



AIDS AT 30

By Katie Stauffer
Renz Center HIV Prevention Coordinator

On June 5, 1981, the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention published the first mention of a mysterious illness among gay men. Since then AIDS has killed more than 25 million people worldwide, including 600,000 Americans.

Three decades later there is more hope than ever for those living with HIV/AIDS. However, in the US more than 56,000 individuals become newly infected with HIV each year and more than 1.2 million are living with HIV/AIDS. And while medical advances have substantially increased the survival rate for those living with HIV/AIDS, 17,000 die annually.

Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease states that the big challenge now domestically is to make sure that the 21% of those infected who are unaware of their status get tested and into care and wrap around services. Knowing your status significantly reduces the spread of HIV.

The HIV Prevention Program at Renz Center conducts HIV testing and risk reduction counseling to high risk individuals where they gather in the community. In the first 3 months of 2011, outreach program staff identified three newly diagnosed HIV positive individuals who were successfully linked to primary health care, wrap around services and partner counseling & referral.

The program also conducts two evidence based interventions: Project START - a six session individual intervention offered to HIV positive and high risk negative incarcerated individuals who are returning to the community, and Latina SISTA - a 5 session group intervention addressing Ethnic and Gender, HIV Prevention, Assertiveness Skills Training, Behavioral Self- Management Training, and Coping Skills. Additionally, the program offers a structured closed group, Hermanos de Luna y Sol, and an open ended support group, Dos Espiritus, for Latino gay men.

June 27th is National HIV Testing Day

The HIV Prevention Program will be conducting free HIV testing in the community and by appointment in the office. Please contact Katie Stauffer @ 847-697-1221 x 262 for more information regarding HIV Prevention Program activities.