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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**JAM YOUR WAY TO GOOD HEALTH**  
**African American Men of Westchester, Inc. Win County Award for Unique Concept**  
**Public Health Week Recognized**

Residents of the Queen City Towers in New Rochelle were treated today to some tasty soul food with a healthy twist, lively music and screenings for diabetes, HIV and heart disease when they joined their neighbors for a community Health Jam.

The African American Men of Westchester, Inc, has brought eight Health Jams to municipal housing buildings in New Rochelle, White Plains and Yonkers since November 2007. Their efforts have been supported by the Westchester County Department of Health and New Rochelle, Yonkers and White Plains housing authorities, Westchester Medical Center and local community and medical partners.

Produced with a festive flair, Health Jams merge health fairs and family day cookouts into one event. Health screenings, health education and healthy versions of favorite foods are all on the bill. And of course, it wouldn't be a jam without some music.

For their unique concept and success in reaching more than 700 residents at these Health Jams, the African American Men of Westchester were honored by the Westchester County Board of Health today when they were presented with the 2009 Distinguished Public Health Service Award.

“It's been well documented that people of color are at higher risk of disease and a shortened lifespan, even in Westchester County where we have some of the best health care centers in the world,” said County Executive Andy Spano, who delivered welcoming remarks at today's event. “With the help of dedicated community groups like African American Men of Westchester, Inc., we have been very successful in bringing vital health services to the doorsteps of residents who truly need them.”

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## Health Jam Award P.2

Mack Carter, chairman of the health committee for the African American Men of Westchester, Inc. accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

“Thanks to the wonderful partnership that we have put together with the Health Department and local housing agencies, we were able to make our concept a reality,” said Melvin Burruss, president of the African American Men of Westchester, Inc.. “Bringing free health screenings to people where they live and socialize makes it easy for them to participate. Through our Health Jams, we have identified people with chronic diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes and we have helped them get the follow up care they need to stay healthy.”

Douglas Aspros, DVM, President of the Westchester County Board of Health, presented the award. “The Westchester County Board of Health is pleased to present this year’s award to the African American Men of Westchester, Inc. for its Health Jams,” Dr. Aspros said. “Health Jams complement the County’s goals of reducing the incidence of chronic disease among Westchester’s residents and addressing health disparities.”

Today’s award ceremony and Health Jam also kicked off National Public Health Week in Westchester County. Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Westchester County Health Commissioner, thanked the County’s community partners for their help in protecting and improving the health of Westchester’s residents.

“Protecting the health of the public is a tall order and government cannot do it alone,” he said. “The community groups that work alongside us each day are a valuable asset. They help us inform people about health issues of importance and they strengthen the community's long term ability to manage and improve health care.”

The Distinguished Public Health Service Award is presented each year to a person or a community group that demonstrates vision and commitment to public health. This year marks the eighth year that the Board of Health has given the award.

HIV rapid testing was provided by the New York State Department of Health. Glucose and blood pressure screenings were provided by the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center.

The New Rochelle Housing Authority graciously provided the food for this event. It was prepared by executive assistant Angela Farrish using vegetables from Rev. Hugh Farrish’s farm in Goshen. Rev. Farrish, of Bowen Memorial Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, was a 2008 winner of the Distinguished Public Health Service Award.

For more information about staying healthy, visit the Health Department’s website at [www.westchestergov.cm/health](http://www.westchestergov.cm/health) or call (914) 813-5000.