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Eagle Scout Candidate Launches Cancer Awareness Campaign

Health / **Published On February 17, 2020 06:19 AM /**

Staff Consortium **February 17, 2020**

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ST. CROIX — Nbiko Bowry, a Life Scout with the Boy Scouts of America Troop 7227, has launched a public awareness campaign to advocate for annual screening for the early detection, intervention and possible prevention of cancer. In partnership with Ribbons for a Cure, Inc., a local nonprofit cancer awareness and outreach organization, Bowry created several cancer awareness banners to be erected at highly visible locations across St. Croix, a release issued Sunday has made known.

The banners will feature local cancer survivors and will be a call to action for the community to seek regular screening to prevent cancer and/or allow for early intervention. Bowry initiated this project to satisfy the community service requirement towards earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

On Monday, today at 10:30 a.m., Bowry along with his fellow scouts from Troop 7227, representatives of Ribbons for a Cure and government officials will unveil the first banner at the D. C. Canegata Ball Park.

Eagle is the highest attainable rank a scout can achieve. To earn the Eagle rank, a Scout must complete a minimum of twenty-one merit badges and demonstrate leadership by completing a community service project that benefits a community group or organization. Only 6% of scouts nationally have earned this rank. Bowry, a 17-year old senior at the Good Hope Country Day School, has been active in scouting for over 10 years and currently serves as the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader for Troop 7227.

The beneficiary of the project is Ribbons for a Cure Inc., which is a local non-profit organization that provides cancer outreach and support in the community through education and awareness initiatives. The mission of Ribbons for a Cure is to educate the Virgin Islands community on the signs, symptoms and risk factors of all types of cancers, with the intent to increase survival rates through early screening and intervention.

The release said Bowry selected this project because cancer has impacted several members of his family, including his great grandfather who died from prostate cancer, several uncles and his Godmother, Gizette Canegata Thomas, who is a breast cancer survivor; she will be featured in one of the campaign banners. Bowry stated that he is very thankful because early detection has saved the lives of people closest to him.

The other survivors to be featured in the campaign are Leilanie Batista, an 11-year old leukemia survivor and Renwick S. Lynch, Sr., a prostate cancer survivor. Criz Batista, Leilanie's mother stated, "I am happy for Leilanie to be a part of this project because every one should be aware that cancer does not discriminate, and that parents should always pay attention to the signs and seek medical attention when they have a concern about their child." Lynch stated, "I am feeling very blessed and fortunate as a survivor of prostate cancer. Thanks to my wife and medical professionals near and far. I encourage everyone to do their annual screening and live a healthy lifestyle."

Bowry wants the community to be aware that cancer does not discriminate; it impacts all ages, males, females and people of all ethnicity. It is important to have annual medical exams that include blood, urine and skin tests, mammograms for both male & females, colon, cervical and prostate screenings, among others. He encourages individuals to speak to their health care provider about their family history that may impact their risk and any unusual marks, bleeding, discharge, lumps, bruising or changes in appetite and feeling of wellness, according to the release.

The American Medical Association has stated that early detection increases survival of cancer by more than 80% for most cases. The AMA highly recommends annual screening, especially for people with a family history of cancer. For more information on cancer awareness and community resources in the Virgin Islands, visit ribbonsforcure.net.