




SISTERBRATION!

2ND ANNUAL
LITTLE RED DRESS
TEA PARTY & SIPOSIUM



A LOOK BACK

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Everything you need to succeed is within your reach. That was the advice offered by Nikki Myers, former contestant on NBC's *The Biggest Loser*, to 150 women during the Little Red Dress Tea Party & Sipsium, hosted by Sisterbration. Myers, the keynote speaker for the afternoon of tea and conversation, shared her personal story of overcoming obesity and refueling her life to live in fullness. Held in February 2007 at the Tutwiler Hotel in downtown Birmingham, the event was a rare opportunity for African American women to share their experiences with heart disease and empower each other to take the necessary steps to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Other speakers included Minister Lisa Taylor of WHAM2 and our own, Dr. Kimberly Clay. Taylor reminded us that "a joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Participating in honest dialogue about challenges to making healthy decisions and lifestyle choices, attendees congregated in the Wellness Expo to enjoy restorative massages and makeovers before going back to their routine hustle on Monday morning. The relaxing environment of the Tutwiler promoted fellowship and allowed women to network, bond, share strategies, and learn from their peers. Of equal importance was the opportunity to establish a new support network, which led to walking teams, business exchanges, and girlfriend weekends/pampering parties.

As a proud sponsor, Real.Life.Fashion teamed up with local boutiques to make heart health "fashionable". Red hats, red suits, red pumps, red lips, everything red. Women came dressed in their finest splash or fiercest flood of red to celebrate a life worth living. Among the themes this year were celebrating life, being truthful with ones' self, and challenging others to be healthy. Sisterbration celebrated the success of having run her first Mercedes Marathon, with the coaching expertise of sisters, Peaches & Lala Haslam. Ten relay runners and three half-marathon sprinters crossed the finish line wearing the Sisterbration symbol. And, VH1's *Born to Diva*, Tarralyn Ramsey, brought healing to the soul (of their hearts and their feet) with her powerful performance of her hit single, "Up Against All Odds."



According to our sponsor, American Heart Association (Go Red for Women), "about 480,000 women die of cardiovascular disease annually, more than the total number of cardiovascular disease-related deaths in men or the next four causes of death combined." For mother and daughter, Lucy & Ovuke Emonina, they know this all too well: both are heart disease survivors who live to share their story of triumph with other women so that they may be inspired to "live on!"

For teen women visiting from Girls, Inc., "this was a very good way to start the week. Being with beautiful black women of all ages - my age, my mother's age, and my grandmother's age - is really an awesome experience. Sisterbration is for every woman. I'm every woman."

The gathering epitomized what it means to have a 'sisterbration' by emphasizing the importance of building strong sisterly relationships and celebrating each other - out loud. Women from Birmingham and surrounding cities, Georgia, and Ohio came to celebrate the "good things in life." By the end of the event, women had exchanged numbers and established friendships, all in an effort to join forces to live healthy, full, committed lives. There were laughter, tears, affirmations, standing ovations, and embraces for hours. Each woman understood the challenges of the next, and felt more empowered by the stories of triumph and victory. But, more importantly, Sisterbration provided them the compass to chart their journey to balanced health and lifestyle.

This event also gathered over 350 women in Dothan, Montgomery, and Tuskegee. Twenty-five women joined Sisterbration's year-long health and wellness program, Fat Tuesday. With the help of local experts, Fat Tuesday participants will receive fitness instruction, nutritional counseling and motivational training - packed with fun and energizing activities designed to help them reach their health and fitness goals. And, at the 3rd Annual Little Red Dress Tea Party & Sposium, we'll be celebrating with them.

Sisterbration founder and executive director, Dr. Kimberly Clay, boasts "Sisterbration is what I call a healthy balance of entertainment and education, food for the mind, body, and spirit. The experience is like none other. Sisterbration is a sacred experience of African American women, 'sisterfriends,' who come together, learn from each other, renew their spirits, and draw power from The Source. Sisterbration is about celebration, sisterhood. But, no one can tell the Sisterbration story like a changed sisterfriend."



ONE SISTERFRIEND DESCRIBED HER EXPERIENCE THIS WAY:

I have been trying to find a way to convey how Sisterbration has impacted my life, soul, and put my thoughts in a thank you note. It is just not possible. This past weekend was truly a miracle. To meet, share, and be inspired by my peers was truly a blessing. I feel empowered and encouraged.

As a professional African American woman, wife, and business owner; my focus is often on many things except my health. Thank you for reminding me that wit out a healthy heart, nothing else matters. Not only do I realize I must make my health a priority, Sisterbration showed me I can have fun doing so. Actually seeing the transformation of Nikki Myers from The Biggest Loser was inspirational and living proof of the quote "Everything I need to succeed is within my reach."

I saw my self in each presenter and related to their trials and absorbed the positive energy from their triumphs. The sheer joy and sense of accomplishment I felt watching the Sisterbration Mercedes Marathon participants cross the finish line was enough to make me announce that" I will be crossing the finish line next year!"

I was reminded of our rainbow of moca shades of beauty as I celebrated our unique style at the fashion show. I have not cried, laughed, or experienced so much joy since my own wedding day. This weekend truly restored my soul! I look forward to participating in upcoming events...not just for continued inspiration and encouragement but in hopes of being able to touch some other sister's life the way that Sisterbration touched mine.

Finally, in lieu of a traditional thank you note, I would like to commit to participating in Fat Tuesday, volunteering for the upcoming Power Breakfast Series and running on behalf of Sisterbration next year in the Mercedes Half-Marathon & Relay Team! May God bless others to be blessed by the Sisterbration experience.

Thank you so very much for inviting me, receiving me with open arms and being a positive force in our community. I commend everyone that contributed to this weekend. It was truly a powerful success. Thank YOU ALL again from the bottom of my HEALTHY HEART!!!!

~ Toni

