



First Ladies Health Initiative

Sponsored by *Walgreens*

www.firstladieshealth.com

Contact:
Katrina Waddy (Parker)
312-545-7392 cell
312-470-0270 office

LOCAL PASTORS' WIVES CELEBRATE NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE BY ENCOURAGING HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR ACROSS CHICAGO
Walgreens-sponsored First Ladies Health Initiative offers free health screenings on Sun., 9/11

(Chicago) – On Sunday, September 11, to celebrate the 2016 National Day of Service & Remembrance, the First Ladies Health Initiative – a consortium of more than 160 pastors' wives (First Ladies) from across the U.S. – will open the doors of nearly 50 houses of worship across greater Chicagoland to offer no cost medical testing and health screenings to detect or prevent systemic illnesses such as diabetes, hepatitis, hypertension, HIV/AIDS, obesity and certain forms of cancer. This year's goal is to surpass 30,000 screenings for all ages.

"Since the church often serves as a hospital for the spiritually downtrodden, it's a natural fit for our doors to open to offer health services and empower attendees to declare war on those chronic, often deadly medical issues," said Jamell Meeks, First Ladies Health Day Chicago chairwoman and First Lady of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago. "We invite community residents – from those in a walker to those with a walker – to come out and take advantage of these life-saving tests."

In 2006, Walgreens embraced faith-based outreach and programming which united local pastors' wives to facilitate a plan designed to confront these troubling health disparities head-on. The result was the First Ladies Health Initiative which has expanded tremendously -- starting with the wives of 12 pastors in Chicago to 172 First Ladies from Chicago, Gary, Los Angeles and Orange County. To date, First Ladies Health Day is the nation's largest of its kind, with nearly 200,000 medical tests and health screenings performed and many lives positively impacted.

In Chicago, the program now includes three predominately Hispanic house of worship: Christian Fellowship Flock South, Iglesia Bautista Casa Degracia, and Rebano Church.

John Gremer, director of Community Relations for Walgreens summed up the corporation's commitment to advancing health in minority communities. "According to the Center for Disease Control, minority communities are disproportionately impacted by illnesses such as hepatitis C, hospitalizations related to hypertension, and other critical medical concerns. We had to do something to move these communities closer to healthy. Our support of the First Ladies Health Initiative started when it launched; and, today, we continue to share a common mission of creating healthier communities."

-more-

8 South Michigan Av, Ste 1600 Chicago, IL 60603 312.470.0270
Firstladieshealth.com

First Ladies Health Day/Chicago - 2

The First Ladies Health Initiative is sponsored by Walgreens. Participating health providers for the Chicago event include: Harmony WellCare, Gilead, Pfizer, the Illinois Department of Public Health, NBC-5 Chicago, American Diabetes Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Haymarket Center, the American Heart Association, as well as the Coalition of the Willing which comprises over 30 healthcare companies, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, pharmaceutical and nursing students; and thousands of volunteers, including members of the LINKS and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. For more information and a complete listing of all participating churches and First Ladies, please visit www.FirstLadiesHealth.com; text HEALTH to 36363; or call 312-470-0270. Follow the action on social media using #FirstLadiesHealth.

About the First Ladies Health Initiative

The First Ladies Health Initiative is held annually in metropolitan areas across the U.S., including Chicago, Gary, Ind., Los Angeles, and Orange County, Calif. It is designed to bring awareness to illnesses that disproportionately affect African Americans, Latinos and low-income communities; and increase first ladies' participation in the Health Day. The program kicks off with a luncheon attended by nearly 200 pastors' wives who receive information from medical professionals on how to educate their communities about various illnesses. The program culminates with First Ladies Health Day, the largest health day of its kind in the nation. Chicago's Danielle Ashley Group manages the program on behalf of Walgreens. More information is available at www.firstladieshealth.com.

###