

Get Screened Oakland: The Highlights

From Poets to Preachers, National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day commemorated in Oakland

(February 7 - 10) During the first week of February, AIDS awareness was the order of the day in Oakland. The observance began on Thursday, February 7, with activities organized by CAL-PEP and the Alameda County Medical Center and ended on Sunday, February 10, at the Allen Temple Baptist Church.

Founded in 1999, National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is the nation's oldest and largest community mobilization initiative devoted to empowering black communities to get information about HIV/AIDS; to get tested and know their status, to get treated should they be living with HIV, and to get involved in local community leadership.

Thursday, February 7

Oakland's commemorations began at Eastmont Health Center with the California Prevention Education Project (CAL-PEP) offering free HIV education and testing. At Eastmont, HIV testing took place in the El Sobrante Room and, in keeping with the site's Latino theme, individuals receiving HIV tests were treated to breakfast burritos, refried beans, juice, and coffee. Individuals who were tested in the afternoon received lunch and were given an opportunity to learn more about HIV at an HIV 101 seminar. Staff from Alameda County Medical Center's HIV services, Bertha Nevarez, Monica Chadwick, Joyne Taylor, Alejandra Garcia, Jim Taylor, and Beth McAllister, organized the day and conducted the HIV screenings. Forty-four people were tested; one person among them had a reactive test and was immediately referred to clinical services.

CAL-PEP offered free HIV testing and education services at its 5th and Broadway location. Sonya Richey and her team of HIV test counselors—Michael Benjamin, LeVell Brevard, Jamila Shipp, and Leslie Spears—provided HIV outreach and education services to more than 40 Oaklanders. Participants in the HIV testing activities received gift cards for food and sandwiches at local markets and restaurants.

Later that evening, the Alameda County Office of AIDS went to Dorsey's Locker, a neighborhood soul food restaurant and lounge, for the second-annual evening of adult fun, food, and HIV education for the "grown and sexy." The event, coordinated by Shelley Stinson, HIV Prevention Services Outreach Coordinator, brought together poets, performance artists, and comedians to provide patrons with an evening of erotic poetry, comedy, karaoke, HIV/AIDS awareness, and demonstrations of how to use condoms. The evening, hosted by the Bad Girl of Poetry, jus'BEA, included performances by "the comedic genius-SHANG," erotic poetry by "Sweetn Shameless" and countless Dorsey Locker regulars and Oaklanders doing their comedic routines and best karaoke to win prizes. Everyone was treated to a BBQ dinner of ribs, chicken, potato salad, macaroni and cheese, salad, and peach cobbler. CAL-PEP provided free HIV testing and counseling services.

Sunday, February 10

Standing in his pulpit, Dr. J. Alfred Smith invited his parishioners to follow his example and get tested for HIV following the church service. And sixty-seven did. One person was found to have a reactive test and was immediately referred to supportive health services.

Medical providers convene to discuss routinizing HIV screening

(February 19) Mayor Ronald V. Dellums convened a second meeting with Alameda County health care providers to hear about and discuss steps that have been taken to make HIV testing an expense billable to health insurance. Currently, private health insurance companies and state Medicaid programs do not cover tests unless an individual presents with some indication of HIV infection.

Mayor Dellums thanked the health care providers in attendance for their willingness to take the lead on this issue. Following the Mayor's remarks, Marsha Martin, Director of Get Screened Oakland (GSO), gave a brief summary of the first meeting, provided a GSO programmatic update, and reviewed the second meeting's agenda. Then, Steve O'Brien, MD, of East Bay AIDS Center, presented an overview of the issues at play in the national discussion about covering the cost of routine HIV testing. He also provided more examples of allowable billing classifications codes that are being used to cover HIV testing.

Michael Allerton, HIV Operations and Policy Leader for The Permanente Medical Group, spoke about the process that Kaiser Permanente is using to review opportunities to expand HIV screening within their health care system.

Chris Aldridge, Associate Director of Medical Affairs, Testing and Linkage to Care for Gilead Sciences, gave an overview of the Gilead Foundation's grant program to fund HIV services and programming. He encouraged attendees to submit proposals to the Foundation on their efforts to make HIV screening routine in their respective medical service centers.

Steve Kilgore, RN, Nurse Manager, HIV Services, reviewed the current efforts at APMC Highland Hospital and distributed examples of materials they developed to support their expanded emergency department HIV screening program. The meeting concluded with some brief announcements about funding that might be available to the health centers and hospitals attending the meeting to support expanded capacity for HIV screening.

Marsha Martin asked the group to consider expanding HIV screening on a pilot basis in support of National HIV Testing Day in June and World AIDS Day in December. Get Screened Oakland will have further discussions with the attendees about this proposal.

Attending the lunchtime meeting were Marty Lynch of Lifelong Medical Center; Deborah Pitts and Ike Mmeje of Alta Bates Summit Medical Center; Joel Garcia of Tribucio Vasquez Health Center; Gayle Quinn of West Oakland Health Council; Laurie Berlin of La Clinica de la Raza; Ron Hypolite of Alameda County Department of Public Health; Richard Needle and Theogene Rudasingwa of Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation; Michele Brown of Oakland's Office of Parks and Recreation. In addition, Miguel Bustos and VaShone Huff of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Office of the Mayor participated in the meeting.

Oakland Community News

Get Screened Oakland participates in East Bay Community Foundation Donor Luncheon

(February 7, 2008) East Bay Community Foundation (EBCF) hosted a luncheon that provided an opportunity for new donors to meet Nicole Taylor, the Foundation's recently appointed President and CEO. Ms. Taylor welcomed her guests and gave brief remarks, which included an overview of the Foundation's work in the greater Oakland community and highlights from her first six months at the Foundation.

The East Bay Community Foundation, founded eighty years ago, in 1928, is home to more than 400 funds and endowments, including Get Screened Oakland. Last year, the Foundation and its donors granted \$36.7 million to nonprofit organizations. Today, the charitable assets under EBCF's management total more than \$285 million.

Carol Doelling, who serves as the Foundation's Director of Philanthropic Services—as well as its liaison to Get Screened Oakland—described for her guests the various donor programs and grants. Sara DuBois, Director of Development, and Joan Cosper gave an overview of the way funds are established and the grant making process. Following their programmatic overview, three new programs were introduced: Gardens for Learning; Art Teachers Skill Development; and Get Screened Oakland.

Gardens for Learning is a grant program that funds the creation of gardens on school premises. The program assists public elementary and middle schools in Oakland and Emeryville that are primarily serving low-income students/neighborhoods. The program makes its grants in order to help sustain and grow school garden programs that are integrated with academic instruction, the school community, and the surrounding neighborhood. Grants are awarded to schools that have had gardens for at least two years. Gardens for Learning makes grants of up to \$10,000, with an opportunity for a second year of funding at the same level awarded in the first year.

Grants from the program can be used to fund the salaries of a garden coordinator or teacher, the professional development of the teacher involved in the school's garden project, the development of the garden itself, or costs related to teaching (including consultants or the development of curriculum).

The *East Bay Fund for Artists* is an artist development grant program designed to provide resources to Bay area artists and schools that are interested in encouraging the development of young artists or in using art as a tool to engage young learners in school. The program was begun by a young couple as a wedding gift to the greater Alameda/Oakland community.

The Get Screened Oakland Program is a municipal-government strategy for the implementation and expansion of HIV testing as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a national government agency. Therefore, the local focus is to increase HIV screening/testing with the goal of making it a routine part of health services and medical care. In this way, individuals living with HIV who might otherwise be missed or over looked due to assumptions about risk and behavior can learn of their HIV status. Another goal of Get Screened Oakland is the to develop a strategic investment fund that will provide much needed resources to local HIV services. The fund will make grants both to agencies that already provide HIV services and to those wishing to provide such services but not yet doing so. EBCF will administer the grant program.

For more information, go to the East Bay Community Foundation Web site at <http://www.ebcf.org>

East Bay AIDS Walk 2008 holds first meeting

(February 15) A dozen people gathered at the Alameda County Office of AIDS to review the successes of AIDS Walk 2007 and make preliminary plans for the 2008 walk. Tentatively scheduled for September 6, 2008, AIDS Walk 2008 has set a goal of 700 walkers and \$75,000 in sponsorships and donations. The meeting, chaired by Gloria Cox Crowell, provided an opportunity to review what worked in the 2007 walk, which raised more than \$53,000 and brought together more political and community leaders than previous walks. Ms. Crowell reminded those attending the meeting that the walk is labor intensive. She asked that every effort be made to expand the number of volunteers in order to share the various tasks and activities required to make the walk possible. The following areas/committees need volunteer support: sponsorship; media and publicity; registration; walker recruitment; agency tabling/information and referral; medical support; and outreach to neighboring counties and cities.

Future meetings of the group will be held the second Wednesday of each month in the Alameda County Office of AIDS . The next meeting is scheduled to convene on Wednesday March 19, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you have any questions, you may contact: Kim Coulthurst; Pathway Consultants, (510) 701-2966, at www.pathwaysconsultants.com

Legislative Update

Get Screened Oakland has added this new periodic section to the newsletter in order to provide readers with news and updates on proposed and existing state and federal legislation that concerns HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care.

Below, you will find a link to legislation that was recently proposed by Assembly Member Swanson. If passed, the legislation will require California's state prisons to make voluntary HIV testing easily accessible to inmates upon their release. For more information, link to http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1951-2000/ab_1984_bill_20080214_introduced.pdf.

Words from the Community

On Leadership

*True leadership comes from the heart,
is implemented by the mind and
is felt by the people it serves.*

It is an attitude that honors and engages the best in other people.

*It is an expectation that good will always overtake the human patterns
that temporarily block our innate goodness.*

And it is the term we use to define our very best efforts.

You can take big steps toward becoming an effective leader. Your leadership is more important than ever. Unworkable leadership practices and seemingly unbridgeable differences in an increasingly diverse world impacted by HIV require new leadership and a new leadership style. As a starting point for the development of personal leadership, there are four basic principles:

- You are smart.
- You have patterns.
- You can take action.
- Difference makes all the differences.

These principles make up the Foundation Four Working Assumptions. They are the underpinnings of a fresh attitude about life and your place in it. They are your everyday baseline reference.

We all have acquired conclusions about ourselves and our world that do not reflect the truth. We experience this everyday in HIV. These are called patterns. Patterns can be barriers to building health, successful and great working relationships. Patterns are the emotional residue of old hurts and lies we all acquired from our earliest days. Part of life's journey is coming to understand these acquired patterns and reclaiming your true self.

People who have never thought of themselves as leaders in the old way are increasingly in positions of authority, participating in HIV service planning networks, directing new community organizations, and providing peer education. People who never would have been looked to as leaders are reshaping the world. Additionally, waves of new immigrants fleeing violence and poverty are moving to all parts of North America. Whole populations of people, different from the images seen on television and in the movies, are rapidly becoming the majority in our North American cities. Women are leading lives and communities unimagined by their mothers (and fathers), and wanting to take charge in smarter ways. Men are fed up with the status quo, including the old "white guy" model of leading and authority. Young people are perceptive and more engaged than ever and want to learn how to make things right. People over fifty the world around are beginning whole new, full lives, planning for age 100 and ready to volunteer their time, expertise, and new leadership skills and start new careers and new enterprises. Families, created and extended are more central in people's emotional lives instead of work holding pride of first place. Members of identity groups who previously were silent and invisible are no longer either. People want more out of their lives...

Everyone wants SOMETHING but can't quite seem to get IT; food, drugs, sex, overwork, competition, money and all it can buy...none of these have quite filled the need.

What is the need? A deep, unquenchable need to belong, to participate wholly and fully. Everyday you work to connect your thinking and your feeling to the world around you. It is a challenging and productive goal to deal with feelings and thinking separately. It is useful to understand the interaction of each on the other.

Feelings are emotional and thinking is rational. It is not easy to keep the two separate. Sometimes we throw feelings at each other under the guise of thinking. For many of us, the past two decades of living with and working in HIV has brought up feelings we didn't even know we had. Many of our HIV community meetings have served as a place for expression of feelings. However, feelings are not a reliable guide to action as we have also seen over the years. The power to act includes being able to think and be sensible despite being overwhelmed with old feelings. Here is the secret to leadership and real power: Act on what makes sense instead of acting on mostly old feelings that emerge.

Acting on feelings will likely achieve only the expression of feelings...when the desired goal is to achieve something much more practical and rational. Trusting your thinking will help you be more confident about your effectiveness, your leadership, and your capacity to connect with others and strengthen a sense of belonging for everyone in your circle.

Adapted from Building Great Working Relationships at Work and at Home.

Stephen M. Schaefer lives and works in St. Paul, Minnesota. Mr. Schaefer is founder of No Limits for Leaders, www.NoLimitsforLeaders.com.

Other HIV News

National conference on HIV science makes materials from its sessions available online

(February 3 – February 6) In Boston, MA, the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) convened its 15th annual meeting. Drawing leading researchers from around the world, the scientifically focused conference provides attendees with an opportunity to hear the latest research on HIV disease and its complications.

The following subjects were highlighted at the three-day event:

- ◆ Immunology
- ◆ Vaccines (preclinical and clinical trials)
- ◆ Virology (including other retroviruses)
- ◆ Pathogenesis
- ◆ Neuropathogenesis and neurologic complications
- ◆ Antiretroviral therapy (preclinical, clinical randomized trials, clinical observational studies, and complications)
- ◆ Therapeutic vaccines and immune-based therapies
- ◆ Primary/acute infection
- ◆ Clinical pharmacology
- ◆ HIV drug resistance (including molecular mechanisms, clinical implications and epidemiology of HIV drug resistance)
- ◆ Opportunistic infections (including tuberculosis)
- ◆ AIDS-related malignancies (e.g., lymphoma and kaposi's sarcoma)
- ◆ Pediatrics/adolescents
- ◆ Maternal/fetal
- ◆ HIV in women/women's health
- ◆ Novel diagnostic technologies and new monitoring tools
- ◆ Epidemiology of HIV infection
- ◆ Molecular epidemiology (including distribution and diversity of retroviruses) Epidemiology of sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV
- ◆ Prevention studies (including microbicides and behavioral interventions)
- ◆ Research on clinical care and scale-up in developing countries (including operational research and implementation).

Auction yields record proceeds for HIV

(February 14) On the eve of Valentine's Day, 83 contemporary works of art were sold for more than \$42.5 million—all of which will go to the United Nations Foundation to support HIV/AIDS relief programs that are conducted in Africa by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The amount raised makes the event the most significant charity auction of Contemporary Art ever.

Held at Sotheby's in New York City, the auction was organized by U2 front man Bono and British artist Damien Hirst. According to *The Washington Post*, the art was donated by dozens of artists, including Jasper Johns, Jeff Koons and Ed Ruscha. Mr. Hirst contributed seven of his works. Among them was the sculpture "Where There's a Will, There's a Way," a pill cabinet filled with HIV antiretroviral drugs.

Among those gathered for the bidding were hip-hop entrepreneur Russell Simmons, businesswoman and talk show host Martha Stewart, actor Dennis Hopper, and retired tennis player John McEnroe. As reported in the *Post*, bidding was aggressive at all levels, with works soaring to two, three, and even 10 times their estimates.

"This is incredible!" Bono stated. "Art and love, sex and money came together tonight to make this Valentine's Day one that we at (RED) will never forget." He continued, "Because tonight we got serious about love, and not just the love of art, but the love

of our brothers and sisters suffering from AIDS in the poorest places on the planet.”

Sources: “The Red Auction Raises over \$40 million to Fight AIDS in Africa”; Southeby’s press release; 02/14/08

“Auction nets over \$40 million for AIDS in Africa”; Michaud, Christopher, with editing by Bill Trott, *The Washington Post*; 02/15/08

“Auction nets over \$40 million for AIDS in Africa”; Michaud, Christopher; Reuters; 02/15/08

With newly designed condom packets, New Yorkers can “get some”

(February 13) The day before Valentine’s Day, New York City’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, began handing out free condoms with different packaging and the fresh slogan: “get some,” in English, and “pointelo,” in Spanish, a Department press release reported. For establishments wising to distribute the condoms, new dispensers will be available.

The designer, Yves Behar, provided his talents as a gift to the city, telling AP that he wanted the new look to be friendly and un-intimidating.



New York City’s latest condom design. Courtesy of New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

“Good design can help bring condoms out of the closet,” said Behar. “The brand’s friendly design and the dispenser’s approachable shape convey openness and acceptance. They say condoms are nothing to be embarrassed about.”

New York City has distributed more than 36 million of its own brand of condoms since they debuted on Valentine’s Day 2007. Currently about 900 establishments distribute them. Any New York City establishment—whether it’s a health club, coffee house, bar, barbershop, or clothing store—can order NYC Condoms in bulk by calling 311 or visiting www.nyc.gov/condoms.

"We want to give away as many condoms as people will use because we're trying to make New York City an even safer place to have sex, and this is a powerful way to do it," Monica Sweeney, the Health Department's Assistant Commissioner for HIV Prevention and Control, told AP/Google.

Sources: “New York Unveils Official New Condom”; Kugler, Sarah; the Associated Press on Google.com, 02/13/08

“Health Department Releases New NYC Condom Wrapper”; New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene press release; 02/13/08

New Illinois lottery game to raise money for HIV testing, prevention, education

(February 15). The Illinois Lottery introduced a new game, Red Ribbon Cash. The game will raise money for HIV prevention and education programs, including free HIV testing. It is believed to be the first in the nation where all of the proceeds will support HIV-related efforts, the *Post Dispatch* reported.

Game tickets will cost \$2 apiece, and the top four prizes will each award \$20,000. According to a Department of Revenue spokeswoman, the lottery hopes annual ticket sales will equal those raised in 2006 for a ticket benefiting breast cancer research: \$3 million.

Grants will be distributed by the Illinois Department of Health, but it is not yet known when the game will have generated

enough money to start awarding grants.

Source: "Illinois Lottery game raises money for HIV-AIDS awareness"; Kathleen Haughney, *Post Dispatch*; 02/20/08

Community Calendar 2008
Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind

March

- Th. 3/6
land. HIV/AIDS Community Forum with Elected Officials; Gary Harmon Conference Room, Office of AIDS Administration, 1970 Broadway, 11th Floor, Oakland.
- F. 3/7 Faith Leaders HIV Community Breakfast; Alta Bates Summit Medical Center; Health Education Center, Room 103; 7:30 - 10:00 a.m.
- M. 3/10 National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day: for more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days.
- Th. 3/20 National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days.
- Sa. 3/30 'Taking Action' conference - Youth Creating Change: Annual meeting for California Coalition for Youth. The conference will include workshops on youth empowerment and advocacy, as well as a youth forum at the State Capitol that is open to conference attendees. More information at www.cal youth.org/index.aspx?id=21.

April

- Su. 4/1 'Taking Action' conference - Youth Creating Change (cont.)

June

- W. 6/11 - Sa. 6/14 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit; Detroit, MI; For more information, send e-mail to conferences@nmac.org or call 202-483-6622; abstracts due 1/10/08.
- F. 6/27 National HIV Testing Day

August

- M. 8/3 - Su. 8/8 XVII International AIDS Conference 2008, Mexico City, Mexico; Theme: Universal Action Now; Abstracts accepted through February 19, 2008.