

JAMES B. DUKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY
CHARLOTTE, NC 28216
APR - 2 2004

Book publisher taps into urban demographic

By Artellia Burch
artelliaburch@thecharlottepost.com

James Muhammad found success as a book store owner. Now he is looking for the same achievement in the publishing industry.

Muhammad's Dynasty book store and specialty shop has become a fixture in the black community. The store has grown in clientele and changed locations over its nine-year history.

Nationally, black bookstores have become less lucrative and many have gone out of business. Yet, Muhammad has found a way to make his store a profitable operation and what it takes to make his new venture, 2 Of A Kind Publishing a success.

"In order to get people to read you have to give people some of what they want," he said.

Authors like Kevin Powell have criticized the publishing industry for its abundance of fiction books targeted to African Americans. But Muhammad says there is a process that must be followed to attract readers to non-fiction and self-improvement books. "If we can wean people over to reading fiction," he said. "Then we can wean them over to eventually reading non-fiction."

Readership in the U.S. is on the decline. Yet Muhammad says low readership will not affect 2 Of A Kind's success. This publishing business will target members of the hip-hop culture with its books. "Readership is down because there have never been stories these people could relate to," Muhammad said. "A few years ago when Terry McMillan was hot, all of the books kind of followed the same formula. You had three women in the story. One woman was usually married and the other two were single with good jobs. A 22-year-old woman couldn't relate to that story and the same goes for men."

Muhammad says authors like Sistah Soulah and Shannon Holmes have been able to tap into a younger readership with urban stories. "Sistah Soulah and Shannon Holmes are the king and queen of urban stories," he said. "They are reaching that market."

2 of a Kind Publishing will publish books that tell the overlooked tales of urban street life. "What we're trying to do is reach a whole new market of people who wouldn't normally read books," said Muhammad. "By telling their stories, the stories of the streets, we're confident that we'll accomplish this."



James Muhammad is adding a publishing house to his Dynasty bookstore. 2 Of A Kind Publishing will market books to an urban audience.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/TRINA MONTGOMERY-ARDREY/PHOTO/WADE NASH

Please see PUBLISHER/4B

Expo eye exams can battle glaucoma threat



Attendees at Charlotte's "For Sisters Only" Expo were able to get a free glaucoma screening when they visited the Travatan Eye Drops Project Focus Booth.

By Artellia Burch
artelliaburch@thecharlottepost.com

Glaucoma has led to blindness in millions of African Americans. A leading drugmaker is out to educate people about the disease.

Individuals can receive free eye exams at the Travatan booth at For Sisters Only at the Charlotte Convention Center Saturday and Sunday. The pain free exam takes five minutes.

Travatan, an eye drop manufactured by Alcon Laboratories, is sponsoring "Project Focus" to raise awareness of glaucoma risks. The outreach initiative will target members of the African Americans in throughout the country. It's primarily focusing on the black community because African Americans are heavily afflicted with the disease.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in African Americans affecting more than 750,000 African Americans in the U.S. Blacks are six to eight times more likely to develop glaucoma than whites, and up to 17 times more likely to go blind from the disease.

"African Americans are four to five times more likely to develop glaucoma than the general population," said Stuart Raetzman, global marketing director for glaucoma at Alcon. "Unfortunately, only about half of the African Americans in the U.S. with glaucoma are aware they have it."

Most victims of glaucoma are unaware of they have the disease. "There's no pain attached to glaucoma," said Charles Richardson of Healthcare Marketing Footsteps Group.

"By the time you know you have it, it can't be reversed. The only thing that can be done is to slow it down."

"Glaucoma is often called the silent thief of sight," said Dr. Mildred M.G. Olivier, a Chicago based glaucoma specialist. "Left untreated, glaucoma will lead to a dangerous buildup of pressure within the eye that eventually damages the delicate optic nerve until eyesight is impaired or a person goes blind. Because there is no pain associated with the disease, people at greatest risk won't know they have it until they get screened. Fortunately, the disease can be treated effectively with proper medications, but the key to saving people's eyesight is early detection and treatment."

Early detection and treatment

Please see GLAUCOMA/3B

Frozen Peanut Butter Chocolate Pie

FAMILY FEATURES EDITORIAL SYNDICATE

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Freezing Time: 6 hours
Makes one 9-inch pie
2 (1-ounce) squares semi-sweet baking chocolate
1 (14-ounce) can Eagle Brand Sweetened

Condensed Milk (NOT evaporated milk)
1/4 cup creamy peanut butter
1 (8-ounce) tub frozen nondairy whipped topping, thawed
1 (9-inch) graham cracker crumb crust

In large mixing bowl, melt

chocolate squares in microwave for 15 seconds or until completely melted. Add sweetened condensed milk and peanut butter to melted chocolate; mix well.

Fold in whipped topping. Spoon into crust.

Freeze 6 hours. Garnish as desired. Freeze leftovers.

