

*CenterPieces: Newsletter of the Center
for Applied Research on Aging and
Health (CARAH)*

Volume 1, Issue 1

2006
SUMMER

Article 2

Graduating “Seniors” of Center in the Park’s
Harvest Health Program

<http://jdc.jefferson.edu/centerpieces/>

Copyright © 2006, Thomas Jefferson University

Graduating “Seniors” of Center in the Park’s Harvest Health Program

“I have been to many health classes but none like this. This class was great and well organized.”

“When I wake up I start exercising in bed. The Harvest Health classes have motivated me. I am now exercising 6 days a week.”



These are the accolades that Project Director Delores Palmer hears consistently from members of the Harvest Health Chronic Disease Self-Management classes at Center in the Park Senior Center, a nationally recognized senior center in the Germantown area of Philadelphia. “We are overwhelmed at the response of the community to this exciting program,” Ms. Palmer reports.



“I use a motorized wheelchair, and I walk only a few steps. Thanks to the support from my classmates and the instructors, I achieved my action plan and am now walking in the corridor at Center in the Park. The program has motivated me to achieve my goals.”

In October 2003, the Administration on Aging funded a cooperative effort with the Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health (CARAH), Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), Center in the Park (CIP), and Albert Einstein Healthcare Network to translate the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. This is an evidence-based program initially developed and tested by Dr. Kate Lorig and colleagues from the Stanford Patient Education Research Center. Whereas Dr. Lorig tested the program with white middle-upper class adults enrolled in an HMO, the goal of Harvest Health is to evaluate the feasibility and impact of translating this project for older African-Americans. Each partner has a specific role. Center in the Park is recruiting program participants and implementing the program at their site; Albert Einstein is educating primary care providers about the importance of chronic disease self-management programs; CARAH is evaluating the program; and PCA coordinates the partners’ efforts.

Center in the Park has enrolled more than 500 participants, 90% of whom have completed the program and report important health benefits and lifestyle changes. Participants attend an on-site seven-week program led by Ms. Palmer, with other trained leaders, who are non-health professionals living with a chronic disease. The program's goals are to enable participants to assume a major role in managing their chronic health conditions, increase knowledge of personal risk factors associated with chronic disease, and enhance personal responsibility in managing risk factors. CARAH is evaluating the impact of the program on participants' health status, health behaviors, self-efficacy, and health

care utilization. We also hope to demonstrate that a partnership approach to chronic disease self-management can be replicated within the network of aging services such as those provided by senior centers. To learn more about this program or to enroll as a participant, please contact Delores Palmer at (215) 848-7722 or dpalmer@centerinthepark.org.



Standing L to R: Delores Palmer, Director of Harvest Health, CIP; Mark McClellan, MD, PhD, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Josephina Carbonell, Assistant Secretary of Aging, US Dept of Health and Human Services.