

# Health-e-AME Physical-e-Fit News



Health-e-AME  
Physical-e-Fit

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## Spring Health Director Trainings Expected to Draw a Crowd

The Health-e-AME Physical-e-Fit program staff is excited to be gearing up for a round of trainings to take place this spring. After holding several large trainings in the Palmetto, South Carolina, and Northeast conferences in summer and fall of 2003, we are getting prepared to head to the Central, Columbia, and Piedmont conferences and spread the Physical-e-Fit program across the state!

The trainings that were held in 2003 resulted in 112 churches and 233 individuals becoming trained to deliver the program, and we are eagerly anticipating an even larger turn-out for the trainings to be held this spring and summer.

The trainings will be held in April and May. The Central conference training will be April 3 at Williams Chapel AME in Orangeburg. Bethel AME in Columbia will host a training on May 15 for the Columbia conference, and Long Caine AME will host the Piedmont conference training on May 22. The trainings will all begin at 8:30am and last until 12:30pm, with a break for light and healthy snacks, and of course some physical activity!

We are looking forward to meeting many new

individuals. We encourage and welcome churches who have already been trained to attend to refresh their training, make new contacts, and join in the fun! If you are interested in attending a training, please contact Lottie McClorin at 803-777-2864 or sphame@gwm.sc.edu. Information is also available online at [www.health-e-ame.com](http://www.health-e-ame.com).



Health Directors being trained in chair aerobics at Brown Chapel AME at a summer 2003 training

## Women's Missionary Society Retreat and the Physical-e-Fit Program

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Missionary Society (WMS) Retreat was held in North Charleston January 9-11, 2004. The Physical-e-Fit staff was excited to have the opportunity to work with the Retreat Committee to aid in spiritually and physically energizing women from all over the state of South Carolina.

As the women were recharged and energized from the spiritual enriching occasion, they were also able to enjoy some physical activity with the Physical-e-Fit program. Other retreat activities included registering churches for the program and interacting with the staff to learn more details about the program.

These "Women: Called to God's Purpose" were able to experience His presence in the forms of praise, worship, classes, workshops and fellowship, sending all attendees back to their homes, churches, and communities inspired with a renewed level of empowerment, commitment and service.

### Special points of interest:

- **Happy Easter!**
- **April is cancer control month.** Learn more about a healthy lifestyle and preventing cancer at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- **May is national high blood pressure month and national stroke awareness month.** Find out about African Americans and these diseases at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)
- **National Men's Health Week is June 14-20.** Help to increase awareness about preventable health problems for your AME brothers

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## Recognizing National Church High Blood Pressure Sunday: Some Ideas for Health Directors

National Church High Blood Pressure Sunday is Sunday, May 2nd. Since high blood pressure is common in AME members, this occasion offers an opportunity to educate your congregation about high blood pressure, the health risks associated with it, and treatment options.

When planning your events for this special Sunday you first need to consider available resources within your church. You may have equipment (a blood pressure cuff and stethoscope) to screen interested members, or you may be able to borrow or rent one from local healthcare facilities or medical supply companies. A trained technician is also essential for ensuring a successful event. Have some educational materi-

als on hand, they are available from several resources. Try your local American Heart Association office, or look online at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org). Resources are also available at [www.health-e-ame.com](http://www.health-e-ame.com). Include information about how physical activity can be used to help prevent and treat high blood pressure. You might even consider some physical activities for people to enjoy.

When setting up your event, recruit volunteers to help out. Make sure you have a space that will be large enough to accommodate the number of people that will attend, and organize your tables and chairs to ensure an efficient flow of movement.

Consider partnering with other local churches to organize an event. Working with other churches allows you to pool resources, be creative and share responsibility.

To ensure that your event is successful and educational, get the word out about it: advertise your program on bulletin boards, in fliers, or the Sunday bulletin. Consider having your pastor make announcements encouraging participation, and talk to other groups within the church (Sons of Allen, WMS, etc.)

Your event can be as simple or as complex as your time and resources allow. Your fellow AME members will appreciate the effort you put forth towards improving the health of your congregation.

## Spotlight: New Hope AME Church

The members of New Hope AME Church in Loris, South Carolina began walking together well before Reverend Geraldine Dixon organized and initiated the Physical-e-Fit walking program through Health-e-AME. After receiving the Physical-e-Fit training in September, Reverend Dixon was able to organize the walking club and get more of the congregation involved. Announcements were made before the sermons and demonstrations of both praise and chair aerobics were presented. Now a regular group of women, including the pastor's spouse, walk together every Saturday and enjoy not only the benefits of being active, but

the company of their friends and fellow worshippers.

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On working with other churches:  
*"...two or three heads are better than one."*

The Saturday morning walks at New Hope AME Church have become a community collaboration where members of three different congregations meet and walk on a two-mile track. In working together with other churches, Reverend Dixon has been able to motivate her own church, resulting in a greater interest in physical activity. As the say-

ing goes, "two or three heads are better than one."

New Hope AME continues to educate its members about health issues and has the Health-e-AME notebook available to all members in the educational corner. In addition to their walking club, the congregation also engages in chair exercises. Reverend Dixon has even been able to incorporate the chair exercises into her daily life by introducing them to her work. Congratulations to Reverend Geraldine Dixon and New Hope AME Church on their successful community walking club and physical activity programs!

## Spotlight: Charity AME Church

Charity AMEC, located in beautiful Huger, has taken their health issues with great seriousness and great pride. Their Health Commission, led by Sisters Rosetta Swinton, Betty Broughton, and Bessie Horlback, has truly given their members the tools and tips that we need to be healthy and to become health conscious. The Health Commission gives their tips at least twice a month, during the morning worship service, which includes exercise. They emphasize that the body is "the temple" and we must take care of it.

The health ministry continues on Wednesday night as the "Exercise Classes" take place. The members and friends of Charity AMEC are working out to Christian music, led by Brother David Swinton, who keeps the energy and music flowing. The routines range from chair exercises to standing and stretching activities. No one is pushed beyond their capabilities, but everyone is encouraged to participate.

Above all that is done at Charity AMEC, is the rich and meaningful support and cooperation of the pastor, Rev.

Dr. Arthur Lee Holmes, who is an inspiration to all members. Dr Holmes was presented with a pedometer and he gives the congregation reports on Sunday morning of how many steps he has taken for that week. Not only does he preach about a healthy lifestyle, he practices it too, obvious in the amount of weight he has lost through a healthy lifestyle.

Congratulations to Charity AMEC for strong leadership and placing a high value on healthy lifestyles.

## High Blood Pressure, Physical Activity and AME Members

High blood pressure affects approximately 30% African Americans in South Carolina, and is a risk factor for developing other diseases that are common in the African American community, such as heart disease and stroke. If left untreated, high blood pressure can cause irreversible damage to important organs, like the heart, brain or kidneys.

Treating high blood pressure often involves a personalized plan, and depends greatly on the individual and their healthcare provider. Current research recommends a comprehensive treatment plan including changes to eating habits, increasing physical activity and taking medication.

Including physical activity as a part of a treatment plan can often lead to a

reduction in the amount of medication an individual with high blood pressure may have to take. Any AME member with high blood pressure who would like to begin a program of physical activity should keep in contact with a healthcare provider.

To help control blood pressure, it is recommended that you participate in moderate intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking, on 5 or more days a week for at least 30 minutes. Participating in physical activity on a regular basis can help to regulate blood pressure more effectively. Some important safety points to consider are: drink enough fluids, avoid activity right after taking blood pressure medication, and monitor your blood pressure before, during, and after

activity when starting a physical activity program.

AME members who have high blood pressure and participate in physical activity should be aware of warning symptoms: headaches, nausea, dizziness, or lightheadedness. If you have any of these signs and symptoms, stop your activity, and see a healthcare provider if they continue. Keeping in close contact with your healthcare provider is essential.

Including physical activity as a part of a treatment plan can lead to physical, mental and spiritual well-being.



## A Word From: Elders Middleton & Elder Baxter

The Lenten season begins with Ash Wednesday and continues for forty days, excluding Sundays, which are known as Celebration Days. The period of forty days draws its significance from Jesus' forty days of fasting and praying. Lent provides an opportunity for self examination, in light of Christ's life, and provides a deepening of spiritual disciplines, with an overall emphasis on who we are in Christ Jesus.

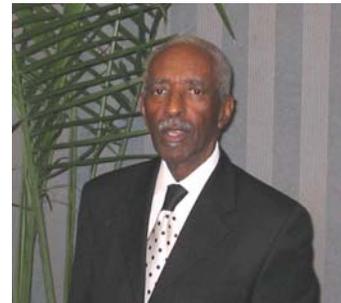
As we involve ourselves daily in the caring for our temples, let us indulge ourselves in two activities: Physical and Spiritual Fitness. It is my prayer that as we journey through Lent together, that the exercises that we examine will be incorporated into our daily lives in order to firm up our flabby souls and strengthen our bodies for the journey through faith.

We live in a time where exercise is the latest craze. Athletes reach stardom only if they discipline themselves and exercise on a regular basis. It is no difference with us. If we are to reach the

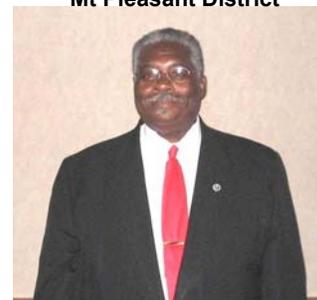
top level of spiritual maturity, spiritual growth and physically sound bodies, we too must be disciplined in our daily spiritual and physical fitness programs. If we can set up a daily program as athletes do, then our physical bodies and spiritual

“...firm up our flabby souls and strengthen our bodies for the journey through faith”

lives will be as firm as a cyclist's legs due to years of training and biking. Because of our commitment to healthy people, and healthy congregations, we along with the Seventh Episcopal District of the AME Church, support the Health-e-AME and Physical-e-Fit programs as we join together to make stronger the body of Christ. Have a blessed Lenten Season, and may the grace of our Father be continually at your side.



**Elder Alonzo Middleton**  
Mt Pleasant District



**Elder Willie Baxter**  
Orangeburg district

### Physical-e-Fit Staff New Arrivals

Project primary investigator Dr Marilyn Laken became a first-time grandmother on January 28, when her daughter delivered Daniel Benjamin. Project graduate assistant Melissa Bopp and her husband Chris welcomed a healthy baby girl, Maggie, into the world on January 19. Dr Laken and Melissa would like to thank everyone for their well-wishes and prayers.

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**Find updated resources,  
program details, and  
upcoming events at  
[www.health-e-ame.com](http://www.health-e-ame.com)**

*Take action and take care of your temple!  
Get 30+ minutes of physical activity a day.  
Eat 5+ fruits and vegetables a day.*



This project was funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The project is a partnership between the AME church, the Medical University of South Carolina and the University of South Carolina. © 2003 Health-e-AME Physical-e-Fit

## Meet the AME Director of Health: Rosetta Swinton

“Greetings in the matchless name of Jesus the Christ. I’m honored to serve in the capacity of Episcopal Director of Health Director. There are so many health needs across this great state that need our attention in a most urgent way. It is my prayer that people not perish for lack of knowledge as it relates to health. The health disparities are greater than we realize.”

Health ministry began for Ms Swinton in 1996 when she asked her Pastor, Reverend Robert J Stokes, to have a health fair. He encouraged and supported the formation of a health committee to plan the health fair, which eventually turned into the health ministry of Charity AME Church. The ministry continues to provide a monthly education program about hypertension, elevated blood sugar and cholesterol, and other chronic conditions, in addition to weekly physical activity classes, and an annual community health fair. The Charity AME Physical-e-Fit program is also featured in this month’s newsletter.

Ms Swinton was appointed the Health Coordinator of the Mt. Pleasant District, coordinating health activities and establishing a health ministry in the 33 churches of the Mighty Motivating Mt. Pleasant District. She partnered with many agencies, which became

the first District Health Cabinet with a focus to provide a Parish nurse in each congregation. After recognizing a nursing shortage, several strategies were developed to implement and expand the ministry to a statewide, national and international level to have worldwide implications. Under the direction of Bishop Henry Allen Belin Jr, Ms Swinton began spreading the ministry across the state, and to date, over 400 churches have a health ministry providing varying degrees of ministry, participating in a variety of programs: the Health-e-AME website, Physical-e-fit program, health fairs, education workshops, screenings, monthly health observances,



Rosetta Swinton  
AME Director of Health

Heart and Soul blood pressure monitoring program, diabetes wellness program and so much more.

“I live, breathe, and provide health ministry on a daily basis morning, noon and night. It is so vital that our pastors and ministerial leadership make health a priority and that our pastors stress the importance of being good stewards of the temple that God has given us. We must take care of the holy habitation, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit because God requires it of us. No one wants to live in a run down shack. Why should we expect the Holy Spirit to do so? Good health begins with prayer, praise and worship. We need it daily to remain healthy and whole. God wants us to have wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Thank you to Bishop Belin, Presiding Elders, Pastors, Health Directors, Health commission members of the 7th Episcopal District, and the many partners, providers and sponsors who make the Episcopal Health ministry possible statewide. May God bless each one of you and may the Favor of God, be yours always. Thank you.”