

Written by Brenda Colston
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Hundreds will join the American Heart/Stroke Association as they raise their voices in song to heighten awareness about stroke at a Power To End Stroke Gospel Concert and Health Fair featuring Lexi of The Word Network, national songstress Dottie Peoples and local Gospel talent on Thursday, October 15, 2009, at Mighty Fortress International Church in Brooklyn Park.

The event is free and open to all. The health fair booths will be open from 4:30-6:30 p.m. The concert will begin at 7 p.m. Additional performers include: Roderick Neal, Kimberly Brown, Mighty Fortress Church Choir, The Remnant, James Greer & Co., and Excelsior Choir.

Stroke (a sudden loss of function of a portion of the brain) is the No. 3 killer in the United States and the leading cause of serious, long-term disability. African-Americans are almost twice as likely to have a stroke as whites, but a recent national survey found that more than half of African-Americans are not aware of their risks. The American Heart/Stroke Association initiated the “Power To End Stroke” campaign and the Gospel Concert to educate the African American community about the risks and empower them to take action to reverse these risk factors.

“A stroke can affect anyone at any time and age, but African Americans are almost twice as likely to suffer a stroke,” said Dr. Bret Haake, director of Neurology for HealthPartners. “But so many of the risk factors such as quitting smoking and managing obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure are controllable. HealthPartners and Regions Hospital are excited to partner with the American Heart and Stroke Association to provide important life-saving information and tools to the community to help prevent stroke through this inspiring Gospel event.”

The PTES Campaign will tour several different cities, with Brooklyn Park being the first stop. The Kickoff event (VIP Reception) was sponsored by M&I bank and hosted at the Health Partners Specialty Center on Tuesday Night, October 6th. The evening included B96 Radio Personalities, as well as an important reiteration of the above stated statistics by Dr. Bret Haake. Ambassador Pamela Gould gave an overview of why PTES is so vital to the African-American community. She drove home the fact that a healthy lifestyle is the key to beating heart related illnesses.

The evening culminated with an electrifying performance by local talent Ms. Kimberly Brown and company. Ms. Brown has performed in and out of the Twin Cities for at least 30 years. Her passion for music is complemented by her passion as an ambassador for the Heart and Stroke Association. Some of her family and friends have been affected by these diseases, causing her to take a pro-active stance in the fight to end them. Ms. Brown encouraged attendees that a “Breakthrough is coming your way”.

The closing challenge is this: Find a buddy and encourage them to make a few healthy lifestyle changes, one at a time. Walk a few minutes every day. Smoke a little less each day until you can give it up completely. Make healthier meal choices. You can make a difference!

The Concert will be held at Mighty Fortress International Ministries, 6400 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Pak, MN 55445. For more information, contact Shannon Forney at 952-278-7934 or Shannon.forney@heart.org