

25 Years

AIDS Community Resources



Viewpoint

By Michael Crinnin
Executive Director



Jean Kessner, our PR expert, wanted me to label this article, "Mr. Crinnin Goes to Washington" – ever the one for catchy titles and black and white movies. Well Mr. Crinnin did just return from our nations Capitol and he could well spend a few minutes ruminating on maneuvering inside the beltway...

Wil Murtaugh (our Special Projects/Development Director) and I recently spent two days visiting members of our congressional delegation. For the 2nd year in a row we were requesting support for our youth initiatives: in particular, we are looking to expand the scope of both the regional **Teen AIDS Task Force (TATF)** program and the Syracuse-based **Q Center** (dedicated to providing a safe space and wide array of prevention services to GLBTQ youth). The always iffy and currently demonized 'earmark' was our goal.

The visits went well in large part, I think, because we made the effort to go to Washington; secondly, we had been before for the same requests and they remembered us, and finally, our proposals were for youth interventions that work and are calling out for expansion.

Wil and I spoke (from the perspective of 16 and 18 years respectively) about ACR's history with young people and the number of former TATF participants who went on to college and professional careers, all the while folding in their HIV/AIDS education/experience. As we got going, I soon woke up to the involvement of these legislative aides in what we were saying, and the fact that everyone we were speaking with was young: 20 - 30 something men and women who had never known a world without AIDS.

They completely understood about the inadequate sexual health information available to teens nowadays, rising STD rates, early pregnancies, bullying, isolation, risky behaviors borne out of desperation, etc. Their nods were the real deal.

They 'got' us; they understood the intent of our programs, and were

Continued on page 3

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

"Dayne Moyer
- in the fight
of his life"



“I just want
to live a normal
life.”

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

LAURA MURGIA
Chair

JASON CENTOLELLA
Vice-Chair

JERENA BARKINS
Secretary

JOHN KING
Treasurer

ALLEN DITCH
OLIVIA FRIED
CAROLE JESIOLOWSKI
SUZANNE KONDRÁ-DEFURIA
ANDREW LONDON
GREG VICTORY
FANNY VILLARREAL

ACR in Syracuse

627 W. Genesee St.
Syracuse, NY 13204
315.475.2430 • 800.475.2430
Fax 315.472.6515

ACR in Utica

401 Columbia St.
Utica, NY 13502
315.793.0661 • Fax 315.735.9551

ACR in Watertown

230 Franklin St.
Watertown, NY 13601
315.785.8222 • Fax 315.836.0033

ACR in Canton

9 Miner St.
Canton, NY 13617
315.386.4493 • Fax 315.386.2530

ACR in Auburn

17 E. Genesee St.
Auburn, NY 13021
315.253.7924 • Fax 315.282.0079

ACR in Oswego

10 George St.
Oswego, NY 13126
315.343.7778 • Fax 315.343.4663

Newsletter Editor
Jean Kessner

Young Mohawk Valley man in the fight of his life

By Jean Kessner • ACR Newsletter Editor

Dayne Moyer's mother died of AIDS when he was 5 years old. Today he doesn't remember a lot about her. "I do remember holding her hand. I held her hand for a very long time. It was the day before she died, I remember that."

Dayne Moyer is 20 years old now and would like to get a job. He'd like to have a girlfriend. He'd like to live on his own, in an apartment with his dog, Buddy. He's skinny and pale, with eyes that flit around the room while he talks, but they make quick contact when he knows he's said something funny. "I just want to have a normal life," he said. He wasn't joking about that.

After his mother died he went to live with her sister. "My aunt felt knots in the lymph nodes on my neck and took me to the doctor. I was five. It was the same year my mother died. I had AIDS."

In January, I met Dayne in a restaurant over a plate of riggies – a Utica pasta favorite that he ordered with chicken. He had seen AIDS Community Resources' 2008 calendar and wanted to talk to me about being featured in the 2009 edition. He asked his Case Manager to set up a meeting. "He has a very interesting story to tell," Jessica Green told me. "He is just the nicest young man."

A number of Utica Case Managers at AIDS Community Resources have worked with Dayne over the past 8 years, and every one of them said they felt fortunate for the opportunity to know him. "Dayne is bright, talented, witty, fun-loving, humorous and feisty," said Wenona Wake, his former Case Manager who now serves as ACR's Director of Prevention. "If you told Dayne he couldn't do something he would show you he could. Many people would describe him as a real fire cracker."

Continued on page 3

“The world has dealt him every imaginable blow and he never complains.”



Dayne Moyer was diagnosed with AIDS when he was 5 years old. He is now 20.



Dayne with Case Manager Jessica Green.

Continued from page 1

behind them. Both Schumer's and Mike Acuri's staff told us that they had submitted our 'ask' as part of their overall requests. Great news, but I'm not that naïve to believe money will soon be flowing our way... This is, after all, all about politics, and we were warned: not everything included receives funding, and the president is threatening to veto earmarks this year... "So, you may need to come back next January and try again..."

Fine, we will be back next year – regardless of funding or not. It's our responsibility to ask for effective programs – programs that make a dramatic difference in young people's decision making – that challenge them to always make the safe choice in the midst of powerful forces (and hormones!) that are pulling them in the opposite direction... It's our job to tell our representatives, despite tight budget times, that there are some programs so important and have such a far reaching impact they must have attention and money to support them - now!

As we headed home I got to thinking about our troops currently in combat: they are young – very young, and we are spending a lot of money to equip them for the most difficult of jobs. Our expectations are high that these young soldiers understand the critical nature of making wise choices – regardless of the chaos they might find themselves involved with. Training to develop the capacity to choose wisely, 'under fire', is just as critical as developing technical expertise.

I'm not sure those we spoke with would immediately see a connection here, and I failed to make it at the time. We are however preparing young people to make choices that will have a lifetime of consequences - choices that could determine the length of that lifetime, and the health and well-being of their loved ones. "At risk" youth need a commitment from this government. They need frank talk and programs that support comprehensive sexual health knowledge and decision making skills.

Mr. Crinnin - and Mr. Murtaugh - will return to Washington. We will keep pushing for the youth we reach - and could reach with expanded capacity. It's our job. It's our legacy. It's our citizen duty to penetrate the beltway, and make Jimmy Stewart proud!

Continued from page 2

The wit and attitude are surprising considering that Dayne has been sickly almost constantly since he was diagnosed with AIDS. When he lived with his aunt he came down with toxoplasmosis, a brain infection. The toxo parasite is very common in cat feces, and the household he lived in had many cats. The brain infection returned four times; the medications he took to alleviate the toxo were very tough on a body already fighting AIDS. Dayne refers to the bouts of illness and hospitalizations as "just minor setbacks."

Earlier this year, Dayne suffered his biggest setback of all, and one he may well not survive. Doctors now say Dayne may have PML* - a serious viral infection of the brain that 6% of people living with AIDS develop. PML is very hard to treat and, in the past, most people diagnosed with PML died within six months. "He never complains," said Jessica Green, shaking her head. "The world has dealt him every imaginable blow and he never complains."

Dayne was hospitalized in February following seizures so severe he was left without the abilities to speak or to walk. He is now in a nursing home receiving physical therapy and can communicate only in a whisper. He's more ambulatory now, but has a very long way to go.

Strong anti-HIV drugs have provided new treatment options for those infected with PML and now 50% survive. But Dayne has an inconsistent track record with HIV medications, despite the best efforts of his Case Managers. He suffers from indigestion and has trouble keeping his medicine down. Like that January day with the plate of riggies – he only ate a couple of bites, and then ordered other things that might settle better in his stomach. The soup didn't do the trick, nor the pie with ice cream, but he took a doggie bag and said he'd try to eat the food later. Then he smiled at the waitress and asked her for her phone number.

*Progressive Multifocal Leucoencephalopathy: The first symptoms of PML are weakness or coordination problems in an arm or leg. There may be difficulty thinking or speaking. Vision and memory problems, seizures and headaches can occur. These symptoms can also occur with other opportunistic infections, including toxoplasmosis.

Teen AIDS Task Force is everywhere!!!

In the North Country... a field trip to see the AIDS Quilt

Three Teen AIDS Task Force chapters from St. Lawrence County went to view 12 panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt on display at SUNY Potsdam during March. "There was a guest speaker who gave a history of the quilt itself, and then told his own story," said TATF Educator Angela Foster.

During discussion that followed some college students asked questions of the presenter. "I was so thrilled when it was my high school students who knew the answers!" said Foster. "Go TATF!!!" Clifton-Fine TATF plans a trip to New York City in May to see the AIDS Quilt.



Canton & Colton-Pierrepont TATFs



Clifton-Fine TATF



Youth Services just looking

New TATF Chapter in Central New York

Traditionally Teen AIDS Task Force chapters were founded in middle school or high schools. AIDS Community Resources has many of those chapters, but recently TATF groups have been organized at places where young people gather after (or instead of) school. In Syracuse, a group of 5 students enrolled at Nottingham High School have begun spending the after school hour on Wednesdays at AIDS Community Resources where they learn about HIV, STDs, and other health and safety topics. "I answer their questions and tell them the truth. Young people have a lot of questions," said Desi Henry, TATF Educator who organized the new group. Welcome ACR TATF!



Left to right: Mekkah Henry, Eryn Bell, Lanyra Jennings-Smith, Niria Jennings-Smith, Kortney Cannon, and TATF Educator Desiree Henry. The group has now grown to 7 members, from the original 5.



Megan, Whitesboro TATF President, and Leean Sack of ACR



Mark, a Peer Volunteer, hands out HIV information along the parade route.

In the Mohawk Valley... ST. PATRICK'S DAY Parade

Saturday March 15th dawned beautiful and sunny for the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Utica. This is the third year that AIDS Community Resources and the Teens AIDS Task Force have walked in the parade. The fun started early for the Teen AIDS Task Force as the group gathered for donuts, orange juice, and enough green paint, shamrocks and crazy hats to decorate themselves.

TATF members and Peers handed out pamphlets with HIV prevention information. "My main goal was to get the word 'HIV/AIDS' out there, make people think and talk about it," said TATF Educator Leean Sack. One of the Peers overheard someone in the crowd say that New York State has more HIV/AIDS than any other state. "I thought that was pretty significant progress. Not only do people accept HIV/AIDS as a problem but know the significance of the epidemic locally. It proves that what ACR does is making a difference."

“Not only do people accept HIV/AIDS as a problem but know the significance of the epidemic locally. It proves that what ACR does is making a difference.”



Though the Teen AIDS Task Force Program is supported by the Madison County Youth Bureau and United Way agencies across our 9 county service area, the majority of funding comes through events like the AIDS Hike for Life. Join us April 27th at Hamilton College to support AIDS Community Resources' youth prevention programs and client support services.

On Giving

The Lighthouse of Love Ministries on South Avenue in Syracuse is a relatively new church, just 6 years old, and very involved in the health of their members, families, and neighbors. They regularly conduct health seminars, including one about AIDS which was taught by an HIV Prevention Educator from AIDS Community Resources. They have support and sharing get-togethers with their Hearts, Hurts & Healing Night.

The Women's Department of the Lighthouse of Love Ministries served as Holiday Angels last winter to an ACR family. "We wanted to give to those who fell through the cracks and were in true need," said group leader Rachel Kgama.

AIDS is a significant threat to communities of color. "We want to reach out to those who do not have a voice in this society," said Kgama. "We minister to the ones other churches turn away. We minister to the broken in spirit."



Lighthouse of Love Ministries Women's Department (top row left to right), Elder Rachel Kgama, Elder C. Patterson, Jeanette Jackson, Elaina Black, Pastor Carolyn Williams, Elder E. Patterson, Ella Reese, Elder Smith, Davina Jones. (Bottom row), Marissa Bryant, Elder Bivens, Michelle Arrindell



VOLUNTEER BUDDIES NEEDED

Funding changes have created an increased need for volunteers to fill the gap. People living with HIV/AIDS need transportation assistance getting medications and groceries.

Come to a Volunteer Orientation in Syracuse, May 8, 2008 5:30 – 9:00 p.m. Call 475.2430 to register.

Thank you, Syracuse Stage

March 2, 2008

ACR's Annual Dessert Reception and performance at Syracuse Stage raised more than \$2,100 this year. Pictured are Executive Director Michael Crinnin (center) with Dr. Fred Farrar and his wife Dennie, longtime supporters of the Teen AIDS Task Force program and the Q Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth ages 13-22.



Sexually transmitted diseases on the increase...

The headlines have been steady: **January 2, 2008**, the New York Times reported that the number of new HIV cases among men younger than age 30 is on the rise. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the number of annual new HIV diagnoses increased by 34% among black and Hispanic men who have sex with men (MSM) between 2001 and 2006 and increased by 32% among all MSM younger than age 30.

On **January 14, 2008**, the Associated Press released a survey that showed 92% of the people the NYC Health Department considered at risk of contracting HIV believe they are not at risk. Among the findings of that survey: among the group with multiple sex partners, 60% did not use condoms all the time.

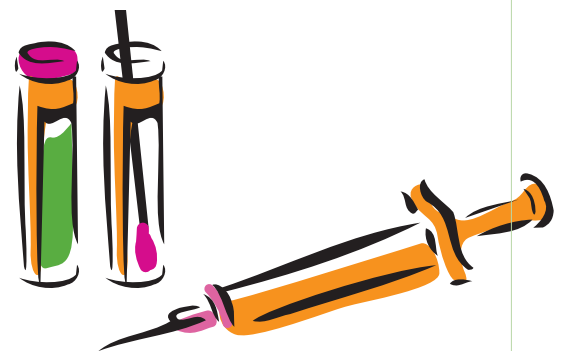
On **March 11, 2008**, ABC News reported that "At least one in four teenage girls nationwide has a sexually transmitted disease – that is more than 3 million teens." A virus that causes cervical cancer is by far the most common sexually transmitted infection in girls aged 14 to 19, while the highest overall prevalence is among black girls – nearly half the blacks studied had at least one STD.

On **April 3, 2008**, NewsChannel 9 in Syracuse issued a health alert about an increase in syphilis cases in Tompkins County. "Nine people in Tompkins County have been diagnosed with the STD syphilis in the past year, and some of those people are also HIV positive." The county normally has just one reported case of syphilis per year. Onondaga County had 10 cases of syphilis in 2007, according to the Onondaga County Health Department annual report.

“92% of the people the NYC Health Department considered at risk of contracting HIV believe they are not at risk.”

...and what AIDS Community Resources is doing about it

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) will be funding special syphilis, Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV screenings in Onondaga County beginning soon and continuing through the end of the year. NYSDOH has asked AIDS Community Resources to oversee testing which will begin soon at Clinton Street Spa and Fitness at 321 North Clinton Street in Syracuse. Tests will also be conducted by appointment at ACR's main office. Behavioral Change Specialist Bob Forbes will oversee the testing. While HIV tests involve an oral swab, blood is drawn to check for syphilis and Chlamydia and gonorrhea are detected in urine.



Bob Forbes, Behavioral Change Specialist at AIDS Community Resources



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.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Syracuse, N.Y.
Permit No. 241



627 West Genesee Street
Syracuse, New York 13204

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IF YOU WISH TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM THIS NEWSLETTER, CALL 800.475.2430

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

April 27, 2008

10th Annual AIDS Hike for Life – a 5K fundraising walk at Hamilton College. www.aidswalkcny.com

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

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

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 gblbtqyouth@aidscommunityresources.com

TREATMENT ADHERENCE GROUPS:

Alternate Tuesdays in Utica
 Alternate Wednesdays in Syracuse
 800.475.2430 for information