

## **How your Organization Impacts those Living with HIV/AIDS?**

### **Northwestern Memorial Foundation**

All donations are used to support the DIFFS/Chicago Northwestern Infectious Disease Fellowship Program.

### **FCAN - Families & Children AIDS Network - Trisha Curran, Grants & Development Coordinator**

FCAN, the Families' and Children's AIDS Network, is a leader in developing family-focused programs and policies that are responsive to the unique needs of parents and children affected by HIV and AIDS in the state of Illinois. At FCAN, we support HIV-affected families by offering free, in-home clinical and legal services in the Cook County area and semi-annual retreats for families across the state. In addition, FCAN has been instrumental in developing public policies and programs through its statewide education and advocacy efforts. With the help of the individuals that we serve and our network of providers and volunteers, FCAN strives to achieve its mission of creating a coordinated, family-focused continuum of care for HIV-affected families.

Funding from DIFFA contributes to our Red Ribbon Trails program, a retreat program for Illinois families affected by HIV/AIDS with children between the ages of two and seventeen. Each year, we hold a summer camp at the Timber Pointe Outdoor Center on Lake Bloomington and a spring retreat at an indoor site near Bloomington, Illinois.

Red Ribbon Trails is unique because of its emphasis on the entire family and the community, which includes both HIV-positive and HIV-affected individuals. At the 2008 annual HIV/STD Conference in Springfield, FCAN's Red Ribbon Trails program was selected to receive the "In Your Own Backyard" award for exceptional work in HIV/STD community education. During the retreats, children and adults participate in sessions tailored to their age group as well as activities for the entire family. Additional legal consultation and social service referrals are available throughout the year for participants.

Campers and volunteers consistently state that their experiences with Red Ribbon Trails have been positive and many families and volunteers return year after year. Here is what some of our campers have had to say about why they enjoy attending Red Ribbon Trails:

- "It's a chance to spend a stress-free weekend as a family."
- "I can be me and let my guard down. I don't have to hide my medicine or secrets about HIV."
- "It helps me to hear other people talk about their problems because then I know that it's not just me hurting."

**Chicago House - The Reverend Stan J. Sloan Chief, Executive Officer**

Chicago House was founded in 1985 as a place where people living with AIDS could live with dignity. Today we have six major programs: Residential Housing, Case Management, HIV/AIDS Prevention, Medication Adherence, Scattered Site Housing, and Employment. Through these programs we have shifted from an agency that helped people with end of life issues to one that helps them move forward with their lives. Our most recent venture, Sweet Miss Giving's Bakery, is a jobs program that returns over 50% of all profits to further the mission of Chicago House. (Order from us at [www.sweetmissgivngs.com](http://www.sweetmissgivngs.com))!

**Vital Bridges - Deborah R. Hinde President & CEO**

Each year, nearly 2,000 men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS count on Vital Bridges for life's most basic needs: shelter; food; someone to help them solve their challenges; and education to work toward a brighter future. Through our comprehensive services, clients may receive nutritious food and professional nutrition counseling; housing; case management and mental health services; and educational and vocational assistance. Most clients live on less than \$800 per month. They can't afford to pay rent, buy food, pay utilities, purchase transit cards or buy additional medications that they need. Vital Bridges' services help them fill the gap. In 20 years, Vital Bridges has provided nearly 10 million nutritious meals; more than 600,000 nights of housing; 250,000 counseling sessions and countless hours of compassion and care.

**Howard Brown Health Center -Donald Rolfe, Director of Communications & Business Development**

Howard Brown has created a synergy of many services, co-located under one roof, including world-class primary medical care, mental health counseling, substance abuse screening and treatment, support groups, medication adherence training and support, research, and resource advocacy/ case management to meet the immense needs of our HIV patients. This multi-layered approach to patient care provides the best benefits for our patients and ensures greater access to care for those with HIV/AIDS.

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"I had literally stopped looking at myself in the mirror. I knew my health was sliding, and I just thought, okay, I'm gonna die. Some friends of mine told me to go to Howard Brown, and I did. That was 12 years ago. My Howard Brown case manager is a resource and a friend. Howard Brown's medical services and case management services are very much interwoven. You don't get that in a regular doctor's office. I've lived longer than I thought I would and I'm enjoying being 61 years old. I wouldn't be alive today without Howard Brown."

Dennis, age 61  
Howard Brown medical patient and case management client since 1997

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### **The Children's Place Association – Jennifer Sampson**

Since our founding in 1991 The Children's Place Association has been committed to following the HIV/AIDS epidemic and responding with programs and services that meet the needs of children, youth and families infected or affected by this terrible disease.

While there have been medical advances in treatment there is still no cure for HIV and it is still the worst epidemic in human history affecting millions of children. Our mission is to improve the present and secure the future for the children and families who are continuing to feel the affects of HIV/AIDS in Chicago. We do this through a variety of services including but not limited to a 24-hour residential center, specialized day care, mental health counseling, foster care and adoption programs, summer camp and case management.

### **Center on Halsted - Davon Woodard**

We are very grateful for DIFFA's continued support for HIV/AIDS Services at Center on Halsted. Thanks to funds from DIFFA, Center on Halsted has been able to greatly increase services for those living with HIV. For example, two counselor-led support groups, which focus on peer-support and education, have been launched for persons who are HIV+ and based on their impact, a third group is underway. One group member recently stated, 'Since getting the news of my HIV status months ago, I hadn't been able to smile until I joined this group. I am so thankful for all of you.' We at Center on Halsted are, in turn, so thankful for DIFFA's ongoing support of our work with our clients."

### **Children's Memorial Hospital - Section for Pediatric, Adolescent, and Maternal HIV Infection (Special ID) - T. J. Johnson**

In 2008, the Children's Memorial Hospital Special ID Outreach and Education program reached over 2,600 adolescents, young adults, and women at risk, providing HIV and STD testing, educational workshops, and prevention information/condom distribution. We anticipate providing services to even more than this number in 2009.

Through networking and partnership with community and healthcare organizations, our Outreach and Education team is a resource for the special needs of youth and young adults, a demographic shown to be particularly affected by the incidence of HIV infection.

#### **A recent experience, described by our Outreach and Education Coordinator, Ann Sanders:**

Recently, I was facilitating training at a well known Chicago high school\*. The science and health instructor for 9<sup>th</sup> graders asked me to provide HIV 101 and prevention information to the entire 9<sup>th</sup> grade class. Because of the funding received from DIFFA to provide educational workshops I was able to provide education to 70 adolescents. In 9<sup>th</sup>

grade adolescents are 14 to 15 years of age. According to their instructor, the 9<sup>th</sup> graders had received little information on HIV or prevention methods to avoid becoming infected. This is alarming considering that each year approximately 19,000 adolescents and young adults aged 14-29 are infected with HIV. This age group represented 34% of all new infections (CDC 2006).

Presenting to the three different science classes was exciting and fun for me, but the payoff as an educator came after each class, when I was approached by individual students who wanted me to know that they had heard new information that was important to them. One student said to me, "Thank you, I'd never heard that before. It's good to know that I can avoid HIV by being tested and using condoms". Another approached me in the hallway and said, "I'm not having sex YET and you helped me see that sex is a big deal. We need to hear this stuff".