



## **Two organizations join forces to educate and engage community**

*Central Blood Bank and the August Wilson Center present Bridging the Blood*

**PITTSBURGH, September 24, 2010**—Central Blood Bank, a business unit of The Institute for Transfusion Medicine<sup>sm</sup>, and the August Wilson Center for African American Culture have partnered to address the lack of blood donation in the African American community, especially among those 17 - 35 years of age. To address this issue, the two organizations have partnered to create a multimedia campaign, which will be launched at an event on Saturday, Oct. 2, 2010, at the August Wilson Center, 980 Liberty Avenue, immediately following Pittsburgh's African American Heritage Day Parade, the route of which ends at the Center.

The event will feature a youth-produced public service announcement video premiere, a mixed media visual art exhibition, a mini-documentary premiere, and a special performance by national recording artist "Fantasia." This campaign is being executed because African Americans make up an ever-increasing population of those in need of blood for various health conditions, including sickle cell disease and surgeries, but are only 2.4 percent of the donating public, according to September 2009 reports in the *Archives of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine*.

It has also been reported that one in 400 African Americans is affected by sickle cell disease, a condition that can require frequent blood transfusions. In Pittsburgh, 37 percent of the population is eligible to donate blood, yet less than 3 percent of the population actually donates. Less than 1 percent of these blood donations are from African Americans or Hispanics.

The lack of African Americans donating blood is fueled by a lack of information, miseducation, suspicion and fear. Misinformation and widespread mythology about blood donation and transfusion have fueled a stigma that grips the African American community, said Carla Arnold, Special Products Apheresis Telerecruitment Specialist with Central Blood Bank. While current attitudes toward blood donation are not without historical cause, it is imperative that the community is presented with accurate information on donation, transfusion, and the reasons it is important to donate blood – namely, literally saving the lives of friends, family, and neighbors.

Central Blood Bank and the August Wilson Center are collaborating with Ya Momz House, LLC, a multimedia video production company and Liberation Music, LLC, a music and art education production company, to create a comprehensive approach that will include community education, events, outreach, sustainable practices, and most importantly savvy multimedia components to engage the target population and tear down the walls of incorrect information and fear.

For more information about the upcoming Campaign Launch Event, visit: [www.AugustWilsonCenter.org](http://www.AugustWilsonCenter.org)

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