

## Harlem Sole 5K Raises Funds for the DEP at Metropolitan Hospital



**Left Photo:** Jenee Gooden (2022) rocks her Harlem Sole 5K T-shirt.

**Right Photo:** Donating the check raised from the first Harlem Sole 5K is Damien Pickett, MPH, MS (2023), (center), with April Alexander, Director of Human Resources at Metropolitan Hospital (left), and Consuelo Dungca, EdD, RN, Chief Quality Officer, and Director of The Diabetes Prevention and Education Program at the hospital.

On September 5th, 2020, The Pinkett Foundation (TPF), a 501c3 philanthropy founded by 2023 student Damien Pinkett, MPH, MS, partnered with NYCPM's SNPMA chapter to host the first annual Harlem Sole 5K, a race dedicated to raising funds to combat diabetes, raise awareness, and increase prevention and education in Harlem, NYCPM's home: a city in which the disease disproportionately affects the African-American community and exacts a horrific toll.

Originally intended to be a physical race in Riverbank State Park, the race was run virtually. Damien Pinkett worked with students John Harris (2023), Jenee Gooden (2022), Stephan Joseph (2022), Sharisse Victor (2022), Janet Isaiah (2022) and Jennifer Alegun (2022), and with the help of 23 runners, three donors, and the Custom Ink company (producer of the race's fundraising T-shirts), the Harlem Sole 5K raised \$347.40 for the Diabetic Prevention and Education Program at Metropolitan Hospital, with which NYCPM is affiliated and which serves the community of East Harlem. Damien Pinkett presented the monetary donation to Metropolitan on October 8th, 2020.

### ***Here is Damien Pinkett's own description of the genesis of Harlem Sole 5K:***

The Pinkett Foundation is the 501c3 I started late last year, with an official registry date of January 2020. I established it to be my philanthropic outlet dedicated to service. I have always been one to volunteer in my community, specifically the African-American community and other underserved populations such as our homeless siblings, our domestic and sexual abuse survivors, and our families with disabilities.

Diabetes, in general, harms Native-Americans and African-Americans the most in this country, and it is

*continued on next page*

## **Harlem Sole 5K Raises Funds for the DEP at Metropolitan Hospital, *cont'd***

---

mostly related to poverty and food deserts, which come with other underlying causes themselves. But because of this fact, diabetes has been something I've been exposed to for a long time. However, it wasn't until I was almost done with my second master's program here in Harlem (Touro), that I learned about podiatry. During the time I was completing my application for NYCPM, I met a person at Bible study who lost his leg due to diabetes, and in the middle of the night one day, he got out of bed and forgot. He ended up paralyzed from the waist down, and for whatever reason we started to talk after class. We ended up befriending each other and on a couple of occasions, I met him in the park to workout. It was then that I developed the passion to fight this debilitating disease that directly troubles my community.

The idea of the Harlem Sole 5K actually came from a meeting I had with Dr. Loretta Logan. She mentioned to me that when she was a student, they held a race as a fundraising opportunity. One of my goals when I came to school, having been exposed to SNMA and SNPMA programs previously, was to become the President of our chapter. I workshopped the name for a race with a couple of my classmates and Harlem Sole resonated with me the most. I reached out to one of my friends from undergrad who is a dental student at Tufts, and a former D1 track athlete. She, along with her friend, started a 5K race in their hometown of Atlanta, Georgia; I picked their brains to see what I needed to do. I then came back to my classmates, especially the SNPMA E-Board (John Harris, Jenee Gooden, Stephan Joseph, Sharisse Victor, Janet Isaiah, and Jennifer Alegun) and spoke at length about the idea. Covid-19 changed our plans this year, but as originally conceived, I wanted to make sure that this race would be annual!

After calling and calling the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation to try to secure a location in Riverbank State Park, I was told we would not be able to reserve space. The race had been in the works for a while, but in March, I put the planning on hold to find out more about the virus, and then picked it back up in June to plan and execute the race on Sept 5th.

I can say I was a little optimistic that we would all be back to normal by then (and now, to be honest), but once I heard "no," it was time to shift gears. I thought that since we have students (and friends) all over the world, why not try to do something online through social media? We raised funds to donate to the Diabetes Prevention and Education Program at Metropolitan Hospital via the creation of T-shirts. Individuals could donate and receive a shirt or just sign up and run. We had over 20 people sign up and were able to raise over \$340 dollars to donate directly to the DPE Program. We used hashtags on Instagram and posted pictures to raise awareness of the race and during the race. There was no winner among the participants, although our own Will Stallings (2023) had the best time. The true winners are the patients who will be participating in the DPE Program, which is an accredited Diabetes Center of Excellence for providing high-quality, evidence-based education to patients with diabetes.