



PROGRAM FOR THE ELIMINATION OF CANCER DISPARITIES

STL Connection

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Salute to Excellence in Health Care Luncheon honors Vetta Sanders-Thompson, PhD

Vetta Sanders-Thompson, Ph.D., speaks like a minister, said her colleagues at Washington University's George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

Thompson is an associate professor at the school and faculty scholar at the Institute for Public Health. When she tells a story, her eyes widen and her cascading braids punctuate important points as she nods in emphasis. Thompson has a 21-page resume that highlights dozens of her presentations, 70 published works and several community projects. Yet hearing her speak it's clear her goal is not to lengthen her resume. She is committed to ending health disparities among African Americans, particularly in cancer detection.

On April 29, Thompson received the 2011 Excellence in Public Health Award at the St. Louis American Foundation's 11th Annual Salute to Excellence in Health Care Awards Luncheon at the Ritz-Carlton. A reception

was held from 11 a.m. to noon, and the awards program followed from noon to 1:30 p.m.



Vetta Sanders-Thompson, Ph.D.

Raised in Birmingham, Alabama, Thompson was one of the first African Americans to attend a previously all-white elementary school. She entered second grade with only two other black girls in the school.

She remembers stepping into the new school and immediately noting the differences from her old school. It had a library with several librarians (not the book mobile she knew), an auditorium, a home-economics room and a physical education teacher who taught nothing else. But most of all, she noted that the books were not torn or already written in.

She had been working with the white schools' hand-me-down books.

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Vetta Sanders-Thompson, PhD *(continued from page 1)*

“We were the first African Americans at this school, and we had to figure it out – and we did,” she said. “Even today, it informs my sense of where the African-American community is and where it has to go. But I also understand how far we’ve come.”

Even though she has lived in St. Louis for 25 years, Thompson still calls Birmingham home. Her experience there shaped her identity and fuels her work today.

“That’s why I like what I do with my public health colleagues because it takes into account that where you live plays a role in your health,” she said.

Whether it is through policy or developing the appropriate intervention communication, Thompson said she aims to influence people’s access to information, foods and programs that are going to make for a healthy, high-quality life.

Body, soul and cancers

Victoria Anwuri, project manager at the Washington University School of Medicine Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center, first met Thompson as a master’s student 10 years ago. Now they work together in the Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD), where Thompson heads community outreach.

“She’s very passionate about what she does, and it comes through in her personality,” Anwuri said. “She’s very committed in everything she does.”

Through the program, Thompson serves as a guest health expert on radio shows, encouraging people to screen for cancers. PECaD also works with libraries and the faith community to ensure the most recent evidence-based cancer information is getting to the public.

“I like the fact that PECaD is ongoing,” she said, “and hopefully when we finish, these churches should be able to sustain that effort long after the project to end disparities is over.”

The idea is to build sustainable programs, Thompson said, so people will always be able to get up-to-date information and know what to do to protect themselves against cancer.

“Vetta has always been supportive of what we’ve been doing in terms of health ministries in the St. Louis area,” said Dr. Del Doss-Hemsley, of Faith Communities Joined for Health. “She’s been a real asset to us.”

Faith Communities Joined for Health grew out of the Brown School’s evidence-based project Body and Soul.

The consortium is now developing health ministries in 15 churches with the focus of encouraging the consumption of fruits and vegetables. Working with Thompson and PECaD, the group also distributes cancer-prevention materials.

“I think things have happened because of Vetta and I think they will continue to happen because of Vetta,” Doss-Hemsley said. “It would be a loss if she left the St. Louis area.”

Thompson said her current work with the National Children’s Study – one of the largest longitudinal studies of children’s health ever undertaken – will be one of the most noteworthy efforts of her career. She will follow children from birth to age 21 to understand how the combination of their environment and their biology contributes to their health.

Having a doctorate in psychology and being trained as a clinical psychologist, Thompson is passionate about integrating mental health into health.

“I think people separate them, as if you can separate mind and body, and you cannot,” she said. “If we want a healthy population, we have to pay attention to mental health as well. I see them as one and the same.”

Taken from the St. Louis American Newspaper article posted on Thursday, March 24, 2011

“She’s very passionate about what she does, and it comes through in her personality. She’s very committed in everything she does.”
- Victoria Anwuri, MPH

Prostate Cancer Community Partnership Member Makes an Impact at Conference

Dewey Helms, a member of the Prostate Cancer Community Partnership (PCCP), recently attended the 2011 Innovative Minds in Prostate Cancer Today (IMPACT) Conference in Orlando, Florida. Helms was invited to the conference, because of his previous role as a consumer reviewer for the Department of Defense (DoD) Prostate Cancer Research Program, in which he reviewed applications for research funding along with leading scientists in the field. At the conference he learned about the achievements in prostate cancer research from DoD-funded scientists and clinicians.



Dewey Helms and PCCP Faculty Lead Bettina Drake, PhD, MPH attend IMPACT Conference.

Mr. Helms was one of over 130 consumers who attended the IMPACT Conference. More than 600 scientists and clinicians provided updates on their research accomplishments, describing new discoveries in drug development, vaccines, diagnostic screenings, addressing health disparity, and improving quality of life for prostate cancer survivors and their families.

The PCCP is a community-based program that works with Siteman's Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD) and is made up of cancer survivors, advocates, representatives from community health care organizations and community-based organizations, academic researchers, clinicians and staff. PCCP helps to facilitate concentrated dialogue and strategic planning to address prostate cancer disparities in the region.

A longtime member of the PCCP, Helms said, "I really got a lot out of the IMPACT conference, because as a prostate cancer survivor, I had an opportunity to see firsthand the ongoing research and scientific programs aimed at conquering this lethal disease that affects so many men and their families. Being afforded the opportunity to review research proposals and present my point of view, I saw the awareness, the progress made, and the new research proposed to deal with the disparity of prostate cancer affecting African Americans. The introduction of new research has provided me an insight on prostate cancer that someday there will be a means to identify and prevent suffering from this disease."

For more information about DoD Prostate Cancer Research Program go to: <http://cdmrp.army.mil/pcrp/default.shtml>. To watch a video about IMPACT go to: <https://cdmrpcures.org/ocs/index.php/impact/impact11/movie>.

PECaD Receives Funding from Susan G. Komen for the Cure for Breast Cancer

The Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD) at Siteman Cancer Center has received a Susan G. Komen for the Cure Vulnerable Communities Project grant. PECaD will use the grant to build upon previous relationships with community stakeholders, continuing to enhance the breast cancer care continuum in eight zip codes of North St. Louis County and City. Dr. Sarah J. Gehlert, E. Desmond Lee Professor of Racial and Ethnic Diversity at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, will lead this effort, working closely with community partners. Partners include the Betty Jean Kerr People's Health Centers, Christian Hospital, Saint Louis Effort for AIDS, Committed Caring Faith Communities, and the Missouri Tumor Registry. PECaD will work collaboratively with breast cancer survivors and partners to address the disproportionate breast cancer mortality rates observed among women in this local region. Komen funding will continue through 2013.



2011 Community Calendar

July 5, 12, 19, 26

August 2, 9, 19, 23, 30

September 6, 13, 20, 27

Event: Yoga Class

Sponsor: Siteman Cancer Center and the Cancer Support Community, Greater St. Louis

Location: Center for Advanced Medicine, 4921 Parkview Place, St. Louis, MO 63110. Room locations may vary. Call for room location.

Time: 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Contact: 314-362-7844

Details: For cancer patients, survivors and caregivers at any level of performance and physical condition. Through rhythmic breathing, gentle stretching and mental focus, participants can learn to ease physical and emotional tension. Led by certified yoga instructors. No reservation is necessary. Comfortable clothing and physician approval recommended.

July 6

August 3

September 7

Event: TOGETHER Gynecological Cancer Support Group

Sponsor: Siteman Cancer Center

Location: Cancer Information Center, Center for Advanced Medicine, 4921 Parkview Place, St. Louis, MO 63110

Time: 5 - 7 pm

Contact: 314-362-7844

Details: A wellness-focused support group for women and their significant others to share feelings and experiences. Current treatments and complementary therapies are discussed, and a physician is available to answer questions. Buffet meal provided. RSVP required.

July 7

August 4

September 1

Event: CONQUER Support Group

Sponsor: Siteman Cancer Center

Location: Siteman at Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital (150 Entrance Way, St. Peters, MO 63376)

Time: 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Contact: For information, call 636-916-9920.

Details: A support group for adults with any type of cancer.

July 6, 11, 25, 28

August 3, 4, 9, 18, 22, 24, 30

September 7, 23

Event: Mammography Van at Schnucks and YMCA Locations

Sponsor: Siteman Breast Health Center and the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology

Location: St. Louis metro area. Call for locations or go to www.siteman.wustl.edu.

Time: 8 am - 4 pm

Contact: Call 1-800-600-3606 to schedule an appointment.

Details: Appointments required. Slots fill up fast. If you do not have insurance, you may qualify for screening at no charge.

July 11, 25

August 8, 22

September 12, 26

Event: Look Good...Feel Better

Sponsor: American Cancer Society

Location: Two locations: Downtown

(Cancer Information Center, Center for Advanced Medicine, 4921 Parkview Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110) and West County (10 Barnes West Drive, Creve Coeur, MO 63141)

Time: 10 am - 12 pm

Contact: 314-362-7844

Details: Registration required. This free program, offered by licensed cosmetologists, offers beauty techniques to help women cope with side effects associated with cancer treatment. Call to register.

July 29

Fundraising Event: Awareness Night with the St. Louis Cardinals

Sponsor: Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

Location: Busch Stadium, 700 Clark Street, St. Louis, MO 63102

Time: 7:15 pm

Contact: For more details contact Justen Meyer at jmeyer@pancanvolunteer.org

Details: Come join the St. Louis Affiliate watch the St. Louis Cardinals take on the Chicago Cubs. There are 600 tickets for sale, so help us turn Busch Stadium purple!

Just for You

A Patient's Link to Cancer Health Information and Community Events



*Please feel free to make copies of this insert for distribution.

What Do You Know about Breast Cancer?

A breast is made up of three main parts: glands, ducts, and connective tissue. When breast cells become abnormal, the extra cells may form a mass called a tumor. Tumors are either benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer). There are many types of breast cancer. The type of breast cancer depends on which cells in the breast turn into cancer. Breast cancer can begin in different parts of the breast, like the ducts or the lobes.

You can lower your risk of breast cancer by getting screened regularly, controlling your weight, knowing your family history of breast cancer, and exercising.

To find out more about cancer and ways to reduce your risk, visit www.yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu or www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/.

Breast Cancer Word Search

Find the words listed in the word search. Words are hidden across, down and diagonal.

G C A N C E R H A N D D P H P I T S
D F D S A H O S P I T A L I H N C Y
R Y L O P N A S T H M A W N L Y D D
A N W N E M O K O P W F I O S E N P
D E R N O N C O L O G I S T M A O T
I E E I P S N E G J G Y L R L E Y O
A R A E T U M O R V R P C G A E N M
T C N O N C A N C E R O U S T N Y S
I S P R E V E N T I O N L D Y T C T
O C M I E H U M Q D I A G N O S I S
N K I G O O J A U I M S L G C O O A
D R I S K F A C T O R S S I S N I E
B O E P A O Y E T A B N O N O I T R
A M M B I R E L T I T S O E D F E B
D U A E L O Y T I S E B O B O O I B
L I N A M O N I C R A C S B E M D A
A M A R G O M M A M N D I S E A S E
U L T R A S O N O G R A P H L E C O

LUMP
CANCER
DISEASE
BREAST
RADIATION
ULTRASONOGRAPH
SCREEN
MAMMOGRAM
BENIGN
PREVENTION
HOSPITAL
WOMEN
KOMEN
NONCANCEROUS
CYST
TUMOR
RISK FACTORS
DIAGNOSIS
ONCOLOGIST
CARCINOMA
OBESITY
GLAND