



UPDATE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VERMONT PWA COALITION
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Mark your calendars for these three events!!!!



**Winter is a Drag
Ball 2010**
*the Drag Ball of
Good and Evil...*

Saturday, February 13th
Higher Ground
S. Burlington

Devil...or Angel???

Good...or Evil???

Friend...or Foe???

Animal...or mineral???

Start working on your
costumes now and
be ready for the
best event of the
winter!!!

**Hosted by the
House of LeMay**

from Beaver Pond, VT
www.houseoflemay.com

**Healthy Relationships
Workshop for
MSM*****
January 9th and 16th
Montpelier, VT
9:30-3:00

includes a hearty lunch



Stressed about
relationships?
Not sure how to talk about
your HIV status?
Feel awkward about
negotiating safer sex?

Learn new *skills* in this
interesting, dynamic
workshop!!!

\$100
in food/gas cards
for people who complete both
sessions and the 3 month
follow-up survey

An application is on page 3 of
this newsletter.
Space is limited, so send in your
application TODAY!

*****men who have sex
with men**



Summer may feel
like a million miles
away, but...we're
already planning

our 20th Annual

*Gathering
of Friends*

Thursday-Sunday
July 15-18
Stowe, VT

This Retreat is a real
milestone—our
twentieth event!
Watch for more
information in future
issues of UPDATE!

We're planning workshops
and activities and welcome
your ideas and
suggestions!!

SUBJECT: *Today*

I'm writing this on World AIDS Day. I have a full day of activities ahead of me, and I feel stressed. Because I have AIDS, and I work at the Vermont People With AIDS Coalition, I am aware of many events I hope will make a difference in the general public's perception and attitude toward HIV disease.

I'm back. It's after 10 pm and I'm tired. Maybe a little cranky.

Another "World AIDS Day". Number? How many have there been? When did it become an officially observed day? I remember, some long ago December 1st in the 90's, somebody telling me of a "march" that hoped to raise awareness (and money) about HIV. She said I had to go. I did my duty and walked with a candle for about a mile on a raw and windy night in Worcester Mass. We ended up at a church and some of us went up to the pulpit and spoke of our grief at the losses we suffered. The "hat" was passed and we donated the proceeds to the local ASO for needed services. No red tape. No fanfare. Lots of benefits.

This Dec.1st could never have been predicted back then. None of us expected to live this long. No one believed there would be viable medical treatment. Nobody thought people would continue to be infected once people were aware of prevention techniques (condoms, clean needles, sterilizing medical instruments, etc...). Once society learns of the HIV realities, there would be no stigma. It would be a medical condition, not a lifestyle issue.

Well, it's been a long time but we've finally succeeded. There are no more problems associated with HIV. There is no more infection because everyone now knows how it is spread, and they use precautions. Society has opened it's heart and sends love and good cheer to all people, especially gays and drug users. Medicare and Medicaid have perfected the art of health care. And no one dies of AIDS anymore.

I know this because of the massive turnouts at this year's activities---NOT.

Seriously, people have become complacent and there is more work to be done. If you have or are affected by HIV, you are being asked to do something, anything, to help each other. To make a difference, we don't have to wait for another December 1st. For us, every day is another World AIDS Day. Make this one special.

Jonathan Heins

"SUBJECT: " is a monthly commentary by Jonathan Heins, the Consumer Advocate for the Coalition.

We welcome your reactions to Jonathan's comments. Please mail, fax, or email us your thoughts for future issues!

**Healthy Relationships Workshop
for HIV+ MSM
Application Form
January 9 and 16, 2010 in Montpelier, Vermont**

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

I would like to attend the HR workshop for HIV+ MSM (men who have sex with men).

I agree to the following statements:

- I am an HIV+ MSM
- I will attend both sessions of the workshop

I understand that if I am selected to attend the workshop, and complete both sessions of the workshop, at the end of the workshop I will receive a stipend of \$75 in gas/food cards. In addition, I will receive \$25 in gas/food cards when I return the Three Month Post-Assessment Survey in April.

signature

date

Please return this application form to:

Vermont PWA Coalition
P.O. Box 11
Montpelier, VT 05601



*The workshop will be filled on a
first come, first served basis!!*

*Don't Delay!!!
Send in this application TODAY!!!*

**COMMUNITY LETTER
URGES THE OBAMA
ADMINISTRATION TO
HOST THE FIRST-EVER
WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT OF
PEOPLE LIVING WITH
HIV/AIDS**

The Coalition for a National AIDS Strategy sent this letter to President Obama on December 1, World AIDS Day. Excerpts appear below:

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the estimated 1.1 million people in the U.S. living with HIV/AIDS, we commend your Administration's efforts pressing for tangible health improvements via comprehensive health reform and a National HIV/AIDS Strategy. You have rightly identified HIV-related stigma and discrimination as a persistent social driver obfuscating greater progress to address the epidemic at home and abroad. In addition, your Administration has recognized that, nearly 30 years into the epidemic, a renewed commitment is required to address present-day challenges driving HIV/AIDS in the U.S.

For these reasons we are writing to respectfully request a White House summit of HIV-positive community leaders from across the United States meeting with you and members of your Administration to discuss efforts begun to formulate the first-ever National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States.

For the President of the United States to publicly meet with a diversity of HIV-positive leaders would send a powerful message to the nation. Such a summit would serve as a powerful, public denunciation of institutional- and individual-level stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Beyond its symbolism, the summit would provide the White House a compelling opportunity to gather

constituents and federal officials assisting the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) in drafting the Administration's National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) to frame your expectations for this important process.

Those charged with developing the NHAS must hear directly from you, Mr. President, that the task of writing the nation's first, unifying and integrative HIV/AIDS plan demands an outcomes-oriented approach that defies the typical institutional biases that too often stifle greater inter-agency and inter-departmental federal collaboration. In addition, the Summit should underscore the urgency to tackle domestic HIV/AIDS as part of a renewed commitment to strengthen U.S. communities, slow healthcare expenditures and invest in the future of our people.

Your Administration has made a historic commitment to change the course of the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic. We urge you to leverage the example of your leadership to change public attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS. The White House forum on health reform, held on May 11, 2009, is a model for the type of public gathering we propose. Challenging persistent HIV-related stigma in the U.S. is central to efforts to achieve the important goals you have set for the NHAS.

Do you need vitamins or supplements but have problems affording the high prices?

Our Buyers' Coop sells supplements and vitamins from Jarrow Formulas and New Chapter at wholesale prices and is open to anyone. We also offer scholarships to low income HIV+ Vermonters to help pay for vitamins and supplements. Contact the office for a scholarship application or an order form!



Sad news for our community last month. Bridget and Sherman Ordway were killed in an auto accident on November 11th in Hookset, N.H.

Bridget, who was HIV+, was an inspiration to all of us at two of our Retreats. One of her workshops, "How to pick yourself up when all you want to do is pack it in", perfectly reflects her positive point of view. Bridget was a member of our Board of Directors and had been part of Twin States Network for 7 years.

Sherman and Bridget found each other later in life and their love was obvious. Sherman supported Bridget in her HIV advocacy.

They will both be missed.



**The Vermont People with
AIDS Coalition**

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