

## Stroke Survivor is a Divine Inspiration

### *Issue*

Edna Hugh realized what was happening as her headache grew worse and she began to experience numbness down her arm. Since Edna was a secretary at Roger Peace Rehabilitation Center, she knew she was probably having a stroke and recognized how important it was to be treated right away. Mrs. Hugh's knowledge of stroke symptoms and quick thinking helped her recover quickly and avoid long-term disability.

Heart disease and stroke, respectively, are the number one and three leading causes of death among African Americans in S.C. Compared to Caucasians, African Americans are twice as likely to have a stroke and tend to have strokes at earlier ages. A primary concern is that the African-American community has potentially lacked the knowledge on how to encourage their members to reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease.

### *Intervention*

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Region 2 staff have addressed these concerns by conducting two train-the-trainer workshops with funding from the DHEC Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Division. Both workshops, which are implemented in faith-based settings, have been shown to be promising practices for increasing knowledge and teaching health ministers how to help their congregations prevent heart disease and stroke. The first workshop, *Search Your Heart*, focuses on warning signs of heart attack, risk factors for cardiovascular disease, and reducing risks by healthy eating and increasing physical activity.

Congregational members are especially interested in one activity of the workshop where they can trace their family health history to see what risk factors are inherited and can't be changed. The second workshop, *Power to End Stroke*, focuses on recognizing the warning signs of stroke, reducing risk of stroke, and responding quickly by calling 9-1-1 immediately.

### *Impact*

Edna Hugh has served as an inspiration to members of her church, Shady Grove Baptist. Shady Grove is one of DHEC Region 2's most proactive churches in reducing the risk of these serious health conditions. In addition, seven other churches have been promoting heart attack and stroke risk reduction through workshops and programs during this fiscal period. Rocky Creek Baptist Church conducted a purple Sunday event where they held a stroke workshop after the worship service and served a healthy meal, including a variety of fresh fruit. Shady Grove initiated several ongoing projects and programs including:

- Two stroke seminars;
- A *Wear Red Day* event, where members wore red and the pastor read the warning signs of heart attack from the pulpit; and
- A walking club with incentives, including a pedometer, a 100-calorie snack, a healthy recipe, and a weekly physical activity tip.

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