Editor’s Letter-Fall 2008

The Power of Health

September 4, 2008 By Kate Ferguson

This summer, one of the first things I did as editor was attend an annual health conference, sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), which exposed me to the critical work being done in the community by men and women dedicated to health awareness, education and HIV outreach.

This annual summit provides information to health care advocates, professionals and media on relevant clinical and scientific information about this crucial disease that continues to impact so alarmingly on our communities.

Attended by participants from all over the country, the 10th Summer Summit was an educational and inspirational experience for me. I met men and women in the vanguard of a health movement to win back lives from a formidable disease. I returned home armed with a supply of story ideas that’ll come to life in various ways in the pages of *Real Health* and online at Realhealthmag.com.

I also returned home brimming with inspiration. The individuals I met are remarkable, each characterized by a commitment to eradicating HIV/AIDS (a disease that many incorrectly believe is no longer a problem). And the stories I heard (which you’ll hear soon in *RH*) still echo in my mind. One health advocate told me about confronting a Haitian woman’s abusive husband who had locked her in their home to stop her from visiting the local HIV/AIDS service center. Even now, women of color of all ethnicities continue to fight for empowerment and access to health care information and services to improve their lives and control their destinies.

Branded on my mind, many stories indicate the extreme health danger we face as a race. We continue to suffer disproportionately from HIV/AIDS and other diseases (many made more challenging by the HIV connection), which indiscriminately steal the lives of young and old alike.

The summit took place during my second month on the job. What a powerful and memorable start. To be sure, there will be lots more to learn and share with all of you about health and wellness issues that affect the African-American community, both in our print magazine and website.

To that end, in this issue, we are launching a hair health section in *Real Health*. Often taken for granted, the hair on our head can be used as a way to gauge the state of our physical health. In this symbiotic relationship, there is a synergy that largely has gone unnoticed, unappreciated and

underutilized—it can help us realize our full potential for achieving total wellness. *Real Health* will explore this relationship in each and every issue, bringing you a variety of information on the topic.

I’m thrilled to finally explore the passion for health and fitness I’ve nurtured for many years. I regard it as a real privilege to be here at *Real Health*. This service-oriented publication has the power to better our lives through education and awareness. After all, being healthy has a positive impact on our mind, body, spirit and social condition. I feel I have found my niche at last.

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