

Get Screened Oakland: The Highlights

Building the Capacity of the Believer to Serve! 2008 Black Church Institute

(October 21-23, 2008) The Balm in Gilead held its Ninth Annual Black Church Institute on HIV and other Health Disparities at the Founders Inn and Conference Center in Virginia Beach, VA. The Institute featured: an awards ceremony; a daily early-morning physical workout with Benita H. Perkins, Personal Trainer; a daily morning glory and praise worship celebration, led by Psalmists Roz Brown and Greg Mitchell; five plenary sessions, two preaching sessions, and five workshop sessions.

Pernessa Seele, Founder and CEO of “the Balm” welcomed Institute attendees and provided these words as the context for the two-and-a-half-day event:

“If Black America was its own country, it would constitute the world’s 35th most populous country. It would constitute the 28th largest economy in the world, and it would rank 16th in the number of people living with HIV/AIDS. The number of black Americans living with HIV is greater than the HIV population of Ethiopia, Botswana, Vietnam, Namibia, Haiti, Rwanda, and Guyana. As a result, African American life expectancy is lower than the life expectancy of people living in Algeria, the Dominican Republic, result, African Americans’ life expectancy is lower than the life expectancy for people living in Algeria, the Dominican Republic and Sri Lanka. History has already recorded the role of the church in the survival and Sri Lanka. History has already recorded the role of the church in the survival of African Americans through the ages. Today, we must re-commit ourselves—pastors, church leaders, individuals, families, congregations, and community—to the tremendous work of healing and restoration to wholeness.”

Get Screened Oakland staff members Rev. Dr. Damon Powell and Marsha Martin attended the Institute. Ms. Nell Davis, an HIV-positive grandmother of fourteen and great grandmother of four, joined the Get Screened Oakland delegation.

What follows are highlights from the Black Church Institute.

This year’s Black Church Institute was preceded by the Wisdom of Healers Award ceremony. Among the honorees were the following three distinguished African American faith leaders: Rt. Rev. George W. C. Walker, Sr., Senior Bishop of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; Rt. Rev. William Graves, Senior Bishop of The Christian Methodist Church; and Rev. Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, Senior Pastor Emeritus of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ.

The senior bishops thanked Ms. Seele and the staff of the Balm in Gilead for leading the way in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the black community and they each accepted the challenges that receiving the award brings: making sure all of the churches in their respective denominations have an HIV ministry program, continuing to show compassion to those living with HIV, and teaching about HIV prevention using comprehensive and scientifically sound best-practice approaches throughout their churches.

During the ceremony, two other awards were presented. The Debra Fraser Howe Leadership Award was awarded to Goulda A. Downer, PhD, RD, who is Principal Investigator and Project Director of the National Minority AIDS Education and Training Center (NMAETC) as well as Principal Investigator at Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. The Phill Wilson Advocacy Award went to Rudolph “Rudy” H. Carn, Founder and CEO of the National AIDS Education and Services for

Minorities, Inc., in Atlanta, Ga.

Dr. Downer and Mr. Carn accepted their awards on behalf of their hard working staffs and committed to continuing to work with Pernessa Seele and the Balm in Gilead as it reaches deeper into the African American community to raise awareness about HIV and to bring those who are positive into care.

On Wednesday, October 22, the Institute officially opened. Rev. Dr. Damon Powell, who is Get Screened Oakland's Outreach Coordinator, gave the opening invocation. He asked the attendees to open their hearts and their minds to receive the word for the days ahead. Following Rev. Dr. Powell, Bishop Walker brought greetings on behalf of all of the bishops gathered for the Institute.

Bishop Walker thanked Ms. Seele and the Balm for "shining a spotlight on the devastating aspects of AIDS, especially for the black Church. He stated, "I don't know what it will take for us to get it... We don't seem to want to... as HIV worms its way to and throughout our community." He continued, "This is an opportunity for the Black Church—the single most effective voice in the black community.... If it is muffled and silenced, see what can happen to us... look at the shocking statistics about AIDS in our communities. Today, it is clear we cannot speak loud enough. Thank you, Pernessa, for making us understand the importance of 'doing something to prevent further HIV transmission in our communities'... I have great hopes."

Rashad Burgess, the Director of the Capacity Building Division of the CDC, brought the agency's greetings to the attendees and talked about its work. He briefly described what CDC is prepared to do to build capacity in light of the recently released demographic data revealing that 56,000 people annually are newly infected with HIV in the United States. That statistic is a 50% increase from the long held estimate of 40,000 new infections annually. Mr. Burgess cautioned that new money is not likely to be forthcoming in light of the economic crisis. However, he did offer an important reminder message: "When you have a charge and a call, less money will not get in the way of the work."

The morning plenary, *An Urgent Call to the African American Faith Community*, featured Dr. James E.K. Hildreth, Director of the Center for AIDS Health Disparities at the Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., and Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, Research Psychiatrist and Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University in New York City.

Dr. Hildreth gave an overview of his research, which is a highly specialized initiative focusing on the "whys and hows" of the overrepresentation of African Americans with HIV in the United States. During his talk, Dr. Hildreth gave a review of HIV's natural history and discussed the importance of understanding "scientifically" why African Americans have five times the prevalence of HIV. While Dr. Hildreth does not have any answers, he does believe his research will help those working in the areas of vaccine and microbicide development... until a cure is found.

Dr. Fullilove began her remarks by saying the world is in a global meltdown, and "no one knows the scope of it... however, this present-day crisis shows how we have gone from health in the body to health in society to illness in the body and illness in society. Hatred is our national illness, and we need a balm in Gilead to help us to heal the national psychosis... important task at hand is to open our hearts to the love of God and the love of one another." She added, it is not enough to see the epidemic; you have to believe you are suppose to act... stigma kills, hate kills. Our own hatred makes a bad situation worse. We must start to act out of love." What are the moments on the horizon that will lend themselves to a breakthrough... perhaps the national strategy discussion provides a new beginning. But that strategy cannot recommend the same old, same old. We must be strong enough for chance of heart... We must move from hatred to love." Dr. Fullilove concluded her remarks by saying that the definition of insanity is "doing the same things over and over again, expecting different results." She encouraged everyone to change the things they are doing and to start to re-think the epidemic and the U.S. response.

The morning plenary was followed by the opening preacher, Rt. Rev. John Bryant, Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Bryant's message was a simple one, taken from the story of the farmer who needed laborers to tend his fields in Matthew 20. In the story, the laborers complain to the farmer who hired them that it was unfair for everyone to get paid the same amount even though some of the workers had only worked a short time. The farmer asked, was it not his choice and right to pay what he wanted to pay the workers and everyone was getting paid what they had agreed to work for? The cen-

theme of the story is the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Instead of remaining silent and walking by those in need, we need sight and we need to say something.

Two panel discussions followed this opening sermon. The first panel, entitled *Lift Every Voice! Listen! Understand! Love!*, provided a unique opportunity for trans and gay people, HIV-positive and -negative alike, to share a platform at a faith-based meeting. Speakers on the panel included Nell Davis, who spoke from the perspective of a 61 year-old HIV-positive “church lady” and great grandmother of four; Marvelyn Brown, the HIV-positive, 26 year-old author of the newly released memoir *The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful and (HIV) Positive*, Kali Lindsey, an HIV-positive gay man and Vice President of Federal Affairs for the National Association of People with AIDS, Valerie Spencer of the Transcend Empowerment Institute; and Dale Anthony, an HIV-positive motivational speaker and the Founder of Anthony House, a self-help organization for families. All of the panelists told their personal stories about how HIV came into their lives, or how they were able to remain HIV-negative.

Ms. Davis found out by accident. Her new husband’s lab report fell out of his Bible, which he kept with him all the time. He had not told her the truth about his status. She described the steps she had to take to come to grips with the fact that she was HIV-positive, including learning to accept the attitudes of some family and friends. Mr. Lindsay said that never in his life had he expected to be standing in front of a group of “church people” as an out gay man living with HIV. He attributes his positive serostatus to society and faith organizations that condemned his “lifestyle.” He had no positive images to hold on to when confronting potentially dangerous and compromising situations. Ms. Spencer explained that she was able to stay HIV-negative early on because, when she was a boy, she was always rejected—the men wanted the harder, tougher sex partners. The men who were attracted to her male friends thought Ms. Spencer was “too sissy.” She asked those present to work to accept the trans people in their congregations and families.

Mr. Anthony, an HIV-positive man for more than 20 years, and a member of the joint HRSA-CDC advisory council, told how his family and friends never abandoned him, even in his darkest moments. In closing this section of the Institute, Mr. Anthony talked about the need to continue to invite HIV-positive persons to be part of meetings like the Institute so that they can educate others about HIV and how to prevent its transmission.

Following this first panel, attendees were challenged by the presentations comprising the second panel: *Biblical/Theological Constructs for Addressing HIV/AIDS: A Social Justice Issues*. The presenters were some of the leading theologians and faith leaders in the United States today: Dr. Obrey M. Hendricks, author of the book, *Politics of Jesus*, from N.Y.; Rev. Dr. Katie Cannon, President of The Society for the Study of Black Religion in Va.; Rt. Rev. Yvette Flunder of the Ark of Refuge United Church of Christ in Cal.; and Rev. Edwin Sanders, Senior Pastor of the Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Tenn.

The day closed with a showing of the controversial film “Cover,” starring Vivica Fox, Louis Gossett, Jr., Clifton Davis, Patti LaBelle and Leon, which was produced and directed by Bill Duke. The film’s promotional materials give the following synopsis: “When Ryan Chambers is murdered on New Year's Eve, the prime suspect is Valerie Maas, a church-going home-maker whose life unravels when she discovers that her husband of 15 years has been leading a double life. Her strength of character and faith keeps the family alive as a deadly disease threatens to destroy all that they have known.” Quite simply, it is a film that explores the issues of marriage and HIV.

Thursday morning offered two panel discussions. The first was *Pastoral Counseling and the Realities of Out Youth!*, led by Rev. Derrick Jones, Youth Pastor for the First Baptist Church of South Richmond, Va., and Rev. O. C. Allen, III, Senior Pastor of The Vision Church of Atlanta, Ga.

Revs. Jones and Allen started their presentations by describing their programs for young people. Both ministers cautioned attendees about “offering” youth programs, explaining that it requires dedication and commitment—more than just asking parents to bring their family members. Rev. Jones recalled his experience with a young woman who would not speak to him when he first approached her. In fact, she kept to herself for several months. But then, she finally approached him to share a poem that she had written about him. It was her way of saying thank you for caring about her and believing in her. Rev. Allen talked about leaving the door open for leadership of young people in the church—even those who, at first glance, you would never imagine in a church.

The second panel on Thursday morning was *Models of Effective Health Ministries (especially HIV/AIDS)*. It was led by First Lady and Executive Director Rene Beaman of the Beautiful Gate HIV/AIDS Ministry at Bethel AME Church in Wilmington, Del. and Leisha McKinley-Beach of the Florida Department of Health. In this second panel the presenters provided examples of HIV programs in Georgia, Virginia, Florida, and Delaware.

First Lady Rene Beaman described the HIV testing and outreach program that began four years ago at her church, which has become the largest provider of HIV prevention services in Delaware. Involving the men's and women's ministries, Bethel AME has developed an innovative approach for outreach to all of Wilmington.

Ms. Beach, from the Florida Department of Health, described an outreach initiative that led the local bishop of the Florida African Methodist Episcopal Church to encourage at least one church in each county in Florida to work to set up a testing site, an HIV outreach program, and an HIV education site.

The afternoon workshops on Thursday were *For Pastors Only: Effective Leadership for Addressing HIV/AIDS and other Social Justice Issues*, led by Rev. Dr. Franklyn Richardson of Grace Baptist Church in N.Y.; *Developing an Effective Health Ministry Based on an Assessment of the Needs of Your Congregation and Community*, led by Rev. Makeba D'Abreu, Director of Domestic Programs for the Balm in Gilead in Va.; *HIV/AIDS Prevention, Testing, Treatment and Vaccines: Let's Get Started*, led by Dazon Dixon Diallo, Founder/CEO of Sisterlove and Ronald Johnson and Anna Ford of AIDS Action Council in D.C.; *Health Politics and Our Incarcerated Family Members: What your Church Can Do*, led by Rev. Debra Hickman of Sisters Together and Reaching in Md.; and *Faith, Philanthropy and Building Partnership: Resourcing Your Health and Ministry*, led by Diane Jones Wilson, President/CEO of Faith Partnerships, Inc. in N.C.

The Institute concluded with an evening program featuring the Total Praise Dancers from Metropolitan AME Zion Church of Norfolk, Va., Psalmists Greg and Roz, and Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Ill.

Dr. Moss' based his message on the biblical passage, II Kings, chapter 7, verses 3-9. This passage tells the story of four men with leprosy who were left to starve by the side of a synagogue. They would surely die of hunger if they did nothing, but their station in life was so precarious that they might also die if they entered the city. They decided to go into town to save themselves, to go against the "rules" of the day. They determined for themselves that they were more than their disease. The story goes on to say they helped to save others through their act of self-determination. Making the story relevant to today's situation, Dr. Moss said the choices were to "stay at death's door—and do nothing or to move into new territory. The choice is ours to make... we have a job to do."

The Institute ended with Rev. Dr. Moss challenging attendees to "take it upon themselves to save each other and the community."

Presidential advisors meeting in Washington, DC for 36th Full Council Meeting

(October 21-22, 2008) The Presidential Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS (PACHA) met for two days at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The agenda for this quarterly meeting included the following items: the swearing in of new members, an update on HIV testing initiatives, the impact of the reauthorized Ryan White program, drug treatment regimens, and new HIV vaccine initiatives. Staff from Get Screened Oakland attended the meeting on the first day and developed this summary report.

After a welcome from PACHA Chair Dr. Marilyn Maxwell, four new members were sworn in by HHS Assistant Secretary Joxel Garcia, MD. The new members are: Joseph Grogan of The Marwood Group; Glenn Mattes, President of Tibotec Therapeutics; Antonio Enrique Urbina, MD, of St. Vincent's Comprehensive HIV Center; and Jean Ann Van Krevelen of Portland, Ore. Five members are retiring; they are Troy Benavidez of AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals; Cheryl Bowers-Stephens of The Schopenhauer Group; David Malebranche, MD, of Emory University; Jose Montero of Tampa General Hospital; and Ram Yoge of The Children's Memorial Hospital.

Bernard Branson, MD, Associate Director for Laboratory Diagnostics in the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provided an update on HIV testing initiatives. In addition, he discussed the new epidemiological data released in August 2008, explaining how CDC derived the new numbers. He said the agency's process was as follows: look at test specimens from people newly infected with HIV, compare that data with HIV case reports and the testing and treatment history, and finally develop and use mathematical models to estimate new cases.

In 2006, at least 40% of adults in the United States had been tested for HIV at least once (an estimated 71.5 million persons), Dr. Branson reported, and 10.4% of them (an estimated 17.8 million) had been tested in the preceding 12 months. Sixty-one percent of the persons screened for HIV are pregnant women. According to Dr. Branson, 53% of testing occurred in private doctors offices, 18% in hospitals and emergency departments, and 9% in community clinics.

Dr. Branson further reported that 20 states had laws and/or regulations that required opt-in informed consent, whereas CDC recommends opt-out testing without a separate written informed consent. Since the CDC issued this recommendation, 11 states have removed written consent. Seven other states have recommended legislative measures to remove written consent, but have yet to enact them.

Dr. Branson then presented updates on the scale up of testing efforts in New York City, Chicago, and the state of Florida. He also mentioned that Oakland was among the cities attempting to scale up HIV screening. In conclusion, he discussed some of the attitudes and uncertainties that inhibit the scaling up HIV screening: “[It’s] not my job.” “The job is too big, numbers daunting.” “Testing for HIV interrupts the flow in the ER,” and “how is the test going to be paid for?” But he also brought up a couple of signs of progress in HIV screening. Nationally, there has been a 4% reduction (from 25% to 21%) in persons unaware of their status. In New York City, hospitals have seen a reduction in late diagnoses, which is partly attributed to screening scale up and legislative changes. Three experts—one from a city health department, another from a state health department, and still another from a state university medical center—offered comments on the impact of the changes that had been articulated in the Ryan White Modernization Act of 2006. Respectively, the presenters were Monica Sweeney, MD, Assistant Commissioner of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Jane Cheeks, Director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Programs at the Alabama Department of Public Health; and Frank Graziano, MD, PhD, of Wisconsin.

Dr. Sweeney gave an overview of the NYC epidemic and walked PACHA members through the city's programs and initiatives, which use targeted strategies to respond to the city's epidemic. These strategies include testing initiatives, prevention education and case management programs, and citywide treatment and adherence services. What emerged from her commentary as the summary statement was “New York will need more money in the future to continue its Ryan White services.”

Because Alabama benefited from the 2006 Modernization Act, Ms. Cheeks, was able to share the advances that her state has made since the act was passed. Before its passage, Alabama had had an AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) waiting list for five consecutive years. Now, it no longer does. Funding has almost doubled for service providers, Ms. Cheeks reported. What's more, the state's formulary of medications from 10 to 45, and case managers are now able to move beyond acquiring medications for their clients to providing other services.

Dr. Graziano started his presentation with an overview of Wisconsin's HIV epidemic, observing that HIV-positive people are living longer, and their numbers are increasing—just like they are across the nation. As a member of a Part C-funded institution, Dr. Graziano summarized his medical center's challenges like this: patient load is growing while the number of staff does not. As the number of patients in need of medications from ADAP grows, so, too, does the possibility of a waiting list. Staff is retiring and/or leaving the field of HIV care. Meanwhile, needs are growing, and the infrastructure is not keeping apace. Finally, transportation and weather make outreach difficult as the patient population becomes more diverse and spreads throughout the state. For information about the PACHA meeting, including reports from the speakers on the meeting's second day, see www.pacha.org.

Oakland Community News

World AIDS Day planning underway in Oakland

(October 17-18, 2008) Representatives from several community organizations in Oakland gathered in the Mayor's office to discuss and plan this year's World AIDS Day commemorations.

The meeting participants decided that the 2008 commemorations will include three pre-World AIDS Day events: 1) an evening *Global Forum and Update on Men Who Have Sex With Men* whose invited speakers will include local and national experts on HIV, including Rashad Burgess from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and George Ayala of the MSM Global Forum; 2) a lunchtime showing of "All of Us," a film about women and HIV; and 3) a breakfast meeting focusing on HIV prevention in the Oakland Transgender Community. The tentative dates for these pre-World AIDS Day events are November 24 and 25.

Oakland will observe World AIDS Day on December 1 with a City Hall Community Awards Ceremony and Reception, where the following awards will be presented: the East Bay AIDS Walk Awards, the Get Screened Oakland Vanguard Awards, and the Alameda County Office of AIDS Business Responds to AIDS and the Community Awards.

Stay tuned and read your e-mail for forthcoming details about these events.

Health centers and hospitals in Alameda County meet to discuss HIV screening scale up

(October 6, 2008) Community health center directors, hospital clinic administrators, and HIV service managers met in Oakland's City Hall for their quarterly meeting, which was hosted by the Office of Mayor Dellums. The following individuals addressed the group: State AIDS Director Michelle Roland, MD; Adolescent AIDS Program Director Donna Futterman, MD, who is the creator of Advise, Consent, Test, Support (ACTS); Steve Kilgore, Nurse Manager of Alameda County Medical Center (ACMC) HIV Services; and Mark Cloutier, Executive Director of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF).

Dr. Roland provided an overview of the work of her office. She also gave the health center and hospital administrators a "sneak preview" of a logic model that the state Office of AIDS is developing. The model, which is expected to be ready by

the end of the year, serves as a template for participating in and guiding institutional and municipal scale up of HIV screening. Dr. Roland said her office was very interested in supporting such scale-up efforts. Although there may not be much new money, she said her office stands ready to assist county health centers and hospitals with other support, including technical assistance and help resolving laboratory/CLIA waiver issues. Dr. Roland concluded her remarks by stating that she remains committed to supporting Oakland's efforts to increase testing and looks forward to working with Get Screened Oakland and the health centers and hospitals.

Dr. Futterman offered a rationale for adopting a streamline protocol and changing the current counseling and testing paradigm. During her remarks, she introduced the "pocket doc" card as an aid for doctors and other health care professionals. The card outlines the streamlined protocol for HIV screening and guides the person who is conducting the test through the process of administering an HIV test in a health care setting. Dr. Futterman said counseling and testing numbers had increased by 25% in six Bronx hospitals after the introduction of "pocket doc" and ACTS—a 10-20 minute HIV counseling and testing approach, created by Dr. Futterman and used by HIV test counselors in many parts of the U.S. and South Africa.

Dr. Futterman cited research showing the definitive utility of ACTS in the six Bronx hospitals. However, she revealed that follow-up at these hospitals indicted a need for ongoing technical support as they worked to expand HIV screening. She encouraged the attending hospital administrators to try the ACTS approach and offered to work with any health center or hospital that wanted to expand its HIV screening efforts with ACTS. Marsha Martin, Director of Get Screened Oakland, distributed a 'mock up' for Oakland of the ACTS "pocket doc" card.

Following Dr. Futterman's remarks, there was a lively discussion among the meeting's attendees, who included representatives from Asian Health Services, East Bay AIDS Center, La Clinica de la Raza, West Oakland Health Council, Tri-City Health Center, Lifelong Medical Services, Children's, Kaiser Permanente, Alta Bates Summit Hospital, Alameda County Medical Center-Highland, Planned Parenthood of the Golden Gate. In this discussion, attendees shared their experiences scaling up testing and expanding services. The following points were included in the conversation:

- Kathy Lievre, Director of Tri-City Health Center, reported on Tri-City's scale up of HIV screening for the LGBT community in all of its clinics. HIV screening at these clinics now averages more than 200 tests a month. And while it took them some time to start their regular HIV screening, it has proven to be a very important aspect of Tri-City's clinic-service model.
- Michael Allerton of Kaiser Permanente gave an update on Kaiser's internal policy of testing in areas of the United States where HIV prevalence warrants it. Following his comments, Dr. Roland reiterated her commitment to work on these issues and to develop an appropriate policy for routinizing HIV screening. She said changes to the system are warranted, but at the same time, there must be a systematic process to ensure that changes take place with uniformity and continuity.
- Steve Kilgore, Nurse Administrator for ACMC HIV Services, presented some background on changes currently taking place at ACMC. Because of financial and programmatic necessities, the hospital-based adult immunology clinic will be re-engineered and folded into services at Eastmont Wellness Center and Winton Wellness Center.

During the past several months, Get Screened Oakland has been meeting with members of the community in general, and with those who serve men who have sex with men (MSM) in particular to discuss the service needs and program strategy for MSMs. As a continuation of these discussions, the Office of the Mayor invited Mark Cloutier, Executive Director of SFAF to the meeting to discuss the magnet concept.

Magnet is a new approach to testing and clinical and supportive services for African American and Latino MSM. The approach has been used for more than ten years by SFAF's Magnet Center. The Magnet approach to services for men who have sex with men has been evaluated and may provide a useful model for people in the East Bay. Mr. Cloutier invited the health center and hospital administrators to visit the Magnet Center. Get Screened Oakland will arrange a site visit.

The meeting ended with a showing of an in-the-works film about Get Screened Oakland. Produced by Abby Ginzberg, the film aims to help spread the initiative's messages. Before the film began, Ms. Ginzberg announced that she is planning to add a segment to the film, which will show how HIV screening works in medical settings and health centers. She asked the attending health care professionals if they would be willing to be part of the segment. Several centers and ACMC-Highland will be included in the filming.

"Raise your Voice" Bay Area Commemorates and Celebrates Latino AIDS Awareness Day

(October 16, 2008) Members of the Bay Area HIV community gathered at La Pena for "Raise Your Voice," an evening of information about HIV, food, music, and fun. This commemoration and celebration of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) included an update on HIV among Latino/as nationwide and in California, an HIV testing demonstration, musical performances, a hoop dance performance, and a panel discussion about living with and working in HIV today.

Oakland Mayor Ronald V. Dellums and Oakland City Council Chair Ignacio de la Fuente each issued proclamations in support of the work of BA-NLAAD. HIV among Latino/as in the Bay Area is rising. It, therefore, is important that our local officials and community organizations come together to educate, advocate and lead on this issue.

The Thursday evening event at La Pena was part of a series of community outreach and engagement programs developed by SALVASIDA, Alameda County Office of AIDS and the Bay Area National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (BA-NLAAD) committee to raise awareness about HIV among Latinos in the East Bay. In addition to the October 16 event at La Pena, a training

on working with Latinos in a culturally sensitive and competent manner was given at Tiburcio Vasquez Clinic. TriCity Health Center developed and hosted the Modos Macho Fashion Show, which took place at the Bench and Bar. BANLAAD and SALVASIDA coordinated Celebrando La Vida at Mi Pueblo. La Clinica de la Raza celebrated and hosted Fiesta Blanca at Laney College.

Get Screened Oakland wishes to thank to all of the members of the planning committee for creating such wonderful and entertaining opportunities to learn more about HIV in the Latino community and helping to keep all of us informed and, most importantly, aware.

Other HIV News

2008 Nobel Prize awarded to discoverers of HIV

(Oct. 6, 2008) This year's Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine was awarded to Drs. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier, the two scientists who discovered the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Their discovery was one prerequisite for the current understanding of the biology of the disease and its antiretroviral treatment.

Following medical reports of a novel immunodeficiency syndrome in 1981, the search for a causative agent was on. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier isolated and cultured lymph node cells from patients whose swollen lymph nodes were characteristic of the early stage of acquired immune deficiency. In these cellular cultures, they detected activity of the retroviral enzyme reverse transcriptase, a direct sign of a retrovirus' replication. They also found retroviral particles budding from the infected cells. Isolated virus infected and killed lymphocytes from both diseased and healthy donors, and reacted with antibodies from infected patients.

By 1984, Drs. Barré-Sinoussi and Montagnier had obtained several isolates of the novel human retrovirus, which they identified as a lentivirus, from persons infected through sex, hemophiliacs, mother-to-infant transmissions, and blood transfusion patients.

Soon after the discovery of the virus, several groups contributed to the definitive demonstration of HIV as the cause of acquired human immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Drs. Barré-Sinoussi and Montagnier's discovery made rapid cloning of the HIV-1 genome possible: an achievement that has allowed for the identification of important details in HIV's replication cycle in how the virus interacts with its host. Furthermore, it led to the development of methods to diagnose infected patients and to screen blood products, both of which have helped to reduce HIV transmission.

The unprecedented development of several classes of new antiviral drugs is another result stemming from detailed knowledge about the viral replication cycle. These treatments have contributed to decreasing the spread of HIV disease and increasing the life expectancy of individuals on treatment.

The cloning of HIV enabled studies of its origin and evolution. The virus was probably passed to humans from chimpanzees in West Africa early in the 20th century, but it is still unclear why the epidemic spread so dramatically from 1970 and onwards.

Drs. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier share this Nobel Prize honor with Dr. Harald zur Hausen who also received this recognition for his discovery of "the human papilloma viruses causing cervical cancer."

Community Calendar 2008—2009

Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind

November 08

- Su. 11/16 Transgender Day Of Remembrance, Preservation Park Niles Hall, 13th Street and Martin Luther King Street, Oakland, CA. 5:00 p.m.
- Tu. 11/18 Day of Action Against AIDS, various locations. For more information, contact the Bay Area Regional African American State of Emergency Coalition.
- W. 11/19 Federal AIDS Policy Partnership; Hall of States, 444 North Capitol, Rm. 333, Washington, DC. 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- W. 11/19 - F 9/21 National Summit on HIV Diagnosis, Prevention and Access to Care, Crystal City Hyatt, Arlington, VA. For more information, go to www.hivforum.org/2008Summit.
- M. 11/24 "All of Us" City Hall Brown Bag Lunch and Film on Women and HIV; Hearing Room 2, City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA. 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- M. 11/24 "Bringing It Home: An MSM Forum and Global/Local Dialogue Among Friends" Town Hall and Discussion; City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA. Refreshments will be served. 6:00 p.m.-10 :00 p.m.

December 08

- M. 12/1 World AIDS Day Awards Ceremony and Reception, Oakland City Hall, 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
- W. 12/3 - F. 12/5 ADAP Advocacy Association (aaa+) and Title II Community AIDS National Network (TIICANN) annual conference, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.
- F. 12/12 San Gabriel Valley HIV/AIDS Action Summit: Progress and Opportunity; City of Hope Cooper Auditorium, Duarte, CA. 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Su. 14-15 KWAANZA Gift Show and Health Fair; Oakland Convention Center, Oakland, CA. 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

January 09

- Th. 1/20 Inaugural Day 2009