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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Life’s Simple 7” Health and Activity Event for Seat Pleasant Seniors a Tremendous Success for Mayor Eugene W. Grant and the Health Empowerment Network of Maryland, Inc.

About fifty City of Seat Pleasants seniors attended a health event “Life’s Simple 7” put on last Saturday, February 11th at Faith Temple #2 Church by Mayor W. Eugene Grant and members of the community based organization, Health Empowerment Network of Maryland, Inc. All senior participants were treated to a healthy lunch prepared by members of the school community and fruit and drinks courtesy of Jason’s Deli located in College Park. The focus of the event was a series of health screenings which were conducted by volunteers.

Mayor Eugene W. Grant began the day’s event by delivering opening remarks and provided some history about the partnership between The City of Seat Pleasant: A City of Excellence and the University of Maryland’s School of Public Health which began in 1999. “Our efforts to close this vast health disparity gap in Prince George’s County is coming into fruition, with local community focused events such as these, building community awareness around health care options and bringing strong partners into the Health Empowerment Network of Maryland, Inc., which is honored to have such a robust health care partner with the University of Maryland’s School of Public Health and having the support of national organizations such as the American Heart Association, there is no stopping progress and providing better care to our constituents,” stated Mayor Eugene W. Grant. The Mayor then introduced Professor Sharon Desmond who has worked with the community alliance since its beginning.

Dr. Desmond at the University of Maryland’s School of Public Health provided blood glucose (blood sugar), blood pressure and body fat screenings. Three individuals who had their blood glucose level checked learned their blood sugars were too high, meaning they could have type II diabetes and need to follow-up with their doctor. Seven million people in the United States are currently living with undiagnosed diabetes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011) and it is screenings like the one we had at Faith Temple #2 Church which help people learn they may have diabetes. Dr. Desmond stated, “I was thrilled we were able to identify three people who did not know they may have diabetes. Knowledge is power and these three people can now take the needed steps to improve their health. Also, finding out earlier rather than later increases their chances of not developing the serious complications associated with diabetes.” She also went on to inform attendees it is important to know if you have diabetes so you can prevent or reduce the very serious complications diabetes can cause, such as: heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage and amputations. The earlier you find out, the sooner you can begin practicing the healthy behaviors that help control your diabetes, such as eating a diet low in saturated fats and sugars and exercising on a regular basis. You can definitely live a happy, healthy life with diabetes because millions of people are doing that every day.

Reverend Gail Harris-Berry, Ambassador for the American Heart Association, shared her amazing story of survival from a major heart episode and stressed the importance of heart health to senior residents attending the event. “It was an excellent event, I hope we can do this health event on an annual basis”

stated Roberta Coleman, a senior who lives in the City of Seat Pleasant and participant at the event.

Event activities organizer, Gloria S. Friedgen, with the Alumni Affairs and Outreach Office at the University of Maryland's School of Public Health, "Was excited to collaborate with Mayor Eugene Grant and the City of Seat Pleasant: A City of Excellence on a project that uses mobile phones and text messaging in supporting healthy behaviors of senior citizens." One health screening included, Dr. Robert Gold, Dean, who demonstrated how text messaging could be utilized by seniors, sending simple messages reminding folks about "Life's Simple 7," a program to learn about heart health and information/tips on what one can do to live better. Participants would receive approximately three messages per week over a three month period that would be both informational and motivational.

Sylvette LaTouche-Howard, PhD and a student at UMD, gave some background about the study and encouraged those present to sign up. Another activity which took place was increasing one's physical activity. This is one of the messages that was emphasized and to get the senior participants pedometers were passed out to, these devices measure the number of steps taken on a daily basis. Taylor Graham, Morgan Wallace and Jessica Lowy, all students from the University of Maryland lead the group in some great dance moves to show that physical activity can be lots of fun. "This health event was marvelous, I learned a lot and will incorporate the health tips gained here at my home, in everyday life and activity" stated senior participant Penny Edwards who did 1,147 steps during the workout activity portion of the health event, beating out all the other participants.

Gloria Friedgen, event organizer also included, "The potential for improving health behavior of seniors in Seat Pleasant took a step forward today. The enthusiasm of Mayor Grant and the excitement of those present was heartwarming on a very cold day!" Ms. Friedgen also wanted to remind all Seat Pleasant seniors over 50 years of age and that have a cell phone they can receive health related and helpful text messages. To participate contact the University of Maryland School of Public Health at (301) 405-1362 or email gsf@umd.edu.

Eugene W. Grant, elected in 2004, is currently serving his 8th year as Mayor of Seat Pleasant: A City of Excellence. During his 8 years as mayor, he has successfully tripled the size of the Police Department, reduced crime by 33%, improved the infrastructure of the city, ended each year with a surplus and raised thousands of dollars for the local elementary school. Mayor Grant serves as the Chairman of the Board for Health Empowerment Network of Maryland, Inc., President of the Maryland Black Mayor's Community Development Corporation, Inc., Chief Executive Officer for Global Developmental Services for Youth, Inc. and a member of numerous other organizations both domestically and internationally. You can follow Mayor Grant on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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