

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

The Gift of Community

By *JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director*

The gift of community is invaluable.

Typical of the English language, the word “community” can be very ambiguous. Is it the tight-knit circle of your friends? Is it your neighborhood? Does it only include people of the same racial and ethnic backgrounds?



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

Community is whatever resonates with you—its definition can be found in the context of your experience. If you are reading this page, you are part of ABIPA’s community. You are invaluable to our efforts that continue to grow, in this, our 18th year of existence.

We continue to host over 100 events and education sessions per year. We serve more than 7,000 people through individual and group interactions. We have championed the work of Community Health Workers since our inception in 2004. We now have our own Community Health Workers who serve in community and are embedded in care teams at MAHEC.

We have recently joined the Healthy Opportunities pilot program and are offering housing navigation support as well as making deliveries of healthy food boxes to Buncombe, Henderson, and Rutherford Counties. Our goal is to serve greater Western North Carolina through referrals of individuals who receive managed Medicaid through United Health Care, Healthy Blue, Amera Health Caritas, and Well Care.

We take pride in the depth and breadth of our services and the ability to serve in many ways. This year we launched the new podcast “Scrubs and Bow Ties” with Dr. Quinton Cancel and Dr. Johnathan Edwards, two powerful and inspiring Black physicians who elevate the voices and faces of men’s health.

We partnered with Memory Care, the Shiloh Community Association, and Dr. David Johnson to offer foot clinics that truly helped many to step lighter, both conceptually and literally.

We have deepened our collaboration with Shaniqua Simuel and Change Your Palate to offer healthy food options with virtual and in-person demonstrations and prepped meal deliveries. Our team continues to provide support to the unhoused population with compassion and respect.

This month we will sponsor our annual toy drive and Night of Joy by gifting 200 children with toys and books featuring characters of color.

ABIPA is a mighty team of seven women of color. Combined, we are professional health educators and promoters,

community health workers, social workers, CNAs, nurses, phlebotomists, entrepreneurs, administrators, health coaches, fitness instructors, mothers, grandmothers, and great grandmothers. We are passionate and compassionate advocates. That is us at the core.

We are supported by men of color, seen and unseen, who are our back-up muscle spiritually, physically, socially, and strategically. We couldn’t do our work with great impact without each other. We couldn’t do our work locally with a regional reach without you.

In this moment and beyond, I am thankful for the gift of my mighty team, and I am thankful for the gift of you.



CELEBRATING 18 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY



The Perfect Time to Give

Help Us Celebrate the Season by Giving a Donation

Tax deductible donations can be made by sending a check to ABIPA, PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802; or online at www.abipa.org. Thank you for your support!

The Winter Blues

by *Kelly White, MHE, MPH,*
ABIPA Health Education Program Manager



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

Our mental health is such an important component of our wellbeing.

Depending on how busy our lives are, we rarely catch a moment to check in with ourselves. Every year around this time I begin to feel sluggish, find myself wanting to hide away in my house, and wanting to sleep most of the day when the weekend rolls around.

As the days become shorter and the nights get long and cold, without notice I find myself checking out, not only physically, but also mentally, even with great friends and a large support system. During the colder months, and around the holiday season, you should keep a close eye on your mental health—and don’t forget to check in on your friends and loved ones!

You may have never heard of the term “winter blues,” otherwise known

as seasonal affective disorder, but it is a thing. Winter blues is described as a change in mood during late fall and into the winter months. It can clear up once the warm and sunny weather returns.

Millions of people, myself included, deal with the winter blues every year. Some tend to suffer a little more than others and not all symptoms and treatments will take on a cookie cutter approach.

An episode of winter blues generally mimics that of depression. Beyond the symptoms I encounter, others may experience overeating, low energy, and weight gain, just to name a few. As always, speaking to your healthcare provider if you notice a difference in the way you are feeling should be your first line of defense. Treatment does not always mean taking a pill—it can be a plan tailored by you and your provider to fit your needs.

Mental Health Check In

- Think about what has worried you lately, if anything. Family? Friends? Work?
- Ask yourself how you are feeling. Stressed? Anxious? Depressed?
- Are you providing your body with its basic needs? Are you eating right and getting enough rest?
- What are you doing to bring yourself joy? Can you get away when needed, or visit with people who make you smile?
- Lastly, think about who you have in your corner. What does your support system look like?



Donate to Our Joy Toy Drive

Our Annual Joy Toy Drive is in full swing! You can drop your donations off at Stefanie’s Design Studio, any of the ABIPA Community Engagement Markets, or arrange a pick-up by calling (828) 778-7122.

Source: NIH

Listen to ABIPA’s Body & Soul Radio Show on WRES 100.7 FM, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. on wresfm.com.

ABIPA, 56 Walton Street, Asheville
Mail: PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802
Office (828) 251-8364 • Fax (828) 251-8365
Facebook.com/ABIPA.CARES • www.ABIPA.org

ABIPA promotes economic, social, and healthy parity achievement for African Americans and other underserved populations in Buncombe County through advocacy, education, research, and community partnerships.

