

# HEALTH NEWS AND FEATURES

## American Diabetes Association Reaches Out to the Community about Diabetes by hosting Diabetes University

**Savannah, GA** - Diabetes is the biggest public health crisis of the 21st century, and it continues to grow to epidemic proportions. Nearly 24 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes, including 17,000 in Chatham County. Diabetes is the leading cause of heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness, and amputations. Since 1987 the death rate due to diabetes has increased by 45%, while the death rates due to heart disease, stroke, and cancer have declined.

### Life Story:

JoAnn Hill, a Savannah native, was 30 years old when she was diagnosed with diabetes. It was 1985 and Hill was pregnant with her first child. Hill had developed gestational diabetes, a type of diabetes that occurs in pregnancies but disappears when child is born.

During her first pregnancy, Hill was ordered on bed rest, diet, and insulin. "I was shocked and overwhelmed because I didn't know what diabetes was. My older sister became my support system, in helping me through daily routines," says Hill. After her son was born, blood glucose levels returned to normal and the gestational diabetes disappeared. Three years later, in 1988, Hill developed gestational diabetes again during her second pregnancy. This time, she was not ordered on bed rest or insulin; maintained normal routines. When Hill became pregnant the third time, she was scared. Dr. Persad, Hill's doctor, warned her of been

diagnosed with gestational diabetes again due to the prior pregnancies. Hill did develop gestational and was put on 100 units of insulin.

A history of diabetes runs through the Hill family. Her father was not diagnosed until his 70s and died in his 90s after complications of a second amputation. Later, followed by her older sister's death related to this chronic disease. In addition to her family history, Hill's husband of 18 years also has diabetes. Hill's three children have not been diagnosed. However, if her daughter has a daughter, there is a high risk of developing diabetes.

Hill, who is now 54, struggles with the complications of type 2 diabetes. She has been admitted to hospitals numerous of times due to this disease. Blood glucose levels have either been too high or to low. At one point, Hill's doctor thought she may be insulin resistance, where the body's cells fail to utilize glucose for energy and metabolism. In 2004, Hill had a kidney transplant and was on dialysis for six months. Years later, Hill was in a coma for four days and suffered from a stroke in 2007. As a treatment plan, Hill uses 12 units of insulin after every meal and every night. Also, she has to watch her diet and exercise.

Hill understands the life-threatening complications of diabetes and wants to help others. As the number of diagnosed diabetes continues to grow, so does the need for diabetes education.

The millions of stories such as JoAnn Hill, allows the American Diabetes Association to further our mission: to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association is hosting Diabetes University on Saturday, January 24, 2009 at The Armstrong Center (13040 Abercorn Street Savannah, GA 31419) for all people affected by diabetes. Doors will open at 8:15 a.m. with five sessions covering twenty topics.

Diabetes University 2009 is a full day educational program designed to educate all people affected by this disease. The program is recommended for people with diabetes, as well as family and friends of people with diabetes who have a desire to learn more about managing this disease.

Pre-registration is required for this educational program and space is limited. The pre-registration fee of \$10.00 and walk-up registration fee of \$15.00 per person includes entry to all of the program sessions, including the panel discussion by subject matter experts. Ask the Experts tables will offer medication interaction evaluations, glucometer diagnostics, nutrition advice, blood pressure screenings, and Body Mass Index (BMI) assessments. Registration fee can be waived upon request.

People may request a registration form by calling the American Diabetes Association at 912-353-8110 ext 3095.

## National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day

Join us and participate in National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day. February 7, 2009 has been designated as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness & Information Day.

The Facts: Blacks are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. While making up only 13 percent of the U. S population, they account for more than 49 percent AIDS cases. AIDS is

now the leading cause of death for Black women ages 25 to 34. and the second leading cause of death for Black men ages 35 to 44. The Coastal Health District which is inclusive of Savannah (Chatham County Georgia) has the second highest number of reported HIV/AIDS cases in the state as of September 2008. Only the Atlanta metropolitan area has more reported cumula-

tive HIV/AIDS cases.

Intervention: My Brothaz HOME, Inc. will offer free rapid HIV Counseling & Testing, Prevention Education and Referrals on this date. For more information, please call 912-231-8727 or visit our office at 2111 Price Street, Savannah. You may also visit our website at [www.myQrQ!.hazhome.org](http://www.myQrQ!.hazhome.org) or [www.Q1ackaiQsday.org](http://www.Q1ackaiQsday.org).

## First Steps-Parents of Newborn Program introduces new Parent Education Classes

The First Steps program is pleased to announce the arrival of its latest parent education classes Baby H.U.G.S. (Help Us Grow Safely). These fun and interactive classes are available to any parent of children from birth through 1 year of age. The purpose of these classes is to help reduce the isolation often felt by new families and provide a meaningful tool to ensure parent & child bonding and to stimulate the healthy growth & development of infants. There are a total of 12 stand alone topics ranging from sleep to nutrition.

We are excited to offer these fun, interactive, baby/child-friendly classes at the Ronald McDonald Hospitality Room located on

the 4th floor of the Life Care Building at Candler Hospital. Classes will be offered two times a month and many of the classes will provide parents free books to take home to build their child's library.

This program is an extension of the support that the First Steps-Parents of Newborns program already offers the parents who participate in this program. We hope to extend to the support to as many parents of newborns as we can with this new addition.

The First Steps program is a primary child abuse prevention program that uses trained volunteers to offer emotional support, parenting education, and referrals to community services to all parents. It is the

only parent support program in Chatham County that is hospital based and volunteer driven. Initial contact is made in the hospital setting shortly after baby's birth. Follow-up telephone contact and support continues for a minimum of three months after delivery. In Chatham County, the First Steps program operates as a partnership between the Coastal Empire R.O.C.K. Group (Raising Our Children Kindly) as the program sponsor, and the St. Joseph's/Candler Health System as the partner agency and host site.

We will hold our first class-"Goodnight Baby" featuring the book, Goodnight Moon on January 22 at 10:00AM.

## Health Talks About Cancer: Teal Ribbon Project

MorningStar Cultural Arts Group is partnering with Savannah Jewish Federation Family Services to present a series of Health Talks about Cancer offered at the Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA is 5111

Abercorn Street) the last Tuesday of the month starting in January. Call 912.355.8111 for more info.

All presentations are free and open to the public at the JEA. Save the following dates:

Tuesday, January 27, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. Are you at risk for cancer?

C. Shai Huffard-King, MS, CGC, a Genetic Counselor will lead the discussion which will include Dr. James J. Burke, II, MD, a gynecological oncologist and general surgeon Dr. Ray Rudolph, MD.

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. Been There: Won That will include discussions of diet, life changes and personal inspirations that helped local friends fight and win their challenges with cancer. Peter Broadhead of Brighter Day Health Foods will discuss nutrition as a means of coping with disease.

Tuesday, March 31, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. Hot Flashes: Cutting Edge Detection and Treatment in Cancer as presented by Hadassah trained, Emory University Geneticist Dr. Laura Tillinger.

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