



25 Years AIDS Community Resources

Viewpoint By Michael Crinnin Executive Director



Driving home from Hamilton College after our 10th Annual AIDS Hike For Life (our walk/run event in the Mohawk Valley) I decided that I needed to write about it: too good not to. The (unusually) great weather, the energy, the cross section of collegiate and community members, the stories – the hot dogs (!), it all needed to be said... I feared I'd be repeating myself some from past reflections but the compulsion was strong. The next day my dilemma was solved. There in my mailbox was a wonderful letter from one of our Board members who had attended. I forwarded it to key staff and then asked the member in question if I could include parts of it in my message. As usual her generosity overcame her humility and she gave me the go-ahead. She says it all.

On my way to get the newspaper this morning, I stepped out into this spring landscape and gasped at the beauty. I just felt like cheering! So I did. I wanted to cheer some more and decided to drive to Hamilton College for the HIKE. With limited time to spare, I figured I'd cheer at the hikers at the start line and leave.

After a few loud whoops, I started talking to people who also were whooping (translation: non-hikers). Each of them had a story that cheered my heart. It wasn't long before I realized the hikers had all returned. Starting to feel a bit guilty as I had to be someplace else and was late, I started to walk back to my car. At the edge of the crowd, waiting to hear the announcements, I saw a family of 6 people: 2 adults, 1 teenager, 2 20-somethings and a young boy of about 7. As I passed them, I asked if they had a good walk and why they came. The woman pointed to a Polaroid picture pinned to her shirt. Her brother-in-law, who died four years ago. In the photo he was holding a young boy about 2 years old up in the air.

I asked the little guy if this was him in the picture. Yes. I said to him that

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10th Annual
AIDS Hike For Life

See pages 4&5
for full details...



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

In Central New York, United Way increases support

United Way of Central New York has guaranteed funding for three AIDS Community Resources' prevention programs through 2011, with funding increased for two initiatives – the Q Center and Teen AIDS Task Force (TATF). The Q Center (the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth Project) will receive \$25,000 per year and TATF will receive \$15,000 for a total increase of nearly 16%. The third program is the Safety First Health Outreach Project, which will receive \$33,290 per year for the next three years.

"This funding is vital to our programs and services," said Wil Murtaugh, Director of Special Projects/Development. "It is so important to have community support and United Way is community here in Central New York.

This increased funding comes at a difficult time for AIDS Community Resources. New York State's new budget cut direct services to people living with HIV/AIDS. For the first time in 25 years, the state budget cut 2.3% from AIDS support programs that provide comprehensive services for tens of thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS throughout the state including funding for AIDS Community Resources. "This cut in state aid combined with federal cuts from last year makes doing our work much more difficult," said Murtaugh.

The three programs with renewed support from United Way are prevention programs which are heavily supported by public donations. The Q Center serves LGBTQ youth ages 13 – 22, and their allies and families. The Q Center's mission is to promote health, safety, and empowerment for LGBTQ young people. The Teen AIDS Task Force is an adolescent driven, peer education initiative that equips adolescents with the information and skills needed to understand and prevent HIV/AIDS. The Safety First Outreach Project's van is in neighborhoods and on the street five days a week carrying a team of prevention experts. They offer prevention case management, treatment referral and risk reduction supplies, like condoms for safer sex, and bleach kits to clean needles.

"Thank you, United Way," said Murtaugh. "They truly believe in supporting *all* of their neighbors."



Q Center youth at Pride event



Nottingham High School TATF

“It is so important to have community support and United Way is community here in Central New York.”



Safety First Health Outreach Project van

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I bet his uncle is really proud of him today. At that, the boy's father—the brother of the man who died—came over to me and the eye contact said it all. Both of us filled up.

It was at that moment that I knew why I was there. To pay tribute. To be a part of something good and bigger than me. And to cheer... for that brother, for my brother, for lots of brothers.

I saw in that brother's eyes the pain of loving someone and not being able to do anything to save him. Except today. Today, in the Mohawk Valley, we did something.

You know I am the first to say we can find a way to "get more \$," it didn't matter. Today was about that 7 year old kid being held up by his uncle, his uncle with AIDS, walking in tribute, returning the love. Today was about watching him cheer for his uncle and a future without this disease. I hope he skipped and whooped it up.

Carole (Jesiolowski)

“ It was at that moment that I knew why I was there. To pay tribute. To be a part of something good and bigger than me. ”

Rider profile: Empire State AIDS Ride

When the ACR Spokes pedal away from Niagara Falls for a bicycle trip across New York State in mid-August, Alexandra Sundberg will be along for the ride. Alexandra is a first year medical student at SUNY Upstate who takes her physical exercise as seriously as the mental variety. "I was attracted to ESAR because I needed a significant training goal for this summer with a benefit for a good charity," Alexandra said. "The mileage of ESAR, combined with fundraising for ACR makes it a perfect opportunity."

Well, it's certainly a great opportunity for AIDS Community Resources! The ACR Spokes Team is looking for more riders, and Alexandra is perfect! She's a seasoned rider, mostly "crits", which is short for criteriums, which are short course bike races that are run on closed off city streets (according to Wikipedia). Those races usually last about an hour. The Empire State AIDS Ride lasts for seven days and that is part of the appeal to Alexandra, whose been riding since she was 15. "I was looking for a local 'team' to support my training and fundraising efforts. I also wanted to support an organization local to the Syracuse area with my efforts," she said.

The Empire State AIDS Ride is the perfect venue for experienced riders like Alexandra and over the years novice riders have taken on ESAR and triumphed. So, welcome, Alexandra! And – to anyone out there who is interested in exercise, a good cause, and a very good ride, contact Carrie at 475.2430 or clarge@aidscommunityresources.com.



Alexandra Sundberg joins the ACR Spokes Team for the Empire State AIDS Ride August 10-16.

Thank you, Mohawk Valley!!!

10th Annual AIDS Hike For Life sets new record



The 2008 AIDS Hike For Life on Sunday, April 27th at Hamilton College in Clinton raised more money than at any time in the past ten years - a record-breaking \$64,000. Thank you Mohawk Valley!!!! The event expanded this year to include a 5K timed run with 35 runners participating. The AIDS Hike For Life pitted teams from Teen AIDS Task Force chapters, colleges and communities from across the Mohawk Valley in a fun and food filled fundraising event to benefit AIDS Community Resources. Team Frankie of Utica, renamed in honor of Frank Meddaugh after his untimely death from cancer earlier this year, blew the competition away by raising more than \$8,200.

100% of the money raised stays in the Mohawk Valley to benefit ACR's youth HIV prevention programs and client support services.



More than 400 participants and volunteers gather for the start of the 10th Annual AIDS Hike For Life



Runners are at the front of the pack...



...with walkers close behind



All were cheered along the way by folks like ACR's good friends from Empower Federal Credit Union



Smiles all around...



...at the finish line



Team Frankie takes the big trophy with \$8,000 plus!



With Chaleau and her mother Charlene as top fundraisers on Team Frankie



The top TATF was from Poland High School

AIDS Community Resources would like to thank Hamilton College, Class of 2008, and all of our sponsors. Without your support, the good work of preventing the spread of HIV would be much harder to do.

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Fastest male runners, from left, #3 Scott Sbaraglia, Michael Crinnin, #2 Ben Noble, #1 Jason Pare



Morrisville-Eaton TATF wins "Most Creative Team" Team Super



Alan Nouer was 2nd highest individual top fundraiser



Fleet of Feet was the top fundraising college team



Cowboy's Angels was the 2nd highest top fundraising team



TATF student fundraisers, from left, #2 Jordyn Ramsey, Michael Crinnin, pictured with top fundraiser Nicole Albrecht



Special thanks to Ryan Morris, President of Hamilton College Class of 2008, Joan Hinde Stewart, Hamilton College President

Since 1981

- 177,272 New Yorkers have been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS
- 100,000 New Yorkers have died
- New York is #1 in all categories compared to other states with more HIV/AIDS cases in Men, Women, Children, African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities

Mental Health • Strength in Numbers

Every other Tuesday in Utica, and every other Wednesday in Syracuse, clients in the Treatment Adherence Program (TAP) gather together in a support group. On this particular Wednesday, there are twelve participants. They are dissimilar – black, white, and Hispanic; male and female, gay and straight; young (20's) and old (grandmother), and one middle-aged married couple. They come from vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds – one former professional earned \$150,000 a year, another is on disability. They became infected with HIV in different ways.

What they have in common is that before coming to the TAP support group they were each isolated. They didn't personally know anyone else with HIV/AIDS and were reluctant to share their status. There is another commonality: "They are all afraid they are going to die," says support group leader and TAP nurse Heather Blum. "They talk about that all the time."

They hold old views about the disease, she says. "HIV is no longer an automatic death sentence but people do have to learn to live with it." HIV+ individuals can live full and productive lives if they take their medications properly and pay attention to their mental and physical health. That's what Treatment Adherence is all about – following a strict regimen to better health.

Participants adapt at their own pace to the yin and the yang of support group habits – which are always in flux. The conversation goes where it will – with nudges and navigation from group members. When two men spend too much time talking about street drugs, others get them back on track. The discussion transitions to medical marijuana laws in California and the speculation about whether HIV+ individuals in New York could one day partake of a substance that increases their appetite and eases their pain.



Support group regular Jim LaRoina with TAP Nurse Heather Blum.

“On her first visit, she sat in a chair behind the others and wept the entire session.”

"Sue" is back this day. On her first visit, she sat in a chair behind the others and wept the entire session. Now, by the end of two months, she's participating with the rest – a little reserved, but coming out of her shell. She has still not told her family about the HIV, but she's talking, and that's important.

"It takes some people a long time to be comfortable with their HIV+ status. Once they accept it," Blum says, "it's easier for them to move forward. Until they accept it, life can be very trying."

A young man speaks up. "One day I am on top of the world, the medications are working; I'm not getting sick, and then – boom. The roller coaster runs off the tracks."

"These people are faced with a continual challenge of having to live with something that's never going to go away," Heather Blum said later. But they draw strength and support from the others.

If you would like to attend either TAP Support Group call 800.475.2430.

Two with ties to the Q Center honored at SU

Jamie King received the 2008 Foundation Award for Outstanding Youth Community Member at the Rainbow Banquet of Syracuse University's LGBT Resource Center on April 17. Q Center Director, Dr. Elizabeth Payne, herself an honoree that night, introduced Jamie at the banquet.

"Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual youth often experience school as a hostile environment, but for Transyouth, the experience is compounded. Our 2008 Outstanding Youth Community Member defied the odds and demonstrated not only dedication to his own success, but to helping others through speaking out and making change in a culture that rarely wants to address the needs of transgender youth," Dr. Payne said.

"As a high school student, he was forced to transfer from school to school, experiencing not only threats of physical violence from fellow students, but harassment from faculty and school staff as well. He took some of his schooling through the homebound program to reduce the harassment he experienced and to be able to concentrate on his studies. Through his own sheer determination, along with support from his mother and girlfriend, he successfully completed his high school education.

"Though he has now gone on to employment and higher education, he has not left high school behind. He continues to speak out about his own experiences as a transgender student and to advocate for safer schools for all LGBT youth. He has told his story to the Syracuse City School District and presented at city-wide teacher education forums, as well as many, many smaller education venues on the harassment of LGBT students. Taking his experience to Albany, he has lobbied for the Dignity for All Students Act and shared his story with legislators.

"He is an active member of the Q Center, educating LGB youth on the T experience, and was pivotal in the addition of the transyouth group to AIDS Community Resources. He serves as an advisor on transyouth issues to the Q Center Director, and is currently beginning a writing project that would allow him to share his experiences more broadly. He is, truly, a remarkable young man. It is my pleasure to introduce to you JAIME KING as the 2008 Outstanding Youth Community Member."

April 17, 2008:

Q Center Director Elizabeth Payne received the "Foundation Award" at the Syracuse University Rainbow Banquet. The award was established in 2003 to recognize individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, whose personal or professional lives have positively affected the LGBT community in a significant way. Individuals are recognized for their contributions and dedication to creating communities that are inclusive and supportive of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.



Would you like
to be published?



2008 is AIDS Community Resources' 25th anniversary, and we are assembling a 25-year book to mark the occasion. We would like to include comments from people who have been helped by our agency over the years. If you have been a client, or the loved one of a client who would like to share your story, I'd like to hear from you. The story can be a few sentences or a paragraph, anything longer might not fit. We'd like to include your words and a photograph as time and space permits in the book. If you'd like to participate, send your comments and photos to pr@aidscommunityresources.com for review. Space is limited so act quickly. We'd love to make you a part of our silver anniversary celebration.



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 mail in the back of this newsletter to:
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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 15, 2008

Men's Night Out – a health and wellness event for MSM. bforbes@aidscommunityresources.com or 800.475.2430 x 801 to reserve

June 1, 2008

16th Annual AIDS Walk/Run – a 5K fundraising walk, 10K run at Beaver Lake Nature Center. www.aidswalkcny.com

June 19, 2008

Musical fundraiser starring Jessy Chick. Mezzanotte Lounge, 658 North Salina Street, Syracuse. 9:00 p.m. – 12 a.m. \$5 admission.

August 10-16, 2008

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: clarge@aidscommunityresources.com

October 19, 2008

9th Annual First Frost AIDS Walk – a 5K fundraising walk at Thompson Park Zoo in Watertown. www.aidswalkcny.com

October 30, 2008

Save the date! ACR 25th Anniversary event.

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]: 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

UTICA YOUTH GROUP:

Sundays from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
For locations and further information, contact Mary Doody at 800.475.2430 or glbtqyouth@aidscommunityresources.com

TREATMENT ADHERENCE GROUPS:

Alternate Tuesdays in Utica
Alternate Wednesdays in Syracuse
800.475.2430 for information