

27 Years AIDS Community Resources



Viewpoint

By Michael Crinnin
Executive Director



I like stories. I think they make the world go round. Every time someone begins a story – especially one about their own experience, I find myself immediately interested and settled in. “Good”, I think, “pictures not platitudes. I’m saved from yet one more lecture”. A story is much more than the sum of its parts - immediately engaging both my emotions and intellect – throwing color and form against the blank screen of my interest: you get the landscape...

We are privy to a lot of stories here. Many are hair-raising and heart-wrenching, but just as many are inspiring and heart-warming... and, if this job has taught me anything, it’s that I have clearly not heard it/them all.

During the December staff meeting, our Teen AIDS Task Force (TATF) Co-coordinator shared an incident that occurred in one the smaller more geographically remote high-schools where we provide services. World AIDS Day activities were being highlighted with sections of the AIDS Memorial Quilt on loan for the day. Group after group came into the gym to both view panels and hear from our staff about the history of the Quilt, as well as an array of HIV/AIDS-related statistics.

As it turned out, off-handed student comments laced the day, along the lines of: “It’s a gay disease; they deserved it; why should we care; we don’t know anyone with AIDS, etc.” The day was very long and difficult for our staff person, especially as at no time did any of the teachers who accompanied the various classes interrupt and ‘check’ the remarks.

Finally the last group of classes filed in, teachers in tow, and sat for the presentation. The general mood was similar to the entire day: restless students uncomfortable with the experience and the reason for the event, mumbling and wise-cracking more of the same.

In the midst of it all two people, sitting across the room from one another,

Continued on page 3

Serving
Cayuga,
Herkimer,
Jefferson,
Lewis,
Madison,
Oneida,
Onondaga,
Oswego,
St. Lawrence
Counties

Case Manager
Jessica Green
of the Mohawk
Valley office sits
surrounded by gifts
for ACR consumers.
Full coverage
of the Holiday Angel
program begins on
page 4.



AIDS COMMUNITY RESOURCES

is a not-for-profit, community-based organization, supported by both public and private funds, bringing information, education, direct services, referrals, and advocacy to everyone in our nine-county region who needs help with HIV/AIDS.

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Newsletter Editor
Jean Kessner

Former client credits ACR for her *Success*

Karen Hinson, who has played many roles at ACR, was the featured speaker at the World AIDS Day service at Panasci Family Chapel on December 1, 2010. Following are excerpts from her address.

"I remember the fear I had when I first got out of a cab and walked through the doors of ACR in 2003. I was a real mess. I had just gotten clean, was in a methadone program, and a supportive living program. ACR helped me deal with the stigma of HIV; go back to college, and start over while living without drugs and undergoing treatment for Hepatitis C.

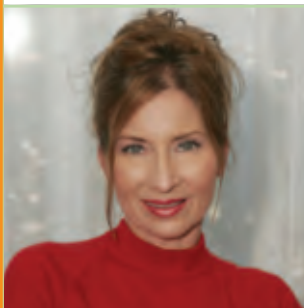
"After finishing school, I came back to ACR as a volunteer receptionist and peer outreach worker. I had never spoken on the phone or run a switchboard of any kind. This experience ultimately helped me get the job I have now.

"Speaking in high schools and up at SU was scary at first. I just spoke from my heart and left nothing out. The mistakes I made, the bad choices and the ultimate consequence was something I used to hide out of shame. Now I just tell young, smart kids what can happen once you decide to take risks. Whether we get high and have one-night stands to self medicate or just plain ole peer pressure or not wanting to feel left out, it simply is not worth it.

"At one time, I was a call girl, cocaine, then heroin addict - this lasted from 21 yrs of age to just 8 years ago. I am well now. I don't make a lot of money, but sometimes money can't buy everything - I still ride a bike to work but I have a new place all of my own, and am off of all Public Assistance. I had a lot of support here in CNY, but none that helped me more, in so many different ways, and for such a long time, than ACR.

"Thank you for helping to save and heal my life. Getting clean is the easy part. Rebuilding a life can be so daunting and overwhelming that it is easy to want to escape this harsh reality that I created in my younger years. I believe if more people got involved with organizations like AIDS Community Resources, they would make a successful recovery."

Karen Hinson



Karen as she appeared in the ACR 2008 calendar.

"At one time, I was a call girl, coke, then heroin addict. I was out there for a long time. I had a lot of support here in CNY, but none that helped me more and for such a long time, than ACR."

OUR MISSION

The Mission of AIDS Community Resources is three-fold:

- To prevent the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases;
- To provide support services to those who are living with HIV/AIDS; and
- To promote sexual literacy and improved medical outcomes.

Continued from page 1

made a critical joint decision, silently, with a nod: from teen boy to mature women – from student to teacher, (who just also happened to be the boy's mom). The teacher/mom stood up and addressed the group of students and other teachers with a simple statement, "For all of you who think you don't know anyone with AIDS, if you've been in one of my classes you do. I have been living with AIDS 18 years". Silence.... tears streaming down her son's cheeks... lives and relationships changed immediately and forever: hers, with co-workers, students and the broader community; her son's, (free now from the burden of isolation and a life-long secret), with his immediate peers and the broader student body. I imagine the pride and protectiveness he felt towards his mom. I imagine his courage and fear in the face of his friends, wondering as to their reactions.

I imagine the rest of those in the room - stunned, shamed, and privileged to be witnessing an act of courage and intimacy I wager they had never come close to witnessing before. I try to imagine the encounter of mother and son at the end of this scene, once they were close enough to touch...

Looking around our conference room as details were filled in, many staff were struggling with tears for this small family unit: tears for the years of hiding, the years of enduring thoughtless and hurtful remarks, tears for the profound loneliness and fear, tears for the courage and redemption of the moment, tears for the release and relief, tears for the pain yet to come, and finally, tears for the so many difficult and courageous circumstances they continue to witness in their day to day work with clients.

The story of this incident, I'm sure has 'gone viral' well beyond the community in question. I know it continues to spin out there into the big wide world, touching and healing, and challenging individuals who will never meet the two main characters. Stories are powerful. We need them. Tell yours. Listen to others. You might find it life changing for more than just yourself.



For other stories from the traveling AIDS Quilt display, turn to page 6 for TATF Coordinator, Angela Foster's first person account.

ACR receives grant for HIV education for girls

The Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc. presented AIDS Community Resources (ACR) with a grant for \$3,820 to support DIVAS programming in the Mohawk Valley. AIDS Community Resources' DIVAS program is a valuable resource for families who don't feel comfortable or equipped to teach their children valuable life lessons about health and safety. DIVAS (Discovering Important and Valuable information About Self) targets African-American and Latino females using the BART curriculum (Becoming A Responsible Teen).

"The mission of the Women's Fund is to improve the lives of women and girls in the Mohawk Valley," said AIDS Community Resources' Prevention Director, Wenona Wake, of Utica. "DIVAS educates girls about the dangers and responsibilities they face in real life relationships. It empowers them take charge of their lives. The Women's Fund has invested wisely."

Through DIVAS, participants learn how to solve problems, make healthy decisions, communicate effectively with their partners on all issues including condom negotiation, and condom use skills. They learn how to self-manage their behavior. The intent of the DIVAS intervention is for participants to delay the onset of sexual activities and incorporate safer sex practices for those who are sexually active (includes incorporation of abstinence).

Ms. Wake anticipates that as many as 40 girls will receive DIVAS training through the \$3,820 grant from the Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties.



December 15, 2010, Utica ~
(from left) Women's Fund Grants Co-Chair Aileen Townsend, ACR's Mamie Smith, Prevention Director, Wenona Wake, ACR Executive Director Michael Crinnin, Stephanie Eghigian, Executive Director of The Women's Fund, and Wil Murtaugh, Deputy Executive Director of ACR.

HOLIDAY ANGEL PROGRAM

The Holiday Angel program is now firmly established as a year-end tradition for dozens of extraordinary people who, every year, provide gifts and necessities for consumers of AIDS Community Resources and their families. They give because AIDS has touched their lives or because their beliefs, as in the case of the Sathya Sai Organization in Baldwinsville, lead them to selflessly serve the needy.

The Angels' collective generosity floods our offices with packages, floods our hearts with gratitude, and sometimes overwhelms the recipients who often receive no other gifts than these.

In 2010, 169 individuals, families, and community, business or church groups volunteered as Holiday Angels. They sponsored 197 ACR clients and their families, giving gifts to 378 individuals.



- 1 • Dr. Cathy Berry (left in photo) and staff is a Holiday Angel in honor of her sister who passed away last year. Thank you, Dr. Berry, for sharing the blessings of your sister's life.
- 2 • Kim Rieppel and his staff at Old Navy in DeWitt, along with the Carousel Center Old Navy, do good things for ACR all year round – especially at Holiday Angel time.
- 3 • Sue Benedict also participates every year in the AIDS Walk/Run at Beaver Lake in honor of Greg Coughlin who died of AIDS in 2002.
- 4 • Jennifer Woodman brings gifts she and her coworkers at BNY Mellon, Utica, donated to a family of six.
- 5 • Stacey Stagnitti brought in gifts that were purchased by her Canastota High School Teen AIDS Task Force. Stacey supports ACR through TATF and Holiday Angel. Canastota was the top fundraising TATF at the AIDS Hike for Life last year.

Anchor QEA LLC
Tom Angiolillo
AT&T - Syracuse
AT&T Global Business
Customer Care Center
Sue & Artie Baderman
The Bank of New York
Mellon
Patricia Barber
Tina Bariteau
Gloria & Ramon Becerra
Anita Bertrand
Beta Sigma Phi
William Blake
BMD Ministries
BNY Mellon - East Syracuse
BNY Mellon - Oriskany
Richard Boyanski
Linda Bradley
Bill Breitenbuecher
& Mike Gardner
Thomas A. Brisk
Mary Bronner
Kathy Brownjohn
Karen Bush
Elizabeth & Jeffrey Cady
Canastota TATF
Tessa Careaga
Cathy J. Berry MD
& Associates

Chittenango TATF
Barb Clark
Kelly Clark
Deborah Clary
Clifton Fine TATF
Clinton Therapy
& Testing Center
Colton Pierrepoint TATF
Corporate Interiors
Donald & Barbara Coughlin
Cub Scout Pack #620
Mary Dealing
Terry Deegan
The DeSanctis Family
Mary DeStefano
Lisa & Billy DiCosimo
Mary Doody
Mike Ducharme & Ray Kyle
Crystal Elliott
Lynne Elmer
ESM Health Education
Class #12/13
ESM Health Education
Class #12/24
ESM Health Education
Class #56/04
ESM Health Education
Class #78/13
The Family of Janet Ours
Felicia's Hair Design

Roxanna Fiore
Marge Foody
Cliff Ganey
Mary Kay Garno
Gay & Straight Alliance
Liverpool
W. S. Girvin III
Joan Gloop
Cheryl Goodwin
The Gordon Family
Sharlene Graeff
Pamela Gramet
Green & Seifter Attorneys,
PLLC
Greg's Rainbow Team
Dave Haggerty & Jeff Church
Hamilton Center for the Arts
& Kathy Herold
Deborah Hardy & Vivian Der-
rickson
Kathy Holton
Ken Hudson
Indian River Drama Club
Jamesville-DeWitt TATF
Jefferson Elementary School
Liz Jenison
Kim & Irene Johnson
Mary Ellen Kalahar
Mark Kavouksorian
Karen Keast & Dana Pierce

Rick King
Nancy LaFave
Lambda Kappa Mu
Sorority, Inc.
Carrie Large & Stacey
Portzline
Linda LeBlanc
Lee Family
Nancy Levine
Allison Lewis
Cheryl Lincoln-Lovely
Bill Louer & Wil Murtaugh
Justin Lynch
Beth Machan
Jenna Malfitano
Angela Maroun
Jenn Matcham
Michele Maurillo
Katie McElroy
Sally McSween & Mary
Cornelius
Melissa Cavaiaola & Family
Karen Miller
Kathy A. Miller
The Family of Mark Mullin
Mary Murphy
& Denise Buford
Moors Myers
Nationwide Insurance
Community Outreach

NEPA
Kathryn Nickerson
Patty, John & Delaney Nolan
Old Navy - Carousel Mall
Old Navy - Dewitt
Marilyn Olejniuk
Oneida High School TATF
Oneida Rotary Club
Oneida Teacher's Association
Oriskany TATF
Connie Palumb
Charles "Jud" Pannaci
Amy Patnode
Lori Jean Perrault
The Pfohl Family
Dale Pierce
Pitcher Hill Community
Church
Planned Parenthood of
Mohawk-Hudson
Hedi Potter
Diane Price
Q Center at ACR
Kevin & Paulette Quinn
Sharon Ranflet
Stephany Richardson
Susan Rozzano
Ginger Ruddock
Tom & Barb Ryan
Elizabeth Sacco

Maggie Simone & Family
Linda Skellan
Debbie Smith
Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center
St. Andrew's Church
St. Luke's Hospital
St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/
Blessed Sacrament Church
St. Mary of the Assumption
Church
Starbucks - Downtown
Syracuse
Starbucks - Fayetteville
Starbucks - SU
Syracuse Area Black Nurses
Association
Syracuse Gay and Lesbian
Chorus
Syracuse LGBT Catholics
& Friends
Syracuse VA Social Work
Department
Barry Thomas & Kevin Sauve
Louis Toscano & Catherine
Louise Marie Tyo
UPS Store - Manlius
Upstate Medical University
- Employee/ Student
Health Office
Utica LGBTQ Youth Group

Thea Van Der Ven
Heidi Venero
Clare Murray Volo
Nancy Walker
The Wendell Family
Westhill High School TATF
Donna Wolf
The Wolkenstorfer Family
Women's Effort
Katherine Zappala
Margaret Wicks
Betty Williams

A FULL CIRCLE OF KINDNESS



↗
Sampling of
Recipients



6



7



8

6• Bethany had her third child in October, so money is tight and her children have growing needs. Without the Holiday Angel program, she doesn't know what her children would have had for Christmas this year.

7• Jose is 72 years old, and to see his face light up like an 8 year old boy upon receiving his gifts is a joy. Jose waits until Christmas Day to open his presents, just like a kid! He would like to send his gratitude to all those that make this program work each and every year.

8• Marcena took her four grandchildren shopping for shoes for the Holidays. Thanks to the generous gift from Payless Shoes 100 children of ACR clients received a new pair of shoes.

Women's Effort: *Angels all year round*



Sheryl Coppola, Elke Johanns, Allison Allen of ACR, and Denise Porter on a December shopping trip for Holiday Angel presents.

On a snowy Saturday morning Denise Porter, Elke Johanns, and Sheryl Coppola met up at a local department store to shop for an AIDS Community Resources client and two children who live in the Syracuse area. The three are from a long line of volunteers from Women's Effort, a non-profit organization in Onondaga County that assists HIV positive individuals throughout the year with emergency financial needs for which no other assistance is available, such as vehicle repairs, furniture, and veterinary bills.

Allison Allen, Case Management Supervisor

Living and Dying in the North Country with HIV/AIDS



For the past two years, Teen AIDS Task Force chapters throughout ACR's nine county service area have hosted displays of AIDS Quilt panels. In the North Country, TATF Coordinator Angela Foster, posing front row center with the Indian River Drama Club TATF, drives many miles and spends long days sharing the personal stories of lives lost to AIDS

Traveling St. Lawrence and Jefferson counties each year with the AIDS Memorial Quilts is always a bittersweet experience for me. It's deeply moving for me to hear the personal stories of those living and dying in my own community of HIV/AIDS, and at the same time, equally as disturbing to me to see how far we have yet to go to make it clear to our friends, neighbors, and co workers just how real AIDS is in rural northern NY.

As the Quilt traveled through the counties, so did the hope, empowerment, and education that travels along with it. It's uncomfortable to think about AIDS in our own community and many of our local youth associate AIDS with the thruway, attributing the fact that NY reports both the highest number of cumulative and new infections to our southern cities, like Albany, NYC, and Rochester. Much time was spent talking with the youth in our local schools about why teens living in rural communities are at an increased risk for HIV infection. Our teens in the North Country had honest and open discussions about the reduced number of available partners, the false sense of security that comes from knowing your partner since childhood, the lack of opportunity for productive and meaningful activities with which to fill their free time, the "coolness" and normalcy attached to partying with the local college students along with its consequences for our local high school campuses, and the prevalence of drugs and alcohol in our community. We talked about youth (ages 13 – 24) being infected at a rate of 2 every hour in the continental United States, and the activities that put them at risk: oral sex, metal/glass smoking accessories, braces, tattoos, piercings, and the lack of open communication by adults that keeps them from having all of the pertinent information associated with these activities to make good choices.

In one of our local schools, a student found the name of her uncle hanging from the rafters of the gymnasium and broke down in tears. She told me that her Grandma died a few years ago, but prior to her passing, had shared with this youth, that she had a son who died of AIDS in the early 80s. Despite frequent questions, this teen's family refused to talk with her about AIDS, or about the uncle she never knew. All day long, she came into the gym, time after time, surrounded by supportive friends and teachers, to ask one more question, or take one more look at the panel.

At the end of the day, when she came to see the panels packed up and put away, she was accompanied by her mom and her aunt, and the gym was closed off to give the family a moment by themselves with the brother, uncle, and son who had for so long gone unacknowledged. I hope this moment was a one that opened the lines of communication long since closed and will remain in the hearts of that family for many generations to come.

Angela Foster

TATF is an adolescent driven, peer education initiative that equips youth and young adults with the information and skills needed to understand and prevent HIV/STDs while promoting positive behavioral change and sexual health. TATF works with youth and young adults ages 9-22. If you would like to learn more about TATF or set up a TATF chapter, call 1.800.475.2430 or email TATF Supervisor Marissa Rice at mrice@AIDSCommunityResources.com.



Long-time volunteer Marcia Hogg remembered

Marcia Hogg, a staunch ally of AIDS Community Resources, died December 19, 2010. "If ACR had a 'way above and beyond' award," Executive Director Michael Crinnin was quoted as saying in a 1997 Scotsman Press article, "it would have to go to Marcia Hogg."

Marcia came to ACR in 1991 with a multitude of skills; the most valued being the comprehensive knowledge, sensitivity, and sense of humor she put to use on ACR's AIDS Hotline. "She answered thousands of calls," said Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Doody. Marcia was a compassionate voice on the phone to those who were confused and afraid for themselves or their loved ones following an AIDS diagnosis. "That was when an AIDS diagnosis was a death sentence," said Ms. Doody. "She listened; she counseled; she cared."

Marcia was generous with her time. She joined ACR's Buddy Program and for years provided one-on-one supportive services to a woman with HIV, sharing all the ups and downs that HIV infection introduces into the life of a person.

She was instrumental in establishing a permanent Syracuse chapter of the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. She played a significant role in the development and maintenance of the AIDS Memorial Garden in Thornden Park.

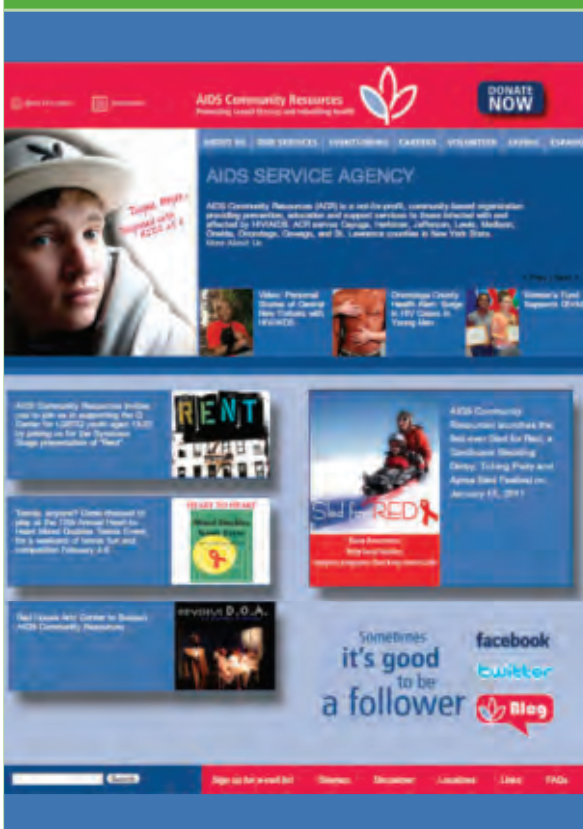
In 1997 Ms. Hogg told Scotsman reporter Radell Roberts that she knew her work with individuals dying of AIDS genuinely made a difference. "I can feel it. It dominates my life. I've witnessed such acts of courage...and I'm not afraid of death anymore."

Marcia Hogg was an active volunteer with AIDS Community Resources for more than 18 years.

"She listened; she counseled; she cared."



ACR website redesigned



Check out the redesigned AIDS Community Resources website at AIDSCommunityResources.com. This new design allows us to focus more on stories about real people and headline items that are important to you and your safety. Special thanks to Brian Hoke of Bentley & Hoke LLC and designer Maha Younes for their hard work in bringing the site alive.

While you're at your computer...look for AIDS Community Resources' fan page on Facebook and become a fan. We'll be better able to keep you up to date with all the latest information about AIDS and about activities at AIDS Community Resources.

If you have a story to share with us either in our newsletter, on our new website or at Facebook or Twitter, we'd love to hear from you. Email information@aidscommunityresources.com and tell us all about it.





627 West Genesee Street
Syracuse, New York 13204

ACR offers its services to anyone without discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political affiliation, marital status, handicapped status, or mode of transmission.

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Or e-mail: information@aidscommunityresources.com

Or mail in the back of this newsletter to:
AIDS Community Resources • 627 West Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY 13204

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 4 – 6, 2011

Heart to Heart Tennis Event

Open to all ages and levels. Call 451.5050 to register your team to play.

February 13, 2011

Dessert Reception and Performance of *RENT*

Reception at 1:00 p.m.; performance at 2:00 p.m. at Syracuse Stage. Tickets are \$30-\$50 for the afternoon; \$20 for reception only. Call 475.2430 for tickets or online at AIDSCommunityResources.com

February 26, 2011

World's Smallest Mardi Gras Parade

3:00 p.m. at Armory Square, Syracuse.
events@AIDSCommunityResources.com

May 1, 2011

13th Annual AIDS Hike for Life

5K fundraising walk and run at Hamilton College
AIDSwalkCNY.com

June 5, 2011

19th Annual AIDS Walk/Run

5K fundraising walk, 10K timed run at Beaver Lake Nature Center
AIDSwalkCNY.com

Follow us on:



PEER/VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Orientation sessions for new peers and volunteers are held monthly in both Syracuse and Utica. In Syracuse, call 475.2430. To sign up in Utica, call 793.0661.

SUPPORT GROUPS

SYRACUSE YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS: Q Center • 617 West Genesee Street • Syracuse, NY 13204

LGBTQ

[ages 13-18]: Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

TRANSYOUTH

[ages 14-24]: 1st Wednesday, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

NEW HORIZONS

[ages 14-19]: 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

CONVERSATIONS OF COLOR

[ages 13-22]: 3rd Wednesday, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

STEPPIN' OUT

[ages 19-22]: Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

COLAGE [for children of LGBTQ parents]

[ages 8-12]: 4th Monday: 4:00-6:00 p.m.

For further information: qcenter@AIDSCommunityResources.com

UTICA LGBTQ YOUTH GROUP:

Thursdays 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

For locations and further information, contact Mary Doody at 315.701.2422

or glbtqyouth@AIDSCommunityResources.com

WATERTOWN AREA GAY YOUTH GROUP:

Tuesdays 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

For information, call Angela, 386.4493 x 151, or Bill 529.4096

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