

## The 100's Commitment to the Community

By Abdullah Jones – February 17, 2010  
Men's Health Network

The 100 Black Men of America, Inc. was established in New York City in the 1960's, during the Civil Rights Movement, when a group of African-American professionals took initiative in improving the conditions of their community to ensure that it thrives.

Today there are over 100 chapters – including chapters outside of the United States – servicing minorities through advocacy, health and wellness programs, mentoring and by forming partnerships with prominent figures and other organizations like the Men's Health Network, a non-profit organization that works to reach men and their families where they live, work, play, and pray.

For instance, about seven years ago Dr. Mark Alexander, Chairman of the Health and Wellness Committee for the 100 Black Men of the Bay Area, partnered with Tommie Smith, gold-medalist at the 1968 Mexico City Summer Olympics and former world-record holder in the 200 meters, and created the Tommie Smith Youth Track Program, a year-round track and field training program.

Dr. Alexander – an epidemiologist – was concerned about elevated blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, obesity and asthma found in African-American children as young as four.

“He started to put together a program to find out how prevalent the problem is in our elementary and middle schools to try to address it by using community resources, parents as well as school administrators and teachers,” said Jesse Parker, Chairman of the Health and Wellness Committee for the 100 Black Men of Greater Washington, DC.

For the second year, the DC chapter is hosting the Tommie Smith Youth Track Meet on May 15, 2010 at Calvin Coolidge Senior High School.

“We'll have kids out there as young as four and as old as 18,” said Parker.

Last year almost 800 young athletes competed in a variety of events at the track meet in DC: from field events to relays. This year the DC chapter will also incorporate health screenings.

Since the program began, Tommie Smith Youth Track Meets have been held in Oakland, St. Louis, Louisiana, and DC.

At Benedict College's Annual Harambee Festival, the 100 Black Men of Greater Columbia, SC provides screenings for diabetes, hypertension and prostate cancer.

This year the festival will be on February 27-28, 2010.

According to Dr. Steward Darby, Chairman of the Health and Wellness Committee for the Columbia chapter, over the past 10 years they have screened over 1000 African-American men at the festival.

This year the chapter will incorporate HIV screening and expects to screen 100 people.

“This is our big, new project we are working on: HIV and teen pregnancy,” said Darby.

When looking at the foundation of the majority of diseases, Lee Moultrie, Chair of the 100 Black Men of Greater Charleston, SC and community outreach coordinator for the Medical University of South Carolina College of Nursing, says we have to look at whether people are exercising and eating balanced meals.

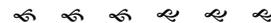
According to Moultrie, everyone should have utensils in their kitchen for measuring in order to watch the portions of foods and liquids they intake.

“As Americans, as a people and especially African-American men we don't do things in portion sizes, and it's important that we start adopting these behaviors,” said Moultrie. “If we don't start adjusting our behaviors we're going to die at an early age.”

Furthermore, mentoring programs like the Saturday Leadership Academy (SLA) are the flagship program for the 100 Black Men of America, Inc. Young males are mentored by African-American leaders in the community.

SLA participants are taught healthy habits and professional skills such as grooming and speech delivery.

“We encourage the kids to be brave, stand up straight, look people in the eyes, give firm handshakes and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times,” said Parker. “A good amount of emphasis is placed on decorum, respect for self and others, attire and presentation.”



For more information about the 100 Black Men of America, Inc. or to find a chapter in your area log on to [www.100blackmen.org](http://www.100blackmen.org) .

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