



# Passing On Wisdom

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## Abstract

African-American women have a low use rate of mammograms and other early detection tools.<sup>1</sup> In order to address this problem, the Health Promotion Department at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) created a one time educational program called Passing On Wisdom. This program was presented to five senior centers.

This program is meant to increase knowledge and awareness of breast health in the low-income African-American women population, who are over the age of 65. The program used Witnesses who are breast cancer survivors, a breast health PowerPoint presentation, and an informational packet with various breast health information to meet the program objectives.

The goals were measured by using a program evaluation survey. Many participants reported an increase in knowledge gained on breast health topics.

## Background Information

The breast cancer mortality rate has decreased for African-American women, but these women still have significantly lower rates of mammography use. Due to those reasons, this population has higher rates of late-stage breast cancer at diagnosis than white women. Therefore, the 5 year survival rate of African-American women is still behind Caucasian women.<sup>1</sup>

Zip Codes	Number of AA Women Who Had A Mammogram in the Last Year	% of AA Women 55+ in this Zip Code
19121 & 19123	3,213	64.7%
19132	4,273	82.6%
19139	3,733	58.6 %
19143	6,023	74.6%

**Table 1: African-American Women, Age 55+, who had a mammogram in the last year in five targeted Philadelphia zip codes.<sup>4</sup>**

Passing on Wisdom is a two part program that targets low-income African-American women in five Philadelphia senior centers. These senior centers are located in North and Southwest Philadelphia. The first part of this educational program was conducted in May 2011, prior to Mother's Day. The program had Witnesses sharing their personal breast cancer experience, to encourage their peers to get mammograms. Studies have found that peer to peer education on breast cancer increases the likelihood of women getting breast cancer screenings.<sup>2</sup>

The second part will be conducted in October during Breast Health Awareness Month. The project director will see if the educational program increased mammogram screenings. Only the first part of this project will be discussed.<sup>2</sup>

This educational program is based on another breast health intervention program named *The Witness Project*. This is a theory-based program specifically targeting African-American women in community centers and churches.<sup>3</sup>



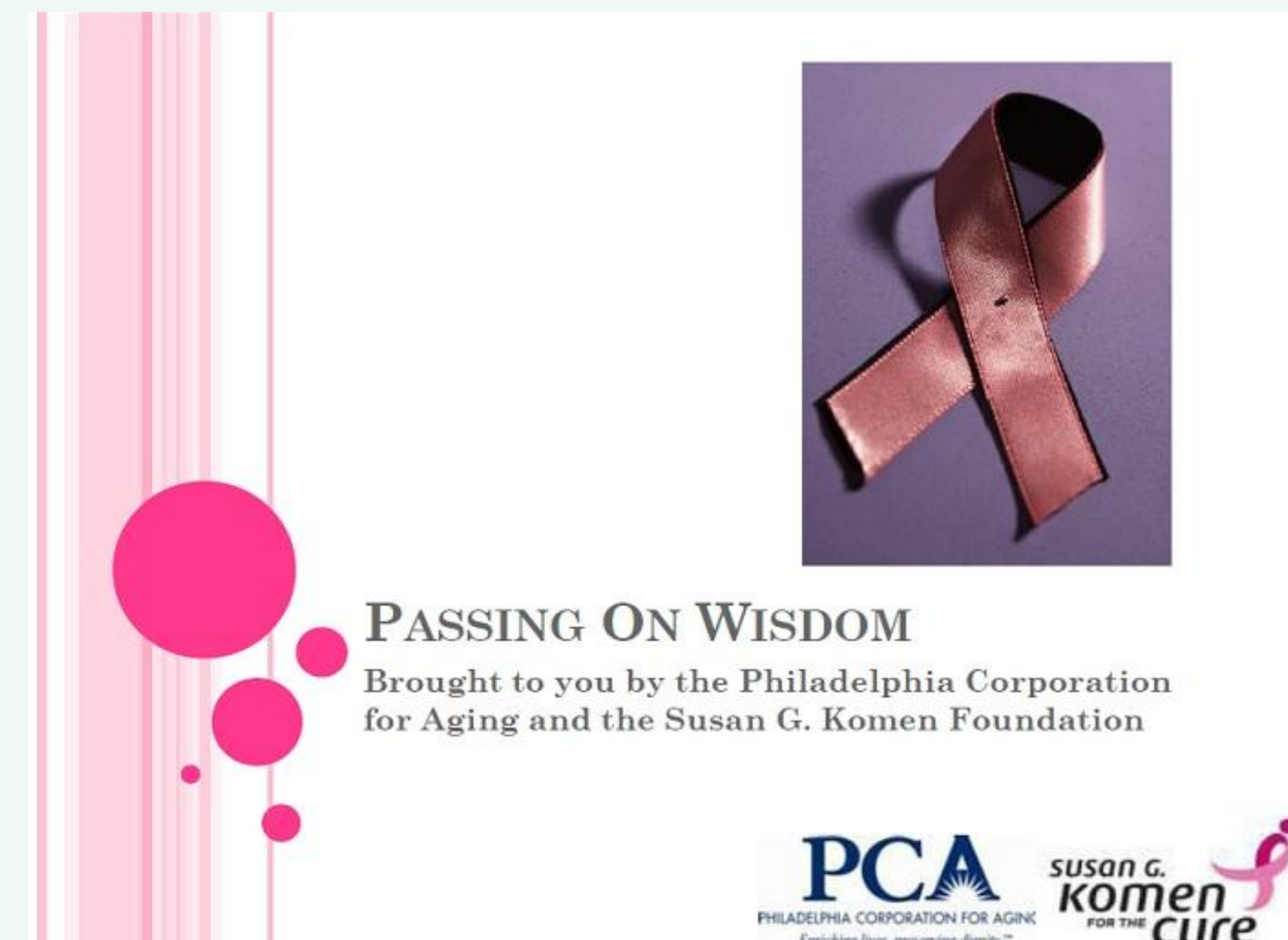
**Last Passing On Wisdom event at Honickman Learning Center on May 6, 2011**

## Objectives

- Recruit a minimum of 500 low-income African-American participants in North and Southwest Philadelphia.
- Recruit a minimum of ten Witnesses from targeted communities.
- Report participants who gained 7/10+ knowledge during the presentation.
- Report participants taking at least 2 additional informational handouts.
- Present motivational educational program at 5 senior centers.

## Methods

- Witnesses sharing their stories
- Breast Health PowerPoint presentation
- Breast Health information packets and handouts
- Tumor size bead visual
- Program evaluation survey



**Above: The PowerPoint presentation presented breast health information on risk factors, symptoms, clinical breast exams, self breast exams, and mammograms.**

**Left: One of the handouts that was distributed to the participants.**

## Results

- There were a total of 208 participants.
- Two of the events were held directly at senior centers and the other two were at another location.
- Two Witnesses were recruited from the Susan G. Komen Foundation.
- The survey found that 84.43% of the participants reported 7/10+ knowledge gained during the presentation. Only 167/208 participants completed the survey.
- All participants received an information packet on self breast exam, mammograms and questions to ask their doctors.
- There were also 10 different handouts on the information table. However, participants did not take many handouts.

## Recommendations

- Recruit more participants by :
  - Holding the educational program directly at each senior center.
  - Marketing the event more than 3 weeks prior to the event.
- Include all information in the premade information packet, so all educational materials are distributed.
- Assign more than one person to the project from the very beginning of the project.
- Discuss this project with senior centers to see if they are willing to accommodate for this event before applying for the grant, in order to ensure cooperation.

## Conclusion

This was Part I of Passing On Wisdom. The events were successful in increasing the participants' knowledge on breast health. However, certain objectives were not met, such as getting a minimum of 500 participants. This project will be completed by November 2011.

## Acknowledgements

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