

Community Conversations Pay Off!

Q Health Connections is proud to announce they have formed a partnership with several professors at St. Thomas University in the Communications & Journalism Department.

In early January, Craig Bryan, a St. Thomas professor, was having his hair cut by a Q Health Connections community partner, Peggy Schmidt owner of the MN School of Barbering. While cutting hair, Ms. Schmidt was talking about an upcoming campaign she is involved in with Q Health Connections and LifeSource which will utilize barbers as health educators. Her excitement was evident to Mr. Bryan and he wanted to learn more about the campaign and Q Health Connections.

When contacted by Mr. Bryan, Clarence Jones, Q Health Connections Director, informed him about the basics of the campaign and mentioned Q Health Connections is always interested in collaborating. This was exactly what Mr. Bryan had in mind, as the Spring semester was about to start, he knew his first year advertising students would need a 'real life' project to work on. He thought there would be no better project for them than one that would benefit the community.

After meeting with Jones and his colleagues, the plan for the students' work began to form and everyone left the meeting excited and energized. The students will have a crucial role in the development of messages, lay outs, themes and logo development. To compliment their work, the Public Relations students will work with their professor, Betsy Anderson, to develop key message points, newsletters, media plans and press releases. It will be an opportunity for both first and second year PR students to get practical experience and learn more about the health field.

The goal of the Barbershop Campaign is to utilize a trusted source of information in the community, the barbers, as health educators who will assist their clients with health information and resources. The barbers will focus on hypertension, diabetes and weight loss/stress management as their key messages. They will also learn more about the disparities in organ and tissue transplantation/donation and how the aforementioned diseases play a role in the discrepancy.

Everyone at Q Health Connections is thrilled about the opportunity to partner with St. Thomas' faculty and students. The students' work will be catalysts for changes that will impact people, families and the whole community and their efforts and the efforts of their instructors should be applauded.