January 2017

Spiritually Speaking Prayer Breakfast
We broke the winter blues with a Prayer Breakfast that was well-attended, with a level of worship that was so powerful, a window of healing literally opened. Our motivational speaker was Rowena Rodriguez, who stirred the guests with her story of how she had to overcome many hurdles in her life. Our keynote speaker, Pastor Bridget James gave a strong, inspiring message of hope to the guests, which included many cancer survivors.

February 2017

Golden Girls Project

In February, we went once again to the TAIBU Community Health Centre in Malvern for another of our Golden Girls “Seniors Rockin’ It Out” music therapy sessions. This was a group information and story-telling program funded by the Government of Ontario's Seniors Community Grant Program, to encourage seniors in our black and ethnic communities to share their health history and medical information with their younger generations. We presented the ladies with a My Ancestry Health Tree (much like a family tree) where they were asked to fill in any known health history info and share it with their children, grandchildren, etc.

August 2017

One Dream – Survivors Walk of Hope

On a beautiful, sunny but mild Saturday morning in August, a group of motivated survivors and their friends gathered to walk in solidarity with The Olive Branch Of Hope to increase awareness and to raise funds for more targeted research on Breast Cancer that could very well save our own lives. Special thanks to Fairmont Royal York Hotel, White Oaks Resort & Spa (Niagara-On-The-Lake), Marriott Toronto Airport Hotel, Sun Life Financial, Vivah Jewellery for their generous donations of prizes, and Chloré Beauty Supply for equipping each participant with a Chloré Gift Bag.
October 2017

Cup For The Cure

October marked the month in which we launched our annual Cup For The Cure event. The ladies came out “dressed to impress”, as prizes were awarded for the Best Dressed Attendee, as well as the Best Decorated Table (complete with settings for tea). It was not only an evening of fun enhanced by lots of awesome baked goodies and tea, but we also learned about the healing properties of tea, the power of vulnerability and getting back on track after life attempts to de-rail you. The ladies had such a great time that they were already planning for the next one in October 2018! Kudos to the lovely Keisha Garcia, owner of Divine Designs & Décor Studio, for creating a beautifully decorated desserts table, complete with delightful cupcakes, etc.

November 2017  Think Beyond ‘Love Pink’ Symposium

In November, we hosted our Annual Think Beyond ‘Love Pink’ Symposium at the Toronto Public Library in Downsview. Our attendees were privy to valuable information shared by our guest speakers Dr. Nadine Wong, Dietician Pauline Wisdom-Gillian, Dr. Blessing Bassey-Archibong and Life Strategist Donnaree Tucker.

November 2017  Worship In Pink

November also marked the inaugural of Worship In Pink. The event was held at Revival Time Tabernacle in Downsview and was hosted by Magdalene John of 100 Huntley Street and Pastor Michelle Jeremie of Victory In The Word Outreach. Worship In Pink allows us to reach out to our churches as, generally people of African Ancestry are a people of faith. As such it is impossible to separate us from the faith that has brought us through many dangers toils and snares. It is the reliance on our faith that gives us the strength to endure. It is our faith that allows us to open up and embrace the many diverse cultures that make up this city and all of Canada. For the first time in Toronto, we joined our hearts together in a crescendo of praise and in an atmosphere of freedom, as we invoked the healing power of God and opened up a river of hope to all who wished to experience a touch from heaven.

On Sunday, November 19th, our ladies from the Peel Region also hosted their Celebrate Life Brunch for survivors. This was held at the Destiny Banquet Hall & Convention Centre in Woodbridge. Our guest speaker was Ms. Korrie Silver, who delivered quite profound speech to the gathering. Guests were also treated to renditions by Rhyann Taylor, a wonderful and very talented young man, enhancing what was an enjoyable evening.
December 2017

Faith Under Fire – Breakfast & Health Seminar

We culminated our activities for 2017 in beautiful, sunny Barbados where we hosted a Breakfast & Health Seminar at the Almond Bay Conference Centre. This seminar was the brainchild of our Co-Founder & CEO, Ms. Leila Springer and featured guest speakers Dr. Juliet Daniel, Professor at McMaster University in Hamilton and Dr. Lucille Baird. The event marked the launch of our Caribbean Breast Cancer Assistance Program to reach across the Caribbean and assist women who are currently in treatment and their family members. At this event, we provided 115 vouchers to allow underprivileged women to get mammograms.

There was an overwhelming response towards raising funds for the Barbados project, particularly from the Barbadian diaspora in North America, Barbados Ball Aid and the Barbados Canada Foundation, Barbados Canadian Bowling League and the Road Runners Bowling league as well as our friends and loyal supporters. We also took the opportunity to honour Dr. Shirley Jhagroo, Chair of the Barbados Breast Screening Project, in recognition of her efforts in the field of breast cancer awareness and early detection for the women of Barbados.

Thank you to all who came alongside us and partnered with our vision in any way.

All in all, it was a great year for The Olive Branch, amidst many challenges. We witnessed the launching of new projects as we sought new ways to support our community. We also welcomed the shift in leadership and new members on our Board. This bodes well for the direction we are headed in to be a beacon of hope to the many who are diagnosed with breast cancer.