

Lacks Family & the Center for Youth Wellness

CENTER FOR  
**YOUTH**  **WELLNESS**  
*health begins with hope*



**Henrietta Lacks' Legacy: A Community Conversation in the Bayview**

On October 22, the Center for Youth Wellness hosted "Henrietta Lacks' Legacy: A Community Conversation with the Lacks Family," a dinner event that brought together more than 150 community members, CYW supporters, health experts and the family of Henrietta Lacks in an engaging conversation about the role of science and medical research in the African American community.

Henrietta Lacks, the subject of the bestselling book “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,” had her cervical cells removed without her knowledge shortly before her death in 1951. These cells became the first immortal human cells ever grown in a laboratory and proved key in developing the polio vaccine, in vitro fertilization, and other scientific breakthroughs. Her contribution has also led to critical conversations and changes around policies concerning the rights of patients and research subjects.

“She was a strong woman and a giving woman in life, and her cells are strong and giving in the world now,” said her granddaughter, Kimberley Lacks. She and her sister, Jeri Lacks Whye, shared dozens of poignant photos with the audience as they discussed the profound impact their grandmother’s story and legacy has had on their own lives, the research community, and people around the world.

The event, hosted by CYW with support from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, UCSF Medical Center and the UCSF Office of Diversity and Outreach, is part of our efforts to engage the Bayview community in community-based participatory research. “We’re here to open a community conversation about research in our community,” said Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, our founder and CEO. “We can’t just set up shop and begin doing research. It begins with this community conversation.”

For a more in-depth look of the event, which also included a powerful presentation from students at San Francisco’s Leadership High School, click [here](#) to read our blog post. If you’re interested in getting involved in our research, email us at [research@centerforyouthwellness.org](mailto:research@centerforyouthwellness.org)!

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