

TESTIMONY

Of

Bernard Herbert

Participant

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative  
KEEN Seniors Program, Phillip T. Johnson Senior Center

for the

DC OFFICE ON AGING OVERSIGHT HEARING

DC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON AGING AND COMMUNITY  
AFFAIRS

Before

The Honorable Marion Barry

Chairperson

DC Council Committee on Aging and Community Affairs

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Testimony on District of Columbia Office on Aging Oversight  
Before the District of Columbia City Council  
Committee on Aging and Community Affairs  
Chairperson Marion Barry  
March 3, 2011  
Presented by Bernard Herbert

Good Morning Chairman Barry and members of the Committee on Aging and Community Affairs. My name is Bernard Herbert. I am 83 years old and a native Washingtonian, who is thankful for the opportunity to testify in support of the DC Office on Aging receiving full funding for FY 2012.

Over seven years ago, my loving daughter introduced my wife and me to the programs at Phillip T. Johnson Senior Center. The senior center operates through funding provided by the DC Office on Aging and is managed by East River Family Strengthening Collaborative KEEN Seniors Program a part of the Senior Services Division.

Initially, we were not interested in participating because my perception of senior programs was the idea of sitting and looking

at one another all day long. To my delight and surprise the program was just the opposite. We both became involved in all that we could, even as my wife's health began to fail.

As regular participants we benefited from the information presented by various speakers, counseling and support rendered by staff and encouragement from our peers.

In 2007, my wife passed. Her quality of life was greatly enhanced by involvement in KEEN Seniors Programs. In fact, for us it has been a family affair as my children have supported and participated in events.

Eagerly in the morning I walk the 2 blocks to the center anticipating fellowship with my many friends, a nutritious lunch and dialogue on issues important to the senior population. Very helpful legal services are provided by a Legal Counsel for the Elderly Lawyer, on site. Health and Wellness remains a major focus and we are afforded many opportunities to exercise indoors

as well as outdoors. Collectively, our world view and knowledge are enhanced through museum trips and other excursions.

For many who live alone and cannot always go shopping, transportation is provided to the grocery store, credit union, pharmacy and other necessary places. In addition social services, nutrition education and counseling help us all in making wise lifestyle choices.

The primary goal of these programs and services is to inspire and motivate our senior population to choose a productive, informed and empowered lifestyle. Chairman Barry I implore you and the City Council to maintain the same level of funding. As we are all aware of the budget crisis, we as team members will do our part to recycle conserve and find creative ways to stretch our dollars.

Once again, I thank you for this opportunity to give testimony and will gladly return to the center and update my 92 year old seat mate, who I love to encourage.