

Lurie Cancer Center COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT UPDATES



King College Prep Students Attend Youth Lab Exploration Day on Chicago Campus

OCTOBER 2024

Students from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. College Preparatory High School in Kenwood visited Northwestern's Chicago campus for a Youth Lab Exploration Day. The event, hosted by the Lurie Cancer Center, gave students a chance to experience firsthand what it's like to work in medical research.

In the morning, students donned lab coats and participated in hands-on molecular biology activities, such as DNA extraction, in the lab of Dr. Gayle Woloschak. The experience allowed students to learn about the theories behind these techniques while considering potential careers in medicine.

In the afternoon, students attended a lecture series presented by members of Northwestern's clinical research staff. Kelly Nnornom, a Clinical Research Coordinator, discussed the history of racism in clinical trials and how it has impacted participation rates among people of color, emphasizing the need for education and reassurance to overcome these barriers. Denisha Brown, Senior Project Administration for the Center for Health Equity and Transformation, shared her personal journey through the education system and highlighted the importance of administrative roles in medicine. She also stressed the need for diverse participation in clinical trials to ensure that research findings are applicable to everyone.

This event was the first in a three-part series designed to introduce King College Prep students to the field of medicine. The Lurie Cancer Center looks forward to welcoming these bright, eager students back to campus soon!

Upcoming Events

HOPE IS IN OUR BLOOD: BLOOD DRIVE AND HEALTH TALK January 10, 2025

Blood Drive: 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Workshop: 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Atgeld Public Library
955 E. 131st Street, Chicago

[For more information](#)

BREWED CONVERSATIONS: FIRESIDE CHAT ON PELVIC HEALTH AND CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS

January 11, 2025

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Sip & Savor

78 E. 47th Street, Chicago, IL

[For more information](#)

FITNESS FACTS: CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS January 25, 2025

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Timothy Center

4351 S. Drexel Blvd, Chicago, IL

[For more information](#)

BREWED CONVERSATIONS: BEING THE CEO OF YOUR HEALTH

February 8, 2025

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Sip & Savor

78 E. 47th Street, Chicago, IL

[For more information](#)



Lung Cancer Awareness Town Hall Aims to Educate, Empower, and Engage Community

NOVEMBER 2024

The Lurie Cancer Center, in partnership with the Canning Thoracic Institute, hosted a Lung Cancer Awareness Town Hall during Lung Cancer Awareness Month. The event, held at the Simpson Querry Biomedical Research Center Auditorium, was open to the public and aimed to educate, empower, and engage the community in the fight against lung cancer.

A panel of experts provided information on a range of topics, including:

- **Screening and Early Detection:** Dr. Eric Hart emphasized the importance of lung cancer screening for those over 50 with a significant smoking history.
- **Advances in Treatment:** Dr. Jyoti Patel highlighted the significant progress made in lung cancer treatment over the past two decades.
- **Environmental Risks:** Dr. Momen Wahidi discussed the dangers of radon exposure, the second leading cause of lung cancer.
- **Community Resources:** Laura Huaracha from the American Lung Association provided information about the organization's support services for individuals with lung cancer.
- **Patient Advocacy:** Former Chicago Bears linebacker Chris Draft shared his personal experience losing his wife to lung cancer and his efforts to support research through the Chris Draft Family Foundation.

ChicagoCHEC 9th Annual Community Forum: A Platform for Community Voices

NOVEMBER 2024

On November 15, over 150 attendees gathered at the Arturo Velazquez Institute for the ChicagoCHEC 9th Annual Community Forum, a dynamic event themed “Nothing About Us Without Us: Community-Driven Cancer Solutions.” The forum created an inclusive space for individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together, share experiences, and voice perspectives on cancer prevention and care.

The day was filled with meaningful discussions, workshops, and presentations, all emphasizing the importance of community involvement in addressing cancer disparities. Attendees contributed ideas and insights, cultivating a collective commitment to creating equitable solutions. The event celebrated collaboration and empowerment, bringing together people from all walks of life to shape the future of cancer care.

Lurie Cancer Center staff had the opportunity to connect with over 60 community members to discuss cancer prevention, screening, and resources. These conversations underscored the value of direct engagement and the power of shared knowledge in driving change. The sense of unity and purpose was palpable throughout the day, as community members, advocates, and organizations engaged in thoughtful dialogue and resource sharing. The event showcased the strength of community-driven efforts, reminding us that progress is best achieved when all voices are heard.

We are proud to have been part of this inspiring event and look forward to continuing to support spaces where communities lead the charge for change.





Movember Men's Health Event Brings Wellness to the Bronzeville Community

NOVEMBER 2024

The “Walk It Like Ya’ Talk It” Men’s Health Event, held in Bronzeville on Saturday, November 16, 2024, was a dynamic celebration of brotherhood and well-being. The event, hosted by the Lurie Cancer Center in partnership with Near North Health and The Man Cave, emphasized the importance of mental and physical health for men of all ages.

The day’s activities, held at the Komed Holman Health Center, were a blend of fitness, self-care, and meaningful conversations. The event kicked off with a morning warm-up, followed by an invigorating fun run and walk led by Michael Muffy Collins, the founder of Run from Prostate Cancer. Participants enjoyed a scenic route on the Drexel trail, fostering connections and camaraderie. The run/walk concluded at the new Northwestern Medicine Outpatient Care Center on 48th and Cottage Grove.

The excitement continued with a lively cooking demonstration by Chef Yuri from Common Threads. Chef Yuri showcased how to transform simple ingredients like sweet potatoes, apples, and Brussels sprouts into a vibrant, healthy hash. The demonstration encouraged participants to embrace creative and nutritious cooking with readily available ingredients.

Meanwhile, barber stations buzzed with activity as attendees received complimentary haircuts and facial grooming in honor of No Shave November, a thoughtful touch of self-care appreciated by many attendees. Throughout the event, participants explored vendor tables featuring organizations such as GRO Community,

Meridian, Run from Prostate Cancer, and behavioral health services from The Man Cave, giving them the opportunity to connect with support available in their neighborhood.

The day culminated with a delicious lunch provided by Catering Out the Box and a candid men’s circle conversation facilitated by Drs. Fred Long and Obari Cartman. The conversation covered important men’s health topics and featured panelists Dr. Dan Vicencio (Near North) and Dr. Adam Murphy (Northwestern Medicine).

The “Walk It Like Ya’ Talk It” event exemplified the power of community and collaboration. Attendees left with full stomachs, fresh haircuts, new knowledge, and strengthened connections. The event was a resounding success, proving to be a meaningful celebration of men and their well-being.





COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Advocates for Community Wellness: A Holistic Approach to Health

Dale Cain began her wellness journey over 25 years ago while working full-time in the corporate world and raising her son as a single mother. After noticing the impact that improving her nutrition had on her overall well-being, Dale realized she had found her passion and began her journey to becoming a nutrition expert.

In 2003, Dale founded Advocates for Community Wellness, a faith-based organization dedicated to providing health and wellness resources to under-served communities in the Chicagoland area, and later focused efforts on the Auburn-Gresham, Englewood, Roseland communities and the surrounding neighborhoods. While leading a nutrition class for diabetic patients, Dale met Regina Hopkins, who was a registered nurse during that time at Lawndale Christian Health Center. The pair bonded over their shared dedication to improving the lives of those in their community. Shortly after, Regina, now a family nurse practitioner, joined Advocates for Community Wellness as a health educator and now serves as the Director of Health Education and board vice-president.

Alongside fellow board members, Dale and Regina have grown Advocates for Community Wellness into an invaluable resource for their community. With a focus on holistic wellness, the organization provides a range of services and educational programs on topics such as nutrition, chronic disease management, cancer support and survivorship, self-advocacy, women's health and mental health promotion. The organization offers health education forums, nutrition programs, resource navigation and hands-on cooking classes.

In 2015, Dale was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer, a diagnosis that both her mother and grandmother had also received. Dale's treatment was grueling, but she remained steadfast in her efforts to focus on holistic wellness, often traveling outside of her community to the suburbs for supportive care. Despite having one of the highest rates of cancer in the city, Auburn-Gresham did not offer the resources Dale needed.

In response, Dale and Regina decided to make a change. With support of a grant from Gilead Sciences, Advocates for Community Wellness developed a 9-week program for patients diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer, anywhere along the treatment continuum. The program provides participants with expert education on plant-based nutrition, emotional wellness and support, the importance of exercise. The program also offers linkages to various local and national resources for financial support and other holistic supportive services.

In 2024, Advocates for Community Wellness estimates they have provided education to over 5,000 people, including 180 cancer survivors whom they have provided with holistic support and financial assistance. In collaboration with the Lurie Cancer Center and other local institutions, they've hosted their first annual E3 (Empower, Eliminate, Equip) to End Cancer Summit, an educational event providing Chicagoans with information from top clinicians for holistic approaches to cancer prevention, screening, and treatment. This and other partnerships helped Advocates for Community Wellness extend their reach and impact.

In 2025, Dale and Regina aim to increase their focus on the importance of mental health and expand their 9-week cancer survivorship support program. In addition, they also hope to secure their own brick and mortar location for the organization. This will be the ideal space for program expansion to house community events, wellness activities for families, a state-of-the-art cooking kitchen and a wellness resource hub on Chicago's south side. To fund these initiatives, the pair will start the year seeking funding through grant applications, donations, and collaborative partnerships.

The Lurie Cancer Center is proud to work with Advocates for Community Wellness. The organization is an invaluable resource in its community and an inspiration to us all. We look forward to a successful collaboration in 2025!





Participants at the ChicagoCHEC 9th Annual Community Forum

Lurie Cancer Center has a long-standing history of commitment to advocacy, education, outreach and engagement. Our community partnerships and programs aim to identify and address barriers to cancer health equity and improve outcomes in traditionally underserved neighborhoods. Working together with new and existing organizations in our communities, our efforts include:

- Expanding awareness and improving access to cancer services, treatment and clinical trials
- Providing up-to-date information and community-based screening programs to reduce cancer risk and increase early detection
- Identifying the social and economic challenges in underserved neighborhoods to guide our efforts
- Developing educational resources to improve health literacy and raise awareness about follow-up and survivorship care
- Advocating for public policy changes to ease the burden of cancer
- Supporting healthy lifestyle changes to reduce cancer risk

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