



25 Years  
AIDS Community Resources

Viewpoint By Michael Crinnin  
Executive Director



These are breath-taking days... of the gasping type. Never has so much time been taken up with matters 'emergency financial'. By the end of most every day I feel as though I've staggered through yet one more marathon, coupled with the knowledge that another awaits me, and another, and another... It can consume.

Then last week, in the midst of deadlines and drama, someone sticks their head in my door to let me know that one of our long-time Syracuse volunteers has overdosed and is on life support: "Not expected to survive." I stop. Perspective enters commanding center stage - at least for a few moments.

I liked this volunteer - a great deal; I was in the majority. He (I will call him 'Brendan') was game to tackle any project always with a sardonic Irish wit and a willing hand. It was almost impossible not to like him. We all succumbed.

When he first arrived to volunteer, Brendan was in the last leg of a residential recovery program (one he placed himself in), after many years of heroin use. He was not the first to volunteer through this program, but he was with us longer than most. His longevity and consistency, as well as being blessed with the gift of charm, made it easy to miss signs that all might not be as it appeared. As he moved on to paid employment we felt the absence of his daily presence but shared the pleasure of his 'graduating' to the next level of recovery. There was to be no storybook ending.

We are not naïve to substance use/abuse here. A good number of those seeking our services have and/or continue to struggle with, drug dependency. Many of our clients will point directly to their addiction as the reason they became HIV+ whether it be diminished capacity to make a 'safe' sexual decision or sharing an infected needle.

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

Number one  
and WHAT????  
Turn to page 4  
for the rest of  
the story....



# 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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Executive Director

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## Newsletter Editor

Jean Kessner

In Central New York...

## A traveling AIDS history lesson

The display was hard to miss for patrons of Soule Library. The colorful panels of the 25 year timeline of AIDS in Central New York and around the world covered nearly the entire expanse of the bank of windows. The timeline was developed as part of AIDS Community Resources' 25th anniversary celebration.

Now a senior at Le Moyne College, Jessica Piper helped research and develop the timeline during an internship at AIDS Community Resources in 2008. Jessica says the timeline was a huge learning experience. "My knowledge of ACR or even AIDS for that matter, said Jessica, "was limited at best, but this project demanded that I have a true understanding of not only the topics I was covering but the people I was doing it for."

Jessica began by reading through 25 years of old newsletters and literature. She used only official statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other government sources. She laid the final document out in five year sections dating from 1981 when AIDS was first detected, through 1983 when AIDS Community Resources was founded, to 2008, ACR's 25th anniversary.

The internship helped guide Jessica's career path. She had majored in Public Relations since her freshman year, but was never sure if PR was the right fit for her until she came to ACR. "I learned that I am passionate about helping people to craft a message and relay it to the people who need it. PR allows me to do this for people who cannot do it for themselves and to help the public learn that there are people doing great things."

Jessica also learned a lot about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. She compared learning about safe sex to studying math. "It's like learning calculus. No one is going to look at a math problem and know exactly how to solve it if they haven't been taught the basics. Without a proper education young people have no chance. Protection from STDs and HIV is not something we just understand without ever having talked about it."



January, 2009, Soule Library, Syracuse. Jessica Piper stands in front of the timeline she helped develop. She's holding the 25 year book which contains her work. She graduates from Le Moyne in May.

If you would like to display the "25 years of AIDS Community Resources" timeline, please contact Jean Kessner at [pr@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:pr@aidscommunityresources.com).

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I've been here long enough to hear first hand any number of client recovery success stories. They smile and shake their head at the wonder of having survived their addiction. They find a new lease on life and manage their HIV disease with stubborn determination – vowing that HIV will not control their lives like drugs once did. I look at them differently today, more conscious of the amount of will and work it takes to stay 'clean and sober' – no matter their charm quotient.

Brendan's wake was a wonder: photo montages – liberal with shots of Brendan on ACR outreach and special event activities, his green ACR, **OBEY ME**, T shirt neatly folded on his casket, his ACR volunteer name tag pinned on the inside satin lining...

Family members pressed upon us stories of Brendan's joy at his volunteer activities: "He spoke of you all by name constantly – full of stories and laughter... He was so grateful to have found his way to your agency... we were so happy that he was so happy there..!"

His parting gift to us: a whisper of re-assurance...? A reminder that paradox is the stuff of life – that pain and joy often co-exist – that in the midst of chaos there are many who bear us up and delight in the support they are able to offer despite their pain...? A challenge to always leave room for joy...?

We hear you, Brendan



## For The Record

In the list of Holiday Angels printed in the last newsletter we should have listed Old Navy at Shoppingtown Mall, a long time supporter of the Holiday Angel program. Thank you, Kim Reippel, for all you do for AIDS Community Resources.



## AIDS Walk/Runs Tri-Sponsor *Thanked*

Mike Kallet, President and CEO of Oneida Savings Bank, accepts a heartfelt thank you from ACR Development Director Wil Murtaugh. Oneida Savings Bank has been a long time supporter of AIDS Community Resources' fundraising events. "Without the support of Oneida Savings Bank our AIDS Walk/Runs would not be so successful," said Murtaugh. "They've been with us from the start."

In Central New York...

**SUCCESSFUL**

campaign to save **Q** Center funding

When the Q Center was threatened with a loss of Onondaga County funding, two members of the County Legislature took steps to make sure the funding was maintained.

Legislator Marty Masterpole, center, came to AIDS Community Resources to learn more about the Q Center Mission from Executive Director Michael Crinnin and Q Center Director Elizabeth Payne. Not shown, Legislator Sam Laguzza, Legislature Health Committee member, who also fought for continued funding. Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney decided funding for the Q Center would be continued to promote the safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.



# Heart Heart, The biggest tennis

Tennis is good for the heart: the exercise, the squeal of tennis shoes racing across the court, the rush to smash a put-away and win the match. In fact, the only drawback with tennis as the perfect winter exercise is that it's not a loner sport. At the 11th Annual Heart to Heart Tennis Event, no partner? No problem! Always the weekend before Valentine's Day, Heart 2 Heart is the ideal remedy for any mid-winter blues.

Tournament director Chris Galle matches all participants – novice to contenders - with a similarly talented partner, and the mixed doubles tournament is underway. "He's the best," said Wil Murtaugh who organizes Heart 2 Heart as a fundraiser for AIDS Community Resources. "Chris Galle, Tennis-n-Gear and Gold's Gym are what make the Heart 2 Heart such a huge attraction for tennis fans. I am grateful that he takes on the job of running what is now the biggest Tennis Tournament in Central New York."

And big it was: 10 divisions, 160 players, 80 teams and \$3,000 raised for AIDS Community Resources.

A talented player himself, Murtaugh has played mixed doubles all his life with family and many tennis friends. "The rap on the street about the Heart 2 Heart is that it is easy to participate with low entry fees and good facilities." The event offers players a weekend of tennis fun, fundraising and HIV/AIDS and STD awareness. The United States Tennis Association sanctions the Open Division of the Heart-to-Heart, allowing players from throughout the Eastern United States to earn ranking points.

100% of the money raised stays in Central New York to help support AIDS Community Resources' Q Center for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth.



Mixed Doubles Division 4.5: Champions Craig Nicholls and Yvonne Lenzen-Roth; finalists Erik Stropp and Liz Uhrinec.



Most Creative Team: Jessica Mylott and Aimee Esce.



14-year-old Division: Keith Jensen and Ashlee Lattner beat Sienna Susko and Robert Dotterer.



16-year-old Division: Dan Kot and Amari Pollard defeated Shilpa Kamani and Daryl Johnson.



# Tennis tournament in Central New York



18-year-old Division: Finalists Tommy Hamm and Nicole Leader. Champions (not pictured) Ben Weiss and Lauren Osada.



3.0 Division: Champions Elise Perigard and Jonathan Conlon; finalists Mary Silky and Bill Silky.



4.0: Matt Poulin and Betsy Dexter are number 1!



2.5 Doubles: Peg Webster and Joe Dwyer defeated Peg Dwyer and Tony Morrison.



3.5 Doubles: Joe Mannara and Alex Vizgaitis were victorious over Barbara Crane and John Sheridan.



Mixed Open: Raphael Almeida and Yvonne Lenzen-Roth, champions; Gyata Stormon and Marc Silva, finalists.



4.0 Division: Winners Matt Poulin and Betsy Dexter; finalists Caili Nizamis and Ken Schiefer.



Fun Division: Champions Beth and John King and son, Andrew.



Fun Division: Tim Louer and Grace Thompson, finalists.

In the Mohawk Valley...

## The AIDS Hike Masterminds

The 11th Annual AIDS Hike For Life Planning Committee at Hamilton College has a serious glass ceiling to crack. In 2008, the AIDS Hike For Life raised more money than at any time in the previous ten years - a record-breaking \$65,119. So how does the 2009 student committee beat that? With their passion, says adviser Jeannine Murtaugh. "They have a sense of responsibility for what is happening in the world around them and they want to do something about it. They can set a record, for sure."

Help the planning committee smash last year's record at the 2009 AIDS Hike For Life on Sunday, April 26th. Form a team, get great -fun- ideas for your campaign, and use the power of the internet to raise money painlessly. Sign up now at [AIDSwalkCNY.com](http://AIDSwalkCNY.com) or call 800.475.2430.



From left to right are: Jeannine Murtaugh, Catie Gibbons, Nick Bergmann, Emily Davaney-Graham, Allison Gaston-Enholm, Jared Pienkos, Stuart Lombardi, Ashbel Wall, Reva Narula, Daniel Kamenetsky, Clare Brown and Jordan Fischetti.

*We're Golden*



In these uncertain economic times, relationships have become the coin of the realm for non-profit agencies like AIDS Community Resources and the United Way of Central New York as we work together to save programming vital to the health and sexual safety of Central New Yorkers. AIDS Community Resources' employees pledged a record sum of money to the United Way campaign in 2008. In February, 2009 ACR was honored to receive United Way's 2008 Gold Award. The citation read in part: "This shows that AIDS Community Resources, Inc. is among the most generous organizations in our community."

## At Syracuse Stage... A *Tasteful* fundraiser

AIDS Community Resources' supporter Mark Orr, second from left, and a group of his friends give a big Thumbs Up to the scrumptious desserts served prior to the performance of *Up!* at the annual Syracuse Stage fundraiser. Thank you Mark, and thank you Syracuse Stage.



In the Mohawk Valley and Central New York...

Black Churches Pray to

# Heal AIDS

“I must speak openly about sexual behavior and sexuality from the pulpit.”

The **Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS** was observed in Syracuse during a service Sunday, March 1, 2009, at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church. The man behind the pulpit, Dr. Leslie Johnson, has made it his calling to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in two populations he considers to be overlooked: youth and seniors.

Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS is an annual week-long education and awareness campaign highlighting the role of the Black Church in addressing the AIDS crisis. Though some Black Church leaders shy away from mentioning HIV, Dr. Johnson brings the issue front and center. “I have to adhere to my spiritual integrity in addressing the health and wellness issues around HIV/AIDS,” said Dr. Johnson, “therefore I believe I must speak openly about sexual behavior and sexuality from the pulpit.”

The annual campaign helps pave the way for the continuous delivery of prevention education and services to the African American community via faith communities. During worship, the Reverend Leslie Johnson offered a special prayer for the healing of AIDS and encouraged his congregants to learn their HIV status. “As a people we must continue to raise public awareness in a somewhat dying issue.”

Unfortunately, Dr. Johnson is right: people are not talking as much about HIV/AIDS as they used to, but they should be. There were 56,300 new HIV infections nationwide last year.

In the U.S. in 2006:

Black teens represented 69% of cases reported among 13–19 year-olds.

71% of new AIDS cases and 69% new HIV infections, and 70% AIDS deaths in 2007 were in minority populations.

In Syracuse, 50% of new HIV infections are in African Americans.

If you want to know more about the Communities of Color initiative, contact Lakecia McKinsey at 475.2430.



Dr. Johnson with ACR's Communities of Color coordinator Lakecia McKinsey.

Giving **CREDIT** where credit is **DUE...**

Michael Crinnin presents a token of ACR's gratitude to John Wakefield, CEO and Olivia Fried of Empower Federal Credit Union. Empower has been a title sponsor of the AIDS Hike For Life, the AIDS Walk/Run and the First Frost AIDS Walk/Run for the past three years. Ms. Fried serves on the Board of Directors of AIDS Community Resources.





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Or mail in the back of this newsletter to:

**AIDS Community Resources • 627 West Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY 13204**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 26, 2009**

11th Annual AIDS Hike For Life  
5K fundraising walk/run at Hamilton College.  
[www.AIDSwalkCNY.com](http://www.AIDSwalkCNY.com)

**June 7, 2009**

17th Annual AIDS Walk/Run  
5K fundraising walk, 10K run at Beaver Lake Nature Center. [www.AIDSwalkCNY.com](http://www.AIDSwalkCNY.com)

**August 16 – 22, 2009**

Empire State AIDS Ride  
560 mile bicycle ride from Niagara Falls to New York City.  
Join the ACR Spokes Team! Call Carrie at 800.475.2430  
or email to: [clarge@aidcommunityresources.com](mailto:clarge@aidcommunityresources.com)

**October 18, 2009**

First Frost AIDS Walk/Run  
5K fundraising walk and 5K timed run at Thompson Park  
in Watertown. [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@aidcommunityresources.com](mailto:qcenter@aidcommunityresources.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@aidcommunityresources.com](mailto:glbtqyouth@aidcommunityresources.com)

**TREATMENT ADHERENCE GROUPS:**

Alternate Tuesdays in Utica  
Alternate Wednesdays in Syracuse  
800.475.2430 for information