Ed Letter-Summer 2006

Truth sets you free

May 24, 2006 By Hilary Beard

For the past few months, my e-mail has been ablaze with forwarded news stories about how black folks are struggling—how our men are falling behind, our relationships are floundering, our leaders are dying. But what do we do about it?

A good start would be to take charge of our wellness, as cover subject Mary J. Blige has done. “I’ve done enough cryin’,” she sings on The Breakthrough. “It’s time to do something for me!” Check out her healthful diet, slammin’ body and spiritual revival.

As a wife and mother, writer Denene Millner is used to taking charge of her family’s health. But even she was surprised when she discovered, while researching this month’s story on kidney disease, that the lab results from her husband’s recent physical showed that he had developed the illness, unbeknownst to him and his health care providers. Now, she schools us on how to prevent and manage it and is using what she learned to empower their next moves.

When journalist Kai Wright suspected a link between the numbers of black men being imprisoned and the HIV epidemic, he applied for grants to investigate his hunch. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a study confirming his conclusions. But the Washington Post reported: “Very few [male prisoners] acquire the virus while behind bars.” Wright checked this assertion with the study’s author, who replied, “The study was not designed to answer the question of how often transmission in prison occurs.”

Whether by being honest about how we’re doing, gradually initiating lifestyle changes or holding accountable the powers that be, we can lift ourselves, individually and collectively. Let’s start now!

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