

POSITIVE REACTION

FEBRUARY 2007

A FOCUS ON HOUSING

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HIV/AIDS: FACT OR FICTION

African Americans are one of the leading groups affect by HIV in this country.

FACT: While African Americans make up just 13% of the US population, the group accounted for 50% or more of new HIV diagnoses in 2004.

As many of you may know, last November, the Frannie Peabody Center, in conjunction with the City of Portland, received a new grant from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Our grant came from a sub division of HUD called Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA). HOPWA is the only federal housing program dedicated to the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Approximately 90% of HOPWA funds are allocated by formula to states and metropolitan areas with the highest number of cases and incidence of AIDS.

The remaining 10% are awarded through competitive grants aimed at providing permanent supportive housing.

Maine does not receive formula HOPWA funds. Frannie Peabody Center is the grantee for the state's first two competitive HOPWA grants. The City of Portland is the grantee for the most recent competitive HOPWA grant.

In the program year 2005-2006, FPC's second grant, HAVEN II, which focuses on providing housing assistance and supportive services to low-income people living with HIV/AIDS in the City of Portland and Cumberland County, saw that nearly half (48%) of clients served were of racial and ethnic minorities.

The minority population in the City of Portland has almost tripled in the last decade, due largely to an influx of immigrants and refugees. One of the most critical needs identified by those working with this emerging population is housing. That is why the third HOPWA grant awarded to the city will focus on outreach to racial and ethnic minorities.

HOW IT AFFECTS YOU?

Through our partnership with HUD, we at FPC are able to offer focus groups put on by AIDS Housing Corporation (AHC) out of Boston. AHC is looking for anywhere from 5-12 clients to attend each group. This will be a time for consumers to share

their ideas and thoughts about services they need or have used to achieve and maintain stability. Each focus group will last approximately 2.5 hours (Dinner will be included). Questions are asked to determine the type of resources being used, barriers people face, their knowledge of living with HIV/AIDS and what needs are not being met. There are two groups scheduled, one in York County, Tues. Feb. 27th at 5pm, and one in Portland on Thurs. March 1st at 5pm. These groups are open to all clients currently receiving services from FPC (both housing and case management). We at FPC feel that it is extremely important to continue to keep up with the needs of our clients, as the management of HIV changes as well as the populations affected. Also, we encourage anyone who is available to attend these focus groups. Your input is important to our future programming! For more information or to let us know you're going to be attending, contact Mary Martha @774-6877 x116
mmgantt@peabodycenter.org

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION

The Maine HIV Advisory Committee will present recommendations to DHHS and support legislation that would increase access to testing, increase access to needle exchange programs, and increase funding to HIV treatment, care, and research.

As it stands now, the bill for increase access to testing supports routine, streamlined HIV testing in all health care setting. Also, this bill would drop the

requirements for all pre-test counseling and post-test counseling for a negative results. In addition, the requirement for specific written consent would be dropped, however verbal consent would be required. This won't impact anonymous testing.

In brief, the needle exchange bill would eliminate the limit on the number of syringes that can be distributed. And the funding

bill would devote appropriate amounts to care, prevention, and studies that would shape future programming.

Continue to check the newsletter for future updates. Also, please let Mary Martha know if you are interested in advocating or speaking on behalf of the HIV community in regards to these issues at the state level.

Portland/Cumberland County Events

Fri. Feb. 2nd, 7pm
Book reading of "The Same River Twice: A Boatman's Journey Home"
By Michael Burke at Books Etc Portland, Free

Fri. Feb. 2nd, 5-8pm
First Friday Art walk, Free
For information on participating galleries:
www.firstfridayartwalk.com

Tues., Feb. 13th, 7:30pm
Portland Stage Co. presents Noises Off
**pay what you can night box office opens at noon

Fri. Feb. 16th, 8pm
USM Windwood Quintet performance
Corthell Concert Hall, Gorham, Free

Tues. Feb. 20th, 7pm
Jazz in Celebration of Mardi Gras by PortCity Jazz
Cathedral of St. Luke, Suggested Donation \$10

Sun. Feb. 25th, 3pm
First Parish Church, Portland
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 200th Birthday Choral Concert
Suggested donation \$10

York County Events

Saturday Feb. 3rd, 7pm
An Evening of Short Stories, a benefit for Literacy Volunteers
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Kennebunk, \$5

Thursday Feb. 8th, 7pm
Indie Film Night at Kennebunk Free Library
Screening of the Iranian film *Day Break*, Free

AIDS GROUP TO SUE PFIZER OVER VIAGRA ADS

Reuters (01.22.07):Lisa Richwine

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) on Monday filed a lawsuit against Pfizer Inc. for allegedly promoting recreational use of its erectile dysfunction (ED) drug Viagra. The nonprofit treatment organization's suit claims Pfizer's actions have led to risky behavior by men and an increase in HIV and other STDs.

AHF cites Pfizer's Viagra Web site, which asks readers, "Want to improve your sex life?" and says the drug can help men who have difficulties attaining an erection "once in a while." The foundation's legal arguments point to Viagra's marketing materials from recent years, including an ad that ran around the 2006 Super Bowl that urged

men to "Be this Sunday's MVP" and talk to their doctors about Viagra.

Such promotions make Viagra sound like a "party drug," said AHF President Michael Weinstein. "The message they are sending out is that any and every male should take it," he said. In 2004, after a complaint from the Food and Drug Administration, Pfizer pulled a TV commercial in which a man sprouted devilish horns. The ad's suggestion that Viagra could restore a man to the "wild thing" of his younger days was an unproven claim, FDA said.

Studies have documented recreational Viagra use among men who have sex with men,

sometimes to alleviate the erection-inhibiting effects of alcohol and drugs like crystal meth, AHF noted.

The lawsuit asks that Pfizer be prohibited from running similar ads and ordered to fund awareness ads about STD risks and Viagra. It also requests that Pfizer use profits gained from the ads to pay AHF's costs for treating HIV and other STDs linked to Viagra use.

Pfizer spokesperson Shreya Prudlo said the company "has always been committed to safe and appropriate use of Viagra," and its label and promotions clearly state: "Viagra does not protect against [STDs], including HIV."

**STAFF SPOT LIGHT
TARA THOMAS, MONITORING & EVALUATION SPECIALIST**

After spending two year working on her BA at SUNY New Paltz, Tara Thomas transferred to USM where she finished her bachelors degree and continued her education as a member of the inaugural class of the Stonecoast Masters of Fine Art Program at USM. In the fall of 1999, Tara began working at FPC as a work study employee. She said, "I thought working for a local nonprofit was more interesting than most of the on-campus work study positions." After graduation, Tara kept in touch with the staff and served as a volunteer for the agency. In January 2002, when the job became available Tara was

hired as the office manager and has been working in some capacity at FPC ever since.

Now as Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, Tara is responsible for making sure each program is in compliance with funding contracts and federal and state laws. Also she collects and analyzes data which is then used to develop reports for staff, board, funders, and the general public. The work Tara does allows clients access to more information about agency activities and ensures that FPC continues to provide services that are meeting the needs of our clients.

When we asked Tara to share

a bit about her life outside of FPC she revealed that she is a member of the Maine Roller Derby and is currently serving as manager for the travel team. Her roller derby alias is Graceless Kelly, because Tara said, "I'm klutzy. In fact, I broke my ankle at my first open-skate practice." Tara is also writing a mystery novel that she hopes to dedicate some time to finishing this year. She is also the proud owner of two cats Mazzy and Emmett.

We at FPC are privileged to work with such a talented and interesting woman. We also wish to thanks Tara for her many years of service.

FITNESS & WELLNESS

Interested in group wellness classes?? Gretchen is creating a fitness group for clients that would incorporate stretch and tone, yoga, Pilates, and other methods. This would be a great oppor-

tunity for all to socialize, discuss issues surrounding wellness and nutrition, and stay fit during the winter. Ideally the group could meet twice a month before or after agency hours but Gretchen is looking

for input about the details. If you are interested please contact her at 774-6877 x111. She would love ideas and feedback so that a group can get started as early as mid-February!

INFO BITS

Mardi Gras Community Night: This month's community night, Tues, Feb. 20th 6-8pm, will be a pancake dinner in celebration of Mardi Gras. Bring your own toppings for the flapjack feast!

Teleconference Training: Harnessing the Power of the Internet: Online AIDS Activism 101. Tues., Feb. 6th at noon or 8pm. For More Info contact Mary Martha @774-6877 x116 or mmgantt@peabodycenter.org

Free Tax Preparation: Dial 211 to see if you are eligible and to schedule and appointment.

Interested in receiving a free copy of the 11th Annual HIV Drug

Guide?: The guide is put out by Test Positive Aware Network and

Positively Aware and offers the latest drug information, including a look ahead at drugs in development. For more information check out the website: www.tapan.com

AIDS Quilt: Interested in making a panel of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt? FPC will be holding a work session in the spring, inviting folks to plan a panel of their own or someone close. The hope is to add these panels to the AIDS Memorial Quilt, which is displayed nationwide throughout the year. Give Mary Martha a call if you are interested, 774-6877 X 116.

Ticket Raffle: For Wed. March 7th, 7:30 performance of Puccini's Madame Butterfly and Thurs. March 15th, 7:30 performance of The Pirates of Penzance. We have six tickets available for each show, which will be performed in Portland at the Merrill Auditorium. If you are interested in being entered in the raffle please contact Gretchen at 774-6877 x111 or gjohnson@peabodycenter.org. If leaving a message please include your name, contact info, show of interest, and whether you are interested in 1 or 2 tickets. The drawing will be held Feb. 28th.




FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Please join us in celebrating the following employment anniversaries this month:

A.J. Carlson, as of Febraury14th, has been employed with FPC **2 years** in a variety of positions.

Ellen Converse, as of February 24th, has been working at Peabody House **4 year**.

FEBRUARY 2007

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 Computer Time 2-4pm	3
4	5 Men's Discussion Group	6 Computer Time 9-11am	7 HIV Heart Circle 6-7:30pm NBHAA Day	8	9 Computer Time 2-4pm	10
11	12	13 Computer Time 9-11am	14HIV Heart Circle 6-7:30pm 	15	16 Com-puter Time 2-4pm	17
18	19 Men's Group President's Day (closed)	20 Mardi Gras Community Night 6-8pm	21HIV Heart Circle 6-7:30pm	22	23 Com-puter Time 2-4pm	24
25	26	27Computer Time 9-11am Focus Group Kittery	28 HIV Heart Circle 6-7:30pm	1 Focus Group Portland		

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

****Every Tuesday from 9-11 and Friday from 2-4, FPC has open sessions for client computer use.**

****HIV Heart Circle is a closed group that meets on Wednesday evenings. If you are interested in joining the next session please contact Manny @774-6877 x121**

- **February 5th-** Get "Out" Men's Discussion Group 6-8pm, 49 Oak Street. For more info call Elmer @756-3285
- **February 7th-** National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- **February 19th-** Get "Out" Men's Discussion Group 6-8pm 49 Oak Street
- **February 20th-** Mardi Gras themed Client Community Night at FPC Valley St office from 6-8 pm.
- **February 27th-**Housing Focus Group in York Co. 5-7:30pm (see front page article)
- **March 1st-** Housing Focus Group in Portland 5-7:30pm (see front page article)



FRANNIE PEABODY CENTER

comprehensive HIV & AIDS services

Check us out on the web

www.peabodycenter.org

Frannie Peabody Center

335 Valley Street

Portland, Maine 04102

Phone: 207/774-6877

Fax: 207/879-0761

Email: info@peabodycenter.org

Thoughts from Heaven

By DLee Walker

Through the midst of a storm the Heavens opened up and an angelic voice cried out.

Just look at All My Children they are living on sunset beaches be it in Santa Barbara or Port Charles sleeping with each and every Bold and Beautiful guy and girl they meet. Oh how they have forgotten that these are the Days of Our Lives, which should be filled with Passions, not lived out in a General Hospital over something as serious as HIV and AIDS. Still I, like Ryan Hope they realize they only have One Life to Live as they journey towards me their Guiding Light.

The Frannie Peabody Center is committed to compassionate care for the community infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS in Maine. The Peabody Center helps the community face and fight the realities of the disease by providing prevention education and direct services, including housing, information, education, advocacy, and counseling services. The Peabody Center treats the whole person with dignity, care and compassion.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

BY: CHARLIE GRINDLE

Greetings I hope everyone has been staying warm, had some hot cocoa, and maybe found time for some ice-skating in the Oaks. Even though we really are in winter now, there are still things we can do to make it enjoyable. Tea and some 'lap time' with my cat are high on my list of cold weather pleasures. What do you do to find some joy in the winter? Just think-winter only began a week or so ago, and we only have eight more weeks until spring arrives (on the calendar at least). Now doesn't that make you feel better?

As I forge ahead with my

new (old) life as a positive person, I find that the coming out process is an on-going thing. Once you open the floodgate, there is no sense trying to shut off the flow. You can only wait for the next round of questions, and hope that you have a comfort zone of self-reliance and friends to support you as you educate more people about life within the battle zone. Many people don't realize that in many ways we are still in a battle zone- we have our forward scouts, soldiers, medics, wounded, and casualties. As much as I abhor militarism, I find this metaphor is apt for the 21st century war against

the spread of HIV/AIDS. Just when we seem to be gaining ground, with new infection rates going down in parts of Africa, countries like India and China report an increase in numbers. Our world leaders have been given strategies for winning, but seem hesitant to do what needs to be done. We can only do what we can, by encouraging others to know the facts and make the right decision, and by living our lives fully. May all your battles be minor ones, and won quickly.

Wishing you health, laughter, and love, Charlie

A dish to warm the heart!

Ingredients:

1 box Penne Pasta

1 large container of ricotta cheese

1 large jar of traditional pasta sauce

1 package (2-3 cups) of shredded sharp cheddar

2 tomatoes, chopped coarsely

1 casserole dish (8x11)

Aluminum foil

Preheat oven to 350'. Cook pasta according to directions on the box, drain, and mix the ricotta cheese while pasta is still warm. Spread a bit of pasta sauce on the bottom of the dish, add a layer of noodle mixture, covering bottom, spread a layer of sauce, and cheese. Repeat layers (no tomatoes) until you reach the top - about three layers on average.

Cover top with foil, be careful not to touch the cheese or you might lose a layer!

Bake covered for 45 minutes to an hour.