

Section 1:

☞ What is the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program? ☞

FAN, or “Faith, Activity, and Nutrition,” is part of the AME Church (AMEC) Health Ministry. The goals of FAN are to help AMEC members become stronger in health by:

- Becoming **physically active** at a moderate intensity (e.g., brisk walking) for 30 minutes per day, at least five days per week
- Eating 2 cups of **fruit** and 2 ½ cups of **vegetables** each day
- Eating **whole grain** foods (e.g., whole wheat bread instead of white bread, brown rice and pasta instead of white rice and pasta)
- Eating **less fat**, especially saturated fat
- Eating **less sodium** (salt)



FAN is a **partnership** between the AME church, the University of South Carolina (USC), the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), Clemson University (CU), and Allen University. It was funded by the National Institutes of Health. The program began in the Palmetto Conference and the Columbia District, but it is now being shared with AME churches all over the state.

FAN is committed to working with AME churches to help address health disparities in South Carolina:

- The number one cause of death in SC is heart disease (CDC, 2005)
- SC has the highest stroke death rate in the entire nation (CDC, 2005)
- SC has the 9th highest rate of diabetes deaths in the nation. African Americans in SC are twice as likely to have diabetes as Whites, and are three times as likely to die from diabetes (CDC, 2005).
- Compared to Whites, African Americans develop high blood pressure earlier in life and average blood pressures are much higher (AHA, 2007)
- Nearly 7 out of every 1,000 African Americans (age 45-84) have had a stroke, compared to 4 out of 1,000 Whites (AHA, 2007)
- African Americans in SC (36.9%) are more likely to be obese than whites in South Carolina (21.5%) (CDC, 2005).

Physical activity and healthy eating habits could help to address these disparities. However, there are disparities in these behaviors as well:

- A higher number of African Americans in SC (63.8%) do not get the recommended amount of physical activity compared to Whites in SC (51.2%) (CDC, 2007; BRFSS, 2005).

- Only 20.8% of African Americans in SC eat the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables per day (CDC, 2007; BRFSS, 2005).
- Only 42.5% of African Americans in SC eat fruit and vegetables 1 or 2 times a day – less than the recommended 5 to 9 a day (CDC, 2007; BRFSS, 2005).

As part of the FAN trainings, a committee from your church will learn how to reach the FAN goals by:

- providing your church with **opportunities** to be more physically active and to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and less fat and salt.
- providing your church with **information and materials** about physical activity and healthy eating
- getting support from **Pastors** and church leaders who will ideally set **guidelines and practices** related to physical activity and healthy eating



FAN Philosophy

Health is a holistic term that includes spiritual, emotional, mental, social, and physical well-being. Our partnership goal is to promote church health. We find confirmation in the Bible and know that there is great value in good health.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body," *1 Corinthians 6:19-20* (New International Version, NIV). With strong physical health, church members can become stronger in spirit and more active in church life.

As in *Proverbs*, FAN aims to spread good news of healthy habits (healthy eating and physical activity) to help better your church in every aspect of health: "A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones," *Proverbs 14:26* (NIV).

We know that every church is different. What works in one church may not work in another. Because of this, FAN is not a step by step, black and white list of directions. What FAN looks like in your church depends on your church members and their interests, the resources in your church, and the members of your church FAN committee. The FAN training will give you suggestions and ideas, but you will be asked to choose activities that you think will work best in your church.

How Will My Church Benefit from FAN?

FAN is part of the church's health ministry. FAN will provide your committee the **training and web support** needed to help members of your church be more physically active and eat healthier. These changes will better your church member's health and well-being. A person who is physically stronger can be more active in church life.



What are FAN Expectations?

We ask your church to make the following commitments:



1. Have a committee from your church **attend a full-day FAN training** (we strongly recommend that your Pastor, Health Director or designee, and other key members of your committee attend the training). Later in the year, we plan to also offer this training online and encourage key members of your church who were not able to attend today to participate in the online training.
2. Have your church cook or lead kitchen staff complete training. **Similar to the committee training**, we offer the cook training online. We encourage key members of your church's kitchen staff to participate in the online training.
3. After the training, your committee will complete a **FAN Action Plan and Budget Proposal**. Both should be reviewed and approved by your Pastor and church board.
4. **Hold a kick-off event** at your church to let your church know about the FAN program.
5. Hold **monthly committee meetings** to plan FAN and health-related activities.
6. Use the health-e-ame website to download resources for your church's use (www.health-e-ame.com).

FAN Champion/Coordinator: You?

To succeed, FAN needs a Champion (at least one!) in every church. Maybe the Champion is your church's Health Director. Maybe that Champion is you! Or maybe the Champion is a member of your church who is a strong believer in the importance of physical activity and a healthy diet. The Champion can be anyone. He or she must be committed to the goals of the program and be an enthusiastic, creative, and reliable person.



We recommend that FAN Champions:

- Attend FAN planning committee meetings
- Speak to groups in your church about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating
- Help groups in your church plan for how to include physical activity and healthy eating in their regular meetings
- Take a key role in making sure the FAN program is put into place in your church
- Be a true advocate and champion for physical activity and healthy eating!

FAN Committee: Who?

FAN is designed to be a committee-based program. One person cannot put the program into place alone. Be creative about who is on your committee! Here are some suggestions for who you might include as members:

- **Pastor (strongly recommended)**
- **Health Director (strongly recommended, if your church has a Health Director)**
- **FAN Champion and Coordinator (strongly recommended, this could be your Health Director or someone else)**
- **Cook or Lead Kitchen Staff (strongly recommended)**
- YPD Director
- Representative from Sons of Allen
- Representative from the Women's Missionary Society
- Registered Dietician at your church
- Nurse at your church
- Fitness instructor at your church
- Anyone at your church who can be creative and motivate members to be more active and eat healthier!

These are just examples of people you might consider, but it is not necessary to include all of them. Think quality over quantity. You want people you can count on who will be committed to FAN and its goals. Committee members should be people who can motivate your church and be good role models.



There is not a mandated meeting schedule for your committee. However, our experience with other churches is that those most successful in keeping programs going have their health committee meet monthly. Frequent meetings allow an opportunity for regular check ups on how activities are going, evaluating what is working and what isn't, and planning for new activities or new spins on existing activities.

Keys to Success

We believe that there are a number of things you can do to make sure your program is a success. These “keys to success” include:

- Have a **Champion** for the program – someone who is excited about physical activity and healthy eating and is committed to the program’s success
- Have a committee that **completes the FAN trainings (you are doing that now)**
- Have your **committee meet at least once per month** to plan and coordinate activities
- Find out what will work in your church** by talking with members about their interests and needs (consider surveying members of your church to get this information from everyone)
- Involve other church members** to help with activities
- Build physical activity and healthy eating into **ongoing church events**
- Keep your **Pastor** informed and involved in the program. Let him or her know what he or she can do to support the program.

What Happens After My Committee is Trained?

We recommend you take the following steps after your committee completes training:

- Set up a committee meeting to **complete your FAN Action and Budget Plans** and **plan your kick-off event**
- Hold a kick-off event** to let everyone at your church know about the FAN program (this is strongly recommended to get the word out to all members)
- Decide whether you need to invite anyone else from your church to be on your committee
- Set a **monthly schedule for planning meetings**. Set goals for offering both physical activity and healthy eating opportunities each month



In the next sections, you will be asked to evaluate what you are currently doing to help members become more physically active and eat healthier. You will also be asked to list some ideas for activities you might want to add. In the final section, you will be asked to set goals and develop a plan for reaching them.

May you “prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers”
III John 1:2 (New King James Version)

