Editor’s Letter-Winter 2014

December 3, 2014 By Kate Ferguson

Celebrating 10 Years of Real Health

In 2008, when I joined Real Health magazine as its editor-in-chief, the publication was just 4 years old. I’d learned about Real Health while researching African-American health publications, and I became familiar with the magazine by reading its back issues. Wow! I was in love. Where were you all my life, I wondered.

Back then, magazines totally dedicated to health and wellness that were aimed at the African-American community were rare. Today, that hasn’t changed appreciably. But I noticed that mainstream black lifestyle publications began slowly expanding their health sections. All of a sudden, health was becoming sexy. Still, surprisingly, newsstands lack health publications aimed at African Americans.

The few I did find seemed more like lifestyle magazines. There were no in-depth feature stories about people living with illnesses, study findings, sexual health issues and HIV. Nor was there general news about diseases, public health policies or reports on conditions that disproportionately affect our communities.

Also missing were articles that offered practical information on how to interact with our doctors and other medical professionals working in our health system. I saw few stories about patients being their own advocates. There was no advice about being proactive in accessing care, and no educational articles taught how to negotiate the health care system.

When I discovered Real Health, I found all these things. I was also amazed because the stories were informative, thought-provoking and very entertaining. The publication was short enough to read in one sitting, but the information stayed with you way beyond the time spent in a doctor’s office waiting room.

Today, as I reflect on the early years of Real Health, I can see its growth. Real Health was created to dispense health news that educates, enlightens, entertains and empowers its readers, and it has fulfilled that mission.

As the magazine’s editor, I have had the privilege to continue to meet this challenging and

satisfying goal. During my time with Real Health, I've met and worked with an assortment of talented professionals who are passionate about their roles as health educators.

In addition, I've had the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life who willingly shared their stories with us in the pages of Real Health. From moms to music personalities and film stars, each and every one contributed to the health education effort that continues to touch other lives in ways that, perhaps, we will never have a chance to discover.

With this 10th anniversary issue, Real Health marks a milestone that places the magazine on the threshold of exciting new developments in the years to come. I'm very proud to be a part of this health publication and its continued efforts to serve our community as a trusted resource of information to keep families healthy in mind, body and spirit.

I wish Real Health many more milestones to come.

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