URU THE RIGHT TO BE, INC

The Deadliest Disease in America
Aggressively Addressing Inequalities

Civic Engagement Leadership Program
Expose, Educate, Build collaborative leadership for systematic change to overcome racism in the healthcare delivery system

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WHO WE ARE:

URU The Right to Be, Inc. is a Connecticut based non-profit, education-through-the-arts company. Our mission is to **foster communication and understanding among diverse racial, social and economic groups** about the issues that affect these groups and our community, using the arts to demonstrate that such **communication and understanding is possible**. Our focus areas are race, health, and the environment. We believe that art can define and transform individuals and civilizations, and that the arts are powerful sources of **self-expression, empowerment, and education**.

Our current healthcare project is **The Deadliest Disease in America**, a new documentary film that includes workshops developed to **reduce barriers of access to health care**. **The Deadliest Disease in America** is a thought-provoking film that, together with intensive workshops, highlights clearly the unequal treatment that individuals often receive based on color. This program is used to help community members and health care professionals understand how to identify racism in the health care system, and what to do about it. With both individuals and institutions ready to take responsibility for **overcoming racism** in our society, this is a crucial time to address racial and ethnic inequities in comprehensive health care reform.

OUR PLAN

The Problem

Health outcomes are generally poorest for racial and ethnic minorities. As the U.S. population becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, with the majority of people in the US expected to be racial and ethnic “minorities” by 2050, disparities in our health care system reflect inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, and inequities that we cannot afford. Addressing these health disparities is thus crucial to creating a more efficient, effective, and equitable health care system that supports societal goals of economic productivity, fiscal responsibility, medical effectiveness, and social integration. **The challenge lies in changing minds and societal norms** that allows racism at the individual, organizational, and/or institutional levels to be acceptable. The documentary, **The Deadliest Disease in America**, and accompanying workshops provide a view of these norms and provoke a thoughtful discussion on how these racial barriers can be removed.
"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Vision, Mission, Strategy**

Our vision is to eliminate racism in society.
Our mission is to expose racism in health care delivery.
The strategy we use to realize our vision and accomplish our mission is to empower individuals, through film, workshops, and a leadership program, to take actions at the individual, organizational, and public policy levels in order to overcome racism in health care delivery. We will act as a catalyst to bring together different organizations and individuals who are working towards the same goal: a more humane America.

**Our Goals**

We have launched a national civic engagement tour geared to a diverse group of health care providers, patients, policy makers, health care advocates and community members; anyone with a heartbeat. The project has seven major goals. Five of them are:

1. **Expose** dimensions of racism in the health care system through the showing of a powerful film, “The Deadliest Disease in America”

2. **Conduct** participatory workshops to explore diverse topics related to overcoming racism in health care

3. **Educate** a new group of community leaders and medical professionals, giving them the tools to mobilize their communities for change

4. **Build collaborative leadership** within their community to address one issue towards closing the gap

5. **Implement** a Civic Engagement Leadership Program
**Our Action**

Our workshops foster dialogue and inspire action among a diverse group of health care providers, patients, policy makers, and health care advocates. This educational program provides a unique opportunity to explore such questions as how well the health care system works for racial and ethnic minorities, how should racial and ethnic differences be recognized in order to ensure equality, and what policy and practice changes need to be made in the health care delivery system to address inequities.

We actively engage in the building of community partnerships. We are working with over 60 organizations, ranging from medical schools, hospitals, grassroots community organizations, health care activists, and foundations working to combat all forms of human inequalities. Through these partnerships, we serve as a catalyst for mobilizing and connecting advocacy groups and organizations around the nation that are otherwise working in isolation.

Our community workshops generally last 2-3 hours, beginning with a welcome from the local organizers and a screening of the film. The workshops following the film are selected with the local organizers from a series we have developed with national experts and produce with expert facilitators.

Our Civic Engagement Leadership Program, designed to reinforce the lessons and message they experienced at the initial event, trains community activists through a 10 week to 4 month process. Individuals and representatives from organizations who were involved in organizing the initial event will come together once a week to discuss and identify specific problems to be addressed concerning racism and health care issues. After examining the local community health needs assessment (we will partner with organizations who have already compiled this data), the leadership group will identify a specific need and create a unified project around it.

In addition to community partnerships, we are currently working on a series of articles for publication in medical journals with Dr. Forester Lee, Associate Dean of Yale Medical School.
Civic Engagement Leadership Project

We have come to understand that there is a gap in effective leadership across the country, particularly within the population of 40 and under. This population can be very analytically effective, but do not possess the tools to lead their community. When you bring into this equation the discussion around racism, it can become quite overwhelming.

In addition, leadership models tend to be hierarchical and leader-centric. In today’s environment, a collaborative model is needed where leaders must engage stakeholders as partners and co-creators, otherwise they are ill-equipped to effectively build and sustain relationships that pursue a shared end. Our leadership training action model will do much to stem the feelings of loneliness and isolation, as well create a foundational support system among those attending that will support long-term collaborations, and ultimately work towards uprooting racism.

The initial weeks will explore the concepts of collaborative leadership and how each representative sees themselves as collaborative leaders – where are their strengths and their gaps. In subsequent weeks we will explore this more deeply as representatives discuss critical topics like institutional racism, and then develop a collective project to address specific issues within communities. After examining the local community health needs assessment (we will partner with organizations who have already compiled this data) our group will identify a specific need and create a unified project around that need, organically initiated based on collaborators’ community needs. This will be implemented within organizations and institutions, ultimately multiplying the number of individuals involved.

Throughout the process, URU will assist, advise, coach and lead, when necessary, organizations toward overcoming obstacles and achieving the goal they have designed that is organic to their environment to combat racism in the health care delivery system creating systematic change.
Additional Information

As the country becomes more racially diverse, efforts to provide all citizens with health care must also address equal health care. At the federal level certain health disparities bills such as Kennedy-Jackson (S.1576/H.R.3333) and Solis-Christensen (H.R.3014) address certain aspects of access to care issues amongst the nation’s minorities and impoverished communities. Many national health organizations, federal agencies, as well as state and local groups have incorporated mandates, resolutions, or funding streams that seek to address racial and ethnic health disparities. The nation’s academic institutions and accrediting bodies that are preparing the future workforce of health care professionals are now recognizing the need for appropriate training on cultural competence.

This educational program can help create the forces for policy changes that Congress, state governments, and accrediting organizations are considering to serve the total population in the most efficient, effective, and equitable way.

In addition to working on legislation, we also work on the individual level by offering Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits as well as Continuing Education Credits as additional incentive for community members and doctors to participate in our events.

Following is a partial list of organizations with whom we are working on this project: SEIU, Latinos for National Health Insurance, Coalition of 100 Black Women, Universal Healthcare Foundation, Yale Medical School, Alpha Pi Alpha Fraternity, The Connecticut Health Foundation, The Unitarian Church, Islamic Temples, State Offices of Minority Affairs, Association of Black Women Attorneys, Politicians, The Diversity Leadership Forum, Cicatelli Associates, Working Films, St. Raphael’s Hospital, Redes En Accion, Charter Oak Community Center, Hill Health Community Center, John Martinez School, Omega Psi Pi Fraternity, Negro Business and Professional Women, Concerned Black Men, Opportunity Agenda, Mishken Israel Congregation, Missing Pixel, Naugatuck Valley Community College, and Institute of Social Medicine & Community Health.
Pre-Measure
At the beginning of the workshop participants will be given a brief 10 or 15-item questionnaire to gauge their attitudes and knowledge about healthcare disparities and the link to racism.

Program and Workshop Evaluations
At the end of each workshop participants will complete a 15-item questionnaire to provide feedback on the content and usefulness of the workshop and the quality of the workshop facilitator(s).

At the end of the program participants will be complete a 20-item questionnaire on the workshop experience. This will include the pre-measure items and their general assessment of the entire program.

Post-Program Evaluation
One month after the workshop the participants will be asked to complete a short online survey to see how they internalized and applied the concepts presented during the program. Participants will also be asked to provide a critical incident they experienced after the program that caused them to think about or apply the program concepts.

Our Data Indicates
This program effectively increases awareness of disparities in healthcare based on race or ethnic background. Furthermore, through discussion of strategies to address disparities and instances of racism in the delivery of health care, the program enhances participants' efficacy in responding to these situations. Combined with the heightened sense of efficiency from program participation, increases the likelihood that participants will be motivated to respond or act when they encounter situations in the future.

Overall, vast majorities of program participants:
-Rated the workshop as either good (32%) or excellent (49%); and
-Agreed (40%) or strongly agreed (47%) that they would recommend it to others.
Workshops

Dissecting Contempt

Doctor-Patient Communication

Empowering Community Based Organizations

Fighting for Universal Healthcare

Healing Within: The Social Activist Within You

What Racism Looks Like in the Health Care Delivery System and Why You Should Report It

Organizing for Policy Change: Working with Legislators

Support from Local Foundations

What The Church Can Do
2010 Tour Schedule

January 27, 2010- Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Baltimore, MD
February 20, 2010 – The Franklin Institute; Philadelphia, PA
March 18, 2010- Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN
March 20, 2010 – Duke University Medical School; Durham, NC
April 15, 2010 – Albany Medical College; Albany, NY
April 21, 2010 - Restoration Plaza, Bedford-Stuyvesant; Brooklyn, NY
Friday, April 30, 2010 - The New School; New York, NY
May 5, 2010 – Harlem Stage, New York, NY
May 2010- Detroit, MI
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Quotes

“This is a daring and insightful film that challenges all of us to demand equal treatment of everyone in the American healthcare system.”  Bill Duke, Producer/Director/Writer

“Your film synthesizes centuries worth of discrimination that you can’t argue with ...”  Yance Ford, Series Producer, POV, American Documentary/PBS

“... poignant yet direct ... It is not about health but about racism in healthcare.”  Alan Jenkins, Co-Founder, Opportunity Agenda

“Crystal Emery has produced a remarkable film that challenges us to elevate our health care system and move quickly to ensure that each person gets the care they need.”  Harlan Krumholz, Co-director of Robert Wood Johnson Scholar Program at Yale School of Medicine

“The Deadliest Disease in America put a human face to a problem that hundreds of research studies have found: that people of color receive a lower quality of health care than whites, even when presenting with the same health problems and the same ability to pay for care. This stunning documentary chronicles the real experiences of people of color who faced indignities and discrimination, simply because of the color of their skin. Crystal Emery has created a powerful and insightful film that should be seen by anyone who wants to understand how unequal health care has a profound human and economic toll.”  Brian Smedley, Lead Editor of Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care

"This film is powerful: it will stir you, make you think and re-evaluate. Ms. Emery tells what Latinos have also endured for years in our healthcare system. I hope it will be a catalyst for change in how WE ALL see people different from us. “  Dr. Jaime Torres, Latinos for National Health Insurance
Dear Colleague:

By now you should have received an invitation to attend a special screening of *The Deadliest Disease in America*, produced and directed by filmmaker Crystal Emery – the recipient of the 2009 National Minority Quality Forum/Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust Leadership in Journalism Award. The screening will take place Tuesday, May 19, 2009 at 6pm at the Orientation Theater located in the United States Capitol Visitor Center. Special remarks will be given by Dr. Brian D. Smedley, Vice President and Director of the Health Policy Institute at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and Dr. Pierre Vigilance, the Director of the Washington, DC Department of Health.

This documentary is an extraordinary communications tool for generating the will necessary to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities and to ensure that health equity is an integral component in health reform. Not only will this documentary encourage dialogue among a diverse group of health care providers, patients, policy-makers and health care advocates, but it also will play a pivotal role in raising awareness about the social determinants of health that affect racial and ethnic minority Americans’ health care, as well as the structural barriers in health care delivery.

*The Deadliest Disease in America* follows the story of four individuals, all of whom experienced racism and discrimination in seeking medical care. The film also highlights five organizations throughout the country, from New England to Texas, that are making significant strides in resolving this crisis. This documentary gives voice to many stakeholders joining a wave of activism and a movement for change that has been sweeping across the nation with the ultimate goal of a universal health care system that serves all equally, eliminating disparate treatment based on racial and ethnic differences.

If you have any questions or need additional information, or to RSVP, please feel welcome to contact Kaitlyn O’Connor at urujuliet@aol.com or 203-389-7466.

We hope that your schedule will allow you to attend this very special screening.

With warm regards,

______________________________  ______________________________
Rosa DeLauro                  Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress            Member of Congress
April 2, 2009

Dear Ms. Crystal Emery,

The 2009 Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Spring Health Braintrust event will occur on Tuesday, April 28th, 2009 in Washington, DC. This year's theme is The Emerging Majority and the U.S. Health System: The Paradigm Shift Begins. For your convenience and review, I included a descriptive agenda of the event.

Ms. Emery, I would like to applaud and honor you for your work with the 2009 NMQF/CBC Spring Health Braintrust Leadership in Journalism Award during the Awards Luncheon, which is scheduled to occur at 12:30pm. As the producer and director of The Deadliest Disease in America, you are being recognized for your extraordinary documentary which will surely become a communications tool for generating the political will necessary to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities. Your documentary is one that will encourage dialogue among a diverse group of health care providers, patients, policymakers and health care advocates, raising awareness of the structural barriers in health care delivery. As such, I am confident that your film will empower those in our nation to push for health care reform that truly transforms; and that serves those in our nation equally, regardless of no matter their racial and ethnic backgrounds.

I would be honored if you accepted my invitation to join us on April 28, 2009 during the Awards Luncheon to accept the 2009 CBC Spring Health Braintrust Leadership in Journalism Award. Additionally, you are welcome to participate in all the events of the 2009 Spring CBC Health Braintrust.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact Britt Weinstock, Director of Health Policy, at 202-225-1790. My staff will contact your office regarding this invitation.

Congratulations, Ms. Emery! It is work such as yours which facilitates and supports the work of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust. I am proud to honor you with this well-deserved award.

With warm regards,

Donna M. Christensen
Chair, CBC Health Braintrust
Dear Alston Bannerman Foundation:

Crystal Emery is one of the most extraordinary people I have had the pleasure to meet in my journey as a state senator. Actually, I have known Crystal since she was 16 years old and was an actress in high school. Even at such a young age, she had an effect on those around her, always encouraging people to reach for their dreams. Crystal has a form of muscular dystrophy, and in 2002 she became gravely ill. At that time, those of us within the Connecticut General Assembly had worked with her on numerous projects throughout many diverse Connecticut communities. There words were given in tribute to her:

Be it hereby known to all that the Connecticut General Assembly hereby offers its sincere congratulations to you, Crystal Emery, in recognition of your;

- Contributions to the arts, through your wise and witty plays, and the development and implementation of the Sankofa Cultural Arts Festival,

- Your commitment to community through your breast cancer prevention programs entitled “Woman to Woman – Helping Ourselves,”

- And your dedication to the environment through your education and mentoring programs “This Is Where I Live, Don’t Dump On Me” and the children’s oral health book, Little Man Loses His Tooth.

You have truly made our community a richer place to live. The entire membership extends its very best wishes on this memorable occasion and expresses the hope for continued success. And is given on this day the 17th of November, 2002, at the State Capitol, and it is signed by Kevin Sullivan, President Pro Tem of the state senate, Moira Lyons, the Speaker of the House, and Susan Bysiewicz, the Secretary of the State.

Since that time, Crystal has rebound and overcome the physical limitations that most of us would have given up on. Her national civic engagement tour of the film “The Deadliest
Disease in America” and its accompanying workshops is a testimony to the triumph of the human spirit. Crystal has left her fingerprint on our hearts, and left her hands on the world. She is leader extraordinaire and humanitarian par excellence.

I enthusiastically support her work.

Sincerely,

Toni Nathaniel Harp
State Senator-Tenth District
Dear Colleagues,

Developing quality curriculum materials for cultural competency training remains an ongoing challenge for all of us involved in medical education. Recently, our efforts at Yale were rewarded in collaboration with Crystal Emery, Producer and Director of The Deadliest Disease in America. This remarkable one-hour documentary film probes historical and contemporary themes and stories of racism in health care, witnessed and reported by those whose voices too often are silenced or ignored. A cross section of our medical students viewed a screening and a series of facilitated workshops.

The student feedback after the event was exceptionally positive. To my heartfelt delight, I saw medical students having new conversations and discussions about the connection between racism and healthcare disparities, about the challenges of creating change, about their assumptions and beliefs. This is new and important. At Yale, we have several courses and curricular activities that touch directly on issues of race, culture, and power in healthcare. Despite these well-received events and course offerings, our students rarely, perhaps never, explicitly engage issues and problems of race in healthcare. In viewing The Deadliest Disease in America, students responded as critical, scientifically trained thinkers and as unsure navigators across unexplored terrain. I know they gained insights - certainly about others unlike them, and perhaps about themselves.

Crystal Emery, who heads the production company, URU The Right To Be, Inc., is a well-respected film maker from New Haven. She is also a medical patient with a complex inherited disorder. The powerful messages in her film flow directly from the passionate center of her experience with physicians and healthcare systems. She is also an artist and an activist. The result is a uniquely crafted reflection on roots causes of health disparities in our society.

The Deadliest Disease in America exposes the need for greater cultural competency in hospitals and medical facilities across America and educates us on the necessity for expanded cultural competency skills in contemporary healthcare settings. I encourage you to take a look at this film. You can view trailers at the website - urutherighttobe.org.

I am happy to talk with you further about our students’ experience with this film and the specific setting we created to facilitate their energetic engagement. I highly recommend Crystal Emery and the project, The Deadliest Disease in America, as part of an education program to work to end health disparities.

Sincerely,

Forrester A. Lee, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Assistant Dean of Multicultural Affairs

FAL/ylw
March 24, 2009

To The Alston Bannerman Fellowship:

I am affiliated with two organizations in New Haven, Connecticut: Theta Epsilon Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA); and the New Haven Club of the National Association of the Negro Business and Professional Women’s Club, Inc. (NBPWC). Both are blessed to have worked extensively with Crystal Emery and her organization URU, The Right To Be, Inc. over the last twenty years.

The following summarizes some of the partnerships the AKA and the NBPWC have cultivated with Ms. Emery over the years, and some awards she has received from these organizations:

- In 1988, the NBPWC awarded Crystal the Sojourner Truth Award for her involvement in community-based character building activities, participation in cultural activities, and dedication to encouraging positive perspectives about people of color. Crystal has always served the people of New Haven with goodwill and had, quite early in her career, proven herself a leader among us.

- In 2000, Crystal partnered with AKA to organize a tribute to Thomas Dorsey at the Sankofa Cultural Arts Festival. New Haven had never seen anything like this concert, held at Yale’s historic Battell Chapel. It brought together communities typically separated by social and economic divisions: Yale academics and long-time New Haven residents, music lovers and members of spiritual organizations. Ten of the organizations involved in planning the concert later united with the goal of healing the divisions plaguing our city.

- From 2000 to 2002, AKA partnered with Crystal for a breast cancer project called “Woman to Woman, Helping Ourselves.” Ms. Emery worked with Sorority chapters throughout Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia to complete a record number of mammograms on women of color and teach women in our communities to perform breast self-exams. We were amazed with the results and proud to be affiliated with URU.

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In 2002, AKA presented Crystal the Northeast Region Trail Blazer Award. We typically confer this award on a Sorority member, but we wanted to make an exception and honor Crystal’s work in the community.

In 2007, the NBPWC hosted the healthcare disparities forums Crystal would later use in her film. Crystal’s work gave voice to many who had been treated unfairly by a system that never heard them.

Crystal’s projects always invite people to participate and share their voices. She always involves ordinary members from the community, but puts them in dialogue with people they might not ordinarily communicate with, like doctors from Yale or elected leaders—people who are often difficult to access.

More importantly, Crystal raises consciousness and moves people to action. She doesn’t prescribe which action anyone should take, but empowers people to take control, define their own agendas, and take issues out into their communities. Her programs always give you a set of tools you could immediately apply as an individual, as an organization, as an institution—tools that help you move towards systemic change.

Despite the physical obstacles Crystal experiences, she never gives up: she is an example for us all. Her mantra is, “Ordinary people can do extraordinary things.” She is empowerment in action.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Gomez
Former President
Theta Epsilon Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
New Haven Club of the National Association of the Negro Business and Professional Women’s Club, Inc.
March 4, 2009

Dear Colleague or Funder:

On January 22, 2009 at the Yale School of Medicine I had the uniquely powerful experience of attending a seminar focusing on racism in health care entitled, *The Deadliest Disease in America.* The seminar was conceived and conducted by URU The Right To Be, Inc., a Connecticut based nonprofit organization. URU's executive director, Crystal Emery produced and directed the documentary film that opens the seminar and from which the seminar takes its title. The film had a profound impact on the audience by virtue of its raw honesty in exploring the uncomfortable reality of the power health providers wield over patients in an often subjective manner. In addition the film offers an uncompromising historical perspective on medicine in America highlighting hidden facts critical to an understanding of current medical practice in the context of race. Both medical students and physicians in the audience were surprised that they were not aware of much of this history. The documentary also included honest discussions about health care issues across a wide demographic spectrum bringing together groups that typically do not dialogue with each other in this arena or groups that have been totally excluded or ignored. Not only are the 'broken' aspects of medicine examined in the film but solutions to some of the problems are examined, individuals, organizations and institutions that have implemented creative approaches point the way to what the future of medicine can be if the public becomes involved through hearings, legislative strategies or simply by reporting racism in health care when personally observing or experiencing it.

The film served as a departure point for equally profound discussions in the subsequent breakout workshops conducted by highly skilled professional facilitators as participants shared the implications of healthcare disparities on their careers and their own personal stories of witnessing this type of injustice firsthand on the job. I was amazed at the enthusiasm and diligence with which participants accepted the role of activists in eradicating what they understood as an uncontrolled cancer within the health care system.
As the Yale event this workshop was tailored to providers and lay to support violence prevention in healthcare settings. The SEIU/URJ alliance and other workshops that specifically target how to move legislation on this issue, which I think is the most critical piece of addressing healthcare disparities. Dehumanizing begins early in life and provides quality care, through investing in infrastructure, education, and compensation, and programs. Of quality access and transparency are just a few of the many ways to address healthcare disparities through the healthcare reform legislation and reform. Creating a movement of everyday Americans to speak out on this issue to our members of Congress is CRITICAL.

SEIU’s vision and mission, collaborative leadership and community impact are illustrated in this report. I attended a policy, organization, private sector, and other community organizations believe in SEIU’s work and came together to support this incredible effort. SEIU’s workshops began to ignite change in our communities and constituencies. Participants learn through watching, thinking, and doing through a creative and powerful medium Central Equity is not only a documentary filmmaker, director, and writer on health equity, this is a true community organizer.

I strongly encourage you to watch this film and your foundation will be enriched even further by supporting The Central Equity National.

Sincerely,

Zoe Dixon

SEIU Director, M.S.N.
Lead Field Organizer
SEIU Healthcare
Change That Works—Healthcare Equity Project
(787) 555-1234
info@seuiequity.org
March 6, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter to express my complete support of the work being done by Ms. Crystal Emery and her group URU, The Right To Be, Inc. — especially the project THE DEADLIEST DISEASE IN AMERICA.

For the past 15 years, I have been involved in the process of developing and producing community conversations and public engagement with Public Agenda and as a private vendor throughout the country. With this experience, I was invited to participate in and evaluate THE DEADLIEST DISEASE IN AMERICA event. I was able to observe the film (the conversation starter), the work of the facilitators, the group dynamics, the reactions of the participants, and the potential impact on the larger community. In one word — GREAT!

THE FILM
The film quality was highly professional. The organization, the clarity of its message, the passion of its subjects, as well as the visual and auditory qualities were all superbly done. During the screening, I panned the audience and found that the viewers were fully engaged; this happened throughout the screening.

As the film ended, members of the audience seemed torn between applauding the film’s excellence and/or clarity of message, but also reluctant to express open praise in such a manner because of the seriousness of the message. Thus, they sat in silence for a few seconds until the lights were turned on. At that point Crystal Emery entered the room and it was filled with the sound of applause.

THE FACILITATORS
Each facilitator held a terminal degree either in medicine or in psychology. While they were academically qualified, they were also thoroughly familiar with the discussion content, as well as steeped in group dynamics.

The film had primed participants to lower their defense mechanisms; thus, the discussions were lively, passionate, but controlled. From my observations, all who had something to say were allowed to speak; likewise, the reluctant participants, although few, were also given ample opportunity as the facilitators invited their participations frequently. It has been my experience, that one of the less scientific ways of measuring the success of such sessions has been the reluctance of participants to leave or end the discussions even after time has been called. In all of the breakout sessions, most of the participants were reluctant to move to the large group, as they all had more to say.

THE GROUP DYNAMICS AND POTENTIAL IMPACT
The facilitators made excellent use of the energy of the group, skillfully using information provided by URU to progressively segue from one section to the next, as well as using statements made by
participants to introduce new thoughts or to stretch the thinking of the group. The groups were given scenarios on discussing difficult material, i.e., “What if you observed colleagues or senior colleagues acting in a discriminatory manner?”

Each participant, some more than others, left the session with new information and new lessons on reviewing their practices, their colleagues, their patients, and the medical profession. As such, they are less likely to be people who do “Business as usual.”

**In Sum**
There is a great need for this forum to be shared and these workshops to be held on a larger scale, as the discussion of medical discrimination is vital and real, and true change is needed within medical institutions and offices, as well as hospitals across the country. This message has to be heard, as it is clearly presented in LBU’s THE DEADIEST DISEASE IN AMERICA.

Thus, my organization, THE DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP FORUM, and I fully endorse and support this effort and give it our highest recommendation. This is an excellent community conversation in a much-needed area of public engagement.

Sincerely,

Thomas (Tom), Lovin Brown, PhD
Footer/President, Consultant
Crystal Renée Emery
PO Box 26925
West Haven, CT 06516
(203) 389-8829

Crystal Renée Emery has more than 30 years professional experience in the entertainment industry as a producer, writer and director. She has been part of both stage and screen production teams throughout the United States and Europe. She polished her craft under the tutelage of industry giant Bill Duke ("A Rage in Harlem") and was one of a select group of young directors to work extensively with theater director icon Lloyd Richards ("Piano Lesson"). She has worked in major regional theaters such as Chicago's Goodman Theatre, D.C.'s Kennedy Center, Los Angeles's Dolittle Theatre and New Haven's (Connecticut) Long Wharf Theatre. She holds a BFA from the University of Connecticut, attended NYU film school and completed intensive cinematography classes with Brianne Murphy at UCLA.

She is the Executive Director of URU The Right To Be, Inc. ("URU"), a Connecticut based non-profit organization with a mission of using the arts to foster communication and understanding among diverse racial, social and economic groups across the country. URU champions issues that affect our urban communities such as race, health, and the environment. URU believes that art can define and transform individuals and civilizations, and that the arts are powerful sources of self-expression, empowerment, and education.

Ms. Emery has developed several initiatives and documentary film programs with social impact as the focus. In 1999, she developed a series entitled “This Is Where I Live, Don’t Dump On Me,” designed to inspire environmental responsibility and cultivate problem-solving skills among inner city children; she also produced the “Sankofa Cultural Art Festival-2000,” which brought together nationally renowned Native American, Latino and African-American artists from across the U.S; and she launched “Woman to Woman: Helping Ourselves,” an innovative and highly successful nationwide series of conferences focused on breast health education targeting under-served women in urban communities. She is a published author. Her first children’s book, “Little Man’s Fourth Grade Journey” is currently part of the curriculum in several school districts. Her latest published work (August 2006), “Little Man Loses His Tooth”, has been well received in educational districts spanning the United States.
As a film producer, she directed a short documentary, “A Love Affair to Remember: Brookside”, a look at life inside the Brookside Housing Project of New Haven, debunking social and economic myths that our environment is the sole determining factor of our outcome as members of society.

Most recently, Ms. Emery completed her first feature length documentary, *The Deadliest Disease in America*, an hour-long film conveying historical and contemporary stories of racism witnessed and reported by individuals seeking medical care whose voices have historically been silenced or ignored. In brief, the film exposes how racism in healthcare continues to affect people of color by providing a rare glimpse of the toll that disparities take on families and individuals in our communities. A National Civic Engagement tour accompanies the film, along with a series of nine workshops designed to engage health care providers, patients, policy makers, health care advocates and community activists by giving them the tools to mobilize their communities for change.

She is currently shooting *Jibarro, My Country My Home*, a look at Puerto Rican hill music and its resurgence in the United States. Other works—in-progress include “The Thomas Dorsey Film Project”, a biography of one of the most prolific music composers of our times, and long considered “the father of gospel music”.

Crystal remains undaunted by the many challenges of living with muscular dystrophy, continuing to shape a successful personal and professional life. She is pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Media Studies at The New School for General Studies in New York City.