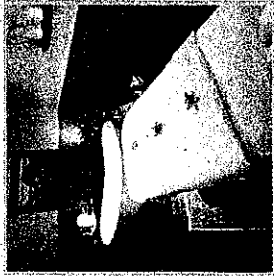


## Mothers' Day Guide to Health and Happiness

By AJ Williams

With Mother's Day just a few days away, if you're anything like me, you're still scrambling to find the perfect, not boring, typical, I want to wow my mom gift. Still searching? Search no more. Instead of giving Mom the traditional flowers this year, try to give her an experience with the following.



### Relax

Mothers are the most giving people, always leaving themselves on the back burner for the sake of the family. Show mom how much you appreciate her sacrifice with this one-of-a-kind day retreat at Woodhouse Spa's annual Mother's Day affair. The event will take place at 4 p.m. on Thursday, May 5, at the Woodhouse Day Spa Detroit, 1447 Woodward. All are welcome to attend.

Guests will also enjoy delectable treats, delightful teas, signature massages and complimentary "Try Me" spa services. Surprise and delight items will also be on special.

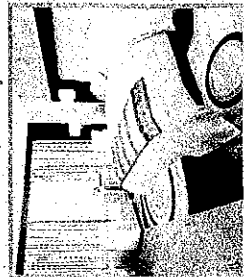
### Rest

Beauty rest is essential, yet something most modern moms lack in their everyday life. So, help Mom return to a place of rest in a house full of people with Voice 1 Sleep Headphones. The built-in over-the-ear headphones block out ambient noise to create a more peaceful environment to rest. Regardless of whether you live in a city with constant street noise, you're on a flight next to a crying baby, or you're sleeping next to a partner who snores, the 1 Voice Sleep Headphone Eye Mask will help you block out the outside world so you can wake up well-rested every day without the need of any sleeping aids or supplements.



### Revive

Nourishment is the key to one's soul, someone once said. Okay, maybe that someone was me, but it's a motto to live by. What better way to revive Mom's spirit than with a delectable feast at one of the hottest new restaurants in the D. From black-eyed pea hummus, crab cakes and crispy fried chicken, Mom's taste buds will not be disappointed.



### Renew



# Blacks and mental illness Why the stigma may be worse than the disease

By Danton Wilson  
Special to the Chronicle

Too often, experts say, the subject of mental illness is a radioactive conversation in the African American community — buried, dodged or denied to the point of absurdity.

May is Mental Health Month, and a number of Detroit organizations and individuals are working to excavate what some say is a covered-up reality in many black families and communities.

"As individuals and as a community, we are starting to realize we can't be resistant to seeking services, and we can't continue to see those who get services as somehow being weak," said Cynthia Jackson, program director at Detroit's Northeast Guidance Center, a comprehensive community mental health agency which has operated in Detroit for more than five decades.

The Detroit-area celebration of Mental Health Month includes an Anti-Stigma Forum set for Thursday, May 5, 5:30 p.m., in the Northeast Guidance Center's Wellness Academy, 2900 Conner, Building A, in Detroit. Guest speakers include WJBB-TV 2's Lee Thomas — a broadcaster, author and motivational speaker — plus recording artist Inuha Cloud, winner of the 2014 "Inspiring Hope, Rising Star" award from the National Council for Behavioral Health.

For several years, a worldwide public awareness campaign has labored to end the stigma associated with mental illness. Billboards around the globe blare out messages such as "StompOutStigma," "Imagine If You Got Blamed for Having Cancer" and "Stop the Judgment/Start the Healing."

Jackson is convinced the effort is starting to pay off.

"Of course, we still have a way to go when it comes to raising awareness about mental health," said Jackson. "After all, completely reversing long-held views and misconceptions is like turning a big ship — it turns slowly. Still, we are definitely moving in the right direction.

"These days, thanks to the new federal initiatives, we are getting so many more individuals who are insured. That really makes a difference in helping people gain access to services."

Some say the overall stigma associated with mental health challenges actually may be a bundle of assorted assumptions, fears and rationalizations about mental illness and mental health treatment.

More than one study has revealed the general view of African Americans can be particularly resistant to change. A major public health article, for example,



Lee Thomas



Inuha Cloud

to believe depression lasting more than a year is normal.

The reluctance to address mental health as a critical issue in the African American community may stem from a narrow view of the subject, others believe. Mental health encompasses more than diseases such as paranoid schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Jackson explains that conditions such as alcohol and drug abuse, for example, come under the mental health umbrella. Substance abuse, she says, is sometimes an individual's attempt to self-medicate his or her way out of undiagnosed mental illness symptoms.

Recognizing that mental health is a much broader topic than certain serious brain disorders can help the overall population understand that mental health is not a concern just for certain health professionals or for just the "unfortunate few victims of serious illness," experts say.

"Mental health problems touch everyone," said Jackson. "In their families or in their own lives, every one of us has had some exposure to some diagnosed or diagnosable mental health issue. It may be something dealt with through medication, something addressed by talk therapy, or simply psycho-educational instruction to help reinforce understanding on issues such as getting enough sleep, managing stress and the importance of good nutrition."

Jackson says the sheer volume of See **MENTAL HEALTH** page B-2

pointed out that some 63 percent of African Americans believe depression is a demonstration of an individual's personal weakness. A rampant view among blacks, Jackson says, is that "if you are not able to handle the issues in your life, there is something bad or wrong with you."

The fear of being branded with that sentiment becomes "strong reinforcement not to seek treatment," says Jackson.

Meanwhile, other studies have shown many African Americans are unaware of the need to seek medical evaluation and treatment even when dealing with long-lasting depression. One study, for example, reported blacks are more likely

## Mental health

From page B-1

mental health episodes in the U.S. is evident in the statistic that one in five Americans will experience a diagnosable disorder in any 12-month period.

If a better understanding of mental health challenges is on the upswing, it is happening at a critical time, Jackson believes. The usual suspects of problems in the African American community — which can provide fertile ground for immediate or long-term mental health crises — are not relenting. Blacks are more likely to be victims of violent crime and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and they are over-represented in illicit substance abuse.

"And then you can add issues such as people just living for generations in a poverty setting or a history of being molested," said Jackson. "When you hear the stories of some people, you wonder how they have been able to hold it together as long as they have. There is so much resilience."

Meanwhile, unemployment, economic problems, and the breakdown of the family have helped erase what Jackson calls "natural supports." In past generations, she explains, a network of extended family connections and a more cohesive community acted as a buffer to isolation and other problems which can contribute to mental illness.

Thanks to a systematic assault on the family, Jackson says, many children are living with a mother and/or a father who are not able to raise a child.

"Sometimes, the family is not intact, and there are no supports — Big Mama doesn't exist anymore," Jackson said.

Still, there is room for optimism, Jackson added. A commitment to community mental health services — while not comprehensive enough or funded in a way that reflects the vastness of the problem — far outstrips what most now believe was the unfortunate "warehousing" and "locking away" of the mentally ill in past decades.

Jackson points to the success of one client as evidence of the system finally starting to get it right. One middle-aged woman had endured multiple psychiatric hospitalizations and had been known for violent outbursts.

She had been in one of the

large facilities sometimes derided as simply warehouses, where some mentally ill individuals were forced to live the rest of their lives.

What eventually worked was moving the client at her request from an adult foster care (AFC) home and finding a way to help her maintain her liberty and independence while at the same time giving her protections.

"She may look different, act different and think different than the way we do," said Jackson. "But she deserves to be independent, and we can help people such as her maintain their liberties ... and give them certain protections. We can build supports for them and learn to coexist with them."

The initiative worked. The client has had no outbursts or significant mental health episodes in the years she has been out of the adult foster care home and since she started living independently with clinical and housing supports.

Jackson added that while the price tag for such improved treatment may initially appear high, the cost pales in comparison to past practices of "warehousing" mentally ill individuals in large facilities.

The lesson is that every person is different, Jackson concluded, and that it takes time to learn the differences. Sometimes, a critical part of the equation is finding doctors, clinicians and other health care professionals the client has confidence in. The traditionally problematic relationship between the African American community and the medical establishment needs to be considered, health experts add. It is the reason many African Americans shun treatment for psychiatric problems and other health issues as well.

"There is a time and place for everything," said Jackson. "And with some of the advances in our understanding of how to treat certain patients, I believe this is a season for healing. Still, to do that, we have to be prepared to make sure we have enough professionals who look like, who reflect, the community they serve."

For more information on the Anti-Stigma Forum or on Mental Health Month, call (313) 308-1416 or visit [scmoon@mcgnidance.org](mailto:scmoon@mcgnidance.org).

# Head Start gets \$1.4 million for teachers and toddlers



The Southeast Michigan Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, a group of funders working together to support early childhood education, has announced a second round of grants totaling \$1.4 million from its Detroit Head Start Innovation Fund (Innovation Fund).

The Innovation Fund made its first grants in September 2014 to foster innovation and collaboration and support stronger outcomes for young children and their families enrolled in Detroit Head Start agencies. The current \$1.4 million was distributed to four Head Start organizations, which together serve more than 3,000 children in facilities across Detroit. The funding supports three system-wide goals: recruit and retain qualified early childhood educators; attract more Head Start-eligible families, and support shared data and program evaluation.

Matrix Human Services received \$450,000 to increase the pool of qualified early childhood and Teach for America educators by offering a Child Development Associate program and a five-week employment training program. The funds will also be used for financial literacy education and other programs to support low-income families.

Metropolitan Child and Youth Inc. received \$200,000 for teacher retention and

the recruitment of families with infants and toddlers to Early Head Start programs. Funds will also support a partnership with First Children's Finance to facilitate staff leadership development and capacity building and implement an accelerated child development associate credentialing process. Funding will also support partnerships with Madonna University to provide infant and toddler care certification for staff, and with HighScope and Teachstone to develop and evaluate curriculum.

New Saint Paul Thernacle Church of God in Christ Head Start Agency received \$300,000 for unique partnerships with Madonna University and HighScope to build teacher recruitment and retention efforts, including teacher development and a "train the trainer" program, with a focus on training teachers for Early Head Start.

Starfish Family Services received \$450,000 to provide training and professional development for teachers, advancement opportunities for qualified staff, and ongoing performance assessment programs for all personnel at the manager level or higher.

Additionally, funding will also be used to support a data manager who will work to ensure the consistency and compatibility of data gathered across all neighborhood Head

Starts managed by the four agencies and the creation of effective data-sharing systems and protocols.

Furthermore, a report commissioned by the Innovation Fund, examines the barriers to becoming a Head Start or Early Head Start educator in the city, and identifies opportunities for Detroit to utilize proven national methods and locally-generated solutions to build the pool of eligible and qualified Detroit Head Start educators.

The members of the Southeast Michigan Early Childhood Funders Collaborative are the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; The Kresge Foundation; the Skillman Foundation; the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation; the McGregor Foundation; the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan; "The Innovation Fund investments are not typical grants. They show a strategic commitment to expanding the capacity of Head Start in Detroit by recruiting new teachers and providing professional development for existing educators and staff."

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