

Q&A WITH ERROL WEBSTER

Q: What does “community” mean to you?

A: To me, community means a sense of togetherness, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, race or sexual orientation. Each one helping one in any way you possibly can no matter how small the gesture.

Q: What personal experiences have shaped your commitment to cancer prevention and why?

A: Knowing that each person that we screen could potentially be a life saved makes this journey rewarding in and of itself. I recall one particular incidence in Brooklyn (Flatbush Junction) near Brooklyn College. When a gentleman whom we had screened a few months earlier approached me. He informed me that due to the efforts of the Robert F. Smith/Mount Sinai screening unit an early detection of prostate cancer was found, and he was able to receive treatment that saved his life. The fact that he went out of his way after seeing the Mobile unit on this occasion showed how much this service meant to him and that he was truly grateful. This gentleman's story has been repeated numerous times over the course of four years that the unit has been operating and touched the lives of nearly 13,000 men screened.

Q: Can you share a moment in your work when you felt you truly made a difference?

A: Looking back from our launch at the Wagner Houses seeing how far we have come since inception back in April 2022, knowing that we have seen close to 13,000 men and covered close to 800 events. Also knowing that countless lives have been saved in addition to highlighting the importance of screening, through education to countless others that we have encountered along the way. By so doing we, in our own way, have helped shine a light on prostate cancer and helped spark the conversation that was once kept secret and not shared among family or friends.

Q: What's one quality you're most proud of in yourself, or something affirming your community has said about you?

A: The mobile Unit team is unique in that we meet the community where they live, be it on the streets of Harlem, Brooklyn, Queens, or a church in Staten Island. The fact that we can venture into the community and provide this life saving service is one of the main things that our many hosts have indicated as the leading contributor to combating Prostate Cancer. This is what is so satisfying for me and the entire team.

Q: What's one thing you wish more people understood about your community or the challenges it faces in cancer prevention?

A: One of the main challenges that we face on a day-to-day basis is the stigma surrounding men's approach to their health in general and prostate health in particular. This coupled with economic factors and access to insurance most men shy away from health care all together and adopt "a head in the sand" approach to their well-being. We hope with education we can break down the barriers and get men more involved with their overall health.