The Olive Branch of Hope is a non-profit charitable organisation founded by breast cancer survivors in 1999 and incorporated in 2001. At the Olive Branch of Hope we provide help and information to newly diagnosed individuals and their families who are seeking help and support at this difficult time. We are concerned about the whole person, mind, body and soul not just their cancer.

In the bid to provide these care services for all, we initiated the think beyond love pink project. This newsletter will focus on the project and the progresses made during the 12months of its existence.
The Think Beyond Love Pink Breast Cancer Awareness campaign is designed by the Olive Branch of Hope, funded by the Women's Xchange Program at Women's College Hospital and conducted in partnership with Dr. Juliet Daniel of McMaster University, The Black Health Alliance, The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, HERC (The Health Equity Research Collaborative), and Taibu Community Health Care to raise awareness of Cancer Breast and Health among women of African Ancestry (WAA).

ABOUT THE THINK BEYOND LOVE PINK PROJECT

The job we do matters to every African Woman of African Ancestry

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our hypothesis is that a culturally-relevant breast cancer awareness education campaign would influence change in health practices in premenopausal WAA.

PROJECT GOAL

To develop and execute a breast awareness and education program that targets young (age 18-45).
THE APPROACH

The main method was focused around outreach and education. Based on the above stated priority our main activities are as follows:

. The Community Workshops and Symposiums

The workshops took place in all three different areas of the GTA and included a zumbathon to actively engage participants in fun exercise and encourage WAA to embrace and pursue healthy lifestyles. The workshop/information session themes included: (i) Healthy nutrition (ii) Healthy Lifestyle options (exercise, not smoking), (ii) Intro to Cancer and Breast Cancer terminologies (iv) Pros and Cons of naturopathic/herbal remedies and drug interactions and (v) Life after BC with BC survivors

Survey

Women of African Ancestry were encouraged to be recruited in a benchmark survey to determine their knowledge and understanding of breast health and breast cancer prior to involvement in our "Think Beyond Love Pink" campaign
OUR SPONSORS

McMaster University

Fondation CURE Foundation
PROJECT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All three workshops were of interest to participants and for everyone held, it was obvious that these survivors benefitted a lot from it. They constantly showed enthusiasm to learn more and be fully knowledgable about the pros and cons of breast Cancer and how one can survive with it or better still prevent it.

It was further evident that programs like these are needed and must be ongoing. Therefore, it is recommended that the program is funded in other to continue with the work.

Policies and practices within the health care system that are inclusive to the unique needs of the vulnerable group- of women of African Ancestry are much needed. Cancer treatments need to be tailored to the genetic biological make up of groups that are most at risk of getting aggressive types of cancer so that treatments can be designed to increase their chances of survival.

Lastly, the saliva collection and research is still ongoing and aims to find possible solutions in providing preferred treatment for women of African ancestry. However more funds need to be provided to complete this research.
CONCLUSION

It is evident that the importance of this project cannot be over emphasized. The participants have a genuine desire to have it ongoing and believe that they can continually benefit from it.

I believe that we can continually achieve a lot and bring the much needed awareness and relevance to the struggles of women of colour.