AIDS United News May/June 2011

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From the President & CEO

“Never a dull moment,” as the saying goes. And that has certainly been true here at AIDS United over the last several weeks!

We have been encouraged by the commitments we have from NEW funding partners for our Access to Care (A2C) initiative. We have been energized by the INCREASED funding support we have received for the critical strategic grantmaking work we are doing in Puerto Rico. We have been invigorated by the RENEWED support we have received from our longtime funding partners for our Community Partnerships and GENERATIONS programs.

Team to End AIDS (T2) D.C. officially kicked off at an inspiring, uplifting and motivating event on May 14, as T2 participants embark on what I know will be an amazing journey. I remembered how scared and excited I was when I did my first T2 event, and I can only hope that the experience will be as transformational for participants as it was for me when I participated for the first time in T2 Chicago. If you are a T2 DC participant, THANK YOU for what you are about to do for your community and for yourself. It will change your life, and help improve the lives of many.

As we commemorated National HIV/AIDS Vaccine Awareness Day on May 19, we are proud of a Special Report authored by Ronald Johnson, AIDS United’s Vice President of Public Policy and
Advocacy. The report highlights two recent HIV vaccine studies, and re-emphasizes the importance of HIV vaccine development as part of the “tool kit” we must be utilizing to end the HIV epidemic. AIDS United remains committed to doing whatever we can to support and advocate for the development of an effective HIV vaccine.

The HIV/AIDS world received some highly encouraging news from a study conducted by the HIV Prevention Trials Network that found men and women infected with HIV reduced the risk of transmitting the virus to their sexual partners through initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART). These findings stand to have a tremendous impact on both our prevention and our access-to-care work, as they significantly advance the discussion of treatment-as-prevention. We invite you to keep connected to AIDS United through our Facebook page, our Twitter account and our website to keep up with developments – and their impact on the people we serve.

And speaking of those we serve, we invite you to check out the impact stories of the individuals organizations served by AIDS United’s predecessor organizations, the National AIDS Fund and AIDS Action, in the 2010 annual report highlighting the accomplishments of the two agencies. One of the most significant highlights of 2010 was the game changing merger of the organizations to become AIDS United! We hope you’ll check out the exciting new electronic “flipbook” format of the report, which you can do by clicking here.

So much is happening, and so much more needs to happen as we surge forward in our mission to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in America. And we need YOU to make these things happen. Get involved with the work of AIDS United. Make a donation to us. Support a T2 runner. Sign up for our newsletter and Action Alerts. Follow us on Social Media.

We can’t reach our goal without you. We can end this epidemic with you. Join us today!

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Team T2: Ready, Set, Go!

( photo left, l to r: Christina Herold, Anna Bavier and Tisha Vaska)

The excitement of Team to End AIDS (T2) has infused the AIDS United offices with energy and excitement -- with four staff members signed up for the marathon training program and a couple of staff members already having met their fundraising goal! And the T2 staff team is now complete and is in high gear for the coming months -- just in time for the May 14 kickoff celebration.

We thought we’d introduce them to you.
Christina Herold is T2’s program director, with more than eight years of non-profit event management experience in the Washington, D.C. area as well as a background in personal training and triathlon coaching. Although Herold’s endurance sports background has historically been in triathlons and shorter running events, she has recently taken up marathons, finishing both the Bank of America Chicago Marathon in 2009 and the ING New York City Marathon in 2010. Collectively she has raised more than $10,000 for various charities through endurance sports.

“I am excited to merge my passion for endurance sports and cause-related fundraising with my background in event planning,” said Herold. “I believe that training and fundraising for important organizations like AIDS United and the Washington AIDS Partnership can be some of the most rewarding achievements a person can realize.” Herold is strongly committed to helping others achieve their goals of becoming endurance athletes while deepening a commitment to helping those living with HIV/AIDS.

Herold’s endurance racing goals for 2011 include the National Half Marathon, the DC Triathlon, the New Jersey State Triathlon (as a relay team with her dad and sister), several 10Ks and a yet-to-be-determined Fall Marathon. She is most looking forward to utilizing the run-walk method to break her previous marathon PR!

Anna Bavier is T2’s newest addition, and is a Team Manager for the program. Prior to T2, Bavier worked with Food & Friends, a local organization committed to providing meals, groceries and nutrition counseling to people living with life-challenging illnesses such as AIDS and cancer. In her role as Team Manager, Bavier will serve as a point person for all of T2 participants’ half-marathon and marathon needs!

A self-described former couch-potato turned workout enthusiast, Bavier previously trained twice with the National AIDS Marathon Training Program in DC, completing both the Mardi Gras Marathon 2005 and Florence (Italy) Marathon 2007 while raising over $3,000 for the Whitman Walker Clinic.

“As a TEAM Manager, I want to share my enthusiasm and insights on nutrition, injury prevention, and fundraising,” Bavier said. "I look forward to helping participants stay on track to complete their running and fundraising goals."

Bavier’s 2011 goals include spending the summer swimming and running in the Honolulu Marathon.

Tisha Vaska holds the dual role of Associate Program Director and Team Manager for T2. She was first introduced to the marathon training/fundraising world while living in San Francisco in 2001, when she trained with the National AIDS Marathon Training Program (NAMTP) to run the Honolulu Marathon. Vaska joined the San Francisco staff of NAMTP in 2002 as a part-time Site Assistant, and then relocated to Chicago in 2004 to work full-time as a Program Representative. Vaska has helped guide hundreds of people to complete marathons and half marathons and has helped raise millions of dollars for those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Vaska joined T2 in 2011.
"I am so happy to be celebrating 10 years of inspiring others to go above and beyond what they thought was possible for themselves," said Vaska. "And for helping others to have a better quality of life."

"Who Are You? T2!"

(photo left: T2 National Director Mike Dilbeck generates excitement with T2 participants about the program)

It's official -- the 2011 DC Team to End AIDS training program kicked off on May 14 with a rally/expo/workshop on the University of the District of Columbia campus. The event was designed to inspire and energize registered participants for the first running training day May 21. Participants met T2 National Director Mike Dilbeck, DC T2 staff (see story above), their running coaches, and T2 sponsors Potomac River Running Store and NOVACare. Discussed topics included fundraising, T2 training philosophy, nutrition, running gear and more. Then on May 21 and 22, the first official training runs took place.

"Why am I participating in T2? Because I've lost my mind!" said T2 participant Melissa Johnson-Bailey. "But it really felt like the right thing to do. I have a family member who passed away from AIDS, and I am a Washingtonian. I love my city and know how affected it is by [the epidemic]. I'm excited, I'm afraid, I'm inspired, and I'm looking to raise money and complete the marathon!"

To see photos from the May 14 T2 kickoff event, click here.

To see photos from the first training run on May 21, click here.

To view video from four participants who talk about why they are participating in T2, click here.
New Private-Sector Funding Partners Join With AIDS United

Support from MAC AIDS Fund, Chevron, Walgreen’s, ViiV Healthcare, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and H. van Ameringen Foundation To Support Access to Care Programs, HIV programs in Puerto Rico

The recent support of four private sector funding partners will help AIDS United advance its mission to end HIV/AIDS in the United States and Puerto Rico.

MAC AIDS Fund, Chevron, Walgreens, ViiV Healthcare, and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS have all joined in AIDS United’s Access to Care (A2C) initiative, to help link thousands of individuals living with HIV/AIDS in low-income and/or rural areas with the high quality care they need. The catalyst for AIDS United’s A2C work was a major grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb, with subsequent cohorts of A2C grantees supported by Walmart, and by a major challenge grant from the Social Innovation Fund (SIF). The Elton John AIDS Foundation, a longtime funding partner with AIDS United, has also become a partner of the A2C initiative. A2C programs represent collaborations of multiple organizations in each grantee community.

H. van Ameringen Foundation has increased its support of AIDS United’s critical work in Puerto Rico, which has an HIV death rate higher than any U.S. state or territory, a rate nearly 4 times the national rate. AIDS United has dedicated significant staff time and resources to create an independent grant making pool for Puerto Rico, as well as engage stakeholders on the island to advise on the most strategic use of resources to combat the epidemic. Grants to agencies in Puerto Rico have supported syringe exchange, programs for men-who-have-sex-with-men and women and girls across Puerto Rico. Other funders of AIDS United’s work in Puerto Rico include Johnson & Johnson, Merck, MAC, and Elton John AIDS Foundation.

“AIDS United is encouraged by and grateful for the commitment and the generosity of our newest funding partners,” said Mark Ishaug, President and CEO of AIDS United. “Their investments will help us build the capacity of community-driven organizations to more effectively respond to the epidemic in the most impacted communities in the United States and in Puerto Rico, while leveraging additional dollars for HIV/AIDS services that previously weren’t available.”
2010 Annual Report "Flipbook" Available Online

The Annual Report highlighting the accomplishments of the National AIDS Fund and AIDS Action -- which includes the historic merger to become AIDS United, is now available online as an electronic flipbook! That’s right, with just one click check out a fun, fresh new format that details the important work that two organizations did throughout 2010 that led to becoming one stronger, more effective and more efficient HIV/AIDS organization. So click here, and take a moment to "flip" through the 2010 Annual Report flipbook!

FCAA Hosts SIF Funders Briefing

Funders Concerned about AIDS (FCAA) offered AIDS United its generous help to mobilize prospective funding partners, by coordinating a briefing on May 16 called Access = Health: Exciting New Opportunities for Grantmakers with the Social Innovation Fund. On hand were AIDS United’s SIF grantees to talk about how their SIF grants have increased their capacity to address access to care issues in their respective communities. The briefing also featured a panel of SIF funders, who spoke about their confidence in the impact that their investments would have on the SIF-supported grantee communities. For an overview of the briefing, click here. To view the briefing online, click here.

Trustee Talk: Blanca Ortiz-Torres, PhD, JD

Blanca Ortiz-Torres, PhD, JD is a Professor of Psychology at University of Puerto Rico in San Juan Puerto Rico

How did you become so passionate about working in HIV? Puerto Rico has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the United States and its territories. It is also one of the countries in the Caribbean with highest incidence of HIV infections. When faced with this reality, as a Community Psychologist by training, it was imperative for me to get involved in prevention
efforts at the community and network level. I also understood that it was necessary to develop culturally-relevant interventions that would respond to the particularities of Latinos and Latinas. I first became involved in HIV when I was living in New York (20 years ago) and it was evident to me that gender had to be considered a central variable in HIV research. After 20 years I am still pursuing these goals.

**What qualities and experiences do you bring as a member of the new AIDS United Board of Trustees?**

I am an academician who has always kept strong links with community-based organizations; therefore I am very well aware of how the epidemic has affected diverse groups and communities. I have been involved not only in research efforts but also in public policy processes, consultation and advocacy with diverse sectors. Since I have conducted research with diverse groups (gay men living with HIV, women living with HIV, men who have sex mostly with women, college students, etc.) I believe that I can offer a scientific perspective to the board. Being a Puerto Rican woman who lives in Puerto Rico I can also provide information and expertise regarding treatment and prevention needs within this US territory.

**As a new AIDS United board member, what is your vision for the organization?**

AIDS United has impressed me primarily for its commitment to end the U.S. HIV/AIDS epidemic in the near future, and its enthusiastic inclusion of Puerto Rico in its portfolio of community investments. It is an organization that acknowledges diversity and is well aware of how needs for treatment and prevention have changed and continue to change. This has been recently illustrated by the organization broadening its scope to include HIV/AIDS policy and advocacy work. An organization that has declared its commitment to work in Puerto Rico deserves all my support and trust.

**AmeriCorps Team Indianapolis Hosts Successful Youth Conference**

Thanks to AIDS United AmeriCorps Team Indianapolis, dozens of students from Indianapolis High School received tools and learned skills to help them make informed health and behavior decisions. The team hosted CHOICES: Make Your Own on April 22, featuring interactive sessions, a service project and a presentation by Picture This, an interactive theatre group. The culmination of five months of work, CHOICES was the team’s required longterm project, with a goal of empowering youth to make their own decisions and improve their health and well-being. In writing about the experience Team Indy blogger Lisa Passmore said, "We were able to see our vision come to life through the CHOICES conference and are still feeling the resounding effects that our program has had on the Indianapolis community."
AIDS United Publishes Special Report on Finding an HIV Vaccine

AIDS United has recently published a special report entitled CAPRISA, iPrEx, and the Importance of Biomedical Interventions in Finding an HIV Vaccine. The report examines the important progress that has been made in developing effective biomedical interventions to prevent HIV transmission.

"The role of scientists and researchers has been vital to the promising progress that has been made in HIV vaccine development," said Ronald Johnson, AIDS United Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, and author of the special report. "But theirs is not the only role. The broader community also has an important role. We need to educate ourselves on the value of vaccines and to be aware of and supportive of HIV vaccine research."

To download a PDF copy of the report, click here.
campaign that is responding to the AIDS crisis in the United States, with a particular focus on the severe and disproportionate epidemic among Black Americans. Through a national media campaign and community outreach, Greater Than AIDS is elevating the public’s knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS and confronting the stigma surrounding the disease. Greater than AIDS is national in scope and community driven, targeting those populations most heavily affected based on HIV/AIDS incidence and prevalence data.

YOU can get involved in the Greater Than AIDS Project! Community-based organizations can request materials that can be customized to help in their HIV/AIDS awareness and education efforts. Click here to find out how your organization and/or community can get involved. Individuals can find out ways they can take action themselves by clicking here, or even record their very own "Deciding Moment" video where they realized they could be "greater than AIDS,” then upload it to the Greater than AID website. Click here to record your Deciding Moment.

And watch in the coming months for ways that AIDS United will be working with partners, grantees, and stakeholders to proclaim that we are Greater Than AIDS!

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