Women and HIV: The Silent Epidemic

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day March 10

The Voice

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Our Mission
AIDS Services Foundation Orange County’s mission is to prevent the spread of HIV and improve the lives of men, women, and children affected by HIV/AIDS in Orange County.

Our Story
A small group of volunteers founded AIDS Services Foundation Orange County (ASF) in the late summer of 1985 because people were dying, had nowhere to turn, and desperately needed help. ASF is now the largest and most comprehensive non-profit HIV/AIDS service provider in Orange County, with a staff of over 60 committed and caring individuals, a 21-member Board of Directors, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers. Each year, ASF helps more than 1,500 men, women and children, along with their families, that are either living with HIV or are impacted by HIV disease. Services include food, transportation, housing, emergency financial assistance, children and family programs, Latino outreach programs, mental health counseling, support groups, HIV testing, and an extensive array of HIV prevention and education programs. We hope for a time when these services are no longer needed. Until then, we work hard each day to prevent the spread of HIV and to ensure that everyone living with HIV and AIDS in Orange County has access to life enhancing care and services.

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I have often heard people refer to “the evolving HIV/AIDS epidemic” when trying to describe the challenges and difficulties that face people living with HIV and the systems of care that seek to serve them. Over the years, we have confronted the difficulties of multi-combination therapy, the changing face of AIDS, lipodystrophy, homelessness, homophobia and so much more. Whenever we have seemingly resolved one issue, several new ones have emerged to take its place. But there’s one facet of the epidemic that never seems to be adequately addressed: women and HIV/AIDS. For that reason, we have focused this issue of The Voice on Women and HIV: The Silent Epidemic.

In the United States, the percentage of women diagnosed with AIDS had quadrupled over the past 20 years. In Orange County, the proportion of women diagnosed with AIDS in 2007 was one-third higher than the proportion diagnosed in 2003 and before. Women of color, particularly Latinas and Black women, are showing an alarming increase in HIV rates and AIDS cases. Latinas have an HIV prevalence rate in the general population that is five times the rate of white women. And in 2008, HIV became the leading cause of death in Black women between the ages of 25 and 34.

As a subset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, women with HIV tend to be younger, poorer, raising minor children, and uninsured as compared to men with HIV. Even those who are in regular HIV care often have difficulty maintaining their treatment regimen as the demands of being a family caregiver overtake their own health needs. This is evidence of a growing problem that needs urgent attention. It’s time that the silence is broken.

ASF is proud this year to be in partnership with UC Irvine in sponsoring an observance of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Tuesday, March 3rd on the campus of UC Irvine. Staff from ASF and other community providers will be presenting information and participating in panel discussions in the Women and HIV/AIDS Forum, which takes place in the Doheny Beach Room of the Student Center, beginning at 5:00. The event is free and all are welcome. Contact ASF’s Andrea Coulson for more information at 949.809.8765 and acoulson@ocasf.org. I hope to see you there.

From Jorge Rodriguez, M.D., President of the Board

I want to thank everyone who responded so generously to ASF’s year-end appeal. I always knew that ASF’s donors were generous, but the outpouring of support and contributions exceeded my wildest expectations. We received more than $36,000 from readers of The Voice who heard the call for help and opened their hearts and checkbooks.

It’s impossible to escape the daily news about hard financial times and cutbacks everywhere. Fear and concern are in the air, and I don’t know anyone who is untouched. But all we need to do is think about people with AIDS who are trying to get by on less than $900 a month, who face uncertainty at every turn, and who struggle just to maintain stable housing and a healthy diet. They remind me that, no matter how tough things get for any of us, there are people who are experiencing much greater difficulties while also struggling to stay well in the face of HIV/AIDS. We must continue to provide for their needs in these economic times.

(For a listing of all donors to ASF’s year-end appeal, please turn to page 10)
Within minutes of his inauguration, President Barack Obama directed that the website for The White House (www.WhiteHouse.gov) post information about the agenda of his administration. According to the website, President Obama will develop and begin to implement a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy in the first year of his presidency that will include all federal agencies. The strategy will be designed to reduce HIV infections, increase access to care, and reduce HIV-related health disparities. President Obama has indicated on the website his intention to confront the stigma — too often tied to homophobia — that continues to surround HIV/AIDS.

Research presented at the 16th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Montreal last month indicated that HIV was on par with smoking and diabetes as risk factors for atherosclerosis. HIV specialists have noted increasing morbidity and mortality rates in HIV patients in recent years but were uncertain whether HIV contributed to an acceleration of heart disease independent of traditional risk factors of heart disease. Even after adjusting for traditional risk factors, a study by Carl Grunfeld of UC San Francisco and others involving 33,000 patients indicated that HIV was characterized by more severe atherosclerosis.

Scientists have claimed a breakthrough in the fight against AIDS with a pioneering stem cell treatment that protects the immune system from the virus that causes the disease, according to research being conducted at the City of Hope Medical Center in Duarte, California. The scientists have found they can import three genes that protect cells against attack from HIV into these blood stem cells in the laboratory. By giving patients stem cells that carry these anti-HIV genes, the patients’ bodies are able to produce new white blood cells that are resistant to attack from HIV. “It is still an experimental treatment at the moment, but we hope that eventually we will be able to give AIDS patients just one transplant and that would then protect them for life,” said Dr. David DiGiusto of the City of Hope.

A sugar molecule called the Pk blood group antigen might provide a defense against HIV, according to a study published recently in the journal Blood. Scientists studied the sugar molecule, which is found on the surfaces of some red and white blood cells, and found that Pk antigens act as magnets for HIV, neutralizing the virus once it attaches to the antigen and stopping its spread to other immune cells. Although most people have a certain amount of Pk in their blood supply, only about one in one million people have very high levels, making them very resistant to HIV. Researchers already have developed an artificial version of the antigen for possible use to absorb the HIV. Once the approach is tested in animals, research could move to clinical trials in humans.

The $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009, included $650 million to carry out “evidence-based clinical and community-based prevention and wellness strategies” as directed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. HIV advocates are now focusing their efforts to ensure that a portion of that funding is applied to HIV prevention programs.
The world of HIV testing has changed dramatically from the days that it took 2 weeks to get the antibody test to today, when a sample of gum tissue can provide preliminary results in 20 minutes. The costs of HIV tests have gone down along with the no-show rates, the percentage of people who never returned for their test results after 2 weeks. Rapid testing has revolutionized HIV testing and taken away most of the barriers that prevented people from being tested and knowing their HIV status. HIV testing services at ASF are free, anonymous and without obligation. With all of this advancement, what would explain the fact that there are still more than 250,000 people in the United States who are HIV positive and unaware? As the nation continues to log 56,000 new HIV infections each year, we asked Martín Salas, ASF's Director of Health Education, to explain the issues that surround HIV testing in 2009.

**The Voice:** ASF is one of only 3 anonymous, free HIV test sites in the County. What is the volume of HIV testing that is done at ASF and what is the typical profile of someone testing today?

**MS:** ASF hit a record in 2008 when we provided 1,040 HIV tests. And the old rule of HIV testing still applies: People get tested when entering and ending a relationship. We find that most of the people who get tested at ASF are gay men under the age of 40, although there has been an increase in testing among women. Last year, 37% of our HIV tests were administered to women.

**The Voice:** What do you think explains the upsurge in HIV testing in women?

**MS:** My theory is that the inclusion of HIV story lines in daytime television dramas, Spanish language telenovelas and popular television series has helped raise awareness among their large female viewerships over the past few years. But there is still too little being discussed about women and HIV.

**The Voice:** Current reports indicate that as many as 25% of people with HIV are unaware of their status. Many years ago, the people who avoided testing believed there was little that could be done for them even if they knew they were HIV positive. Things are different now. Why are there still so many people who are unaware of their HIV status?

**MS:** People in general continue to have fear about HIV and AIDS. There still is a stigma of shame and guilt that surrounds an HIV diagnosis. And since people do not understand the treatment possibilities that are available, they do not appreciate the value of getting into treatment early if they are found to be HIV positive. There are other fears, too. The fear of finding themselves to be identified as sexually promiscuous, the fear of recognizing their own risky sexual behaviors, the fear of admitting their substance abuse habits, the fear of a lifetime commitment to taking HIV medications. Like all human behavior, it is complex and multi-layered.

**The Voice:** What is the current rate of HIV positive tests at ASF’s testing site? How do these positives break out demographically?

**MS:** Our positivity rate is just under 2%, which is up slightly in recent years. Most of the tests at ASF are taken by Caucasians and Latinos. The great majority of people being diagnosed with HIV are individuals who engage in sex with multiple sexual partners, individuals who report the use of methamphetamines and other illegal substances, and people who do not inquire about HIV status with their sexual partners. Strangely enough, many people who test positive do not consider themselves to be at high risk for HIV despite years of public education and awareness.

**The Voice:** What would account for the recent increase? We have heard for years about complacency in following safe sex practices. Do you think there are additional factors?

**MS:** I’m sure complacency plays a role since it is impossible to maintain perfect compliance with anything. But we have noticed a very high linkage between methamphetamine use in the HIV positive cases among gay men. In fact, we have found that more than 40% of our positive tests in gay men correlate with methamphetamine use. It is beyond the point of crisis in the gay community.

continued on page 13
While much has been said and debated about the HIV/AIDS epidemic overall, too little has been said and done about women and AIDS. The stigma and shame that has always surrounded HIV disease takes on a much bigger role in the context of women who are HIV positive. The growing shadow of women with HIV/AIDS, kept quiet and separate from larger discussions of HIV/AIDS for too long, is fast becoming the silent epidemic.

AN EPIDEMIC WITHIN AN EPIDEMIC

In the United States, the percentage of women diagnosed with AIDS has quadrupled over the last 20 years. Women of color, and particularly Black women, are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS. Nationwide case rates per 100,000 population indicate that HIV prevalence rates for Black and Latina women were higher than those for white women. In fact, HIV prevalence for Latinas is 5 times the rate for white women. More alarmingly, HIV was the leading cause of death among Black women between the ages of 25 and 34 during 2008.

The impact of HIV on younger women is also particularly troubling, with more than 6 in 10 new female cases of HIV taking place in those between the ages of 13 and 39. It is clear that the silent epidemic is increasingly younger and more populated by Blacks and Latinas.

In 2005, women represented more than 25% of all new AIDS cases nationwide, roughly doubling the rate in 1990. More recent data from the CDC indicates that women account for 26 percent of all new HIV cases in the United States, and that almost one-third of all new HIV infections were due to high-risk heterosexual contact. Understanding the time relationship between HIV infection and AIDS, absent adequate access to healthcare, a grim forecast emerges about the female composition of the AIDS epidemic.

In Orange County, the sharp uptrend in new AIDS cases among women is best illustrated by comparing a snapshot of new AIDS cases in 2007 with AIDS cases reported in 2003 and earlier. The proportion of new AIDS cases among females in 2007 was 33% higher than those cases reported prior to 2003. Case data on new HIV infections in Orange County indicate that 15% of all new cases of HIV in 2007 were female. Statewide, California ranked 3rd among all states in the number of Women/Girls estimated to be living with AIDS in 2006. The silent epidemic is well embedded in our local community and is now presenting itself in growing caseloads and increased infection rates that demand our attention.

THE REALITY OF WOMEN & HIV

Breaking the silence about women and HIV requires an understanding of the underlying causes of this increasing trend. Many of the reasons, not surprisingly, are familiar to those who have studied women’s health issues and have an understanding of how women’s health outcomes correlate with other independent variables such as income and healthcare access.

Women have been historically misinformed about their risk profile.

From the earliest days of the AIDS epidemic when the categories of persons at risk were determined to be the limited to the 4 H’s (Haitians, hemophiliacs, heroin users and homosexuals), popular culture and the sources of information that women trust have misstated and understated the potential for HIV infection in women. In fact Cosmopolitan magazine, in a 1987 article titled “Reassuring News About AIDS,” reported that “women whose lovers were neither homosexual, bisexual or intravenous drug users faced little risk,” and “there is hardly any danger of contracting AIDS through ordinary sexual intercourse.” Of course, the epidemiology would soon reveal an entirely different set of facts. Cosmo, in its defense, ran an article shortly thereafter advocating the use of condoms for safer sex and has run numerous articles over the years with accurate information about HIV transmission.

Adding to the multi-year news blackout for women is the inherent difficulty that women face in raising a discussion about HIV. Expressing concern about HIV could be a confession of promiscuity, drug use or worse – a veil of suspicion cast upon a husband or sexual partner. Women’s health practitioners were slow to identify the correlation between gynecological problems and HIV. Holding even a passing discussion with a healthcare provider or trusted friend would presume that a woman was able to overcome the awkwardness, embarrassment and difficulty involved in asking a question about HIV transmission.
Many women with HIV are low-income and must have important family responsibilities.

A national study found that women with HIV were disproportionately low income, with nearly 2/3 having annual incomes below $10,000. More than 75% of women with HIV/AIDS nationwide had children under the age of 18 in their homes, adding significant complications to their ability to manage their own illness effectively. Women are caregivers to their families and often place the needs of their families ahead of their own urgent healthcare needs.

Many women with HIV have limited access to healthcare and experience disparities in access, relative to men.

Nationwide, 35% of women were diagnosed with AIDS within a year of testing HIV positive. The compounding factors of a late diagnosis and a clinician’s limited understanding of the unique pathogenesis of HIV disease in women conspire to negatively impact health outcomes. Access to adequate healthcare is probably the largest single barrier that stands between a woman and her ability to manage HIV disease effectively. Research has shown that women were often less likely to receive combination therapy and were more likely to postpone care because of being too sick to go to the doctor or lacking transportation.

Healthcare coverage, whether public or private, improves access to care. Analysis of data from 25 states found that women were less likely than men to be privately insured at the time of their HIV diagnosis. Those who are uninsured are dependent on various forms of government funded healthcare and often experience significant episodes of discontinuity in their healthcare, resulting in lapses in treatment and sub-optimal care. Latinas were the most likely of any demographic group of women to be uninsured. Taken together, women with HIV have less access to healthcare, experience poorer health, and have a higher occurrence of treatable HIV related illnesses.

Women are more biologically susceptible to acquiring HIV infection through sexual intercourse and frequently experience different clinical symptoms and complications.

For all California women with AIDS, sex with an HIV infected man is the most common form of transmission. In addition, women with HIV are at increased risk for developing or contracting a range of conditions, including cervical dysplasia and human papilloma virus (HPV). As a result, there are significant implications for women with HIV in connection with inadequate clinical diagnosis and follow-up, unknown drug interactions and low adherence and tolerance to treatment regimens.

Medical research is presenting new information about women and HIV. A new route of male-to-female transmission of HIV – one in which the virus can travel through healthy genital skin to reach immune cells in just four hours — has been identified by U.S. researchers and has shown that HIV can penetrate normal, healthy genital tissue to a depth where it can get to immune cells and infect them. This preliminary research suggests that the perceived risk of male-to-female transmission has been misunderstood and perhaps underestimated.

ENDING THE SILENCE

Time is urgent. The eyes of the nation and the world are focused on what is being done on behalf of women with HIV. Success in defeating the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic and reversing the global AIDS pandemic depends increasingly on having an effective and thorough response to the problem of women and HIV/AIDS. It will require medical research to focus on HIV in the overall context of women’s health, the public health system to identify emerging trends and populations at-risk, and the healthcare delivery system to provide proper comprehensive care management that addresses the unique needs of female HIV patients. History will be the judge of how well the HIV system of care addressed the silent epidemic.
AIDS Walk Orange County has announced the recipient agencies for this year’s AIDS Walk, which will take place on Saturday, May 16th at Angel Stadium in Anaheim.

In addition to AIDS Services Foundation, AIDS Walk will distribute proceeds to 10 recipient agencies that provide direct care and services, including HIV prevention services, right here in Orange County. They are:

- ACTION (AIDS Care Team in our Neighborhood)
- AEGiS
- The Center Orange County
- Mercy House
- New Life Serenity House
- OC Cornerstone Outreach
- Public Law Center
- Shanti Orange County
- Straight Talk Clinic, Inc.
- UC Irvine Education Center

For more extensive information about the recipient agencies, click the Recipient Agencies link at the AIDS Walk website, www.ocasf.org.

This is the first year that recipient agencies have been grant funded, a move that was made to align the funding process of AIDS Walk with the practice of other walks around the country and to promote innovation and creativity among providers in the local system of care.

AIDS Walk is pleased to welcome New Life Serenity House as a new recipient agency this year and expects the inclusion of additional providers in recent years to broaden and strengthen the continuum of HIV services across Orange County. “We are more focused than ever on generating synergy among recipient agencies to help AIDS Walk achieve its $800,000 goal in 2009,” said Yari Toleno, AIDS Walk’s Director of Events and Corporate Partnerships. “We know that as we expand the roster of recipient agencies, we also expand the reach of AIDS Walk to involve new people in this important work,” she continued.

If you have never been to AIDS Walk, come out this year to one of this area’s most fun community fund raisers. If you have been away for a few years, come back this year and see what’s new at AIDS Walk. And if you’ve always been with us, thank you. We rely on your continued support and your involvement is more important than ever this year. For more information, visit www.ocaidswalk.org. See you on May 16th!

As a friend of ASF, you already know how vital your support is. There are a number of ways to arrange for a substantial gift to be made to ASF that will establish your giving as a lasting legacy of financial support to ASF:

- **BEQUESTS.** You can name ASF in your will or trust.
- **LIFE INSURANCE.** You can name ASF as a beneficiary to all or part of a life insurance policy.
- **RETIREMENT PLANS.** You can name ASF as part of your retirement plan. For example, you can name ASF as the beneficiary of all or part of your office pension plan or personal IRA or Keogh.

If you are considering joining Partners for Life or want to discuss designing a gift that addresses your specific needs, please contact Ty Rose, ASF’s Director of Development at (949) 809–8762 or TRose@ocasf.org.

ASF gratefully acknowledges a gift from the estate of Robert Crowder.
The current economic crisis has impacted AIDS Services Foundation, resulting in layoffs of several direct services staff. The same is true for HIV agencies across Orange County who are working hard to serve increasing caseloads with fewer staff and tighter budgets. I certainly understand that things are difficult for everyone, but people with AIDS never get a break from their disease. In good times and bad, HIV continues to ravage people’s health and claim lives. There is no recession in the HIV epidemic.

More than 80 cents from every dollar raised for AIDS Walk goes to direct services for people with HIV right here in Orange County. There are 10 recipient agencies, in addition to AIDS Services Foundation, who will receive funds to provide the most needy HIV clients with the basic necessities of life. I have personally seen what a difference it makes to have support from these organizations for a loved one. Just knowing that someone was there to be of assistance helped me get through the worst nightmare of my life.

Today I am helping grow walk teams and provide volunteer support to help in any way I can to ensure the success of AIDS Walk. I would like to challenge you to find a way to help – whether as a volunteer, a donor or a corporate sponsor. Even if you are unable to spare a few dollars, you can ask others for their financial support or participate in a fundraising event.

With all the enhancements on the AIDS Walk website this year even a computer dummy like me can register to walk (www.aidswalkoc.org) and send e-mails from your personal AIDS Walk page. Visit Facebook or MySpace. Connect with old friends and ask them to help people with HIV/AIDS. Share your story and raise money from people all over the world.

If you walked in the past, consider coming back this year. If you have never felt the excitement of the Walk, I invite you to come and be a part of an amazing community event at Angel Stadium on Saturday, May 16th. Please take a few minutes to think about how good you will feel if you could really make a difference in the lives of those infected and affected by this horrible virus. You will have the satisfaction of knowing how much you helped and the gratitude of unknown thousands – and me.

AIDS Walk 2009: Do it for me, do it for Jamie.

From Pearl Jemison-Smith

In 1987, I was privileged to be one of the founding Chairs of AIDS Walk Orange County. Things were different then. They told us that we would not succeed in Orange County because of the negative attitude toward AIDS. They said that the political climate would not embrace this cause. They said that AIDS was not a problem here in Orange County. They were wrong on all counts.

Despite these long odds, we summoned up our courage and held the first AIDS Walk Orange County. Thousands of people turned out, including my two friends in the picture. With hard work, brainpower, and a refusal to be discouraged, a dedicated group of individuals succeeded in launching AIDS Walk. It has been an amazing event for the past 24 years.

I was very involved with Walk during most of those years, taking a break only when Jamie, my son, became ill with AIDS. He had been HIV positive for more than 20 years. When he died last May, I decided I would re-dedicate my time and energy to AIDS Walk this year in his memory.

Even though this is not 1987, we still have some enormous obstacles to overcome.

Special Thank You

A special thank you is offered to Michael Johnson, William Bartek, Ray McAfoose and the staff at McAfoose Realty for their fundraising efforts and generous personal and matching gifts in the month of December.

Grants

**EMPLOYEES COMMUNITY FUND OF BOEING CALIFORNIA**
$5,000 - Nutrition Services Program

**ENTERTAINMENT AIDS ALLIANCE**
$5,000 - General Operating

**KAISER FOUNDATION HOSPITALS**
$25,000 - Case Management

**ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**
$15,000 - Latino Mental Health Services for Women and Families

**PACIFIC LIFE FOUNDATION**
$10,000 - Transportation
Thank you to Dr. David Petreccia for his initiative in organizing the New Year’s Eve “Dancing for the Cure” event with proceeds benefiting AIDS Services Foundation. His outstanding drive, energy and persistence led to the creation of what he hopes will continue to be a successful annual event, as he proved it could be this year.

**Patron’s Council Membership**

**AMBASSADOR’S CIRCLE $10,000+**
Marilyn Brewer**

**DIRECTOR’S CIRCLE $5,000+**
Craig Benedetti* and Alex Acosta
The Edwin D. and Rose Delaney Foundation
Bill Gillespie**
Anthony Glenn
Janice M. Johnson**

**DELEGATE’S CIRCLE $2,500+**
Paul A. Blank
Kevin M. Broadwater & James W. Vaughn
James E. Burba & Bob Hayes
Jeffrey Elder & Karla Kjellin-Elder
Gerald Giannini & Ralph Wilson
Robert M. Oster
Patricia Powers

**ADVOCATE’S CIRCLE $1,200+**
Wylie & Bette Aitken
Jeff L. Benedick & Duane Vajgrt, M.D.*
Dr. Joe Baker & Dr. Elliott Korshauer*
Frank Bianchini* & Joseph Ramondetta

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*ASF Board Member
**ASF Advisory Committee

Indicates renewal of Patron’s Council membership since last printing.
ASF’s Patrons Council kicked off the new year with an exclusive visit to the Crevier Classic Car Museum on Sunday, January 25th. This one-of-a-kind venue houses an exquisite collection of over 70 privately owned classic and exotic cars. It was a great afternoon of mixing with friends and reminiscing about how these classic cars were a part all of our lives.

ASF’s Executive Director/CEO Philip Yaeger provided a state of the agency report to donors and explained the measures that have been taken to maintain ASF’s solid financial position despite downturns in the economy and government funding. “The continued commitment of each Patron’s Council member to ASF is vitally important. We have made program cuts to offset decreases in revenue. But your ongoing generosity and involvement provides groceries and necessities of life for our clients and keeps them connected to care. It is your support that is making such a difference in people’s lives.”

Some of the vehicles in ASF’s transportation program were on display at the event, including ASF’s state of the art mobile HIV testing vehicle. Patron’s Council members were given the opportunity to see the key role that transportation plays in the services provided to ASF’s clients.

The event was highlighted by Karla Kjellin-Elder and Mike Johnston who shared their personal stories and unique ways in which they have participated in Patron’s Council over the years. Karla, a mother of 4 children, has been a Patron’s Council member since 2003. Her involvement with ASF began by helping create the auction gift baskets for Splash and now helps deliver food pantry orders to ASF clients. Mike Johnson and his partner Taka have been Patron’s Council members since 2006. Mike and his Laguna Beach Real Estate team from McAfoose Coldwell Banker recently created a “matching gift offer” which brought ASF more than $5,000 in donations.

“On behalf of the Board, staff, and clients of ASF, we’d like to thank all Patrons Council Members for their unwavering support. We encourage everyone to become an ASF sustained donor in some way,” said Ty Rose, ASF’s Director of Development.

Anyone can become a Patrons Council Member by pledging $100 a month. The entire year can be paid in full or paid in monthly installments through credit card withdrawals. Just go to the ASF website, www.ocasf.org, and click on “Join Patrons Council Now” to view giving categories and learn about upcoming events. You can also call Ty Rose at 949-809-8762 for more information. The next Patron’s Council event is being planned for early summer.

ASF extends its thanks to Crevier Classic Cars for hosting this exclusive event.
The word is out that the 2008 ASF Holiday Party was a smashing success. Held at the swanky Shark Club in Costa Mesa, more than 250 donors gathered to raise funds for AIDS Services Foundation. It was an exquisite evening of delectable food, amazing auction items and plenty of singing and dancing. The Holiday Party raised an astounding $60,403 for client programs at ASF — all wrapped up in a fun and memorable evening. And Santa’s helpers were there, too.

*Tijuana Dogs* infused the party atmosphere with high energy sets of everyone’s favorite songs. They even got into the spirit of giving when lead singer Matt Mauser, in an impromptu live auction, got the crowd to swoon as he raised the bidding to $500 for the shirt of his back!

Guests were treated to one of country music’s finest talents when country music legend and gold record artist *Ty Herndon* performed. His star power illuminated the entire event as he brought the crowd to its feet with his powerful musical interpretations.

The silent auction at this year’s Holiday Party included selections from among fantastic trips, sporting goods, entertainment, fine dining and too many other wonderful items to mention. There was a frenzy of auction activity that generated more than $15,000.

This year, a new tradition was inaugurated with the ASF Kids Club Ornament project. Each guest was given a one-of-a-kind holiday ornament that was hand decorated by ASF’s Kids Club members. We extend a special thanks to the talented efforts of ASF’s Family Programs Coordinator *Laurie Barber* for making this possible. These ornaments are great keepsakes and you will want to get one next year.

The holiday spirit was everywhere, from the exciting venue to the fabulous entertainment to the new traditions. ASF thanks event chair *Patrick Stanton* and committee members *Frank Bianchini, Mark Gonzales, Maria Marquez* and *Jorge Rodriguez* for their great dedication to making the Holiday Party a success.

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**HIV Testing, continued from page 5**

*The Voice:* This sounds like a place where prevention education should be intensified. What is being done to reach the population at-risk and educate them about methamphetamine use?

**MS:** Methamphetamine use is one of the big monsters in the HIV epidemic. I frankly don’t think enough is being done. All community members, public policy officials and public health authorities must assess the problem and intervene. We have to bring the discussion of meth use out of the closet so that prevention strategies can be adapted to target this at-risk group. More prevention resources are needed. The problem is staggering.

*The Voice:* What do you want people who are at risk to know about HIV testing?

**MS:** Everyone should know their HIV status. It should be a universal part of health care for men and women. So get tested at least every 6 months if you are sexually active. Be aware of the dangers of mixing recreational drug use and unprotected sex. And, if you are concerned about a recent exposure to HIV, contact an HIV healthcare provider to see if post-exposure prophylaxis is appropriate.
National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Together with UC Irvine, AIDS Services Foundation is participating in a nationwide observance of the fourth annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. The focal point of this observance will be the Women and HIV/AIDS Forum that will be held on Tuesday, March 3rd on the campus of UC Irvine, beginning at 5:00 pm.

Families, health organizations, businesses, communities, public health agencies and individuals will come together to offer support, encourage discussion, and provide education to women and girls about HIV. The forum will be presented in the Doheny Beach Room A of the Campus Student Center. Program participants will include Geeta K. Gupta, MD, Infectious Disease Specialist at UCI Medical Center, Michelle Sherman, RPh, FASCP and Maggie Decker, PhD, Director of ASF’s Mental Health Services. There will also be panel discussions involving clients and advocates who will discuss their day-to-day experiences living with HIV.

Attendance is free; please RSVP to acoulson@ocasf.org or (949) 809-8765.

Save the Dates!

**Friday, March 6**
*An Evening with Classic Lily Tomlin*
Performance & VIP Reception
Orange County Performing Arts Center

**Thursday, June 11**
*Friends of Dorothy*
Haute Fashion Show II

**Saturday, May 16**
*Orange County AIDS Walk*
Anaheim Stadium

**Friday & Saturday**
*September 25 & 26*
Splashback to the Future
The Final Big Splash

**Saturday, October 24**
*Friends of Dorothy*
Haunted Halloween Party
The Village Crean

An Evening with Classic Lily Tomlin

Spend *An Evening with Classic Lily Tomlin*, the multiple Emmy®, Tony® and Grammy® award winning performer, and you will also be benefiting The Friends of Dorothy Guild, which supports programs and services at AIDS Services Foundation. ASF has secured a block of prime orchestra seats for this dazzling performance on Friday evening, March 6th at The Orange County Performing Arts Center’s Segerstrom Hall. Seats are priced at $100 and $200. Those purchasing $200 seats will also have the opportunity to join Lily for a post-performance reception at The Center Club, thanks to the generosity of ASF supporters Tom Ray and Jo-Ri Way.

This event is capacity limited, so please purchase tickets early. Visit www.ocasf.org or www.friendsofdorothy.org or call ASF’s Marc Montminy at (949) 809-8766.
In cooperation with St. Anne’s Church in Santa Ana, AIDS Services Foundational again this year participated in a mass held in remembrance of those lost to AIDS. The December 10th event was organized by Andrea Coulson, ASF’s Director of Community Outreach, and Jorge Santoscoy, HIV/AIDS Case Manager at Delhi Center. Father Gary Guillen celebrated mass with more than 150 people in attendance. One of the most moving aspects of the event was the reading of names of people that have died of AIDS as a banner bearing those names was carried through the church. Jorge Santoscoy spoke during the mass and called for increased compassion, acceptance and understanding of people living with HIV/AIDS. Finally, a choir performed several stirring songs that honored the memories of those who have died and embraced the journey of those still living with HIV.

This special mass is held each year to coincide with the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Guadalupe’s feast day is celebrated to commemorate the traditional account of the appearances in 1531 of this Roman Catholic Mexican icon. The Virgin of Guadalupe is one of Mexico’s most popular religious and cultural images.

World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil

A candlelight vigil was held on Saturday, December 6th in observance of the 20th annual World AIDS Day. Locally and around the world, people joined together to remember those who have died, to reaffirm their commitment of service to those living with HIV, and to promote awareness and understanding of HIV and AIDS.

Nearly 100 people participated in this observance in the Artist’s Walk area of Santa Ana, joined by musicians and members of RockHarbor Church in Costa Mesa. ASF’s Board Member Terry Delonas read the names of ASF clients who died in 2008.

Elizabeth Colyear Vincent

Elizabeth Colyear Vincent passed away on February 1, 2009 at the age of 94. She was a long time major supporter of ASF and a number of other charities in Orange County, including the Hoag Hospital Foundation and the Orange County Performing Arts Center. One of her great passions was boating and her beloved Nordic Star, which gave her great pleasure. She will be missed by all, including her son Dwight Spiers, also a long time major supporter of ASF. In addition to Dwight, she is survived by eight children and fifteen grandchildren and great grandchildren.
Memorials

IN MEMORY OF FRANK WASKO
Joe V. Matthews

IN MEMORY OF DON STRATTON
John W. Benecke

IN MEMORY OF JAMES SALMON
Darrell E. Spaulding

IN MEMORY OF DINO GOMEZ
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur R. Gomez

IN MEMORY OF JOHNNY VAJGRT
Marilyn McIntosh

IN MEMORY OF WAYNE A. THORNTON
William Fogarty and Catherine Bowyer

IN MEMORY OF JULIAN “CHICO” RAMIREZ
Debi Ramirez

IN MEMORY OF STEPHEN PINNEY
Dorothyan Young

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD MAZUREK, M.D.
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas O’Keefe

IN MEMORY OF LUTHER BENEDICK & JOHNNY VAJGRT
Jeffrey L. Stuckhardt and William A. Lawrence

IN MEMORY OF JULIAN
Nancy Lanning

IN MEMORY OF EDDIE “TONY” Estrada
Richard Estrada

IN MEMORY OF MARIA BENECKE
Richard W. Silver

IN MEMORY OF GREGORY OSBORNE
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Osborne

Tributes

IN HONOR OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE ALONE
Sean M. Seeley

IN HONOR OF THE WEDDING OF
JOHN PETERSON AND DAVE MCDONALD
George and Janet McDonald

IN HONOR OF AL ROBERTS & KEN JILLSON
Blake T. Franklin and Tom Getgood

IN HONOR OF GERRY GIANNINNI
AND SKIP WILSON
Mr. and Mrs. Roberto Torrini

IN HONOR OF SUSAN WELLBORN AND
THE STAFF AT THE CSI
Louis Nealon

IN HONOR OF DAVID TREAT
Sheila Peck

IN HONOR OF PHIL YAEGER’S PROMOTION
David W. Schaar

IN HONOR OF JUDY AND DICK RUNELS
Lisa J. Fluor

IN HONOR OF RUTH WEAVER
Kathy McCarrell

IN HONOR OF CHRIS QUILTER
Emily E. Quilter
Ann Quilter

To arrange for a memorial or tribute, please contact Marc Montminy at 949.809.8766 or MMontminy@ocasf.org.