



ON THE HEALING JOURNEY: DEFINING OUR PAIN AND RECLAIMING OUR COMMUNITY

For Immediate Release

February 29, 2008. Brooklyn, NY. The Youth Empowerment Mission, Inc. (YEM) hosted an insightful panel and community discussion on mental health, *Killing Us Softly: The Impact of Depression in the Black Community*, on Wednesday, February 27, 2008.

Dedicated to providing young people and families in high-risk environments with real alternatives to violence and delinquency, YEM created the forum to shed light on the impact of mental health in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and many urban communities at large. According to Isis Sapp-Grant, YEM's Founder and Executive Director, "Depression is at the root of many deeper problems in our community and the only way to solve the problem is to first admit that we have one."

Keynote guest Terrie Williams, celebrated author and founder of the Terrie Williams Agency, opened with a personal testimony of her battle with clinical depression. As a social worker, public relations advisor and author of newly-released book *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting*, Williams responded to the (introductory) mention of her being a 'healer' by clarifying, "I am a *wounded* healer, and so is everyone on this panel. We have seen and gone through the fire, and made it to the other side. We have to share our stories to heal those who still hide their own. That's the only way this can work."

Identified by policymakers as a "distressed community", Bedford-Stuyvesant suffers from a number of environmental factors that can lead to poor mental health, such as poverty, violence and substance abuse. Moderator Alfonso Wyatt, Vice President of the Fund for the City of New York, kept the audience and panel engaged with his thought-provoking statistics and a compelling call to action. The distinguished panel included: Psychotherapist Jeffrey Cox, LCSW; Moyosore Paupau, LMSW, CPT; Anita Thomas, LCSW and Isis Sapp-Grant, LMSW. Select government officials, representatives and community leaders also came to support.

After a heartfelt discussion, guests participated in a resource fair, where materials on crisis intervention and mental health treatment were provided by select community non-profit organizations. *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting* was also for sale and author signing.

This event is included in a year-long series to raise awareness about the issues facing youth and families of central Brooklyn, and to promote the health and wellness of all community members.

To learn more about YEM's 10th Anniversary "A Second Chance: Making Good on a Promise" 2008 campaign, visit www.girlsblossom.org and contact Trina Morris, Style Root Inc. 718.789.9290 / trina@style-root.com.

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