

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**June 22 Kidney Health Fest for African American Families to educate the community on kidney disease prevention and treatment**

Seattle, WA (May 21, 2013): On Saturday, June 22, 2013, Northwest Kidney Centers will hold its 11<sup>th</sup> annual **Kidney Health Fest for African American Families**, featuring free health screenings, education, entertainment and healthy food made by local celebrity chefs.

The free event runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Van Asselt Elementary (formerly the African American Academy), 8311 Beacon Ave. S., in Seattle, on Metro bus line 106. About 750 people attended last year.

**Free health screenings.** From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., participants can receive a free kidney health screening and private consultation with a doctor about the results. The screening includes a finger stick for a blood sample, urinalysis, blood pressure and weight check. Diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity all contribute to the current epidemic of kidney disease.

**Educational presentations.** A health education program from 10 a.m. to noon will be hosted by Chris B. Bennett, publisher of The Seattle Medium and talk show host on KRIZ/KYIZ/KZIZ Radio.

Dr. Jonathan Himmelfarb, director of the Kidney Research Institute in Seattle, will be among the speakers. Himmelfarb is an international authority who can explain up-to-the-minute science in terms lay people can understand. He will talk about the reasons why kidney disease is more common in African Americans than Caucasians, and the latest thinking about ways to prevent and treat it.

**Healthy, tasty lunch.** At noon, noted local chefs will serve up a free lunch. Donating their services are Jemil Johnson of Jemil's Big Easy, Mulugeta Abate of Pan Africa, Theo Martin of Island Soul, Anthony Davis of AMD's Catering, and Kristi Brown-Wokoma of That Brown Girl Catering.

**Entertainment.** The award-winning Pacific Northwest Drumline Association will kick off the day, and the energy will stay high with performances by electric fusion band Comfort Food, rapper Willa Scrilla, singers and musicians from the NAACP ACT-SO program, spoken word artists, the Liberation United Church of Christ choir, and more.

Special activities for children include an obstacle course and a visit from the Black Firefighters Association truck.

**Focus on fitness.** Edna Daigre from Ewajo Center, Ajene Bomani-Robertson from the Austin Foundation, and Jannine Young from Core Power Yoga will speak and get the audience moving with fitness demonstrations.

This year's Fest is dedicated to the memory of Willie Austin, former University of Washington football player and power lifting champion. His Austin Foundation provides youth with vital access to fitness and nutrition. A regular and popular presenter at the Fest, he died unexpectedly April 24, 2013.

**Local churches are co-hosts**, providing volunteers and encouraging attendance. They include Damascus Baptist, First AME, Freedom Church of Seattle, Goodwill Missionary Baptist, Immaculate Conception, Liberation United Church of Christ, Madison Park Church of Christ, Mt. Zion Baptist, New Beginnings Christian Fellowship, New Hope Missionary Baptist, Pentecostal Covenant Church, Southside Church of Christ, St. Mary's, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist, and Walker Chapel AME.

**Community partner organizations.** More than 30 exhibitors will be on hand to share resources for healthy living.

"Everyone is welcome to attend the Fest, have fun and learn about kidney disease and healthy living – and it's completely free!" said Dr. Bessie Young, a Seattle kidney specialist who has chaired the community organizing committee since the Fest began. "Bring your friends and family and make a day of it. People of every age can have fun while they learn how to keep their families healthy."

One in seven American adults has kidney disease. In the African American community, the number increases four-fold. Although African Americans make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, 35 percent of individuals with kidney failure on dialysis are African American. In addition, African American men are 10 to 14 times more likely to develop kidney failure due to high blood pressure than Caucasian men in the same age group.

Participants in the Kidney Health Fest will learn how to improve their lives to avoid kidney disease. This includes:

- Treating high blood pressure and diabetes, two of the leading causes of kidney failure.
- Quitting smoking.
- Reducing added salt and processed, packaged and fast food.
- Eating healthy to avoid obesity.
- Exercising at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- Avoiding the overuse of pain relievers such as ibuprofen and naproxen, which can damage kidneys.

For more information about the event or to pre-register, visit [www.nwkidney.org/fest](http://www.nwkidney.org/fest). The Twitter hashtag for the Fest is #healthfest.

**About Northwest Kidney Centers:** Northwest Kidney Centers keeps people alive with dialysis care, educates the public about kidney health, and collaborates with UW Medicine in the Kidney Research Institute. It is one of very few community-based, nonprofit dialysis providers in the country. Founded in Seattle in 1962, it was the first out-of-hospital dialysis program in the world. It is still a model in the field. Learn more at [www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org).

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