

Special points of interest:

- Community Health Fair at City of Refuge, UCC
- World AIDS Day 2009
- Samaritan Care Center in South Africa
- New Riverside Church HIV ministry logo

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Health Fair integrates HIV prevention and care

By Leonard Conner

On Thursday, September 18, 2008, City of Refuge, UCC in San Francisco held its annual Community Health Fair. This annual event is sponsored by Refuge Ministries' social service non-profit corporation, The Ark of Refuge, Inc., and was coordinated this year by Director of Program Services, Ms. Rachel Kelley. It has historically been, and continues to be, the largest Community Health Fair in San Francisco. This year's fair was the largest to date, with 24 exhibitors/presenters, inclusive of the Ark of Refuge, and also included food and entertainment.

From its inception, the purpose of Refuge Ministries' Health Fair has been to address health concerns in an encompassing, holistic manner—of which HIV care/information/education/prevention are a part. We have sought to eliminate the societal stigma often ascribed to HIV/AIDS by not isolating it, but rather incorporating it into a total health information forum. The presenters at this year's Fair were primarily Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in San Francisco, and addressed just about every health concern imaginable. In addition to HIV/AIDS, the health concerns addressed included: substance abuse/alcoholism, mental health,

hypertension, diabetes, coronary artery disease, stress reduction/massage/meditation, breast and prostate cancer, homelessness, and economic development/job training—as well as rapid HIV testing and STD screenings. The Health Fair targets traditionally underserved populations that we, and our sister CBO's, serve in San Francisco. The attendees include many of our existing clients, as well as underserved persons from the SOMA (South of Market Area) of San Francisco where we are located, who are just learning of the many services available to them.

In addition to the many community agencies present this year, we were honored by some special guests. One of our contract managers from the San Francisco Dept. of Public Health was in attendance—and, two staff members from the office of California State Assemblyman Mark Leno attended and surprised us with a proclamation from the Assemblyman's office, honoring the Ark of Refuge for our many years of service to underserved populations.



People of Faith March to end discrimination and homophobia at the International AIDS Conference. Mexico City, Mexico, August 2, 2008



Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer
Executive Director

From the Desk of the Executive Director

On November 6, the Wider Church Ministries Board of Directors adopted a resolution calling for increased HIV prevention throughout the church and community.

The resolution will be submitted for consideration at the 27th General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC). It calls for new col-

laborations with UCAN, working together in deliberate and strategic ways to reduce HIV infection, engaging and strengthening the existing capacities of church and community, including:

- increasing HIV and AIDS competencies;
- creating new partnerships focusing on increased effectiveness and accountability
- initiating new and innovative

strategies, particularly with vulnerable groups and higher risk populations.

UCAN, Inc. is already prepared to provide technical assistance to all settings of the church.

The text of the resolution is below and the resolution with a background statement can also be accessed online at www.ucc.org/ucan.

Resolution: Calling for comprehensive HIV prevention in church and community

Whereas:

Our Christian faith calls upon the disciples of Jesus Christ to follow Jesus' teachings and the examples of Jesus' ministry; and,

Jesus reached out with compassion and healing to those who were sick and marginalized, and called people of faith to be ready and alert, for example:

Matthew 14:14.
When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

Mark 1:40-42.
A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

Luke 12:39.
But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

Matthew 25:1-13.
Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour; and,

There are an estimated 33 million people living with HIV worldwide and that for every 5 new HIV infections there are only 2 people who receive medical treatment (UNAIDS, June 2008), demonstrating that the world is losing the fight against HIV and AIDS. Treatment alone cannot stop the HIV and AIDS pandemic; and,

The United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) released new data revealing that HIV infections in the US are 40% higher than previously thought and reporting estimates that there are more than 1 million persons living with HIV in the U.S. and 20% of them do not know they are HIV positive (August 3, 2008); and,

The global health community, including UNAIDS, the World Health Organization, the U.S. CDC, and the U.S. National Institute for Health, has called for increased best practice, comprehensive HIV prevention efforts, especially with vulnerable groups and high risk populations; and,

The CDC has encouraged

everyone to know their HIV status; and,

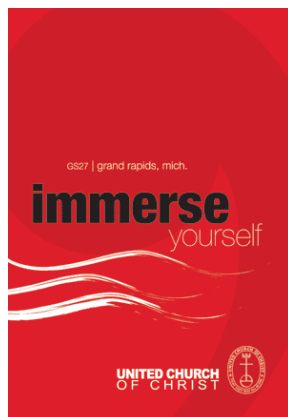
The international HIV and AIDS community has recognized the important role of faith communities like the United Church of Christ in HIV prevention and care, and the untapped capacity that exists in such communities for effective response; and,

The Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the Resolution on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and declared its "compassionate concern and support for all persons with AIDS, their lovers, spouses, families and friends" and the Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the pronouncement "Health and Wholeness in the Midst of a Pandemic" and called the United Church of Christ to leadership in response to AIDS.

Therefore let it be resolved: that the Board of Directors of Wider Church Ministries:

Declares its compassionate concern about the growing

Treatment
alone cannot
stop the HIV
and AIDS
pandemic.



Summer Youth/Young Adult Visit for HIV and AIDS

Riverside Church Global HIV and AIDS Ministry, AIDS Service Center New York City, the United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network and Conscious Contact of New York had the opportunity to collaborate with The Presbyterian United Nations Office by hosting the New Providence Presbyterian Church of Maryville, Tennessee in a week-long seminar mission program from 7-10 July 2008. The program, entitled, "Living the Goals" is a combination classroom and interactive ministry educational experience intended to introduce youth to questions of urban poverty through the lens of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



HIV seminar participants

While spending the morning familiarizing themselves with the United Nations system, The group spent a one day emersion on the Domestic Issues of HIV and AIDS within the EPI Center of New York City. The group of 30+ youth and young adults also had an opportunity to visit the AIDS Service Center of New York City to fully discuss Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Prevention.

human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic in the United States and throughout the world, and its support for all those living with and affected by HIV; and,

Reaffirms the Pronouncement on Health and Wholeness in the Midst of a Pandemic adopted by the Sixteenth General Synod, the Resolution on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) adopted by the Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ and the Resolution, "Responding to AIDS: Endorsement and Enactment of the "Ten Principles for the Workplace" adopted by the Seventeenth General Synod; and,

Calls on all clergy and lay persons in all settings of the United Church of Christ to:

- become knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS,
- understand how HIV is transmitted,
- work to prevent its trans-

- mission,
- reduce stigma and discrimination, and
- help the whole church to increase its HIV competency; and,

Strongly urges all clergy and lay persons in the United Church of Christ to know their HIV status; and,

Calls on local churches and other settings of the church to develop and implement best practice comprehensive HIV prevention education, programs and strategies for church and community, with particular attention to vulnerable groups and at risk populations; and,

Calls on the United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network (UCAN, Inc.) to work collaboratively within and beyond the United Church of Christ to provide technical assistance, training, education, and resources to help all settings of the

church develop and implement comprehensive HIV prevention strategies and programs for church and community, and encourage the use of existing resources such as Affirming Persons, Saving Lives and the comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, Our Whole Lives; and,

Calls on local, state and federal governments to work together to develop and implement a national HIV and AIDS strategy that includes increased funding for best practice comprehensive HIV prevention programs; and,

Calls for this resolution to be submitted for consideration by the Twenty-seventh General Synod and to include in that resolution a call to Wider Church Ministries to report on the progress of the implementation of this resolution to the next three General Synods.

Strongly urges all clergy and lay persons in the United Church of Christ to know their HIV status.



World AIDS Day



Leadership is the theme for World AIDS Day again in 2008, following up on the theme of Leadership from 2007 and the theme of Accountability from World AIDS Day 2006.

This theme calls attention to the gap between the promises of leadership to stop the spread of AIDS, and what has actually been delivered to date.

The theme of leadership is intended to empower everyone, not just governments and organizations but also individuals, to take the lead in the response to this still too often devastating illness.

Last year the World AIDS Campaign invited us all to take the lead to stop AIDS. This year they are telling us that it is time to *deliver* on our promises of leadership.

This is the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day, and there is much that needs to be done in order to meet the goals that have been set for

stopping the spread of HIV and for universal access to treatment.

Right now, new infections are occurring at 2.7 times the rate of increase of people receiving treatment. People with HIV and AIDS still face stigma and discrimination. In 2007, only 31% of those needing treatment in low to middle income countries received treatment.

New infections in the United States have been more numerous than previously thought, and many people in the US and around the world do not have access to prevention education and methods.

The goal has been set of universal access to prevention programs, as well as care and support for those who are HIV positive,

by 2010. This date is coming up fast. Now is indeed the time to deliver on promises and to truly take the lead to stop AIDS. We need to be empowered to create change, and to empower everyone to prevent the transmission of HIV, to fight stigma and discrimination, and to get needed treatment.

“The theme of leadership is intended to empower everyone, not just governments and organizations but also individuals...”

Take the Lead!

Living Positive

Zuziswe says, "I like to talk." Her favorite topic is her own story. She was diagnosed as HIV positive in 1999, then 48 years old. By 2003 she was so ill that she nearly died. She spent three months in hospitals for acute tuberculosis. From there she was admitted as a patient at the Samaritan Care Centre, a hospice in South Africa for the terminally ill, predominately those infected with HIV/AIDS.

The Samaritan Care Centre cares for those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and also bridges cultural barriers between the black and white communities. HIV/AIDS has no face, no color, and no culture. Therefore, everyone is needed to help find a way forward, a cure, and ways to help one another. This indeed is a ministry of healing and also of reconciliation.

When Zuziswe first became a patient at the Samaritan Care Centre, she was too weak to walk and had a CD4 count of only 15. She immediately began treatment with ARVs. To this day, she takes her medication every morning and every evening at 6 o'clock. Her life now is in a completely different place, so different that most people would not hesitate to call her story a miracle.

While still a patient at the Centre, Zuziswe became strong enough to begin to help out, first with cleaning and laundry tasks, later assisting with patient care. Today she stays with her friend, Patience, in a shack not far from the Centre and has joined the Samaritan staff.

One of her special contributions as a caregiver is her role as an example of how to live positively with HIV.

"If you want to survive, you must wake up early, take your medication, go to the shower, exercise, and stay busy -- and don't stress, or HIV will take you out. Tell HIV 'I'm not your friend!'"

These instructions of hers become especially convincing in conjunction with her high level

of energy and her determination to live life to its fullest.

Zuziswe has no tolerance for people who refuse to find out about their HIV status. Testing, she knows, is the first step toward "jumping over the grave." Five years from now, she sees herself still as a caregiver at the Samaritan Centre, "using whatever God gives me."

The Samaritan Care Centre is an ecumenical project of the churches in the Buffalo Flats area of South Africa. Volunteers come from these churches, including those related to Global Ministries partner church, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA-South Africa Synod). Global Ministries missionary, Reverend Dawn Barnes, is on the Samaritan Care Centre's Management Board.



Zuziswe, a staff member at The Samaritan Care Center in South Africa



STOP AIDS.

World AIDS Day is observed each year, on December 1

KEEP THE PROMISE.



“The globe with the candle represents the illumination of the faith by which The Riverside AIDS/HIV Global Ministry will reach its destiny in assisting those with the disease.”

Partner Highlight- New Riverside Church Global HIV and AIDS Ministry Logo

Riverside Church held a national contest to find the official Riverside Church Global HIV and AIDS Ministry Logo.

The winning design was made official on December 1, 2008.

The Logo: The globe with the candle represents the illumination of the path by which The Riverside AIDS/HIV Global Ministry will reach its destiny in assisting those with the disease. Through art, mankind can be guided toward a more peaceful and productive existence. Peace!

Meet **Mr. Mustaf Mikal Nasir** as he shares how he came up with the design:

My name is **Mustafa Mikal Nasir**. I was born in Trinidad. Thirty five years ago, the Brooklyn Museum Art School awarded me a Fine Art Scholarship to study Drawing and Painting. I later studied Graphic Design & Illustration at the Center for Media Art in Manhattan.

As early as four, my mother (a stay-at-home mom) was instrumental in my visualization. On a clear day, viewing different types of clouds, she would encourage me to actualize their

shapes. At six, I was introduced to drawing by my father who had a creative streak—apart from his career as a Correction Officer—he made clothing without patterns, built furniture; did masonry. Many of those attributes were transferred to my Graphic Art career.

Now living in Harlem, I utilize my skills to positively facilitate all humanity. I am an accomplished pre-press and graphic designer, art director, and fine artist. My art is a tribute to my mother and to my father.

EAA chooses to focus on HIV and Food at General Assembly

Rome, Italy

At its quadrennial meeting in Rome in mid November, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) chose to focus on HIV and Food for the next four years.

HIV and AIDS has been a focus since the EAA came into existence in 2000 and that focus will continue. The EAA has created theological and worship resources in the struggle to end AIDS. In 2006 and 2008 it was the coordinating organization for faith participation in the United Nations High Level meeting on AIDS.

EAA has also coordinated ecumenical Pre-Conferences at the last three International AIDS Conferences.

The leadership EAA provides has

strengthened the faith voice through its three-pronged approach to advocacy: awareness raising, campaigning and lobbying.

EAA has normally focused on two areas and food was narrowly chosen over climate change as the second focus area. Building on achievements in its HIV work and its work on the previous focus area of global trade, the EAA will work to strengthen advocacy for food justice, which includes the care of creation in food production.

The EAA, located in Geneva, Switzerland, was created as a program of the World Council of Churches. At this meeting they became a formal association (non-profit corporation) under Swiss law. UCAN participates in the EAA through the Health and Wholeness Advocacy Office of Wider Church Ministries. Rev. Mike Schuene-meyer participated in the meetings in Rome together with his colleague Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa, of Justice and Witness Ministries.

For more information, go to the EAA web site:

www.e-alliance.ch



From the Desk of the UCAN President

Blessings to all. As we approach 2009 with Leadership as the World AIDS theme, it is my prayer that each of you, your congregation or community will participate in an HIV and or AIDS awareness event on one of the dates below.

"Be careful how you live, you may be the only Bible some people read."

Yours in the Struggle — Oliver W. Martin III

UCAN Celebrates HIV/AIDS Awareness Days through June 2009

A number of national and global observances are held annually to help us understand and fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We encourage you to visit this web site throughout the year and to download materials, educational tools, and information that support all HIV/AIDS Awareness Days. We hope the resources and information will assist your efforts to educate, motivate, and mobilize your local community in the fight against HIV/AIDS!

<http://www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/>

February 7- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

<http://www.blackaidsday.org/>

March 10- National Women & Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/hiv/NWGHAAAD/> (2008 event resources)

March 20- National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

<http://www.nnaapc.org/news/awareness-day.htm> (2008 site)

May 18- HIV Vaccine Awareness Day

<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/events/HVAD>

May 19- National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

http://www.banyantreeproject.org/hivaids_awareness.html

June 8- Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

<http://www.caribbeanhealthaidsday.com/index.php> (2008 resources)

June 27- National HIV Testing Day

<http://www.napwa.org/programs/nhtd.shtml> (2008 resources)



**Obama supports
a U.S. national
HIV and AIDS
strategy to
decrease new HIV
infections and
improve health
outcomes for
Americans living
with HIV/AIDS.**

President Elect Obama's HIV Plan

What will the Obama presidency bring to HIV and AIDS response? The answer to that question remains to be seen, but in President-Elect Obama's campaign, he expressed support for a stronger HIV and AIDS policy.

Obama supports a U.S. national HIV and AIDS strategy to decrease new HIV infections and improve health outcomes for Americans living with HIV/AIDS. Obama proposes the creation

of a National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Obama's plan would focus on eliminating disparities in the epidemic's impact, particularly in minority communities. He also supports comprehensive sex education, expanding access to HIV testing, increasing federal funding for science-based HIV prevention programs, and federal funding for needle-exchange to prevent the spread of HIV.

On the global level, Obama supported the reauthorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and supports an increased commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

More information on Obama's position on HIV/AIDS/Global Health is available at

<http://www.health08.org/>



UCAN

Leadership Team

Barbara Baylor

Minister for Health Care Justice
Justice and Witness Ministries, UCC

Leonard Conner (Chair)

City of Refuge UCC—CA

Rodney Johnson

Trinity Church UCC—IL

Adora Iris Lee

Washington, DC

Lizette Merchan

Community of Hope—OK

Leslie Penrose

Tulsa, OK

Rose Wright Scott

Franklinton Center, NC

Oliver W. Martin III

Riverside Church, NY

Staff

Mike Schuenemeyer

Executive Director

Eleanor Carey

Intern

UCAN
700 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
Phone: 216-736-3218
Fax: 213-736-3203
E-mail: ucan@ucc.org

www.ucc.org/ucan

Supporting the UCAN Mission

To support our HIV & AIDS
Ministry, gifts may be sent to
the address above
marked **UCAN**

Next Issue:
Spring-Summer 2009

UCAN News, a newsletter of the United Church of Christ HIV/AIDS Network

General Synod 27, An Ounce of Prevention-Luncheon

UCAN joins with Health Justice Ministries to sponsor the Health Luncheon at General Synod 27 on Monday, June 29, 2009. An Ounce of Prevention will be the theme for the luncheon.

The program focus will be an important luncheon workshop addressing important issues of prevention in health care. From theology to policy, from HIV to diabetes, we will look at the state of health, address gaps and barriers in health services, lift up collaborations that work and identify planning and implementation strategies

that make a difference.

UCAN will also sponsor a Church Positive space in the exhibit hall, as part of the Wider Church Ministries—Global Ministries exhibit. Saturday of General Synod will feature River City Synod, a day of speakers, workshops and other activities for engaging and celebrating life in the UCC. A health fair is proposed for Monday.

General Synod 27 will take place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 26-30. Online registration for General Synod will open in December 2008 at www.ucc.org.



Keep up with the latest
news and information about UCAN,
SUBSCRIBE to:
UCAN Stop AIDS E-News
<http://www.ucc.org/ucan/ucan-stop-aids-e-news.html>

UCAN's Mission Statement

The mission of the United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network (UCAN) is to build a network of people, congregations and organizations within and beyond the United Church of Christ for care giving, education and prevention in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic by:

- Providing technical assistance to help congregations and other settings of the church start and build their capacity and programs;
- Offering training in the use of the UCC's comprehensive HIV and AIDS curriculum, *Affirming Persons, Saving Lives*, as well as other HIV and AIDS educational resources;
- Giving leadership for education and information on public policy concerns; and
- Prioritizing its work to bring critical presence to those most affected by HIV and AIDS in the United States and throughout the world