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Syracuse, New York 13204  
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January 2010

# 26 Years AIDS Community Resources



## Viewpoint By Michael Crinnin Executive Director



Good stuff in the midst of it all:  
#1. Abundance abounded here in response to our annual "Holiday Angel" program. Presents lined hallways and crammed conference rooms, filling every one of the 390 client/family member requests submitted by Case Managers - and then some. This outpouring of community generosity was all the more touching as it happened in the midst of terrible economic times: those that 'have' are giving – in a big way - conscious, I think of how close we all are to economic free-fall.

The majority of our clients live below the poverty level: HIV/AIDS is more and more a disease of the poor. It is, yes, a disease of 'behavior' first and foremost, and many folks of means become infected, but the poor are much more vulnerable to the kinds of behaviors that lead to infection with few resources to help manage after becoming sick. It is heart-breaking to hear stories of the people we serve (many living on the margins) and the choices they feel they have to make to feed and shelter their families, to hold on to a low paying job, to maintain benefits and some kind of self respect. Gifts of warm clothing, bedding, personal care items, holiday food and a present for their children can generate renewed hope and as a result, improved health. I see it every year.

#2. The Federal Government has finally, after 20 years, lifted the ban on allowing Federal money to be used for needle exchange programs. Study after study, here and throughout Europe, have demonstrated the dramatic reduction of HIV transmission by making clean needles available to intravenous drug users. AIDS service agencies have been shackled for these last 20 years by self-

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

Julia Parker's death at 17 inspired her family to open their hearts. See page 4 for a true Holiday Angel story.



IF YOU WISH TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM THIS NEWSLETTER, CALL 800.475.2430

Or e-mail: [information@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto: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 5 – 7, 2010**  
Heart to Heart Tennis Event  
Call 451.5050 to register to play.

**February 20, 2010**  
World's Smallest Mardi Gras Parade  
1:00 p.m. to decorate, 3:00 p.m. to march,  
Armory Square, Syracuse.  
[events@AIDSCommunityResources.com](mailto:events@AIDSCommunityResources.com)

**March 7, 2010**  
Dessert Reception and Matinee Performance:  
of *Lookingglass Alice* at Syracuse Stage.  
[events@AIDSCommunityResources.com](mailto:events@AIDSCommunityResources.com)

**April 25, 2010**  
12th Annual AIDS Hike For Life  
- 5K fundraising walk and run at Hamilton College.  
[www.AIDSwalkCNY.com](http://www.AIDSwalkCNY.com)

**June 6, 2010**  
18th Annual AIDS Walk/Run  
- 5K fundraising walk, 10K run and Beaver Lake Nature  
Center. [www.AIDSwalkCNY.com](http://www.AIDSwalkCNY.com)

### PEER/VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Orientation sessions for new peers and volunteers are held twice 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:

**LGBTQ** [ages 13-18]: Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
**TRANSGENDER** [ages 14-24]: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
**STEPPIN' OUT** [ages 19-22]: Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
For location and further information: [qcenter@AIDSCommunityResources.com](mailto:qcenter@AIDSCommunityResources.com)

#### UTICA LGBTQ YOUTH GROUP:

**New Time, New Location.** Thursdays 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
For locations and further information, contact Mary Doody at 315.701.2422  
or [glbtqyouth@AIDSCommunityResources.com](mailto:glbtqyouth@AIDSCommunityResources.com)

## 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.

**MICHAEL CRINNIN**  
Executive Director

**JASON CENTOLELLA**  
Chair

**JOHN KING**  
Vice-Chair

**JERENA BARKINS**  
Secretary

**SUZANNE KONDR-DEFURIA**  
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**Newsletter Editor**  
Jean Kessner

## ACR notes passing of three clients in December



Those of us involved in the fight to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS are amazed and distressed at the public's perception that AIDS is a curable disease (it's not) or that there is a vaccine to prevent it (there isn't) or that medication will keep an infected person healthy and strong. In truth, though drugs have extended lives and stabilized the health of many, they take a toll on the human body.

At every ACR staff meeting we hear updates from Case Managers about our clients, and at nearly every meeting there is a death to report. The obituaries that appear in the paper don't say the word AIDS, and in fact the official cause of death can be something other than HIV, adding to the myth that AIDS is no longer dangerous. But the virus takes its toll, medications stress certain organs, and even HIV+ individuals receiving the best of care die far too early.

To help refute the public perception that AIDS has been tamed we will, as a regular feature, make note of the passing of those under our care. We will not use names, as strict confidentiality laws stay in force even after death. But we know their names, and their stories, and news of their passing hits hard.

In December 2009, three HIV positive individuals died. The first is client #1654, who lived in the Mohawk Valley and was described by her Case Manager, Vicki Tagg, as a "tough cookie who would never give up." She worked hard to overcome her infection, but never managed to get her HIV numbers (infection load) under control. She died "suddenly." She was 52 years old.

Client #2162 is remembered by his North Country Case Manager, Suzanne Kelley, as a positive and upbeat guy with many friends who loved fresh flowers and gave every visitor a flower to take along as they left. He liked collecting old records. He was co-infected with HIV and Hepatitis C, but was reportedly recovering well from a medical setback when he died of liver cancer at the age of 49, leaving behind a loving and devoted family.

Syracuse Case Manager Amber Rush remembers client #1714 as a woman who grew by "leaps and bounds" under our care. She came to us with no furniture, always short of food, and was bad at keeping appointments. Her life stabilized, she soon took her health very seriously. She'd say, "Life is so short, but life is such a blessing." "I don't think I'll ever forget her," said Ms. Rush. "She put the rest of life in perspective for me." Client #1714 was 58 years old.

## 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 wise sexual decision making.

## Q Center youth thank Dave Valesky for brave stand

On December 2, 2009 the New York State Senate decisively rejected a measure that would have allowed gay couples to wed. Central New York State Senator Dave Valesky cast one of only 24 votes for same-sex marriage, while 38 senators were opposed. Mr. Valesky, who will stand for re-election in 2010, took a political risk with his yes vote to marriage equality. Youth who participate in Q Center programming showed their support for his brave stand in a series of handwritten letters excerpted here.



Senator David Valesky, speaking in support of marriage equality, on the floor of the New York State Senate, December 2, 2009.

"I want to thank you for your support. I am glad to have someone to accept me as I am."  
Tony

"I appreciate you putting your political life on the line. Hopefully people will follow your great example in the years to come."  
Q

"You are super cool for doing this."

Anna

"I never met you, but I feel closer to you than my own mother because you accept and support us for who we are."  
Kimberly

"You are a really good person and don't let anyone change that or say otherwise. It's AMAZING that you were brave enough to stand up for us."  
Brennan

"Thank you for trying to spread equality. Don't give up!!"  
Marissa

"You are a good man and do not let anyone discourage you for sticking up for civil rights. We owe you our gratitude."  
John

## In Central New York... Thanksgiving food from IFC

The Interreligious Food Consortium (IFC) made it possible for 15 AIDS Community Resources' clients and their families to have extra food over Thanksgiving. "It really came in handy," said Director of Support Services, Alissa Viscome. "It's important for parents to be able to feed their children nutritious food when they're home over a long holiday, but that can stretch a budget past what many of our families can afford."

Many children qualify for free breakfasts and lunches at school because of low family income, but there is no provision to feed them when schools are closed. The IFC Thanksgiving baskets filled a need for ACR families and countless others in Onondaga County.



## “Extreme Makeover” for Q Center Therapy Room

Left side, leaning on the couch, are Carissa Hoch and David Hyle of Old Navy. Right Side leaning on couch are Kimberlee Rieppel and Theresa Raphael also of Old Navy. Seated are Patty Boyd, Elizabeth Payne, Heather Hawkins, and Sarah Hernandez. Two Old Navy employees who helped but are pictured are Laurie Sylvia and Luann Fazio.



It’s amazing what \$1000, some creative juice, and the good will of a corporate giant can accomplish. During October 2009 every Old Navy store manager in the nation received \$1000 to invest in their communities. Kimerlee Rieppel and his crew from the DeWitt Old Navy store chose the Q Center, where they extremely made-over the Therapy Room. “At Old Navy, we know how important it is for each of us to be involved in our communities, both personally and professionally,” said Mr. Rieppel. “We’re making a ONE MILLION DOLLAR investment into the communities we work and live in.”

## Youth-centered activities on World AIDS Day Local AIDS Quilt panels tell life stories

Panels from the massive AIDS Memorial Quilt were displayed at various schools in the Central, Northern, and Mohawk Valley regions of New York to commemorate World AIDS Day. The panels were provided by AIDS Community Resources for use by its Teen AIDS Task Force (TATF) program and other community groups.

TATF’s Supervisor Marissa Rice said the AIDS Quilt panels are a powerful educational tool to prevent new HIV infections. “I think it really motivates our teens to continue their mission of spreading information about HIV/AIDS prevention. It makes me feel proud to work with such dedicated young people who have the desire to make a difference.”



AIDS Quilt panels on display at Nottingham High School in Syracuse.

## Reducing social stigma for LGBTQ youth



December 1, 2009~The Q will offer additional outreach LGBTQ youth cultural competency training in 2010 thanks to the Community Foundation (see newsletter insert).

The Q Center offered a workshop to local youth service providers to increase awareness about Q Center programming and improve the LGBTQ cultural competency of youth serving organizations. The seminar focused on current research on the social stigma experienced by LGBTQ youth and how that stigma significantly raises risk for drug and alcohol use, suicide, homelessness, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. Twenty-eight community members attended the workshop, representing service providers in mental health, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, relationship violence and juvenile justice. The workshop was partially funded by the Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth.

*Continued from page 1*

righteous politicians who ignore the research and cling to the belief that providing a clean needle to someone who shoots drugs will encourage that person to shoot drugs (!?!). These are the same folk who believe making condoms available to teenagers will trigger sexual activity...? But I digress... Intravenous drug users are a much maligned and much misunderstood group of people. Providing clean needles sends a message that, at the very least conveys, “You are a worthwhile person and you don’t have to become infected with Hepatitis C or HIV because you shoot drugs.” We support a ‘harm reduction’ model and have seen a lot of folks reduce their injecting drug use once they trust and become involved with our street outreach staff. This lifting of a ban sends a message of hope.

3#. We were recently notified that, thanks to Senator Schumer and Representative Maffei, we would be receiving \$300,000 to support our Youth Prevention Programs: TATF (throughout our 9 counties), the Q Center (Onondaga County), and The Youth Safety Project (Mohawk Valley)...! Needless to say we are thrilled, relieved, and determined to keep youth in our nine counties safe from and informed about HIV and STDs. This money will literally save the aforementioned programs.

So, we start the New Year sober (regarding the economy and how it is affecting State funding for all human service agencies), but grateful as well, for the ‘good stuff’ that happens along the way: ‘good stuff’ that keeps us focused, hopeful, and engaged with the struggling people we serve who are looking to stay healthy and to turn their lives around... In the midst of it all, “Happy New Year”, still has traction here at AIDS Community Resources.

To you and yours.

## Faithful sponsor Empower Federal Credit Union accepts “thank you” plaque

ACR fundraising took a giant leap forward when Empower Federal Credit Union boosted its long-term commitment to ACR by becoming the **Title Sponsor** of ACR’s three main fundraising events in Syracuse, Utica, and Watertown. With Empower’s backing, ACR has been able to market and expand its fundraising events with magnificent results. In its more than 13 years of sponsorship for AIDS Walk/Runs, Empower Federal Credit Union has helped AIDS Community Resources raise more than \$2 Million. The vast majority of the money ACR spends educating young people about HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases, is raised on the local level. Empower’s generous investment in AIDS Community Resources has saved lives.



Jim Reynolds, Empower VP, Michael Crinnin, John Wakefield, Empower CEO, and Wil Murtaugh.

12th Annual  
**AIDS HIKE FOR LIFE**  
5K Fundraising Walk  
5K Fundraising Run



The 12th Annual AIDS Hike For Life, a 5K fundraising walk and run at Hamilton College will be April 25, 2010. Sign up now at [AIDSwalkCNY.com](http://AIDSwalkCNY.com).

# In Central and Northern New York and the Mohawk Valley... Holiday Angels deliver *hope and joy*

ACR's Holiday Angel program has become a tradition for many fortunate families, a way to share holiday kindness with people in genuine need. Under the program "angels" are paired with an ACR client and his/her family and purchase "gifts" for them to be opened during the holidays. Unlike the Christmas "wish list" many of us concoct, the Holiday Angel lists are designed to address basic needs.

In our nine county service area, 369 clients and family members were blessed with gifts. In total, 189 individuals or groups of friends or coworkers accepted the Holiday Angel challenge. Here are three of their stories.



Dottie Abbey & Sheree Sherwin  
ADP  
Anchor QEA  
Tom Angioliello  
Tim Annable  
AT&T  
AT&T / CWA  
Debbie Baldino  
Baldwinsville High School TATF  
Jo-Anne Balestra  
Pat Barber  
Kathleen Bartel & Luke Bellardi  
Gloria & Ramon Becerra  
Anita Bertrand  
Bethany Baptist Church Men Fellowship  
Maria Bishop & K.C. Martin  
BNY Mellon  
Bonnie Boyden  
Bill Breitenbacher  
Tom Brisk  
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS  
Mary Bronner  
Darrell Brown  
Janet Butkins  
Wendy Byrne  
Elizabeth & Jeffrey Cady  
Mary Anne Calogero  
John Camilleri & Jerry Reed  
Theresa Campese  
Canastota TATF  
Tessa Careaga  
Paul & Mary Jane Cavano

Charms Club Utica  
Colleen Clancy  
Kelly Clark  
Deborah Clary  
Colton-Pierpont TATF  
Congressman Michael A. Arcuri Staff  
Connect Peer  
Becky Corbin  
Corporate Interiors  
Cub Scout Pack #620  
Gregory T. Davis  
Terry Deegan  
Mary DeLing  
Mary DeStefano  
Lisa & Billy DiCosimo  
Mary Doody  
Robin Drypolder  
Mike Ducharme & Ray Kyle  
Kelly Dwyer  
Lynne Elmer  
Employee Student Health Office @Update  
Medical University  
ESM High School  
Health Class  
Family of Janet Ours  
Kate Ferguson  
Roxanna Fiore  
Marge Foody  
Cliff Ganey  
Mary Kay Garno  
Jordan General & Toni McClendon  
W. S. Girvin III  
Denise Glenn  
Gloo Family

Cheryl Goodwin  
Kelsey Gordon Family & Friends  
Sharlene Graeff  
Ben & Jake Greenfield  
Greg's Rainbow Team  
Jane Guiles  
Dave Haggerty & Jeff Church  
Deborah Hardy & Vivian Derrickson  
Susan & Ron Hauptfleisch  
Laurie Haynes  
Henninger High School TATF  
Carol Holliday  
Kathy Holton  
Linda Hook  
Ken Hudson  
Janet Hunter  
Huntington Family Centers - HARTS Program  
Indian River Drama/TATF  
Interreligious Food Consortium  
Jamesville-Dewitt High School TATF  
Jefferson Elementary School  
Kim Johnson & Irene Johnson  
Mark Kavouksorian  
Karen Keast  
Key Bank  
John King Family  
Rick King  
Patricia & Larissa Knox  
Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority  
Duke Lawton  
Linda LeBlanc

Nancy Levine  
Allison Lewis  
Life Church  
Barbara & Ian Lindsey  
Liverpool Central School District Office  
Liverpool High School GSA  
Beth Machan  
Ellen Maidman  
The Maids Home Services  
Michele Maurillo  
Kate McElroy  
Sally McSween & Mary Cornelius  
Laurie Meyers  
Karen Miller  
Kathy Miller  
Kathy Miller  
Harold Mills  
Linda Munson  
Jim & Sandy Murphy  
Mary Murphy & Denise Buford  
Moors Myers  
Nationwide Insurance Co.  
Kathryn Nickerson  
Patty, John & Delaney Nolan  
Karen Noyes  
Mary Jane O'Connor  
OCC GSA  
Old Navy-Carousel Center  
Old Navy-Dewitt  
Marijyn Olejniuk  
Oneida High School TATF  
Oneida Rotary Club  
Onondaga Hill Middle School  
Oriskany TATF

Oswego Health Center (OCO)  
Connie Palumb  
Charles Pannaci  
Amy Patnode  
Lori Jean Perrault  
Adam Peruta  
Wendell & Maryann Pfohl  
Dale Pierce  
Dana Pierce  
Pitcher Hill Community Church  
Heidi Potter  
Crystal & Beth Powers  
Diane Price  
Q Center  
Michelle Quackenbush  
Kevin & Paulette Quinn  
Sharon Ranfite  
Jerry & Erin Tylutki  
Louise & Marie Tyo  
Thea van der Ven  
Cathy Vaughn  
Heidi Venero  
Verizon Group  
Verizon Wireless  
Maureen Vinciquerra  
Clare Murray Volo  
Watertown High School TATF  
Westhill High School TATF  
Margaret Wicks  
Wolkensdorfer Family  
Women's Effort  
Laurie Wood  
Young Scholars @ Proctor High  
Kathy Zappala

Starbucks-Armory Square  
Starbucks-Fayetteville  
Starbucks-SU  
Carol Sweet  
Syracuse Crunch Corps  
Booster Club  
Syracuse Gay & Lesbian Chorus  
Syracuse LGBT Catholics & Friends  
Syracuse Stage/Symphony  
Telemarketing Dept.  
Syracuse VA Medical Center, Social Work Dept.  
Vicki Tagg  
Barry Thomas & Kevin Sauve  
Thompson Family  
Jerry & Erin Tylutki  
Louise & Marie Tyo  
Thea van der Ven  
Cathy Vaughn  
Heidi Venero  
Verizon Group  
Verizon Wireless  
Maureen Vinciquerra  
Clare Murray Volo  
Watertown High School TATF  
Westhill High School TATF  
Margaret Wicks  
Wolkensdorfer Family  
Women's Effort  
Laurie Wood  
Young Scholars @ Proctor High  
Kathy Zappala

## In Central New York...



Emily and Melissa with their beloved sister, Julia.

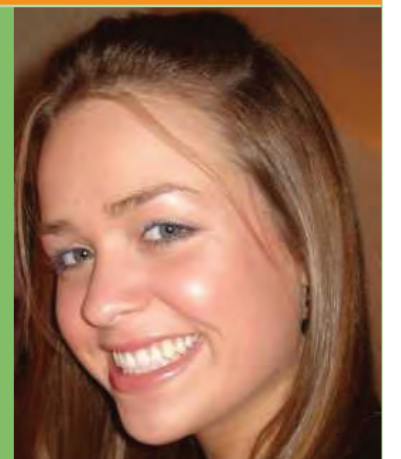
The Parker Family became first-time Holiday Angels as a way to ease the pain of the death of their beloved sister, Julia, who died at 17 in a fire that made headlines in the Spring of 2008. Julia was a senior at Cazenovia High School, the only one of seven who did not escape from an overnight fire at a cottage on DeRuyter Reservoir in Madison County.

Julia had worked at a church nursery and grown attached to twin baby girls. In her honor, sisters Melissa (who works for AIDS Community Resources) and Emily became Holiday Angels for six children, including two sets of twins. With their gifts they included this card:

"This holiday angel gift is in honor of a special angel who was taken from us too soon, Julia Marie Parker. Our family makes baskets for babies as a way of honoring Julia's life. She loved babies, especially twins. Julia's love for babies has inspired us to open our hearts and help where we can. Her memory has inspired this abundance of love that is overwhelming. She is proof that angels do exist. Julia is smiling from heaven today. From our family to yours, may you have a very Merry Christmas."

*In Loving Memory  
of Julia Marie Parker,  
"Our Angel in heaven has received her wings"*

July 25, 1990 –April 27, 2008



## In the Mohawk Valley...



Staff from Congressman Michael Arcuri's office united to become "angels" because they want to help those less fortunate than themselves. Sarah Bormann, who is pictured with ACR's Abdul Vohid, delivered gifts to ACR's Utica office that were purchased in conjunction with co-workers Cynthia Cornelius, Peter Scalise, Jason Phelps, and Connie Wood.

Ms. Bormann, who is a Caseworker/Field Representative for Mr. Arcuri, said, "We see a lot of need throughout the year and the Holiday Angel program gives us an opportunity to help a family anonymously. We enjoy being a part of your good works."

## In the North Country...



Louise (left) and Marie Tyo have been involved with ACR for several years by donating a portion of their state paychecks through the SEFA program, buying ACR's beautiful Christmas tree ornaments, and more recently, becoming Holiday Angels for families living with HIV/AIDS in the North Country.

Since 1992, Louise and Marie have lost loved ones to AIDS and say that it warms their hearts and helps them heal to help those who struggle with this still stigmatized disease. Their decision to help with the Holiday Angel project has been a Christmas gift they have given to each other for the past few years. Their motto has been, "Let our gifts to each other be to find those in need and spend it on them!"