



# AIDS Community Resources

A Multicultural AIDS Service Agency

*Celebrating 23 Years of a Community Responding to AIDS*

SERVING CAYUGA, HERKIMER, JEFFERSON, LEWIS, MADISON, ONEIDA, ONONDAGA, OSWEGO, ST. LAWRENCE COUNTIES

October 2006



## Viewpoint

by Michael Crinnin

School daze – remember them well... Lately they've been very very good to ACR... Stars have aligned with three different classes from Syracuse University working to upgrade the quality and appearance of our prevention message – you know, move us into a 21st Century look... 'bout time...

In part, our fortune is born out of past student intern placements and, in part, new Board relationships (two Board members work for the University): we are determined to mine this precious vein.

Not-for-profit human service agencies – especially small local organizations - have been notoriously negligent, in my humble opinion, when it comes to pursuing 'slick' advertising options: "Stodgy Are Us". I get it. When money is tight, the work load overwhelming, and funding sources very specific with objectives they want attended to, 'public relations' is often viewed as a luxury and an after-thought – nice work if you can get it.

It was a very long time incoming, aforementioned reasons notwithstanding, but we now have a staff person that is dedicated full time, to public relations. It has dramatically changed our ability to be the 'Resource' of, AIDS Community Resources, and is a credit to our Board of Directors' vision.

Nine counties, up to the Canadian border, is a

large territory to pound the pavement with the HIV prevention message. Despite an office in six of these counties it has not been unusual to hear, "We didn't know you (ACR) were here/there was such an agency...?!" Hated hearing it, but it did keep us determined to forever change that experience.

Not only does Jean (Jean Kessner, our PR Director) do all manner of press releases, stories, interviews, forums, web page updates, newsletters, photo shooting, etc., she sets up as many different staff, volunteers, and clients as will agree to speak for themselves about their experiences and/or programs.

Jean is also our 'prime miner': if there is the precious metal of media assistance available to us, she will uncover it and bring it to the light of day – routinely linking us to the already trained and tuned in. Such has been the case with the aforementioned Syracuse University classes.

I've had the pleasure of tagging along with Jean, and participating some, as she has addressed the students involved, laying out our needs and challenges. With her 26 years of TV reporting, she cuts right to the chase and they hang on her every word. Students are wonderful to work with – especially public relation students, creative design students and media production

*Continued on page 3*

## AIDS COMMUNITY RESOURCES

is a not-for-profit, community-based organization, supported by both public and private funds, bringing information and 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

# NORTH COUNTRY ORIGINAL: MORE THAN A RED RIBBON

Mark your calendar: on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2006, the original play "More Than a Red Ribbon" by SUNY Potsdam student Lexy Nitisco, premiers at Dunn Dance Theatre. It's billed as "a play reflecting the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS".

AIDS permanently altered Lexy's life when she was 13 and lived in Maputo, Mozambique where she saw many Africans infected and dying from the incurable disease.

Lexy later moved to Upstate New York and joined the Teen AIDS Task Force and drama club at Indian River High School. "The more I learned about what I had seen in Africa, the more frightened I became," Lexy said. "I was not only worried about my health, but the health of those around the world."

She transferred her fear to her creative side and thought: what better way to get other people involved but through my true love...theatre? On stage she can address popular misconceptions about the HIV/

AIDS epidemic, which is so inescapable in Africa. "People tend to forget that it is happening in our country too."

Lexy believes effective medical treatments for HIV encourage Americans to put their faith in technology to fix this "problem", and they tend to forget what AIDS looks like when it goes untreated. Denying the reality of AIDS can be especially easy to do in rural areas.

People think of it as a big city disease.

Will her play change lives and attitudes? "It would be great if it did," Lexy said. "Honestly, it's still a work in progress. But it might make them think a little bit."

**For more information:**  
[nistic52@potsdam.edu](mailto:nistic52@potsdam.edu)

*"The more I learned about what I had seen in Africa, the more frightened I became."*



Playwright Lexy Nitisco and Associate Drama Professor Jay Pecora, faculty advisor for "More Than a Red Ribbon".

Left to right: Stephanie Hyde, Mike Castillo, Chris Peacock, and Donna Moschek. Erin Gandia is the woman in the center. This scene is "You Have AIDS". The woman in the center is in a waiting room waiting for HIV test results. She's imagining how she might be told that she is positive and the other four characters come out and do a comedic dance in her imagination.



## Continued from Cover

students: right down to business. They are highly competitive and practical: "This project goes into my portfolio, and it will be good!" Jean knows what they're after, and it always works better for me when everyone involved comes out a winner.

It is easy to think only how lucky we are – how much we have to gain – and to forget that at the end of these projects, the students will have benefited tremendously from their involvement with our agency: they will most likely be the most HIV/AIDS educated students on campus. College students are much like the general population when it comes to having a comprehensive understanding of HIV/AIDS: if or until it hits home, not much serious thought about it - the way of the world.

I look forward to the finished products – the 6 (!) PSAs and a new 'tag line' currently

under (student) construction. Just as much, I look forward to watching it all 'dawn' on the students: the stigma, the fear, the denial, the 'sex-phobia', the misuse of religion and rigid beliefs that keep good people from reaching out to infected members of their community, the loneliness...

I look forward to the best and brightest helping to make normative the discussion and the behaviors that keep this disease from spreading. I look forward to youthful talents unleashed for a cause too easily misunderstood and poorly portrayed. I look forward to re-tooled messages for prevention.

I just know there's gold in them there hills...!



## GOOD DEED WITH

# GoodSearch

**D**o you use the World Wide Web to search for information? Please consider using <http://www.goodsearch.com/> and AIDS Community Resources will benefit. More than 15,000 nonprofits and schools are generating revenue by using GoodSearch.

The service, which uses a Yahoo-powered search engine, has been featured in articles by the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Oprah Magazine, Fortune Small Business Magazine, and more than a thousand blogs.

Next time you need information fast, try GoodSearch, type in AIDS Community Resources as the beneficiary, and ... thank you very much!

## ACR WELCOMES

*Liz Malcolm MSN, APN, Director of Treatment Adherence*

**"M**y father died from AIDS in 1991, which impacted me greatly. As a nurse, my goal has always been to restore clients to a state of wellness and in a time of dying to bring them to a peaceful death absent from pain and suffering," says Liz Malcolm.

Her professional goal is to focus on issues prevalent to the growing population of HIV+ women of color and the increasing HIV+ geriatric population.

She earned her RN in the early 90's and graduated this past May with a Masters of Science in Nursing as an Advanced Practice

Nurse and also a minor in Nursing Education.



*September 22, 2006, The Marx Hotel, Syracuse: Liz Malcolm presenting "An overview of mother to unborn transmission of HIV in the U.S."*

# A TIME TO REMEMBER...REMEMBERS

It is with gratitude and sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Mary Garber Gaffney, one of the founders of "A Time to Remember", who died August 7 in New Hartford. After the death of her beloved brother Stephen, from AIDS, she worked tirelessly to end the stigma associated with the disease. In 2000, Mary called together a small group of dedicated volunteers to organize the first cocktail reception to raise money and awareness about AIDS and promote prevention education.

The 7th Annual "A Time to Remember", a fundraising cocktail reception at Fountain Elms Terrace at Munson Williams Proctor Institute in Utica raised more than \$7000 for AIDS Community Resources. Local artists donated 23 pieces auctioned to the highest bidder; proceeds further ACR's work to care for those living with HIV/AIDS and to educate young people about HIV prevention.



## A TIME TO REMEMBER SPONSORS

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# NORTH COUNTRY WOMAN HITS THE HIGHWAYS

**Q:** How many people does it take to raise thousands of dollars for a worthy cause?

**A:** Ten people, if you have Canton's Rosemary Philips on your team.

Rosemary Philips, a North Country attorney, recently completed the Empire State AIDS Ride bicycle ride across New York State; a 560 mile journey from Niagara Falls to New York City, to raise money for AIDS Community Resources. ACR serves 9 counties including Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence.

Philips recently talked with ACR's Public Relations Director Jean Kessner about the Ride.

**Jean:** Why did you ride? Do you know anyone with HIV/AIDS?

**Rosemary:** The first person I knew with AIDS was a good friend of mine in college. It was around 1985-86, and that was the first time I'd heard anything about it. I've known people with HIV/AIDS since then, but no close friends. Until this ride, that is.

**Jean:** Are you new to the sport?

**Rosemary:** I used to bike some about 12 years ago, but not long distances. I took up biking again last Fall and this Winter I got interested in doing the ride.

**Jean:** What were the best, and the worst, parts of the ride?

**Rosemary:** The best part of the ride, by far, was the camaraderie. Everyone involved was so amazing and inspiring. All the people pushed themselves to their physical and emotional limits and were always there to support one another. You get really close to people really fast when you're together 24/7 under such demanding circumstances.

The worst part is when it ends and you have to go back to "the real world." It's hard to make that transition. Also, the hills on Day 6.

**Jean:** Whatever do you think about hour after hour and mile after mile?

**Rosemary:** The first day, I rode by myself way too much and I had quite a few thoughts, like "whose stupid idea

was this?" and "there's no way I can do this for a whole week" or "I wonder what normal people are doing right now" or "I wonder if anyone would notice if I just left." After that, I tried to ride with other people more. I also sang to myself a lot.

**Jean:** Will you ride next year?

**Rosemary:** Oh yeah! As one person said, it's like a family reunion. Once you get involved you just have to keep coming back every year. Plus, I have to do better on those hills!



*New York City, August 19, 2006. Rosemary Philips celebrates after completing the 560-mile Empire State AIDS Ride from Niagara Falls to NYC in 7 days.*

**Jean:** I love the picture of you holding your bike over your head! Must have felt great to finish.

**Rosemary:** I had seen pictures of people holding their bikes up over their heads so I got it stuck in my head that I had to do that at the end. I was so tired, I was afraid I might rupture something, but I still had to do it. I love that picture. My first thought when I finished was "Oh, thank God I'm alive." I just broke down crying. After that, it was more jubilation.

**Jean:** Would you encourage others to participate next year?

**Rosemary:** It is definitely a week that will change your life. You will challenge yourself physically, mentally and emotionally. You will learn a lot about yourself in a hurry. You will become a part of an amazing family. At the same time, you will know that you are doing something that really makes a difference.

AIDS Community Resources should learn within the next few weeks how much money it will receive from the Empire State AIDS Ride. Money raised in the cross-state bicycle ride helps defray costs in ACR's 9 county service area.

Jean Kessner  
AIDS Community Resources

# HAPPENING IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY

## FAITH IN ACTION

In 2004, the most recent year for which statistics are available, AIDS was the leading cause of death for black women in the United States between the ages of 25 and 34. It's a crisis that can be turned around if the prevention message is disseminated widely and reaches the right ears. But how do you talk effectively about HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) to the African American community? From the pulpit.

AIDS Community Resources' Mohawk Valley Regional Director Wenona Wake invited pastors and leaders from the African American Faith Community to join in an open dialogue about HIV/AIDS. About 60 people attended the discussion, lead by Wake and Pastor Chauncey Brown of the True Vine Baptist Church of Syracuse. The Utica Observer-Dispatch interviewed Reverend Veronica Nevith of New Bethel Mission Baptist Church in Whitesboro, who said children need to be educated at a young age to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. "They need to know they are robbing themselves of a full life," Nevith told reporter Jennifer Fusco. "It's very serious and they need to protect themselves."

If you would like to know more about HIV/AIDS prevention, contact Wenona Wake at AIDS Community Resources' Utica office, 793-0661.

*The Reverend  
Chauncey Brown from  
the True Vine Baptist  
Church in Syracuse  
speaks during the  
Open Dialogue.*



*September 23, 2006 Radisson Hotel-Utica Centre: 60 representatives from Mohawk Valley Black churches meet to map HIV prevention strategies.*

## PROCTOR TO BEGIN AIDS TASK FORCE

UTICA OBSERVER-DISPATCH,  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2006

A Teen AIDS Task Force will begin in mid-October at Thomas R. Proctor Senior High School, Utica City School Superintendent Marilyn Skermont said.

Students will be able to participate in the task force program either after school or in between classroom time, Skermont said.

The program promotes abstinence, she said.

Students will need parent permission to participate, she said.

Skermont met with a representative from AIDS Community Resources and her high school staff in mid-September to discuss the program, she said.

Now the district is in the process of appointing a program adviser, who will probably be a Proctor teacher, Skermont said.

- Vanessa Ebbeling, O-D



## GET THE WHOLE STORY

The Teen AIDS Task Force gives youth straight up facts and a place to talk about important decisions. TATF deals with feelings others ignore, and information that affects relationships.

TATF members design creative ways of getting AIDS information out to the entire student body in dozens of middle and high schools in Central and Northern New York and the Mohawk Valley.

**Call to find your local chapter or  
get information on starting a new chapter.**

**1-800-475-2430**

***Knowledge is Power – Get Some!***

## 'GRAVY' FROM OLD NAVY

**Y**ou made our day, Old Navy, and enriched the lives of children whose worlds are affected by HIV/AIDS. Money is often tight for our clients. We help with the big things – medical care, medications, housing... but school supplies and other quality of life materials for school-age children are not part of our support.

Old Navy prides itself on providing the latest fashions at great prices for the whole family. At Carousel Center, it provided both philanthropy and fashion, as Old Navy staff collected boxes of backpacks, notebooks, pens, pencils, crayons and paper products for our clients' children. Thank you for your generosity!



*Kimberlee Rieppel (left) and Jennifer Kostine of Old Navy Carousel.*



*AIDS Community Resources' Case Managers Bryony Grealish (left) and Lori Sherry sort through school supplies donated by Old Navy.*

## NYS LAW PREVENTS CDC TESTING PLANS

**A**New York state law passed in the 1980's prevents the state from implementing the Centers for Disease Control revised recommendations on HIV testing. CDC wants HIV tests to become a routine part of medical care for residents ages 13 to 64 and that requirements for written consent and pretest counseling should be dropped. The CDC says health care providers should continue routine HIV testing unless they find that less than one of every 1,000 patients test HIV positive, "at which point such screening is no longer warranted". Patients would have the opportunity to opt out of the test if they choose.

The New York law aimed to protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and requires a physician or anyone ordering an HIV test to have the individual receiving the test read and sign an informed consent form. The form explains the test and the patient's rights.

According to the New York Times, NYC Health Commissioner Thomas Frieden has attempted to change the state law, but has made little progress. Those opposed to changing the state law say doctors are not comfortable raising the issue with patients, which is another sign of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

*~ Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report, 9/25*



## RYAN WHITE DECISION DELAYED

**C**ongress adjourned at the end of September without the Senate passing a measure to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides funding for HIV/AIDS programs. Five senators, including Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton of New York blocked Senate Consideration of a House-approved bill that would change funding formulas to benefit rural areas and decrease funding to urban areas. AIDS Community Resources would lose \$200,000 per year under the House bill. The Associated Press quotes Senator Clinton as saying, "You want to take money away from my 100,000 people living with HIV/AIDS and give it to worthy people in other parts of the country because this administration and this Congress won't put more money into funding treatment programs for HIV and AIDS." Congress could reconsider the legislation when it reconvenes after the November elections.

## AIDS NOT ALWAYS THE CAUSE OF DEATH

More than a quarter of New Yorkers infected with the AIDS virus are now dying of other causes, researchers reported September 18th. Scientists at the NYS Health Department found that 31% of HIV patients died because of substance abuse, 24% died of cardiovascular disease, and 20% died of cancer unrelated to the virus.

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627 West Genesee Street  
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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**October, November, December**

**Holiday Angel Collections**

Join us as we brighten the holiday season for those affected by HIV and AIDS. Put on a pair of wings and spread the spirit of the season by providing needed items for our clients. For more information, call 800-475-2430.

**October, November, December**

**2006 Holiday Ornament "Light Everlasting"**, A solid brass ornament with a gold and enamel finish. \$12 per ornament (includes shipping). Call 800-475-2430.

**December 1, 2006**

**World AIDS Day**

7:30 a.m. Service at Panasci Chapel LeMoyne College

**December 1, 2 & 3, 2006**

**More Than a Red Ribbon**, a new play reflecting the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS. Dunn Dance Theatre, SUNY Potsdam. nistic52@potsdam.edu

**December 6, 2006**

**Holiday Open House** - 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

AIDS Community Resources, 627 West Genesee Street, Syracuse

**April 29, 2007**

**8th AIDS Hike for Life** - a 5K fundraising walk at Hamilton College.  
www.aidswalkcny.com

**PEER/VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

**Utica – November 9 – 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**November 18 – 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Syracuse – October 26 – 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**November 18 – 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Please call 475-2430 to sign up.

**SUPPORT GROUPS**

**TREATMENT ADHERENCE**

Contact Liz at 475-2430, Ext. 510

**SYRACUSE YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS:**

**LGBTQ (ages 13-18): Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30**

**Transgender (ages 14-24): 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:00**

**Steppin' Out (ages 19-22): Thursdays, 7:00-9:00**

For location and further information:lgbtqyouthcenter@aidcommunityresources.com

**UTICA YOUTH GROUP:**

**Sundays from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.**

For locations and further information, contact Mary Doody at (800-475-2430).