

## 2012 International AIDS Conference: Ending the Epidemic, Turning the Tide Together

From July 22 – 27, we had the privilege of attending the XIX International AIDS Conference held in Washington, D.C. The scale of this conference was truly staggering covering the space of four city blocks. Billed as an AIDS Global Village, there were people from agencies all over the world including Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East as well as the United States. Some presenters joined via satellite. People from small organizations received sponsorships so they could attend. Hundreds of sessions were offered covering topics from the latest developments in research and treatment to prevention and harm reduction to working with critical populations such as women, youth and gay men. There were also numerous exhibits and plenty of networking opportunities. While there was much to choose from, we each attended sessions focusing primarily on HIV prevention.

The global presence gave us a broad perspective showing us how far ahead the United States is in prevention efforts and also how far behind. Some foreign governments persecute, even jail doctors for treating people with HIV or prevention workers for passing out condoms. European countries eschew the stigma around the topics of sex, sexuality and are more progressive in their approaches to HIV prevention, harm reduction and drug users' rights. What inspired us was the excitement people had, especially in developing countries, about their successful HIV prevention efforts with fewer resources. Their enthusiasm and commitment were contagious. Their approaches emphasized human interaction, peer-to-peer connections, and public policy initiatives.

Here in the U.S. 'Treatment as Prevention' (TAP) was one of the buzz phrases. To summarize, the intention is to ensure people living with HIV/AIDS access HIV medical care and treatment to achieve an "undetectable" viral load, thereby reducing – but not eliminating – the risk that they can transmit HIV to others. Ensuring that everyone with HIV has access to effective and affordable clinical care is certainly something we need to strive for and achieve. However, TAP potentially places a lot of responsibility, even pressure, on people living with HIV. This approach alone cannot turn the tide unless barriers to care, especially stigma, poverty and accessibility, are addressed and our communities continue to receive direct prevention messaging addressing condom use, skills-building, and personal responsibility for good health.



SAAF Prevention Director, Luis Ortega, and Executive Director, Wendell Hicks

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) was the other hot topic which continues to be controversial. PrEP involves prescribing the HIV drug, Truvada, to people at high risk of acquiring HIV. Initial studies were conducted with gay and bisexual men in 2010, and then heterosexual men and women in 2011. Studies with injection drug users were recently completed in August 2012. Proponents at the conference touted the effectiveness of PrEP as safe and effective for reducing the risk of acquiring HIV sexually.

While the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of Truvada for HIV prevention, it is not a panacea. The PrEP protocol involves more than taking a pill once a day. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends prescribing PrEP only to people at very high-risk, conducting a thorough medical screening testing for HIV, hepatitis and other STDs, and regular monitoring. People who receive PrEP should also receive risk and harm-reduction counseling.

Some physicians at the conference believe prescribing Truvada violates the Hippocratic Oath to "do no harm" as the long-term effects of someone who is HIV negative taking Truvada regularly are not yet known. One of SAAF's Peer Counselors told us, "Why would anyone want to take HIV medications if they didn't have to? The side effects are no joke." Adherence is another critical issue. Like people living with HIV, people who use Truvada to prevent HIV infection must remain adherent in order for PrEP to be effective.

*Continued on page 4*

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# CONNECTION

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October, November, December  
**Fall 2012**  
Tucson, Arizona

# CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

Your gift today to  
SAAF's  
Food Program  
will help someone tomorrow!

## 2012/2013 SAAF Fundraising Events



### 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

## In This Issue:

AIDSWALK Tucson is Sunday October 14	Page 1
Festival for Life is almost here!	Page 1
2012 International AIDS Conference: Ending the Epidemic, Turning the Tide Together	Page 2
Staff Spotlight – Jerry Anderson	Page 3
2012 Holiday Project	Page 3
SAAF Receives 2012 GLBT Chamber Award	Page 4
SAAF Adopts a Highway	Page 4
Foundations for SAAF's Mission	Page 5
What's in a Name?	Page 5
Fundraising Events	Page 6



## 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.

## AIDSWALK Tucson is Sunday October 14

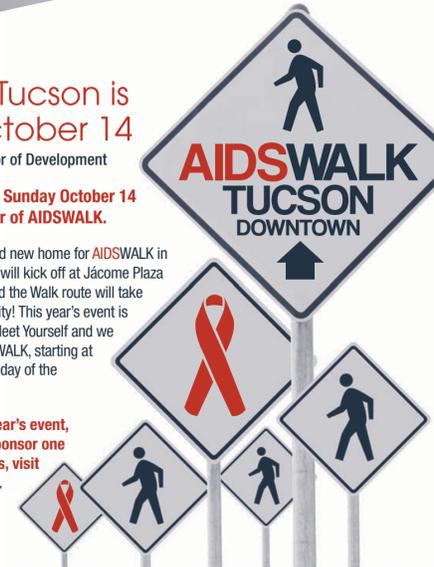
By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

We hope you can join us Sunday October 14 for another amazing year of AIDSWALK.

We are excited to have a brand new home for AIDSWALK in Downtown Tucson! The event will kick off at Jácome Plaza in front of the Main Library and the Walk route will take you through the heart of the city! This year's event is in collaboration with Tucson Meet Yourself and we hope you will join us for AIDSWALK, starting at 8:00am, and stay for the final day of the Tucson Meet Yourself festival.

To learn more about this year's event, to register to Walk, or to sponsor one of this year's many Walkers, visit [www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com).

We'll see you there!



## Festival for Life is almost here!

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

The 24th Annual Jérôme Beillard Festival for Life, occurring on Saturday November 10 at the Tucson Chinese Cultural Center, is just around the corner and we hope you can join us for THE live and silent auction event of the season.

This year's event will feature works from prominent artists including: David Adix, Sarafina Luz, Diana Madaras, Gail Marcus-Orlen, as well as many more. There will also be jewelry, holiday trees, gift baskets, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences up for bids in our live and silent auctions.

Mark your calendars now and join us for a wonderful evening on November 10. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.festivalforlife.org](http://www.festivalforlife.org).



## 24th Annual Jérôme Beillard

# Festival for Life

Eat! Sip! Bid!



Jerry Anderson, SAAF's Housing Services Property Manager, with his team: Wolf Shepp, Jeanne Callan, and Ellen Noble (l-r)

## Staff Spotlight-Jerry Anderson

By Beth Carey, Director of Care Services

SAAF is pleased to announce that Jerry Anderson has been named a Housing Hero by the Arizona Department of Housing, and will receive the Arthur Crozier Partner in Housing Award at the annual Arizona Housing Forum to be held in Tucson on October 4! One of seven Housing Hero awards to be given at the event, the Arthur Crozier Award celebrates the single action or a lifetime of successes of an individual committed to improving the lives of families and the health of communities through recognition that decent, affordable housing is basic to our social fabric.

Jerry Anderson has served as the Housing Services Property Manager for the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation for nearly ten years. His work with SAAF and its housing program exemplifies a successful career improving the lives of low-income individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Jerry's work has a much larger impact than managing the 83 units of housing at seven different property locations in Tucson. He is committed to creating safe, energy-efficient, quality homes and environments for each household in SAAF's housing program. He has enhanced the coordination of housing and support services with other SAAF staff to ensure that residents, many of whom have been homeless and all of whom are low income, have what they need to maintain their housing for as long as possible.

With Jerry's leadership, all seven SAAF properties have benefited from many improvements intended to increase the safety and health of the units and outdoor spaces for SAAF's residents. A former Tucson City Council Member, Jerry Anderson has continued his public service as a member of the City of Tucson Metropolitan Housing Commission and as a former member of the State of Arizona Housing Commission and the Pima County Industrial Development Authority. Join SAAF in honoring Jerry Anderson as a Housing Hero!

## 2012 Holiday Project Gift List

Gifts for Kids ages 1-17

- Clothes
- Toys
- Books

Youth ages 11-18 are always in the greatest need of gifts.

Gifts for Adults

- Blankets
- Movies (DVDs)
- Sweaters or jackets
- Household items
- Bath and pampering items
- Gift Cards in increments of \$25.00

Gift cards from Target, Safeway or any other local retailer are appreciated.

## 2012 Holiday Project Now Accepting Gifts

By Anna Griessel, Support Services Manager

The Holiday Project is a collaboration between the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF) and the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN). This year, the 2012 Holiday Project will provide clothing and gifts to over 55 families, including almost 100 children and young people.

Most of the people served by SAAF and TIHAN live on low to very low incomes. Families are challenged to meet their basic needs for food and shelter, let alone holiday gifts. For others, the holidays can be a lonely time. The Holiday Project gives individuals living with HIV an opportunity to:

- Choose from new donated gifts to give to their children;
- Allows children to select a gift to give their parent(s) or caregivers and;
- Provides gifts and holiday cheer to homebound individuals.



Gift items & cash donations will be collected between now and November 30th, 2012.

Interested in giving to the Holiday Project? Then please contact Anna Griessel at (520) 628-SAAF (7223) or by email at agriessel@saaf.org.

SAAF can help with picking up gifts and donations and a list of items has been provided, at right, to give you some guidance.

## 2012 International AIDS Conference: Ending the Epidemic, Turning the Tide Together

Continued from page 2

Putting research into practice raises many questions: Who is going to pay for PrEP? Gilead Sciences, the company that manufactures Truvada, said they would not raise the price, but it still comes with a hefty price tag of \$14,000 a year. Another concern is as information is filtered from research scientists and the CDC to the public, the complexity of the PrEP protocol is lost. The media focus on the once-a-day pill may be giving many people the wrong message, potentially hampering prevention efforts. When the CDC and the FDA announced it in the press, we started hearing people in the community, including SAAF's clients, saying that all you will need to do is take a pill to prevent HIV. If only it were that simple. While the cost of PrEP places it out of reach for most people, SAAF staff are ready to answer questions people may have about this option and direct them to resources if they want to pursue PrEP as a prevention method.

Our colleagues in developing countries reminded us that enthusiastically engaging the community through education, training and peer-based outreach are the most cost-effective options as resources shift to larger metropolitan areas.

Upon returning home, we thought a lot about what role SAAF would play in helping to turn the tide and end the epidemic. Certainly one of our most important roles is educating people about the latest tools and options to prevent HIV infection so they can make the best choices based on their risk factors and lifestyle. SAAF's Care Services assist people living with HIV to access care and treatment, help them find resources to remain adherent and promote safer practices.

SAAF continues to promote the harm-reduction approach which includes the correct use of condoms as one of the easiest and most

cost-effective ways to prevent the spread of HIV as well as peer-based education and outreach while also embracing the latest trends in prevention. In the end, it will take a combination of innovative approaches to make a real difference and TAP & PrEP give us 2 more tools that, when integrated with more proven approaches, will help us fulfill our vision of a community with NO NEW INFECTIONS...PERIOD.

With warmest regards,

*Wendell Hicks*

Wendell Hicks, Executive Director

*Luis J. Ortega*

Luis Ortega, Director of Prevention Services

## SAAF Receives 2012 GLBT Chamber Award

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

On Friday July 27, the Tucson GLBT Chamber of Commerce awarded SAAF its 2012 Non-Profit Business of the Year Award at its Sweet Sixteen celebration. SAAF has been a proud member and partner with the Chamber for more than a decade now! SAAF's Associate Director of Development, Monique Vallery, was on hand to accept the honor.



SAAF had some stiff competition in this category. We were nominated with: Wingspan; Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN); Desert Voices; the LGBT & Straight Alliance Fund; and Reveille Men's Chorus. We truly know all the good that these 5 organizations do in our community as we are constant partners and while we were happy to receive the award, we know that all nominated organizations were just as worthy and we salute their ongoing commitment to our community and look forward to many more years of collaboration. We also thank the GLBT Chamber for their recognition of all the great work that non-profits are doing in our community.

To see photos from the event, visit the Chamber website at [tucsonglbtchamber.org](http://tucsonglbtchamber.org).

## SAAF Adopts a Highway

By Rich Clark, Director of Human Resources

Earlier this year, SAAF staff took to the streets to help keep our community a little bit cleaner. SAAF has adopted the stretch of Euclid between Broadway and 22nd and for the past 6 months has been making once-a-month journeys up and down the street picking up trash and reporting possible dangerous roadway debris. In late August, a sign was posted at the southwest corner of Broadway & Euclid noting SAAF's hard work.

The Adopt a Highway program has been going strong for more than 20 years now, helping to keep Arizona's roads clean and beautiful. SAAF is thrilled to be able to give back to a community that has provided so much for us, every day, for the past 27 years.



Want to join us for an upcoming clean up? Then contact Rich Clark, SAAF's Director of Human Resources, at [rclark@saaf.org](mailto:rclark@saaf.org).

Shifts begin at 7:30am and usually take about 2-2 1/2 hours to complete. Water, safety vests, gloves, and trash-grabbers are supplied for every participant.

## Foundations for SAAF's Mission

By Evelyn Rens, Grants Coordinator

SAAF would like to recognize the following corporate and private foundations for making grants to fund programs and services that improve the health and quality of life for people living with, affected by or at risk for HIV/AIDS. A special thanks to:



SAAF Executive Director Wendell Hicks accepts a grant from Letty Lopez & Maree Urias-Buono of the Sundt Foundation in support of SAAF's Food Programs

Habitat for Humanity Tucson for their continuing commitment to address and prevent homelessness and their support of SAAF's housing program.

Steve J. Miller Foundation for continuing to fund HIV prevention services for gay and bisexual men.

Southern Arizona Foundation continues to provide essential funding for SAAF's Food Program.

Sundt Foundation and the employees of Sundt Corporation for choosing to fund SAAF's Food Program. Letty Lopez and Maree Urias-Buono visited SAAF in August to drop off a check for the Food Program.

Viva MAC Cosmetic's VIVA GLAM! Just before the deadline, we received terrific news that MAC AIDS Fund came on board with a grant to support SAAF's Food Program. Remember, 100% of every cent of VIVA GLAM lipstick and lip conditioner sales support people living with HIV/AIDS.

## What's in a Name?

By Evelyn Rens, Grants Coordinator

On August 1, The Apothecary Shops announced their new name: Avella Specialty Pharmacy. The name, Avella, cleverly uses letters from key words - Health, Devotion and Excellence - found in the company's mission statement. With 18 locations in 8 states, rebranding made sense to bring the growing company under one name. They still have the same leadership and store locations, and the same commitment to optimize patient health through clinical excellence.

Arizona's Department of Health Services awarded The Apothecary Shops the contract to provide services through the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (known as ADAP). The Apothecary Shops have been filling prescriptions for the people SAAF serves since 2005. That year they also came on board as an AIDS WALK sponsor and have supported programs and services at SAAF by sponsoring Mōda Provōcateūr and Festival for Life as well.

Avella excels in customer service and goes the extra mile to help identify resources to purchase lifesaving drugs. Costs for HIV medications are very high, even with health insurance. Many people require prescriptions for other conditions,

which are not covered by ADAP. Out-of-pocket costs can mount up beyond the ability to pay, especially for those on fixed or limited incomes. SAAF's Support Services staff work with Allison, one of Avella's pharmacy technicians. Through her knowledge about co-pay and patient assistance programs, Allison has helped many of SAAF's clients save from \$25 to \$200 a month on co-pays or access drugs not covered by ADAP or private insurance. In 2011, Avella saved all their patients a total of \$4,994,168. For people who are too ill to come to the pharmacy, Avella schedules automatic prescription refills and offers free delivery which helps makes it a little easier to live with HIV and AIDS.



SAAF would like to recognize Avella Specialty Pharmacy (formerly The Apothecary Shops) for returning as an AIDS WALK Contributing Sponsor for the third year in a row! Whenever possible, please support the businesses that support SAAF. Thank you.

## Support Groups

Wednesdays  
SAAF Haven Support Group  
(lunch included)  
11:00 am - 12:30 pm @ SAAF

Thursdays  
Heterosexual Support Group  
(lunch included)  
11:00 am - 12:30 pm @ SAAF  
(except for third Thursday of the month)

Third Thursday of Every Month  
Friends and Family Support Group  
An educational support group for friends and family of people living with HIV/AIDS  
5:30 pm - 6:45 pm @ SAAF

Support Group schedules may vary. Please call SAAF for more information.

## Volunteer Training

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

Orientations take place from 5:30 - 8:30 pm at the SAAF office building located at 375 South Euclid Avenue.

Tuesday, October 23, 2012  
Tuesday, November 13, 2012  
Tuesday, December 18, 2012

To sign up for Volunteer Orientation, contact Courtney Kelly, SAAF Volunteer Coordinator, at (520) 628-7223 or [ckelly@saaf.org](mailto:ckelly@saaf.org).

(\*No orientation is necessary for volunteers at fundraising events and Walk-in Wednesdays.)