

<http://www.nbc5.com/community/4974290/detail.html>

Get Educated About AIDS/HIV

Approximately 22,000 Chicagoans are living with HIV/AIDS.

The fastest growing increase for infections are females.

Unlike in Africa, we have the medicine and the resources to save lives and stop it from spreading. Approximately 22,000 Chicagoans are living with HIV/AIDS.

The fastest growing increase for infections are females.

Unlike in Africa, we have the medicine and the resources to save lives and stop it from spreading.

Stigma

"... you can be sensitive to the stigma attached to all people, not just those living with AIDS but any people living with anything less than you'd wish for yourself." (Kenneth Cole; Designer and AIDS Activist)

Living With AIDS

" ... she has become a role model ... an HIV advocate."

By Courtney Reid, Director of Programs, Better Existence of HIV

"Jo Ann" (fictitious name) is a 20-year survivor of HIV. Formerly homeless, a single mother, and struggling with substance use, she came to BEHIV over a year ago. Since joining BEHIV's Safe Start program, which stabilized her housing and her health, she has become a role model for other program participants and an HIV advocate. She just returned from Washington DC where she was part of the Campaign to End AIDS Caravan (www.campaigntoendaids.org). In Washington, she participated in rallies, trainings, and congressional visits. She is a dedicated champion of people living with HIV/AIDS.

BEHIV is able to celebrate the many successes of the past year including:

- *The education of more than 11,000 students*
- *The housing of more than 180 men, women and children impacted by HIV, who might otherwise be homeless*
- *The delivery of case management, mental health and alternative therapy services to more than 300 adults who need a lifeline to supportive services*
- *Providing over 1,700 free HIV & Hepatitis C tests to our vulnerable populations*

Africa

"... to establish self-esteem so that...they have value and should not risk their lives by engaging in risky behaviors such as unsafe sex."

By Carl C. Bell, M.D., President/ CEO Community Mental Health Council, Professor of Psychiatry and Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago

NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health) funded us to do an HIV prevention project in Durban South Africa (Collaborative HIV Adolescent Mental Health Project in South Africa - CHAMPSA) and after 4 years of work, we are finding that our intervention works like wildfire.

The intervention is based on research done in Chicago Robert Taylor's Housing Development and works with families to help them get more connected with their kids:

1. To teach their kids social skills.
2. To re-establish the adult protective shield around their kids by monitoring their behavior.
3. To rebuild the village around the families so everyone in the community will look out for one another.
4. To establish self-esteem to that Zulu people will know they have value and should not risk their lives by engaging in risky behaviors such as unsafe sex.
5. Minimizes trauma by empowering Zulu people to save themselves from HIV (it is the Zulu mothers in the villages that are delivering the intervention to their neighbors) - all of the things that work to change health

behaviors from risky ones to safe ones. Thus it is truly a wonderful application of science working in the real world to make a difference and save lives.

Deception

"You were just infected by your husband."

By Ida W. Byther-Smith, Founder and Executive Director, Jo-Ray House Inc.

"Being oblivious to the term "on the down-low", Ida W. Byther-Smith had no idea she was susceptible to getting AIDS. "I'm married, I was faithful, and so in my mind I had nothing to worry about."

Ida found out she was positive after getting tested for HIV as part of a standard procedure for interest in a different medical career position. The only possible way she thought she could have gotten HIV was from a patient sneezing on her because she had never been unfaithful to her husband or gotten infected before marriage.

Eventually, her and her husband had separated. She could only be denial for so long, before a conversation with her husband's secret lover.

"The doctor told you that you are HIV-positive. I know because I told your husband I was positive when we got involved, and he told me it didn't matter." Her husband denied everything.

Nothing made Ida feel like someone would understand what she was going through. She tried group sessions with other people that were HIV-positive and received comments such as, "You don't have a story. You were just infected by your husband. I was on drugs, and I sold sex to buy money for drugs. You? You don't have a story."

Ida went on for eleven years like this. Now she is a Chicago-area activist and author who is living with AIDS. She is constantly wanted to talk about AIDS Prevention, relationships and overcoming the perceived hopelessness of being HIV-Positive." (Article permission granted by *Grace: the Magazine*)

Pay Forward

"The Chicago women, who are HIV infected, are raising money for their "sisters" in Rwanda and Kenya."

By Mardge Cohen, M.D., Director of Women's HIV Research of the Core Center

Mardge Cohen's work in Africa was featured by NBC5's Don Lemon. [Click here for more information.](#)

- The Community Advisory Board (with about 10 active members, and about 50 regular members) of the Women Interagency HIV Study (WIHS) and NIH (National Institution of Health) funded study of HIV disease progression in women, which has been ongoing for 11 years is spearheading the effort. They have organized church events, racetrack fundraisers, and doll selling (the dolls are made by the women in Rwanda).
- "The CORE Connection to Africa." Out of a growing concern for people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa, patients at the CORE Center (living with HIV themselves) are making a difference. They are raising funds to go towards the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Rwanda and Kenya, to programs in which staff at the CORE Center participate.

Rapid Testing

Get test results in 20 minutes. For more information visit:

1. Illinois Department of Public Health:

www.idph.state.il.us

www.basuah.org

AIDS Hotline: (800) 243-2437; 7 days 11 a.m. - 11 p.m. (otherwise your call would be directed to Center's for Disease

Control (800)342-2437
HIV/AIDS Section (217) 524-5983

2. Chicago Women's AIDS Project: 1817 East 71st Street
Chicago, IL 60649
(773) 955- 8709 every Friday; 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Someone To Talk To:

1. Allison Solomon
Communications Manager
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
(312) 922-2322

2. Floyd Kelly Director, Let's Talk Let's Test Foundation
(773) 821-2795

3. Tina Bell
Chief Operating Officer
Let's Talk Let's Test Foundation
(773) 821-2830

4. Mardge Cohen
Director of Women's HIV Research
CORE Center

4. Minerva Bonadonna
Office Manager
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
(773) 271-2242

Click on the links below for information on testing, prevention and other resources.

www.basuah.org
www.idph.state.il.us
www.behiv.org
www.tpan.com
www.aidschicago.org
www.rainbowpush.com www.corecenter.org
www.ltlftfoundation.org

Jo-Ray House (Ida W. Byther-Smith) - (773) 568-2008
Chicago Women's AIDS Project (773) 271-2242