

CEO Memo – April

The coming of spring highlights the many achievements and exciting possibilities for our work towards lifelong health and well-being for the communities we serve. Whittier Street Health Center is pleased to share the following news and events:

- Our **Community Relations Department** has reached a total of 500 people to date in its wildly popular **10-Week Wellness Groups**, which combines physical activity, nutrition education, and stress management and life coaching.
- In March, **56 children and their parents attended Storytime**, a two-hour session where parents and family members learned strategies to make storytelling fun and engaging. Storytime seeks to promote learning, strengthen bonds between children and families, and help encourage kids to stay in school and graduate. At Whittier, we believe that that low academic achievement is a public health issue that we can address as a community.
- Through a **grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation**, we will begin offering **fall prevention education for seniors**. The curriculum is geared toward improving elderly strength, balance, and knowledge about common risks for falls.
- With generous support from the **GE Foundation**, we are launching the **Women and Girls Healthy Living Program**, which will help girls to cope with the violence they have experienced and teach them to be leaders and advocates for peace in their community. The program also aims to connect and empower extremely vulnerable women with the knowledge and resources needed to rebuild their lives and care for themselves and their families.
- Since the Affordable Care Act's provision for low-income people took effect in January, Whittier's **Health Benefits Department has enrolled 1,900 new patients in insurance coverage**, including many hard-to-reach individuals. Connecting the underserved to the health care system brings Whittier another step closer to its vision of equitable access to high quality health care for all.

Events

On April 3, Whittier hosted its annual Roast, designed to recognize the achievements of a local leader who has exemplified excellence in the Boston community. This was the 20th year of the Roast, and the theme was “A New Health Care.” Whittier put Dr. Ralph de la Torre, Chairman and CEO of Steward Health Care System, in the “hot seat.” With the idea that laughter is the best medicine, Dr. de la Torre's peers crafted humorous presentations about him, but kept underlining his inspirational leadership at Steward Health Care System and his visionary commitment to the Boston health care community. The event helped raise funds to support Whittier Street Health Center in our ongoing mission to provide equitable, high quality to the most vulnerable communities in Boston and beyond. We thank our Honoree, our Toastmistress, our Roasters, corporate sponsors, and everyone who came out to contribute to our important work of eliminating health and social disparities.



From left to right: Andrew Dreyfus (Roaster and President and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts), Dr. Ralph de la Torre (Honoree and Chairman and CEO of Steward Health Care System), Frederica M. Williams (President and CEO of Whittier Street Health Center), Dr. Marisela Marrero (Toastmistress and Emergency Room Physician at North Shore Medical Center), and Mark DiNapoli (Roaster and Northeast President of Suffolk Construction)



Roast Honoree Dr. Ralph de la Torre holds the award presented to him by Whittier President and CEO Frederica M. Williams

We hope you can join us for two inspiring events this summer. Whittier will hold its annual **Women for Whittier Summer Tea & Talk on Tuesday, June 10, from 4 PM to 5:30**

PM. Participants in Whittier's DecisionArts program will make a presentation and have a graduation ceremony to celebrate their completion of the program. DecisionArts is an arts therapy program for girls and young women ages 6-17 who have experienced violence. It incorporates individual counseling, behavioral arts enrichment, dance, and art education to help the girls begin healing, understand the impact of violence on themselves and the community, learn decision-making and coping skills for future positive life decisions, and become advocates for peace in their communities.

Next, we will celebrate Men's Health Month with our annual **Men's Health Summit on June 28, from 11 AM to 2 PM.** Whittier is excited to welcome back fitness expert Billy Blanks, Jr., who served as last year's keynote speaker, and his wife Sharon Catherine Blanks. The event will feature an exercise class from Bill and Sharon Catherine, lunch, and health screenings, take-home information, and prizes from our partners in health care and wellness. Our Honorees at this event include *the Honorable Marty Walsh, the Mayor of Boston.*

As always, it is my pleasure to keep you updated about our important work here at Whittier. I look forward to sharing more great news about community health throughout this year. Please visit our website (www.wshc.org) and Facebook and Twitter pages for more details about our programs and services. Thank you again for your support for Whittier Street Health Center.