

HISTORY

Body & Soul is based on ten years of successful programs in African American churches across the country. Two programs were combined to create *Body & Soul*: *Black Churches United for Better Health* and *Eat for Life*. These programs were conducted in churches of various sizes and each of these faith-based programs were highly successful in helping church members eat more fruits and vegetables.

Black Churches United for Better Health was a collaborative effort among 50 African American churches, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services—division of Community Health, the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center, the North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Service, the University of North Carolina and local health departments and Cooperative Extension Agents. It began as a four year project funded by a grant from the National Cancer Institute of the University of North Carolina Department of Nutrition.



Eat for Life began as a collaboration among African American churches in Atlanta, Georgia, and Emory University. It was funded by a grant from the National Cancer Institute.

Body & Soul developed as a pilot program in collaboration with the American Cancer Society, the University of North Carolina, the University of Michigan and the National Cancer Institute. The program combined the most successful components of *Black Churches United for Better Health* and *Eat for Life*. African American Churches in California, Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia successfully started and ran the program.

PILLAR DESCRIPTION

Pillar I: A Pastor Who is Committed and Involved

As the church's spiritual and organizational leader, the pastor's support of the program is essential. The more actively involved the pastor, the more successful the church will be in implementing the program.

Pillar II: Church Activities that Promote Healthy Eating

Church gatherings and workshops teach both information and skills that encourage a healthy diet. The simple message is to add a fruit or vegetable to each meal served. Adding a healthy choice and sharing vital health information becomes the primary responsibility of the Health Ministry committee or team.



Pillar III: A Church Environment that Promotes Healthy Eating

It is important to surround the congregation with healthy choices at meals and other church functions. This shows the church members just how easy it is to make eating more fruits and vegetables part of their daily lives.



Pillar IV: Peer Counseling that Motivates Church Members to Eat a Healthy Diet

One-on-one support helps church members take more control over their health. Church members are trained to conduct non-judgmental counseling sessions with their peers. They help members connect their spirituality and health together to help them make lifestyle changes.



Body & Soul: A Celebration of Life & Healthy Eating



PARTNERS

American Cancer Society

In 2004, the American Cancer Society embraced *Body & Soul* as one of its Cancer Control programs. In 2005, they touched over 100 churches with this very special program. In 2006, the executive leadership of the Great Lakes Division put its full support behind *Body & Soul* as a means to address health disparities especially among the African American community. For the past ten years, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the American Cancer Society have researched the *Body & Soul* program. Currently, programs are being delivered in Detroit, Flint, Ann Arbor and Indianapolis. In 2006, *Body & Soul* was rolled out nationwide through a partnership by the American Cancer Society & NCI. Metro Detroit currently serves 36 churches with *Body & Soul*, which means these churches have decided to make health a priority and affecting thousands of lives.

University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center

- Completed peer counseling training with five churches in Ann Arbor and eleven in Detroit
- Providing ongoing technical assistance for church educational activities (identifying resources, speakers, linking churches together to share best practices, etc.)
- Piloting physical activity enhancement with churches in Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti in partnership with the UMHS Program for Multicultural Health
- Expanding the *Body & Soul* model to address physical activity and cancer screening (UM)
- *Body & Soul* Newsletter (ACS)
- Quarterly regional meetings with *Body & Soul* churches (ACS, UofM, PNBC, HFH, St. John Riverview and Flint Area Churches)

Progressive National Baptist Churches

A national relationship with the Progressive National Baptist Churches (PNBC), NCI and the American Cancer Society, has allowed the *Body & Soul* program to be implemented in all PNBC churches. Currently, six churches are implementing *Body & Soul* and the program has the support of the President of Health Ministries who resides in the Metro Detroit Area. *Body & Soul* has been adapted by the PNBC as part of its national initiative.

Michigan Steps-Up

Body & Soul is part of Michigan Steps-Up, a faith-based effort to involve churches with helping their congregations to eat healthier and to increase their physical exercise. Currently, seven churches in Detroit and one in Saginaw participate in the program.

Your Journey to Wellness – Henry Ford Health Systems

The American Cancer Society joined Henry Ford Hospital's committee initiating the *Your Journey to Wellness* program. *Your Journey to Wellness* focuses on heart disease, diabetes, nutrition, physical exercise and cancer. Five churches were recruited to be a part of the first rotation of the *Your Journey to Wellness*. *Body & Soul* was offered as one of the final subjects for the churches to adopt. Currently, three of the five churches are now implementing *Body & Soul*.

DIAGRAM



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Regardless of the location or size, each of these faith-based programs was highly successful in helping church members eat more fruits and vegetables.

- *Body & Soul* positioned ministers not only as the spiritual leader but as a person that cares about his or her congregation's health
- When congregations addressed healthier eating, they addressed physical activity as well
- Congregations actually created a healthier environment in the church when food was being served
- *Body & Soul* empowered churches to address their own health issues as they perceived them to be—allowing churches to be unique in how they implemented *Body & Soul*
- *Body & Soul* presented a sustainable model that allowed churches to establish their own health ministries that became an internal, ongoing church activity
- Churches were able to identify internal and external resources that allowed them to bring quality programs and health education to their congregations
- Many very special collaborative relationships have been established and will continue to grow as a result of *Body & Soul's* implementation

LESSONS LEARNED

This is the third year implementing *Body & Soul*. Several lessons have been learned including:

- Trust the model
- Trainings are important
- Development of a solid program takes time
- There is no one model for partnership involvement
- Trust the volunteers' capability to construct and develop their own unique direction for their health ministries
- We are guides not implementers
- We found regional meetings of the churches implementing *Body & Soul* solidify their commitment and expands their understanding of the needs of the community allowing them to address those needs more effectively



FUTURE ACTIVITY

The American Cancer Society plans to expand *Body & Soul* to Grand Rapids and Fort Wayne in 2006 – 2007. The American Cancer Society will continue to recruit and facilitate orientation trainings for additional churches in Flint, Ann Arbor and Detroit. In addition, the Great Lakes Division will share best practices with other American Cancer Society Divisions. The *Body & Soul* program will save lives not only by empowering individuals but whole congregations to put their health and the word of God side by side.

