



## SAAF's Donors Make a Big Difference in These Times of Big Changes

By Wendell Hicks

Photo by David Berger, Cox Media

*"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee."*

~Marion Wright Edelman

Coming back to work after the Memorial Day holiday, I noticed that all the palm trees had been removed from the parking areas in the office complex where SAAF's building is located—about a dozen mature trees. Some staff told me their reactions to this drastic change. Evelyn drove up and felt something was wrong. Luis told me he thought he had driven into the wrong complex. Gloria initially thought SAAF's sign was missing. Rich thought a whole building was missing.

My own reaction was more direct "Where the [bleep] did all the palm trees go?" We all have different responses to dramatic changes: shock, denial, disorientation, anger, bargaining.

This time last year, I was telling you about the shift in federal and state funding priorities that impacted SAAF's HIV prevention programs. These shifts turned out to be the leading edge in a year of dramatic and drastic changes. A few of the more significant changes included:

- For the first time in 15 years, SAAF did not have the opportunity to apply for federal or state grants to provide HIV prevention programming for gay men and the MSHAPE Lounge closed its doors.
- HUD didn't put out a funding announcement delaying SAAF's plans to build additional housing units for people disabled by AIDS by two years.
- In preparation to implement the Affordable Care Act in 2014, changes were made to the Ryan White Program and SAAF had to reapply a year earlier than anticipated. The Ryan White Program funds many of the critical services SAAF provides for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In a leadership role, you don't have much time to wallow in your own fear, shock or anger. The focus for me, SAAF's Board and management team was to find the opportunities in these challenges. What guided our efforts was a solid and clearly focused strategic plan. We knew where we wanted to go and what we needed to do. And, who could help.

Even so, I could not have foreseen how all the daily differences would add up. As SAAF's fiscal or business year comes to a close, I am heartened, humbled, and deeply grateful. SAAF came through with flying colors — because of you.

SAAF's loyal donors and volunteers, members of the Circles of Humanity, funding partners in corporate and private foundations, businesses and restaurants, artists, media partners, local and federal government representatives, Board and staff, students and interns, event sponsors, collaborating organizations and local agencies as well as family and friends all came through with pledges, gifts, contributions, funding, in-kind support, time and talent, creative ideas, information and inspiration, air time and ad space, leads, resources, contacts and so much more.

You made it possible for SAAF to:

- Re-open the doors of the MSHAPE Lounge in partnership with the Pima County Health Department and private foundation grants;
- Purchase land for the Park Avenue Casitas multifamily housing through partnerships with local realtors, Circles of Humanity donors, private foundations, and collaborating agencies;
- Seek to expand Ryan White services in Pima County and southern Arizona through the planning, foresight and tenacity of SAAF's Care Services staff and partnerships with collaborating agencies and most important;
- Continue to serve people living with, affected by and at-risk for HIV/AIDS and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in our community.

There is a big gap in the skyline around SAAF's offices. I miss those palm trees, the shade they provided, and there is no bringing them back. But through sheer determination and a partnership with Watershed Management Group, SAAF plans to re-landscape with desert-adapted, drought tolerant trees.

Funding priorities have changed and there is no going back. We have to keep SAAF's mission moving forward. And we are because you are making a big difference in these times of big changes.

With warmest regards,

*Wendell Hicks*

Wendell Hicks  
Executive Director

THE SAAF  
SOUTHERN ARIZONA AIDS  
FOUNDATION

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Tucson, Arizona  
85719

# CONNECTION

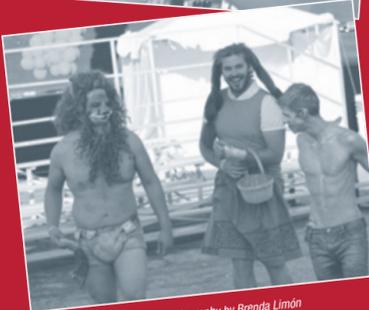
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Your gift today to  
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will help someone tomorrow!

## Jell-O Wrestling 2013 a big success!

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development



Jell-O Photography by Brenda Limón

The 26th Annual Reno Gannon Memorial Jell-O Wrestling Extravaganza and Benefit Auction, presented by Title Sponsor IBT's, was held on Saturday April 27, 2013 at its new home, The Slaughterhouse. This year's event raised more than \$39,000 for the programs and services of SAAF and we truly could not have done it without your support.

26th Anniversary  
Reno Gannon Memorial  
**Jell-O**  
wrestling

Title Sponsor



Highlights of this year's event included: a Wizard of Oz themed match complete with Dorothy, the Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion; Several on-the-spot challenge gifts that were met or exceeded; and, of course, the antics of our lovely Drag Queen Hostesses led once again by the always indefatigable and amazing Lucinda Holliday.

We also drew the name of this year's raffle grand prize winner of 2 nights in Vegas and 2 tickets to see Beyonce live. Congratulations to Veronika Sufleta- We hope you had a great time in Sin City!

We'll see you next year on Saturday May 3, 2014 for another great year of Jell-O!

THE SAAF

July, August, September  
Summer 2013  
Tucson, Arizona

# CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

Volume 1, Issue 5

## AIDSWALK Tucson Celebrates Silver Anniversary

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

2013 will mark the 25th Anniversary for AIDSWALK Tucson, a momentous occasion to say the least! We hope you will join us as a Walker or Runner at this year's event, taking place on Sunday October 13 in Downtown Tucson on Jacome Plaza in front of the Main Library. SAAF is once again teaming up with one of Tucson's most beloved cultural events, Tucson Meet Yourself and we have reinstated the fun run now that the majority of downtown street construction is in the final stages.

Visit [www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com) for complete information and to register yourself or a pet TODAY!

We look forward to seeing you October 13 for AIDSWALK's biggest year yet!



## Register for AIDSWALK 2013- Be entered into our Drawing

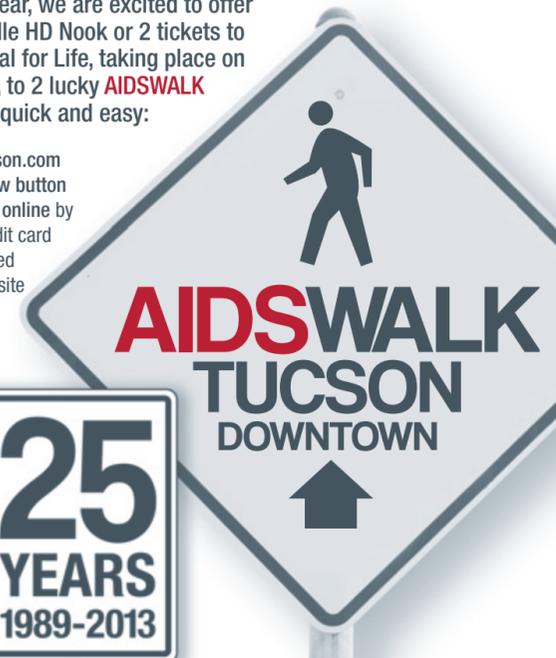
This year, we are excited to offer a Kindle HD Nook or 2 tickets to Festival for Life, taking place on

Saturday November 16, to 2 lucky AIDSWALK registrants. Entering is quick and easy:

1. Go to [www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com)
2. Click on the Register Now button
3. Pay for your registration online by August 15 using a major credit card (Online registrations processed through a secure, encrypted site to insure the privacy of your financial information)
4. Set up your AIDSWALK fundraising page.

Every paid registrant through August 15 will then be entered into a drawing for the nook or tickets to Festival.

Register today for YOUR chance to win!



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SAAF

## Our Mission

The mission of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation is to create and sustain a healthier community through a compassionate, comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS.

## Travis Wright Memorial Buyers' Club

Purchase vitamins and supplements for HIV/AIDS care and general health at the lowest possible cost. Located at The Medicine Shoppe 305 S. Euclid Ave, next to SAAF

**Monday-Friday**  
9:00 am to 6:00 pm

## Volunteer Training

Get involved with SAAF. Join us for an upcoming volunteer orientation, the first step for anyone wanting to volunteer at SAAF.\*

Orientations take place at the SAAF office building located at 375 South Euclid Avenue.

**Saturday July 20, 2013**  
10:00am-1:00pm

**Tuesday August 20, 2013**  
5:30-8:30pm

**Tuesday September 17, 2013**  
5:30-8:30pm

To sign up for Volunteer Orientation, contact RJ Wilkinson, SAAF volunteer coordinator, at (520) 628-7223 or [rwilkinson@saaf.org](mailto:rwilkinson@saaf.org)

*(No orientation is necessary for those volunteering for fundraising events and Walk-in Wednesdays.)*

## Staff Spotlight- Evelyn Rens

By Ethan Smith Cox, Development Director



Evelyn Rens has been SAAF's Grant Coordinator (and frequent contributor to this newsletter) for nearly 7 years, having helped raise millions of dollars through her grantwriting.

When asked about what has kept her happy at SAAF these past many years, Evelyn responds, "I took creative writing classes throughout my 8 years in college to obtain my Bachelor's degree. My job allows me to use my creative writing skills to serve people living with HIV and AIDS. Working at SAAF, I get to write larger and more complex federal and state grant proposals and more personalized grant requests to private foundations. Each has their own style. I enjoy the variety."

She continues, "The other part of my job that I enjoy is the collaborative process – especially working with staff and people from other agencies on program development and then successfully conveying that to a funder."

When asked about some of the unique challenges in her position, Evelyn replies, "(W)riting grant proposals where funders ask you to describe your program in 500 characters or less!", but this limitation has helped her to become an expert at brevity.

Evelyn is originally from Southern California and lived in Topanga Canyon where her first nonprofit job was fundraising for a documentary film project. Her first volunteer job in Tucson was with the Shanti Foundation when it was located on 4th Avenue. She was there to answer the phone and staff the office on Sunday afternoons when it was really slow. During these slow shifts, she read Randy Shilts' "And the Band Played On" over several afternoons and states, "I didn't know who they were at the time, but I met Jerome Beillard, Chuck Clapp, Chuck Mayer, Natalie Perry, and Craig Snow".

Evelyn relaxes with massage therapy, which she considers a necessity and not a luxury in her line of work. "My neck and shoulders get very tense sitting typing on a computer all day, especially under deadlines. My massage therapist is very skilled at relaxing muscles and easing pain; I often fall asleep on the table. That is why I am a big proponent of SAAF's Complementary Therapies Program. I understand how beneficial massage can be for SAAF's clients", she states. Evelyn also finds attending spiritual retreats and long vacations rejuvenating.

Evelyn's dream if she wins the lottery? She would "change my position at SAAF from grantwriter to grantmaker, starting up the Cash Cow Charitable Trust with the motto *moo-la that makes a difference*."

## Foundations for SAAF's Mission

By Evelyn Rens, SAAF Grants Coordinator

Corporate and private foundations generously provide support for programs and services that improve the health and quality of life for people living with, affected by or at risk for HIV/AIDS. These grantmakers are:

*Preventing hunger and providing comprehensive food and nutrition services to more than 500 individuals and households 365 days of the year:*

**Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation**  
**Southern Arizona Foundation**  
**TJX Foundation**  
**Union Pacific Foundation**

*Saving lives through youth suicide prevention:*

**Congregation Or Chadash-7th Grade Board of Directors** chose ALLY (Arizona's Life Links for Youth) as one of only two recipients for a grant from the Noah Cohen Memorial Youth Philanthropy Fund for youth suicide prevention. T Loving, the ALLY Program Manager, met the 7th grade board members during a follow-up presentation for the proposal. T said "They are an amazing group of youth! You can tell that each board member is extremely

passionate about the work they do and they take their responsibilities very seriously. They were engaged, respectful and asked great questions that I wish all funders would ask us."

*Educating at-risk youth to prevent HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections:*

**Macy's Foundation, Atlanta, Georgia & Macy's Passport Fund, San Francisco, California**

*Helping people who are injection drug users stay free of HIV and Hepatitis C:*

**Comer Foundation**

*Providing life-enhancing alternative health care services to people living with HIV and AIDS:*

**Nordstrom** provides funding in partnership with **M.A.C. Cosmetics**. Nicki Minaj and Ricky Martin are the celebrity spokespersons for the VIVA GLAM line of lipsticks and "lipglasses". Every cent from sales of the VIVA GLAM goes to help those living with HIV/AIDS.



**NORDSTROM**



## Giving Thanks to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Beth Carey, Director of Care Services

The collaborative relationship between SAAF and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Tucson's Armory Park neighborhood has been a long and significant one.

St. Andrew's established the Frensdorff House in 1989 as a safe haven, a secure and supportive home for low-income and formerly homeless people living with AIDS in Tucson. The house serves other purposes now, but for over a decade St. Andrew's has served as the home for SAAF's Food for Life home-delivered meals program.

As SAAF's partner, St. Andrew's provided a fully equipped and licensed kitchen, volunteers, leadership, and quality service for Food for Life. As the ministries of St. Andrew's and the programs of SAAF have grown, SAAF will be leaving St. Andrew's kitchen at the end of June to move to a new home for the Food for Life program.

SAAF is pleased to announce that the Food for Life program will now operate out of the kitchen at Mercado San Agustin at Avenida del Convento and West Congress. The success of the Food for Life program relies not only on the leadership of Drayanna Masingale, SAAF's Food for Life Coordinator, but on the generosity of volunteer kitchen assistants and delivery drivers. For information about volunteering for Food for Life, contact RJ Wilkinson at [rjwilkinson@saaf.org](mailto:rjwilkinson@saaf.org).

Both SAAF and St. Andrew's cherish the experience we have had to be in service together to improve the health of people living with HIV/AIDS in our community, and look forward to celebrating with one another the opportunities ahead for the people we serve.



Deacon Jefferson Bailey and Vicar Kate Braden

## Cox Communications Helps Expand HIV Testing

By Evelyn Rens, SAAF Grants Coordinator

Cox Communications is helping SAAF mobilize HIV testing, prevention and education in our community. Funding provided by Cox helped SAAF to acquire a refurbished ambulance. Luis Ortega, SAAF's Director of Prevention Services shared that "this is really exciting. Having mobile capability will enable SAAF's prevention staff to meet people where they are at, literally. We can set up events to provide HIV testing and one-on-one risk reduction counseling to reach people who might not otherwise receive these services."

Funding provided by Cox is specifically focused on targeting youth. Some of the partnering charter schools and organizations support HIV testing for at-risk youth as part of prevention education programming, but cannot provide services on campus or in their facilities. Barriers for youth participants include lack of transportation or feeling too intimidated to travel on their own to SAAF's offices or the County Health Department. The mobile unit can be parked nearby to facilitate access.

and Testing Coordinator, helped coordinate weekend training programs. "So far, most of SAAF's prevention staff and a couple of Care Services staff have participated in the training program. They learned everything from starting the vehicle which is different from a car, to maneuvering it and getting a sense of its size so it can be driven safely. We set up orange cones so they could practice parking. We even showed them where the gas cap is located and how to open it."

SAAF's mobile unit provided testing services during SAAF's Jell-O Wrestling fundraiser, the HIV/AIDS Candlelight Memorial Celebration, at Pueblo High School, the Eon Youth Lounge, and several other community events.

**Thanks to Cox for their investment which will serve our community for many years to come.**



*"This is really exciting. Having mobile capability will enable SAAF's prevention staff to meet people where they are at, literally. We can set up events to provide HIV testing and one-on-one risk reduction counseling to reach people who might not otherwise receive these services."*

— Luis Ortega, SAAF's Director of Prevention Services

A portion of SAAF's Prevention Services Department mission, "Creating Healthier Communities", is painted on the mobile unit. Luis explained, "We don't have SAAF's logo or name on the unit in part because there is still stigma around HIV and we want the community to feel comfortable receiving the services. Testing services are confidential."

Driving the ambulance is not like driving a car. "The ambulance dashboard resembles a small plane. There are a lot of extra controls and buttons. We don't want someone to accidentally set off the siren trying to turn on the wiper blades." In order to operate the unit safely, Alethea Do, SAAF's Prevention Quality Assurance



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