

Spring/Summer
2007

project NOTES



In This Issue

President's Message	2
Client Profile	3
AIDS Conference	4
In Memoriam	4
Phoenix Project	4
Donor Recognition	5
Corks & Canvas	8
Staff/Board Members	14
Programs and Services	15
AIDS Walk	16
Calendar of Events	16

The mission of Good Samaritan Project is to provide supportive and responsive care for a diverse community of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS and to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS through education and advocacy.

**Until there's an answer...
there's GSP.**

Tackling HIV Behind Bars

"Prisons are a world within a world," explains Donnie Robinson, community prevention specialist who visits the Lansing Correctional Facility on a monthly basis to provide information about HIV/AIDS.

He meets with groups of 15 to 30 men in both minimum and maximum security prisons who participate in a required HIV-educational course prior to release.

"We provide basic HIV-education, beginning with questions such as 'what does HIV/AIDS stand for,' 'do you know your HIV status' and 'do you know how HIV is transmitted.'"

Robinson admits that often times it is a struggle to reach the men, at least at first.

"Usually as we get into our presentation most men end up participating. We end up forming a strong bond as they realize we are not here to judge them, but simply to help them be more educated citizens and responsible in their family lives," Robinson said.

Each session is filled with time to answer each inmates' questions, discuss facts versus myths, talk about other sexually transmitted diseases, provide some

basic education and ultimately hope they will get tested and live healthy lives upon their release.

Between unsterilized tattoo instruments, unprotected sexual contact, blood from harsh fights and intravenous drug use, prisons are a tremendous facilitator for

the HIV virus, although it is difficult to gather accurate information.

Currently, most state and federal prison systems do not conduct HIV testing prior to a prisoner's admittance, nor is it mandatory upon release.

Prisoners represent less than half of one percent of the U.S. population, but account for more than 10 percent of AIDS cases reported, according to amfAR, an AIDS research foundation.

Only about 10 percent of state and federal prison systems offer comprehensive HIV/STD education programs.

When told about this statistic, Robinson agreed:

"It's good to be part of that percentage and make a difference in these people's lives." ■



President's Message



Tomas L. Griebling, M.D.

Many good things are happening locally in the AIDS arena. There is a growing awareness of the ongoing AIDS crisis, and an increasing sense of urgency that something must be done to address it.

AIDS activists both here and elsewhere seem to be getting their second wind, and new friends and allies are joining the ranks. This is critically important with increasing rates of new HIV infections among multiple communities including gay

men, youth, women, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Consider the revitalization of funding and activism going on in our community:

- **Kansas City's AIDS Service Foundation** just completed a very strong year. More than \$350,000 was raised for AIDS services; walk attendance rose to the levels not seen in several years. Team GSP tripled its numbers over last year. The

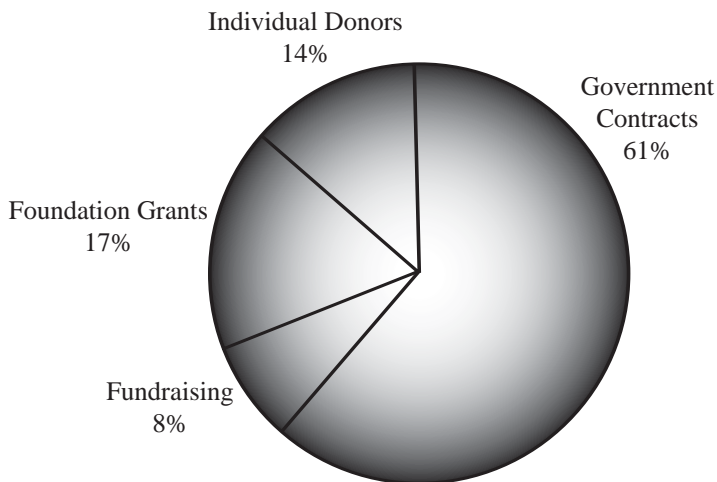
Foundation's annual **AIDS Walk Kansas City** raises funds for four AIDS Service Organizations, including GSP.

- **Corks and Canvas**, GSP's annual art, wine and food auction, set an all-time record this April, when more than \$107,000 was raised for HIV/AIDS services. More than 650 people attended the "sold out" event at the Boulevard Brewery.
- GSP, in partnership with **Calvary Community Outreach Network** and the **Wyandotte Health Foundation**, is sponsoring a unique black clergy training on AIDS on June 30. The regional event in Kansas City, Kansas, expects to train 50 church leaders to begin HIV/AIDS health ministries of their own.
- Meanwhile, GSP's newly launched **Communities of Faith United to Prevent HIV** expects to train 480 individuals in the African American community in its first year. This is a **GSP-Kansas Health Foundation** initiative.
- In all, a record 1,200 plus individuals, businesses and organizations gave to support GSP services in 2006. They included donors as diverse as the **Friday Night Cocktail Bowling League**, the **K.C. Cave Bears**, the **MoKan VW Club** and the **Center for Spiritual Living**.

Great progress has been made on many fronts, but there is still so much more to do in the future. The GSP Board of Directors and staff are proud to be partners with you in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

2006 Financial Results

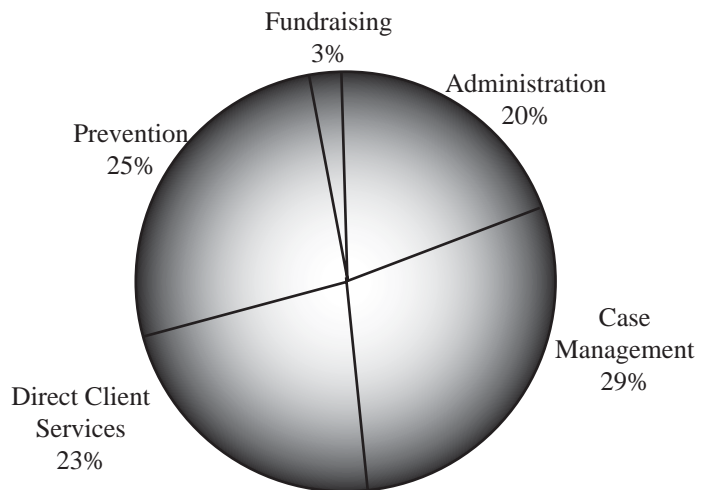
Total Revenue: \$1,263,660



Good Samaritan Project relies on generous financial support from a variety of donors, including government contracts, private foundations, the United Way and many individuals.

This support allows GSP to provide a wide variety of services to individuals in the Kansas City community who are

Total Expenses: \$1,241,954



infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. In addition, prevention services are provided throughout the community in order to help stop the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

If you're interested in becoming part of GSP's success, please refer to the gift envelope in the middle of this newsletter. ■



Client Profile:

Fifteen and Afraid to Tell Mom He's HIV+

When 15-year-old Thomas J. learned his cousin was scheduled for a checkup at the health department clinic, he suggested he would tag along.

"After all," he told her jokingly, "I think I might want to get tested for AIDS."

Thomas did go and he did get tested, but a few days later he learned it was no joke. The African American high schooler burst into tears when he learned he was HIV positive. Tall, neatly dressed and athletic, the young man had been eager to finish high school and move on to college. Suddenly, life seemed to be over.

This spring Thomas joined the ranks of the estimated 5,000 Kansas Citians who have contracted the HIV virus. Increasingly, like Thomas, those infected are young, African American, and engaging in risky behavior before they fully understand the risk.

Thomas's situation is unusual in several respects, however. He found out soon after he was infected, which means he can better manage his illness. Many find out years after being infected and only when they've developed full-blown AIDS.

Early detection means Thomas can take medications to slow the progress of the disease. He can also take precautions to not spread the virus to others or become re-infected with another HIV strain, which would greatly complicate treatment.

Also, his case is unusual because he was fortunate to connect with an HIV positive mentor at Good Samaritan Project (GSP) who is helping him through this rough time.

By coincidence, Thomas attended an HIV prevention workshop at school conducted by GSP a few hours prior to getting his diagnosis. An HIV positive staff member had presented a workshop in which he described what it's like to live with HIV.

When Thomas returned home from school there was a message from the health department requesting he stop by the clinic. A second HIV test was administered to confirm the

first, and Thomas was informed: "You tested positive for the HIV virus."

Thomas took the news hard but managed to tell the clinic's disease intervention specialist about his earlier encounter with a guy from the Good Samaritan Project. That resulted in a call to the GSP office, and the GSP staffer rushed to the clinic to see the young man.

It was an emotional meeting, GSP's prevention specialist reported. The tearful young man explained he had only recently begun having sexual relations and, in that brief time, had engaged in unprotected sex with two partners, one female and one male. Both partners were much older than he.

He expressed worry about the long-term impact of HIV on his health, but what concerned him even more was keeping his HIV status secret from friends, family and church members. So powerful is the stigma and shame associated with HIV/AIDS and homophobia, the young man is determined to bear the burden of his illness in silence rather than tell his own mother.

Thomas is scared and isolated, but he's not completely alone. He and the

GSP staff member exchanged phone numbers and have kept in touch.

"Right now, he's in denial," says the AIDS prevention specialist. "He understands he has HIV, but he is in denial about what he has to do about it."

It will take time before Thomas is willing to deal with HIV, but GSP plans to be there when he is ready. ■



High School can be a very lonely place, especially if you're HIV-positive and afraid to tell your friends and family. In situations like these, GSP has specially-trained staff who step in and help guide youth toward a better future.

DID YOU KNOW?

Young people, ages 15-24 years old, account for half of the 40,000 new infections in the United States each year (Gutmacher Institute).



Good Samaritan Project Hosts KC AIDS Conference



Chana Collins

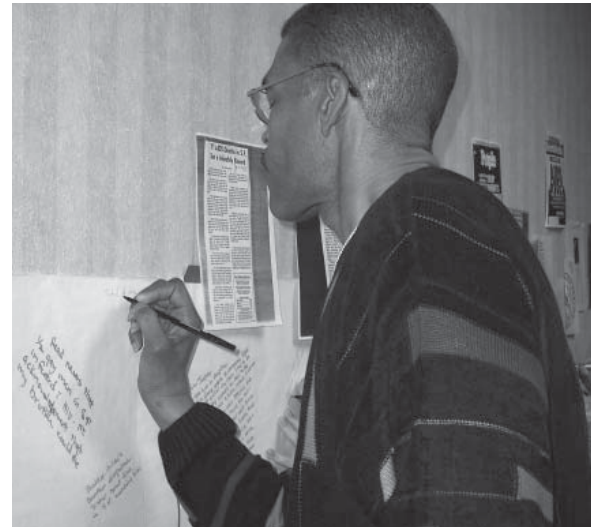
Good Samaritan Project hosted The 2007 Kansas City Conference on AIDS on February 9. The sold-out event included five educational sessions and a networking cocktail hour.

The conference was chaired by GSP's Chana Collins, director of case management, and David Schlomer, director of business operations. Collins commented, "It was great to see professionals from the region gather, along with individuals who are HIV-positive, discuss this epidemic and learn from each other."

The goal of the conference was to unite AIDS medical and social service providers, community members and those who are HIV-positive to discuss trends in HIV/AIDS care.

Speakers and topics at the conference included:

- Stephen Fallon, Ph.D., who focused on "The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: What HIV Means to You Today."
- Jay Fournier presented "HIV 25 Years to Life..."
- Rodney Goodie discussed "Secondary Prevention."
- Brother Jeff S. Fard spoke about "Community Mobilization/HIV and People of Color."
- "The Aging Population and HIV" was Jane Fowler's focus in the last presentation of the conference. ■



During one conference session, attendees were invited to share how and when their lives were affected by HIV/AIDS by writing on a timeline, which lined the conference room walls.

In Memory of Chris

*You hadn't traveled far into the New Year
when you left us.
You pushed yourself every inch of the way,
believing life had to be lived while there was time.*

*Your energy was activated by compassion and concern.
You worked selflessly for the sake of others.*

*Your work was not lost.
Your memory is vivid in our minds.
Your good deeds go before you.
We will keep them alive by imitating your spirit.*

*So rest in peace, dear Chris,
where angels chant their praises,
and you have found a home in their midst.*

-Sister Kevin Marie Flynn, SCL

Phoenix Project Offers Acceptance, Support



Donnie Robinson

Often times men who have sex with men don't identify themselves as "gay" or "homosexual" because of the judgment associated with those words. This causes many to feel isolated and without much support.

In response to this trend, Good Samaritan Project's Prevention Department began The Phoenix Project, which is designed to help educate and create awareness among African American men who have sex with men by using a peer-to-peer approach.

Donnie Robinson, Community Prevention Specialist, coordinates the program, which involves regular meetings that use a holistic approach to meet the physical, mental and emotional needs participants.

"We want members of this support group to feel safe and accepted," says Robinson. "There is no judgment here, which means clients feel at ease discussing real-life issues they face."

"I needed an outlet where I could be myself and identify with other men in similar situations," one client expressed. ■



Donors' Generosity Changes People's Lives

Good Samaritan Project relies on the generosity of many donors to help support its programs and activities. Our deepest appreciation goes to the following individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations that made monetary and in-kind contributions between Oct. 1, 2006 and May 15, 2007.

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(continued on page 6)



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(continued on page 10)



Seventh Annual Corks & Canvas is a Huge Success

More than 650 GSP supporters gathered the evening of April 27 for GSP's seventh annual Corks & Canvas art, food and wine auction. Art, jewelry, food and wine gift baskets and live auction items generated more than \$100,000, which will support HIV services in Kansas City.



Honorary Co-Chairs Lou Marak and Philomene Bennett



Sister Kevin Marie Flynn and Patron Party host Kevin Westrope



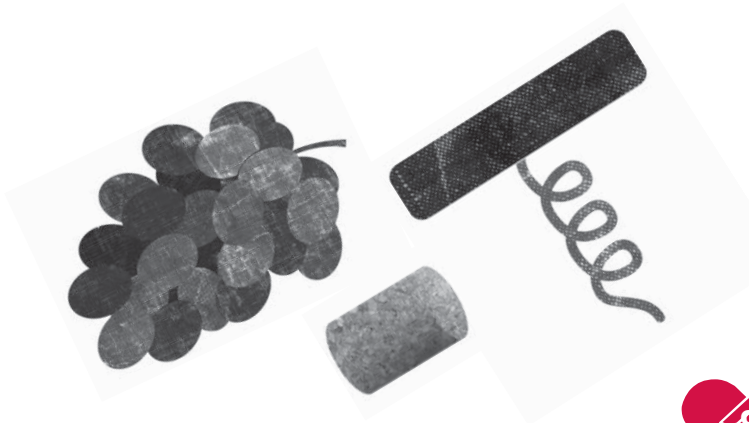
Marj and Mike Hicks



Linda Helling and Patti Leathers



Justin Wisner, Tracy Swirk and Chris Engeman



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(continued on page 11)



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(continued on page 12)



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(continued on page 14)



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*We are deeply grateful for all the
 donations we receive and apologize for
 any omissions.*

Denton L. Hargis Joins Board

Denton (Dennis) L. Hargis has been elected to the GSP Board of Directors. Hargis is Director of Surgical Services at the ambulatory surgery center and women's health unit at St. John Hospital in Leavenworth.

For a complete board listing, see column on right.

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 Sister Kevin Marie Flynn, Spiritual Coordinator
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GSP Programs and Services

DIRECT CARE SERVICES

Case Management: A case manager assesses medical and social needs and helps the client develop a plan to obtain necessary services, such as food, social security, housing, legal assistance, home health care and other critical services.

Transportation: Clients in need of transportation to and from medical appointments and pharmacies receive taxi rides and passes via the metro bus system.

Financial Assistance: This program prevents homelessness by providing cash assistance for rent and utilities to HIV/AIDS clients and families during a temporary financial crisis.

Recreational and Social Activities: HIV-positive women, men and families may participate in various activities, such as retreats, recreational outings, holiday parties, and other fun events during the year.

Buddy Companions: A volunteer is matched with a socially isolated client for friendly support through phone calls and visits. Volunteers receive training and are matched by GSP's volunteer coordinator.

Spiritual Services: Staff and volunteers provide spiritual support to HIV/AIDS clients, their partners, and loved ones, in sickness and in grief.

Mental Health Counseling: Licensed counselors provide personal, couple and family counseling for HIV/AIDS clients at a variety of locations in the metropolitan area.

Interfaith Volunteer Care Teams: Volunteer church groups provide compassionate assistance for an HIV/AIDS client or family. Group members dedicate about one hour per week.

Back-to-Work: GSP promotes economic self-sufficiency through career counseling, computer skills training, resume preparation and job placement. GSP also trains local businesses about disabilities.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Testing for STD's: GSP collaborates with the health departments in Jackson and Wyandotte counties to screen and test high-risk young people for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia bacterial infections. Clients testing positive are referred for treatment.

HIV Antibody Testing: Certified counselors provide free, confidential HIV counseling and testing. Testing may be conducted in the field or in the office. Clients who test positive for HIV are referred for retesting and are assigned a case manager.

Mentoring Adolescents and AIDS Prevention: Youth participate in retreats and other educational activities designed

to reduce their risk for HIV and STDs. Participants learn refusal and partner negotiation skills through interactive games. Teen Peer Advocates may earn community service hours.

Mpowerment and Many Men, Many Voices: These HIV programs are directed to men who have sex with men. Through targeted health messages, outreach activities, peer-led groups and creation of safe places, GSP offers education on risk reduction and safer sex. Safer sex kits and literature are dispensed.

SISTA (Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS): This five session seminar for African-American women focuses on ethnic and gender pride. It promotes better decision making, risk reduction and condom use.

Healthy Relationships: Certain life skills can boost immunity. This video program helps HIV-infected individuals connect with peers and establish trusted support. Participants learn how to address disclosure issues, improve coping skills, reduce stress, and manage risky behavior.

Community Promise: High-risk individuals share their experiences through role-model stories. Trained Peer Advocates and GSP staff refer high-risk individuals for HIV testing and other services. Community organizations display role-model stories in the community.

CONTACT US

3030 Walnut Kansas City, MO 64108
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No person(s) eligible for services shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, physical ability, veteran status, age, sexual orientation, or HIV status be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination for any services provided by Good Samaritan Project.





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project **NOTES**

Kansas City AIDS Walk



GSP volunteers, staff, board members and community members joined Team GSP at the 19th Annual Kansas City AIDS Walk on April 28. Proceeds from the event will benefit four Kansas City AIDS service organizations, including GSP. More than 4,000 individuals, teams and sponsors participated in the walk, which raised over \$350,000.



Calendar of Events

- June 16** **Gourmet Dinner (SOLD OUT)**
 Country Club Congregational United Church of Christ

- June 30** **Reaching All God's Children**
 One-day training for African American church leaders on HIV/AIDS health ministry. Keynote: Rae Lewis Thornton. \$10. Call 816-531-4683, ext: 3

- July 12** **Summer Family Day Out**
 Day of fun at Power Play Family Entertainment Center. Space is limited. Call Jennifer: 816-778-0780.

- October 6** **AIDS Bicycle Challenge**
 Event will take place on the Mill Creek Streamway Trail in Shawnee, KS

- December 1** **World AIDS Day**
 Details will follow in future newsletters and on www.gspkc.org.