

# THE BASIC NEWS

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## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello All!

I am extremely pleased to welcome all of you to the Winter edition of our newsletter. Since our last edition, several significant things have happened. We have had a successful celebration of World AIDS Day despite the extremely unpleasant weather which forced us to move the candlelight vigil traditionally held outdoors at McKenzie Park to City Hall. Due to Fire Department restrictions, there were no lit candles this past year, but we did have a quilt which displayed the names of those who have died due to HIV/AIDS during the past twenty years, and their names were read as is customary. Likewise despite the inclement weather and the change of location, approximately 80-100 people joined together to remember those who have died.

As you know, World AIDS Day, 2009, was also a commemoration of BASIC's founding as a community agency and its past twenty years of service to the community. Those twenty years of service have been made possible by the generosity of many people in the local community, the commitment of persons who have served on the Board of Directors, as staff members, and as volunteers at BASIC, and to the many resources provided through federal, state

and private grants. This same generosity was evident as many individuals, businesses and organizations contributed to make World AIDS Day and the Twentieth anniversary of BASIC a success. For all those who helped with these events, the BASIC family is truly thankful. As we venture upon a new year, I can assure all of you that BASIC will continue to be here to serve the care and treatment needs of our many clients and to assist in the prevention of the spread of HIV among those at risk. BASIC's commitment of the past twenty years remains the same for the coming years, and until there is a cure for HIV/AIDS. On behalf of the BASIC family, may I extend to all of you the very best wishes for a wonderful, healthy, and safe new year.

Sincerely,  
Valerie Mincey, M.S.W.  
Executive Director





Part of the Twentieth Anniversary HIV/AIDS Commemorative Quilt



Lobby Display at BASIC on World AIDS Day

BASIC's mission is to aid, assist and comfort those living with HIV/AIDS, and to provide awareness, education and prevention services to those at risk of contracting HIV.



Ms. Valerie Hutchison, Partners in Prevention Program Director at BASIC, leads those assembled in "Amazing Grace"



**Amy Salce, a previous member of the Board of Directors (1996-97) remembers those who have died by reading names at the World AIDS Day Vigil**



**Gary Voss, one of the original founding members of BASIC (1989), delivers welcoming remarks at the World AIDS Day Vigil at City Hall**



**The Honorable Jonathan Wilson, Sr., Mayor Pro Tem, reads the City Proclamation of December 1, 2009 as World AIDS Day**



**The Rev. Thomas Gashlin, a volunteer at BASIC in the late 1980's-'90's, delivers the invocation on World AIDS Day**



**Dr. Dennis Cookro, Acting Director of the Bay County Health Department, offers some thoughts on World AIDS Day**



**Open House at BASIC on December 1<sup>st</sup> with three current Board Members, Carol Lapensohn, Joyce Smith, and Jerre Deason**



**Butch McKay, Executive Director of OASIS in Ft. Walton Beach and first Case Manager at BASIC reflects on why it is important that we remember those who have died due to HIV/AIDS**



**Ms. Valerie Mincey, M.S.W., Executive Director of BASIC offers closing remarks at the conclusion of World Days Day activities**

## NEWS BRIEFS

### **BASIC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTS A NEW PRESIDENT:**

In accord with the agency by-laws, Nancy Jones-Gaglio completed her second term as President of the Board of Directors of BASIC. Beginning with January 1, 2010, Dr. Hulon Crayton undertakes the presidency. Dr. Crayton is a medical doctor with a specialty in Sports Medicine and has been an active member of the Board of Directors for the past several years. As a physician he will bring a distinctly new brand of leadership to the Board.

### **BASIC: A PART OF PANAMA CITY LIVING;**

In case you missed reading the latest edition of Panama City Living, BASIC was featured in The October-November edition of this local magazine. The article, written by Carol Lapensohn, former President of the Board of Directors at BASIC, and long time board member, discusses the significance of BASIC to the local community as the only agency providing comprehensive services to persons with HIV/AIDS and those at risk of contracting the virus. The article also notes that BASIC, founded on World AIDS Day, in 1989 has served the community for the past twenty years, a milestone that many agencies, and particularly HIV/AIDS agencies, do not have a chance to celebrate. Most importantly, Mrs. Lapensohn notes that BASIC has not been afraid of addressing the many issues involved with HIV that many in the community

have shied away from. It is important that the community understand that HIV/AIDS is present within our communities, and that it is a health issue that is being addressed in a compassionate way and without judgment.

### **ViiV, A NEW HIV HEALTHCARE COMPANY:**

Two large pharmaceutical companies, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Pfizer, Inc., have combined their HIV medications and development divisions into a new company called ViiV (pronounced "veev"). What might this mean for persons living with HIV? ViiV is a "new HIV specialist company" and is expected to increase "flexibility" in responding to changing needs, as well as develop new drugs and new treatment strategies. Dr. Dominic Limet, the Chief Operating Officer for ViiV acknowledged that research and development into HIV had become more difficult and that to deliver effective medicines a new approach is needed. "In truth, we have to get closer to those people who live with the virus," said Dr Limet. "Much of our historic effort has been led by the virus – a chase of science. This must continue, but we must also listen and better understand the needs of people living with HIV. If we get this balance right, I believe ViiV Healthcare can really make a difference."

**ENTRY BAN ON HIV LIFTED:** On October 30, President Barack Obama lifted the ban on entry into the United State by HIV Positive persons. The lifting of this ban which was established

in 1987 took effect on January 1, 2010. The ban affected persons visiting the United States as well as those applying for residency, and was widely criticized as something that has no justification on public health measures, and increases the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS. The 2012 World AIDS Conference will be held in the United States in recognition of the lifting of this ban.

### **NO ONE NEEDS TO SHOULDER BURDENS ALONE:**

BASIC NWFL, Inc. continues to provide two support groups designed to establish a network of social support among people living with HIV/AIDS. Groups are coordinated, maintained and directed by group members with staff facilitation. The meetings emphasize positive thinking and personal empowerment in order to promote a healthy lifestyle, change negative thought patterns and improve social functioning. For meeting times and locations, contact Irene Henderson (850) 785-1088 #122 Bay County or Kyle Sullivan (850) 526-2412 #134 Jackson County. In addition, if you are interested in volunteering to help our staff coordinate an Annual Spring Picnic, please contact them at the numbers listed above. There is also a self-help advocacy group starting up in Panama City and funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. Anyone is welcome to join. Contact Amanda at 763-5624 for more information.

### **WE NEED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS:**

BASIC, in conjunction with other AIDS Service Organizations throughout Florida will be assisting the Florida

Department of Health in its annual needs assessment of persons living with HIV. Through this survey, the Health Department has a better understanding of how well persons living with HIV are being served through monies received from the Ryan White Care Act, what services continue to be priorities, and what additional services might need to be provided. Anyone with HIV/AIDS is encouraged to complete the survey on line at

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/IndividualEnglishSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/IndividualEnglishSurvey) or to complete a paper survey which can be obtained from any of the case managers at BASIC. This survey is also available in Spanish and can be completed on line at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/IndividualSpanishSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/IndividualSpanishSurvey).

In conjunction with this annual needs assessment, the Central Panhandle AIDS Network (CPAN) meets monthly to ensure that the needs of persons living with HIV are being met. CPAN need additional persons, particularly persons living with HIV, to join in that planning effort by becoming a member of CPAN and attending the monthly meetings. For additional information, please call Cynthia Albert at 785-1088 #112.

### **TESTING FOR HIV IS STILL A BIG DEAL:**

Knowing one's status is still the most important action a person can take in preventing the spread of HIV. If a person knows that they are HIV positive, they can access care and treatment to prevent the infection from getting worse, and take precautions not to infect another person, or to pick up another infection themselves. If one knows that he/she is negative, they can take precautions to remain negative.

BASIC continues to provide confidential HIV testing at its office at 432 Magnolia Avenue in Panama City on Mondays and Tuesdays from 10:00A.M. to 2:00P.M. and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:00 P.M. til 4:00P.M. Persons can now be tested by a new Rapid technology and have their results in approximately twenty minutes. Testing for HIV and other Sexually Transmissible Diseases is also available at the County Health Departments. BASIC also conduct testing in the community at scheduled health fairs and other opportunities. For additional information on HIV testing, call Pam at 785-1088 Ext 118.

**WELCOME:** BASIC is pleased to welcome two new members to the agency staff; Ms. Jennifer French and Ms. Rebecca Miller. These ladies are implementing the new mentoring program which began in September of 2009, matches children, aged 4-17 years old, who have one or both parents incarcerated with a community volunteer mentor. This program is not HIV/AIDS related and represents a new direction in service to the community on the part of BASIC NWFL.



# Every Child: 1 Promise

**We are currently seeking motivated, fun-loving, adult role model mentors to help encourage and inspire the potential of each of our mentees. We offer a volunteer program to help enrich the lives of both the mentor and the mentee, with personalized ongoing training. Our program matches one adult for each child, meeting weekly for at least one hour, for a period of one year.**

**As residents of Northwest Florida, individuals have the perfect opportunity to directly impact their communities and the lives of their mentees. Mentors can offer leading by example in so many different areas including: higher education, educational achievement, career development, motivation, compassion, and guidance.**

***Impact a life, volunteer today!***

For information, call Jennifer French at 785-1088 #133 or Rebecca Miller at 785-1088 #113. You can also apply online to become a mentor or a mentee at [www.basicnwfl.com](http://www.basicnwfl.com)

**NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY:** On February 7, 2010, persons throughout the country will be asked to remember that impact which HIV/AIDS has had and is having on the Black Community. At BASIC, National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day will be celebrated on Saturday, February 9, 2010 by testing opportunities at BASIC's office, 432 Magnolia Avenue from 10:00 A.M. til 2:00 P.M. Testing results can be available in approximately twenty minutes. Other community events are in the process of being schedules, so please check BASIC's website for additional information or call Pam Williams at 785-1088 #118.



**The HIV/AIDS epidemic isn't just happening in faraway places. Every 9½ minutes someone in the United States gets infected with HIV.**

**HIV and AIDS: We Are All Part of the Solution**

We can all be leaders. We can take more responsibility to do more as individuals and as communities to fight HIV and AIDS.

As individuals:

- We should know whether or not we are infected with HIV;
- If we are infected, we should seek medical care and protect others from becoming infected;
- We should protect ourselves and others from HIV;

- We should educate ourselves and others about HIV.

As communities:

- We should mobilize to overcome the challenges and barriers to HIV prevention;
- We should fight ignorance and complacency related to HIV;
- We should increase the awareness about the severity of the epidemic and the continued impact that HIV is having on our communities;
- We should make sure that HIV prevention services, HIV testing, medical care and treatment are available to all who need them;
- We should work to prevent stigma and discrimination—and to increase support for people living with HIV.

Together, we have the power to change the course of the HIV epidemic in the United States and in our area.

## LOOKING FOR A WAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

BASIC is looking for a volunteer who would be interested in coordinating other volunteers at BASIC. This position would be helpful for anyone wishing to not only volunteer their time in a beneficial way to the community, but also to gain hands-on experience within a nonprofit organization. The service would be a wonderful addition for a person to add to their resume, as well as a great opportunity for gaining experience that so many employers are looking for. If interested, please call Ron at 785-1088 Ext 117.

Check out BASIC's website at [www.basicnwfl.com](http://www.basicnwfl.com).