SUGGESTION FOR FOOD INSECURITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Interview with Mekkah Irby: Graduate of Hudson County Community College, Culinary Arts

Food plays a large part in ongoing and preventive healthcare. It is also a part of most celebrations in our society. Unfortunately, food insecurity is widespread in our communities today. Food Insecurity is the condition of not having access to sufficient food, or food of adequate quality, to meet one's basic needs. Food insecurity can result in negative health outcomes. Mekkah Irby has found a way to help lower food insecurity in her community.

What gave you the idea of preparing meals for those in need in your community?

I got the original idea years ago while attending UFC Liberation In Truth Church in Newark, New Jersey. Once a month we would serve hot meals to the homeless, those living in shelters, and transitional housing. I also noticed families that would come in for a meal. Though I was much younger then, I still remember the impact it had on me.

What made you study culinary arts?

I have always had a love of cooking and preparing food. I really had an interest in finding unique ways to prepare food so that people would enjoy it.

How do you support your community service?

I work in a restaurant, and because I do not like to see good food thrown away. I would retrieve the food before they throw it away and pack it to serve the homeless. Living in Jersey City I see a lot of people who need a good meal. I get donations of fresh food. Local stores have heard about what I do and donate also. Because of my passion for what I am doing, I also come out of my own pocket to buy ingredients.

What are some of the foods you include in your meals?

Rice, macaroni and cheese, chicken, vegetables. I try to make it as nutritious as possible. Often it is the only meal they may get that day.

When do you serve your meals?

Since I was going to school, I could only do it on the weekend. But now I have graduated, I will have more time. It depends on the donations and availability of food to prepare.

What is your vision for the future?

I plan to enroll in New Jersey City University to study business management, and one day open up my own restaurant with part of the service being for those in need of a meal who cannot afford it.

FUN PROTEIN SOURCES FOR THE SUMMER

CANNED SALMON WRAP: 20 GRAMS of protein, calcium, Vit. D. Combine spinach, mixed greens, cucumber, tomato slices. Roll mixture tightly with a high protein wrap. Season with dressing to taste.

BLACK BEAN BURRITO BOWL: 15 grams protein, Mix Leafy greens, corn, onions, bell peppers and black beans(canned or precooked) in a bowl. Add shredded cheese for an extra 7 grams of protein.

TUNA PASTA SALAD: 22 grams protein. Mix 8oz can of tuna with your choice of diced vegetables. Toss with Olive oil and lemon juice mixture. Herbal seasoning to taste.

CHOLESTOROL HEALTHY SHOPPING LIST

Foods high in fiber, raw vegetables, fish- salmon, blue fish, tuna, Chicken breasts (no skin). Fruit: bananas, oranges, apples, mangoes and berries. Vegetables, dark leafy green, sweet potatoes, spinach, broccoli. Beans: Navy, white and lima beans. Nuts, Green tea and water.

“FOOD AND MEDICINE ARE GROWN FROM THE SAME ROOT.”



The Olkama (Circle of Elders) Corner

Health News for those 50 and Older

HEALTHY LIVING

Nutrition

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

What foods work best for your body? What are your body's energy needs? Why do you eat the foods you eat? Do you make adjustments in your diet as you grow older?

Healthy Eating Patterns

You may need to make some changes in your food and beverage choices to achieve a healthy eating pattern. A healthy eating pattern is a plan that lets you enjoy food that meets your body's needs and fits your budget.

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern in your life, which fits your activity level and calorie needs. Reduce the risk of chronic illness.
2. Focus on variety, and the amount of nutrients. Choose a variety of high nutrient foods in all the food groups in individual portion sizes.
3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.
4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices. Choose foods you like. It makes change easier. Remember it is a process.
5. Support healthy eating patterns in your family and friend's circle. Everyone has a role in helping support and create healthy eating patterns.
6. Healthy Style Eating Pattern. The main types of food in this eating pattern include a variety of vegetables (including dark green, red, and orange vegetables; beans and peas; and starchy vegetables like corn); fruits, whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy; seafood, poultry, meat and eggs; and nuts, seeds and soy products.
7. Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern. This eating pattern contains no meat, poultry, or seafood. Compared with the Healthy Style Eating Pattern in the U.S. It contains more soy products (such as tofu), eggs, beans and peas, nuts and seeds and whole grains. This eating pattern is higher in calcium and fiber and lower in vitamin D compared to the Healthy Style Eating Pattern in the U.S.

**UNITY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH MOVEMENT HEALTH &
WELLNESS INITIATIVE**

AND

**LIONEL LEE JR. CENTER FOR WELLNESS
COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR**

Date: June 7, 2025

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

**Location: Reedy Creek Park,
Shelter 1**

2900 Rocky River Rd, Charlotte, NC



Free Services:



Get Moving - Fitness Activities

BP & Glucose Screen

Breast Cancer Awareness

Nutrition/Healthy Eating

Managing Chronic Illnesses

Swag! Raffles! Prizes!

Children's Table & Activity

Healing Drum Circle



Contact us at: Info@llcwellness.org
or phone 704-719-0848





NOW YOU CAN ADVERTISE IN THE NEWSLETTER!

The Unity Fellowship Church Movement: UFCM HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER is published monthly and is widely distributed to all of the congregations of the UFCM, Inc. population, as well as health and wellness spaces and social media groups. This is a great opportunity to place your small business before a broader audience and to support our critical work to get our membership to consistently consider their well-being.

As we move towards our 5th Year of publication, we are opening up for ads, targeting health agencies, mental wellness counselors, and medical staff. Holistic Practitioners. Nonprofits. If you provide health services to the community and have reliable information to share about health and wellness, you can reach our audience now.

ALL ADS WILL BE PRODUCED IN FULL COLOR

FULL PAGE \$75

HALF PAGE \$45

BUSINESS CARD \$30

PATRON SUPPORTER* (name listed) \$10

**PLEASE SUBMIT A JPG OR PDF OF YOUR ADVERTISEMENT TO:
Namewellness2023@gmail.com**

**SUBMIT PAYMENT TO \$UFCMlife (CASHAPP)
or contact GJERRILEE@GMAIL.COM (other payment forms and question**

UNITY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH MOVEMENT HEALTH INITIATIVE PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE

FIND OUT MORE:

Namewellness2023@gmail.com or 862-405-7612

“Wellness is an Energy: Healing is a Process”



Unity Fellowship Health Initiative Newsletter is looking for informative health articles and anyone interested in working on the newsletter monthly. We need writers and researchers.

Please contact Rev. Jerri Mitchell-Lee or Rev. Cheryl Bragg.

- Rev. Jerri Mitchell-Lee- gjerrilee@gmail.com or (201) 289-6941
- Rev. Cheryl Bragg- whosoevermusic59@gmail.com or (732) 259-3782

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