



February - March 2008

Viewpoint

By Michael Crinnin
Executive Director



I recently had the pleasure of “Two Meals and a Lecture” with Dr. Marjorie Hill, the CEO of **Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC)** - the New York City based oldest (if not largest) AIDS service agency in the world. My time with her was an unexpected and genuine pleasure.

Bit of background: Dr. Hill was in town to give a lecture at Syracuse University and early on, during the arrangements phase, offered to make time available to the local AIDS service agency. We were contacted and, grateful for the opportunity, decided to host a small breakfast presentation the morning following her campus lecture, as part of our 25th anniversary year activities.

Months later, the time arrived and I was invited to a small dinner the university hosted for Dr. Hill prior to her lecture. At one point during the meal the entire table (20 or so) engaged in ‘spirited’ dialogue with Dr. Hill, and if she was uncomfortable, you’d never have known from her easy, informed, and inviting manner. You could feel the learning.

All too quickly it was time to move on to the lecture hall where Dr Hill delivered a major address outlining the history of the disease and GMHC’s response over the years. As she contrasted ‘then and now’, she made note of the one constant where she has seen no change - stigma. “Stigma”, according to Webster: “A mark of disgrace”

From her experience, entrenched beliefs, images, and prejudices continue to ‘mark’ those living with AIDS and keep those at high risk for HIV infection from getting tested and seeking treatment. At one point she noted the prevailing statistical assessment that 25% of all those living with HIV in this country do not know it.

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Dr. Marjorie Hill



“She couldn’t hide her dismay... until she stopped and ‘remembered’, oh yes, the stigma...”

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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

AIDS Community Resources reaches out to AIDS orphans in Zimbabwe

By Joy Mutare, President • Kinyatta King, Vice President, Project It Takes A Village

On behalf of Project It Takes A Village, Inc., we would like to express our sincere gratitude to AIDS Community Resources for the agency's recent \$1,000 donation. This funding will have a huge impact. Here's why: PITAV is a Syracuse University student-run nonprofit that funds the physical and educational needs of AIDS orphans in Harare, Zimbabwe. Through the generosity of individuals and organizational benefactors, like AIDS Community Resources, we are able to provide assistance for school fees, uniforms, books and food. We direct 100 percent of all donated monies to the children we serve.

The support that PITAV provides to the children is vital. In Zimbabwe, there are 1.8 million people living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2006) and 1.4 million children who have lost one or both parents to the disease (UNICEF, 2006). Additionally, Zimbabwe faces significant humanitarian challenges, not only from the threat of HIV/AIDS, but also as a result of the nation's growing economic woes and a declining capacity for basic social service provision.

With this in mind, PITAV is striving to inspire a generation of Zimbabwean children - many of whom have watched their parents die - to change their lives and their country via the most powerful tool they have - education.

Thank you to all at AIDS Community Resources who made this donation possible. With an exchange rate of \$1 U.S. dollar to \$6,000 Zimbabwean dollars, you can be certain that these funds will positively impact many, many young lives.

To learn more about our organization and to read correspondence from the children we sponsor, visit www.toraiseachild.org.

“PITAV is striving to inspire a generation of Zimbabwean children - many of whom have watched their parents die.”



Pictured from left to right are: PITAV board members Karen Loftin and Dyana Smolen, PITAV president and founder Joy Mutare, ACR Executive Director Michael Crinnin, PITAV vice president and co-founder Kinyatta King, and PITAV board member Amy Quade.

AIDS Community Resources has donated approximately \$3,000 to PITAV since its inception in 2004. The other donations came from the Teen AIDS Task Force program and the Q Center.

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During both her evening lecture and her morning breakfast remarks she shared a story about the women's group she facilitates (as a licensed psychotherapist) for HIV+ women who are long-time survivors. During the course of one group, two women spoke of their separate church involvements and their ministry to other HIV positive individuals. As the stories unfolded it became apparent they had not shared with the church pastors their own HIV status and, had no intention of doing so: "I'd be treated differently and wouldn't be able to carry on with my ministry...!" To her credit Marjorie shared her less-than professional reaction at the time: She couldn't hide her dismay... until she stopped and 'remembered', oh yes, the stigma..."

As a tall and imposing black woman, who also happens to be a lesbian, Dr. Hill doesn't have to tell me or anyone who receives services at Gay Men's Health Crisis that she 'gets' stigma. I can only imagine.

I'm confident that any of those living with the virus who attended one of the aforementioned events heard what they needed to hear. I know Marjorie's poise and gentle humor only enhanced the message to those who struggle with the continued stigma of this disease. They knew that she knew... and they understood she was committed to keeping this damning obstacle front and center until shame was no longer a factor in living with HIV.

For me, it was pleasure and nourishment on every level: full head, full heart, full stomach...! And (aside from that too over full stomach) two out of three ain't bad...



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.

Interested? Come to a Volunteer Orientation in Syracuse • April 5, 8:15 – noon • Call 475.2430 to register.

We're Golden! United Way honors ACR's workplace campaign

AIDS Community Resources' employees in all six offices rallied around United Way, and pledged a record amount in 2007. "We always strive for 100% participation, and we're getting close," said Campaign Coordinator Wil Murtaugh. "United Way funding is vital to our programming, and we know how important it is to give back."

United Way's letter to ACR reads:

"The generous employees of AIDS Community Resources, Inc. are already helping thousands of people in Onondaga County to find the help they need to live safe, healthy, productive lives.

On behalf of our board, staff and agencies, we congratulate you on your 2007 Gold Award. This award shows that your organization is among the most generous in our community."



Tennis Serves Up \$\$\$ for ACR

The 9th Annual Heart to Heart Tennis Event, February 8 – 10, was the biggest and liveliest yet. Novice player Michelle Nowyj had such a good time she decided to make the sport a bigger part of her life and signed up for tennis lessons. "I never played seriously, but now I'm ready to go. I loved it!" Michelle was one of 179 players competing in nine divisions.

"No tournament even comes close to the Heart to Heart in players, fun, enthusiasm, and numbers who return year after year," said tournament director Chris Galle.

Played over three days at Tennis-n-Gear and Gold's Gym, the Heart to Heart is now the biggest tournament in Central New York. The event offers players a weekend of tennis fun, fundraising and HIV/AIDS awareness. This annual contest is a tennis event, not a tennis tournament because the "T" word has been known to add layers of stress to an otherwise enjoyable activity for beginners and casual players. 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.

Michelle Nowyj isn't ready for ranking points – at least not yet. "But I'll be seriously ready for the Heart to Heart next year."

Heart to Heart 2008 raised more than \$6,000 – up \$1,500 from last year. 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 and the Teen AIDS Task Force with chapters in schools and community locations.



2.5 Division: (L to R) Shelly Smith and David Underwood defeated Peg Webster and Tony Morrison



3.0 Division: Bill Silky and Mary Kay Silky lost to Allison Vizgaitis and Al Vizgaitis



3.5 Division: Joe Manner and Alex Vizgaitis lost to Brianna Pollard and Brian Pollard



4.0 Division: Bob Connor and Marion Nies lost to Matthew Nardella and Quinn Gleason

“ No tournament even comes close to the Heart to Heart in players, fun, enthusiasm, and numbers who return year after year ”



4.5 Division: Finalists Erik Stropp and Liz Uhrinec lost to Andre Putyera and Christine Douglas



14 and under Division: Evan Vail and Ashlee Lattner lost to Amari Pollard and Kirkland Nagy



Fun Division champions Carrie Large and her dad Dave.



Fun Division finalists Erin Grieves and Michelle Nowyj



Open Division: Renee Underwood and Naveen Singh lost to Yvonne Lenzen-Roth and Raphael Almeida



Fun Division participants Abigail Nann, Colleen Clancy, Meghan Boyle and Nicolette Hamilton.



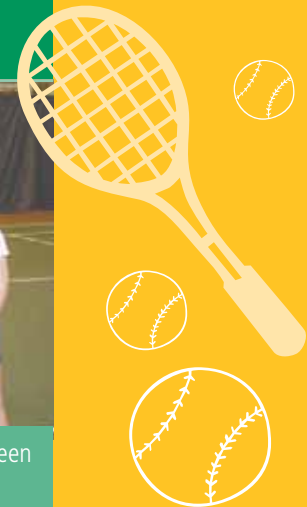
16 and under champions Tommy Hamm and Nicole Leader



Chris Galle, Tournament Director



“ I never played seriously, but now I’m ready to go. I loved it! ”



Mohawk Valley AIDS Volunteer Remembered

“He lived his faith. He was in service all the time.”

The Mohawk Valley lost a compassionate and faithful friend on February 8th when 57-year-old Frank Meddaugh died of pancreatic cancer at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center.

“Frank was kind, kind, kind, and caring” said best friend Charlene Valeriano who met Frank 11 years ago when they volunteered with the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network at Grace Church. “We would go into homes and help people suffering from AIDS. We'd hang curtains; give rides, whatever was needed.”

When Grace Church opened the Shanty to house people who had AIDS and no place to live, Frank was a faithful volunteer. When Abraham House replaced the Shanty, Frank volunteered for four hours every Sunday. “He lived his faith,” Ms Valeriano said. “He was in service all the time.” Abraham House is redecorating its living room and renaming it in Frank's honor.

Ms Valeriano plans an additional honor in Frank Meddaugh's memory at the 10th Annual AIDS Hike for Life at Hamilton College on Sunday, April 27th. Her daughter Chaleau is re-naming her normal fundraising group from “Team Romeo and Juliet” to “Team Frankie” and collecting money for AIDS Community Resources' youth prevention programs in Frank's name. “He always had so much fun at the AIDS Hike for Life. He had such an incredible sense of humor. This will help keep all those happy memories alive.”



Frank Meddaugh at last year's AIDS Hike for Life.



Team Romeo and Juliet in 2007. Frank and Charlene are in the front row, left.

\$\$ Help Team Frankie \$\$

Sunday, April 6th
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Romeo & Juliet's
9273 Kellogg Road, New Hartford
\$12 SHAMPOO AND CUT
\$8 MANICURES
\$2 NAIL ART!!!!

All proceeds go to the AIDS Hike for Life to benefit youth HIV Prevention programs of AIDS Community Resources.

Living Well with HIV/AIDS in the North Country



At the “Living well with HIV/AIDS” forum: Treatment Adherence Nurse for the North Country Mary DeStefano and presenters Steve Williams from Kripalu Yoga Center, Licensed Clinical Social Worker Deb Doss, and Wellness Consultant Joel Timourou from the Mustard Seed led the discussion for 35 participants at Watertown's Partridge Berry Inn. Primary Care Physician Dr. Marylene Duah also participated but was absent when this photo was taken.

Watertown, February 27, 2008.



World's Shortest **MARDI GRAS** Parade

February 16, 2008 Armory Square, Syracuse: The beginning of a fun new tradition - the first ever world's shortest Mardi Gras Parade marched for just one block but created a big stir in Armory Square. Mardi Gras beads were \$5. Condoms were free. Proceeds benefited youth prevention programs and client services at AIDS Community Resources. Thank you Magic Hat Brewing!



Signature Music leads the way



Dave Mevoli of T.J. Sheehan and Alan Newman of Magic Hat Brewing



Beads for sale



Kitty Hoynes had a float and revelers



Darnell Halloway carries the ACR banner



Karen Loftin in her Safety First Outreach van



Quentin, Kerry and Bob

January 28, 2008, Syracuse: AIDS Community Resources Executive Director Michael Crinnin met with Empower Vice President of Communications Jim Reynolds, ACR Board Member and Empower Vice President of Internal Audit Olivia Fried, and President and CEO John D. Wakefield to thank Empower for sponsoring AIDS Community Resources' events for the past two years, and there's more support to come. Thank you, Empower, for investing in your community.





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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

- March 28 & 29, 2008**
 "Drags Along the Mohawk" – female impersonation fundraiser at Stone Mill of Little Falls. 793.0661 x 42
- April 3, 2008**
 AIDS Walk/Run kickoff event. 627 West Genesee Street, Syracuse. 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.
- April 24, 2008**
 AIDS Hike for Life pre-event registration – 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. ACR, 401 Columbia Street, Utica and Hamilton College
- April 26, 2008**
 AIDS Hike for Life pre-event registration – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ACR, 401 Columbia Street, Utica
- April 27, 2008**
 10th Annual AIDS Hike for Life – a 5K fundraising walk and run at Hamilton College. www.aidswalkcny.com
- 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

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