

FULTON COUNTY HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

Recap of meeting with Nazeera Dawood and Don Rubin
June 7, 2012

Meeting for a quick brunch and a follow-up at the Zen Center on Zonlite place, Nazeera and Don and I reviewed some of the ideas we discussed in earlier meetings, and had some salient ideas for going forward. Following, highlights of our brainstorming session.

ASSESSMENT

One general objective of the program will be to accomplish a tangible, measurable effect on the community, as early as feasible. A 12-month window to achieve such a result is suggested as a reasonable lead time to demonstrate that some or all of the initiatives under consideration actually work, and to what degree. It is also recognized that whatever form the program eventually takes, for the near-term it will be a matter of starting small and scaling up later. We recommend conceiving of the program in several phases, where we can learn from our experience and redefine achievable goals in the subsequent stages.

RESEARCH

The program development should be reflective of the culture and aspirations of the end-users — members of the communities we are trying to effect. To this end, we propose initiating a series of focus groups and other appropriate forms of research to be conducted to gain feedback from the various congregations. A qualitative, non-directive approach is proposed to ensure that information comes to the workgroup from the end-users, forming the approach and fostering buy-in at all levels of the project. The details of this approach will be forthcoming, and will be designed to be inclusive of all stakeholders.

Example: Again, the language will be framed to emphasize the warm and communal nature of the project, such as *feedback*, *fellowship*, and *listening*, rather than cold research jargon, such as *study*, *focus group*, etc.

AUDIENCE

The target audience consists of several sub-segments based on demographics, time-of-life, and lifestyle distinctions within the interfaith communities we are inviting to participate. An initial goal is that everyone be empowered to have an appropriate effect on the outcome. As a first-blush analysis, the following segmentation is offered; it may need refining as we enter later phases of the project:

- CLERGY — Gate-keepers to the flock; wise and influential stewards
- ADULTS — Young, single, married, divorced, childless, empty-nesters
- PARENTS — Singles and couples with dependent children
- CAREGIVERS — Adults responsible for others care in the home
- TEENS — Pre-college adolescents and ‘tweens; latch-key
- CHILDREN — K-12, preschool and daycare

The initial focus will be within the context of the religious organizations and facilities, but could eventually expand to include programs that reach out to the homes and schools of the families, friends, and other members of the larger community.

Such social dynamics as the credibility of the clergy, who are held in great esteem by the congregation, and the support and peer pressure natural to the younger members of the congregation, will be enlisted as natural allies in the effort to restructure habits in a more positive direction.

Example: With the success of program initiatives, enlisting the support of famous personalities might extend the reach of the effectiveness while enhancing the public image of the celebrity: the Justine Bieber Bento Box!

INTERFAITH

The constitution of this workgroup and the target congregations representing the diversity of many faiths should be reflected in the program's breadth. Each has a unique gift to share with the program, to enhance the appreciation of health integrated as a faith-based initiative. The emphasis of the program should encourage the sharing of best practices as between the disparate communities. Like "world music," we can offer "world cuisine," non-traditional approaches to special events around diet and community. (Traditional events such as Thanksgiving dinner are usually seen as contributing to the problem.)

Example: The inter-faith context lends itself to an inter-cuisine covered dish, such as a "Second Sunday" event in which various churches, synagogues, and mosques host visitors and guests from other participating congregations. This program takes advantage of the rich diversity already existing in the cultures of the participants as a natural asset. It is thus food-driven (rather than anti-food), and allows each culture to expose the others to its cuisine. Developing changes in appetite and attitudes toward eating and nutrition becomes a matter of cultural exchange, rather than forcing an unnatural change upon the congregation.

This program may then be extended through the exchange of recipes, ethnic cooking classes, perhaps eventually influencing and effecting substantial changes in food service programs for the religious service centers, school lunch programs, and summer camps.

BRANDING

The need to develop a distinct, recognizable, memorable and appropriate identity for the program, as well as for the workgroup implementing it, is recognized. We have solicited ideas for copy from all members of the workgroup, and are developing a name-generating exercise. The elements will include:

- Program Umbrella
- Work Group Identity

- Program Modules

The basic approach is to list all appropriate words with positive connotations that are associated with the problem definition and hoped-for outcome, then to find combinations of those words which may be unique, and uniquely expressive of the program intent to its intended audience(s).

All such language and image components, icons, message styling and content should be age-appropriate to the sub-segments of the community population to which they are directed, and in general connotative of a positive, rather than negative, user-friendly framing of the message.

Example: Program nomenclature may emphasize “gaining” over “losing” even though that construction may seem counter-productive in the conventional context of weight-management programs.

Likewise, words like *exercise* that have lost their impact through overuse will be avoided in favor of more contemporary phrasing indicating positive connotations of activity, e.g. “Let’s Move.”

We are excited at the prospect of this sorely-needed program, and look forward to working together as a team to achieve its compassionate objectives.

On behalf of Nazeera Dawood and Don Rubin,
Respectfully submitted,
Michael Elliston