



RED RIBBON TIMES

2018 Volume 5



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Relax... It's Just Art!



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New Member Profile

National **HIV** Testing:

A collaboration of the Counties by Chris Haubenestel, FCCM

Every year National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) has one major goal in mind, to get as many people to know their status as possible. In 2019 on June 27th, we had gone to extreme measures to have any may options available for someone to be tested for HIV and resources for whatever their results may be. For the past several years, NHTD has been a collaborative, weeklong event. Spear headed by The Florida Department of Health Area 7 HIV/AIDS Program Office and in partnership with Walgreens, we are able provide dozens of testing locations

throughout Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Brevard counties over the span of three days.

CURRENTLY, FLORIDA IS NUMBER ONE FOR NEW HIV TRANSMISSIONS, WITH THE ORLANDO METROPOLITAN AREA BEING THE NUMBER TWO CITY IN THE ENTIRE NATION.

To address the increase in new transmissions, the State of Florida has the plan to eliminate HIV transmission

by: implementing priority testing in non-health care settings, provide rapid access to treatment, improve and promote access to PrEP and nPEP, and increase HIV awareness and community response through outreach, engagement, and messaging. NHTD was an exceptional opportunity to address these goals at a much higher scale than usual, with the help of the entire community.

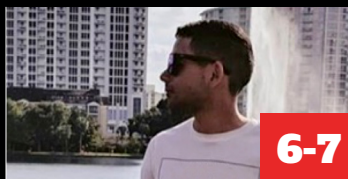
Agencies who provided testing include Aspire Health Partners, Miracle of Love, The LGBT+ Center, Two Spirit,

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CENTRAL FLORIDA HIV PLANNING COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEES

- Membership Committee**
 - This meeting is the first Tuesday of the month at 2:00 PM
- Service Systems and Quality Committee**
 - This meeting is the first Thursday of the month at 9:30 AM
- PR & Marketing Committee**
 - This meeting is the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30 AM
- Needs Assessment and Planning Committee**
 - This meeting is on the second Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM
- Executive Committee**
 - This meeting is the Thursday of the week before the Planning Council meeting at 9:00 AM
- Planning Council**
 - This meeting is the last Wednesday of the month
 - Meet-N-Greet (5:30 PM) & Meeting (6:00 PM)
- Contact Planning Council Support** for meeting locations or visit website

PLANNING COUNCIL SUPPORT CONTACT INFORMATION

- Dieudonne Pierre**
Planning Council Support Coordinator
407-429-2119
Dieudonne.Pierre@hfuw.org
- David Bent, Planning Council Support Administrative Assistant**
407-835-0906
David.Bent@hfuw.org

RYAN WHITE PART A SERVICE PROVIDERS

- AIDS Healthcare Foundation**
407-204-7000
www.aidshealth.org
- ASPIRE Health Partners**
407-245-0014
www.aspirehealthpartners.com
- Center for Multicultural Wellness and Prevention**
407-648-9440 • www.cmwp.org
- Dept. of Health in Lake County**
352-771-5500
http://lake.floridahealth.gov/
- Dept. of Health in Orange County**
407-836-2680
http://orange.floridahealth.gov/
- Dept. of Health in Osceola County**
407-343-2030
http://osceola.floridahealth.gov/
- Dept. of Health in Seminole County**
407-665-3200
http://seminole.floridahealth.gov/
- Heart of Florida United Way**
407-429-2197 • www.hfuw.org
- Hope and Help Center**
407-645-2577
www.hopeandhelp.org
- Miracle of Love**
407-843-1760
www.miracleofloveinc.org
- Orange County Medical Clinic Pharmacy**
407-246-5356
N.E.E.D. Inc.
407-661-1300
www.needincfla.org
- Orange Blossom Family Health**
407-428-5751 • www.hcch.org
- Turning Point**
407-740-5655
www.turningpointcfl.org
- Part A Recipient's Office**
2002-A E. Michigan Street
Orlando, FL 32805
407-836-7631



Connect with us on Facebook @ CentralFloridaHIVPlanningCouncil
<https://ryanwhitecflap.org/member-resources/integrated-hiv-prevention-care-plan/>
www.ocfl.net/ryanwhite



Positive Assistance, Bliss Cares, Center for Multicultural Wellness and Prevention, and The Florida Department of Health. Testing began June 23rd with a kick-off event put on by Aspire's PrePare program and the Department of Health, where fifty-nine HIV tests were completed.

Starting June 26th various Walgreens stores allowed testing to be conducted with over ten locations opening their doors on the official NHTD, which was June 27th. Testing concluded on June 28th, but several Walgreens will still offer testing on a weekly basis. Each agency that participated came prepared with condoms, information, resources and facts. All testing was also free and confidential.

This year's NHTD was the largest collaboration, with the most involvement of collaborating agencies and the most available locations ever in the history of the event. NHTD 2019 was a year when we were able to provide an opportunity for Central Florida to get the facts, get tested, and get involved!



Responding in Brevard

by Chris Haubenestel

DID YOU KNOW?

- The CDC estimates nearly 20 million new STIs occur every year in the United States, nearly half among young people ages 15 to 24 years of age.
- Yearly physicals or gynecological exams do not routinely include STI or HIV testing.
- Having an STI can increase your chance of getting HIV if exposed to the virus.
- Most women and 50% of men have no symptoms.
- All STIs are treatable and most are curable.
- Untreated STIs can cause lifelong problems, including: issues with the heart and brain, arthritis, harmful effects on pregnancy and newborn babies, chronic abdominal pain and can even cause death or the inability to have children.

PROJECT RESPONSE, INC. IS A NON-PROFIT HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION SERVING BREVARD COUNTY SINCE 1990.

The organization's mission and purpose has been to assist residents who are living with HIV. It's HIV Education and Prevention programs provide comprehensive HIV Awareness, Education and Testing services to the general public as well as those at highest risk for HIV/STD infection. As a result of many years of providing HIV Testing and Education, it became apparent that Brevard County was in need of a full service STD/STI Clinic that could offer a full range of medical screenings and treatment. Addressing this gap in

Project Response Testing & Treatment Center

EVERYONE HAS A STATUS

do you know yours

FREE HIV & HEP C TESTING 20 Minute Results

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

1st Saturday each month
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Licensed Infection Disease Physicians

Other STD screenings available including Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and Herpes Simplex Virus 2

747 South Apollo Boulevard, Melbourne, Florida 32901
321.372.5003 | www.projectresponse.org

services and with the blessings from the Brevard County Department of Health, the Project Response Testing and Treatment Center (PRTTC) located at 747 South Apollo Boulevard in Melbourne, Florida was able to open its doors in October of 2017.

THE CLINIC'S TWO INFECTIOUS DISEASE PHYSICIANS, DR. ANA CONDE-ROSA AND DR. AISHA ST. CYR ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING TESTING AND TREATMENT FOR STD/STI'S ACCESSIBLE, CONVENIENT AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Set in a culturally respectful environment, services include medical treatment for HIV infection, free HIV and Hepatitis C testing

as well as screening and treatment for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and Herpes Simplex Virus 2. In response to the U=U movement, the clinic recognizes the need for expedited entry into care for those who are newly diagnosed with HIV infection and the introduction of FDA approved medications to prevent HIV before and after exposure to virus, PrEP (pre-Exposure) and nPEP (Post-Exposure), respectively. As a teaching clinic, PRTTC is working in collaboration with the Nursing Program at Easter Florida State College and the Dietetics and Nutrition Program at Keiser University. This is a wonderful opportunity for students entering the health care profession to become exposed to the unique health issues of those seeking HIV/STD medical care. The cure is within sight, please help in spreading the word about Project Response Testing and Treatment Center. We are here to help.



2019 National HIV Prevention Conference

By Gabriel Martinez

I had the privilege and honor to have been sponsored by National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) to this year's 2019 National HIV Prevention Conference in Atlanta, GA in early March. As the current Sexual Wellness Coordinator at the University of Central Florida's Wellness and Health Promotion Services plus my work as a community advocate for HIV care and treatment, the opportunity to attend such an important conference is pivotal to my professional growth. So before I discuss my experience, shout out to NMAC for providing such an amazing opportunity for working professionals such as myself.

I HAD NEVER BEEN TO THE CITY OF ATLANTA BEFORE AND WAS EXCITED TO NOT ONLY ATTEND THE CONFERENCE BUT ALSO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HIV PROBLEM THAT SURROUNDS THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY.

In December 2018, ESSENCE magazine published an article titled "Atlanta's HIV Problem is now an epidemic," where they compare one of America's beloved cities to that of third-world countries. In the article, Dr. Carlos del Rio, co-director of Emory University's Center for AIDS Research, was quoted stating "Downtown Atlanta is

as bad as Zimbabwe or Harare or Durban." Ironically or possibly purposefully, this year's 2019 National HIV Prevention Conference was located in the heart of Downtown Atlanta in partnership with the Hyatt Regency Atlanta and Atlanta Marriot Marquis Hotels.

I arrived on St. Patrick's Day and even though I am a native New Yorker, the crisp, cold air blowing in the Atlanta sky was not the best welcome after eight straight years in the sunshine state. Nevertheless, the city was alive with St. Patrick's Day celebrations and in Atlanta's booming gayborhood, Midtown did not disappoint in entertainment and livelihood.

There are so many different things I could say about the conference including food, conference programs, plenary sessions, posters, and how gorgeous these two hotel locations were, however I do not want this to just be an information based article. Instead, I want to take the opportunity and briefly discuss the experience that I had to network and share space with such amazing individuals fighting the same war. It can at times, feel isolating when day in and day out you see the struggles of your own community or your own city with the HIV epidemic, however so many others across the globe are fighting this with you and that reminder was a priceless tag.

One of my most memorable experiences was sharing space with individuals from a community based organization out of the city of angels, whose entire mission is to

provide social and sexual health services to youth through visual and performing arts, REACH LA. Luis Ramos, REACH LA's Outreach Coordinator, and myself had met at the 2018 Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit held in Los Angeles, California in early December. This gave us the opportunity to briefly make an introduction, however at the conference in Atlanta, we had the opportunity to learn more about each other's work. Since the population I mostly work with are college-aged students, it was such an honor to learn how Los Angeles is impacting their LGBTQ+ youth



around HIV care, treatment, and education. REACH LA taps into the enormous dance community that has always existed in this city and they utilize this form of art for example, to provide a safe haven for youth needing a place to thrive and educate them on high risk sexual behaviors, safe sex practices, STD and HIV prevention, including assistance with advocacy and PrEP access.

I ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIT WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ORLANDO COMMUNITY TO DISCUSS WHAT WE COULD DO TOGETHER TO HELP FIGHT THIS EPIDEMIC.



With this year's conference mission "Getting to no new HIV infections," many of the program sessions concentrated on the need for community partnerships to successfully implement programs that get to the conference's mission. We had the opportunity to share space outside of our own city and reflect on the education and tools that we had been provided. We understand the impediments to care and treatment in our city, so we sat for hours brainstorming ideas to take back to our city beautiful. In the end, the beauty of our conversation came from the passion and willingness to create change. A change that is bigger than who we are and what we do. It's a change that is necessary for the future of HIV care in our city, state, and country. With these incredible people, their minds, their thoughts, opinions, ideas, and courage to do the work, we will eventually meet our goal. Until then, conferences like these allow us to recharge and understand why we have dedicated all our efforts to this cause and why it takes an entire village to create the next generation of social activists for HIV care, treatment, and getting to ZERO new infections.

HIV in the News

By Gabriella Rodriguez & Nicole Elinoff



Based on #ScienceNotStigma

Have you heard about U=U? Undetectable = Untransmittable? What does it Mean? The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently stated that, "People who take ART daily as prescribed and achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner." U=U means that people living with HIV who achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load by taking and adhering to antiretroviral therapy (ART) as prescribed cannot sexually transmit the virus to their partners. Making U=U truly a game changer because it transforms the social, sexual, and reproductive lives of PLWH. U=U IS based on substantial scientific data with the backing by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention has stating, "People who take ART daily as prescribed and achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner. "The success of U=U depends on people with HIV having the needed access to health care and taking their medications as prescribed every day. The U=U campaign is global and has spread to 650 organizations in 79 countries and has been translated into more than 25 languages. Together we (less than 40 copies in a milliliter of blood) To read more: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/treatment-prevention>

Together We Can End HIV

UNAIDS welcomes the pledge by the US President to stop HIV transmission in the country by 2030 an announcement made during his State of the Union Address to Congress this past February 2019. UNAIDS which serves as the leading advocate in global action against HIV.

UNAIDS mission is to guide, strengthen and support worldwide efforts have recently launched ambitious treatment targets to help end the AIDS epidemic Worldwide: 90-90-90. The UNAIDS Fast-Track treatment targets state that, by 2020, 90% of the people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90% of the people living with HIV who know their status will be on HIV treatment, and 90% of the people accessing HIV treatment will have undetectable levels of HIV in their body (known as viral suppression). Having an undetectable viral load means that people's immune system remains strong and their risk of transmitting HIV is greatly reduced. Ending HIV is everyone's job Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director stated it perfectly "By working together to ensure that no one is left behind, the AIDS epidemic can be ended."

To read more: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-hiv-and-aids-2030/>

The future of HIV treatment



While there are currently no vaccines available that will prevent HIV or treating those living with, Scientists are working on the development of one building on the findings of earlier studies that looked promising, as finding new and easier ways to more effectively treating HIV to stop the spread is an urgent priority to get to zero transmission. Vaccines are some of the most powerful public health tools available—and an HIV vaccine would play a powerful tool in our toolkit of Prevention Modality. Dr. Ronald G. Collman, director of the Penn Center for AIDS Research in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania stated "This new research is very encouraging and quite exciting. But we have to keep in mind that HIV is a virus with certain unique things that make it exceedingly resistant to the creation of a vaccine." Watch a short video describing the Progress towards a vaccine: <https://youtu.be/n3S83S6Pdn8>



Alone No More

A Client Impact Story by Andres Acosta

A Brave New World

“I FELT ALONE, AND SCARED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD”

That is how Ryan White client Alexander Rojas describes his first six months in the United States.

Alexander is one of 114,772 individuals in Florida living with HIV, and part of the over 8,000 consumers that benefit from the services provided by the Ryan White program. Alex looks like any other 23 year old. Fresh face, boyish smile and athletic frame, but his eyes tell you the story of a much older man.

Humble Beginnings

Alex comes from the small town of Estado Lara in Venezuela, near the city of Barquisimeto. Born to a lower class family in a country that promised equality but delivered misery. Alex struggled with his faith, culture, and sexuality as far as he can remember.

“I WAS IN THE CLOSET THE ENTIRE TIME I LIVED IN VENEZUELA” HE SIGHS “EVEN NOW I’M OUT SOCIALLY BUT MY MOTHER STILL DOESN’T KNOW, OR RATHER DOESN’T WANT TO KNOW.”

As the situation in Venezuela grew worse and his desire for a better life grew, stronger alexander set his sights on the American Dream. Like many children in the developing and third world, Alex had grown up with the idealistic vision of United States America. He worked hard and sacrificed in order to save all the money he could scraped together and his dream to escape to the USA became a plan.

The Diagnosis

The doctor asked Alex to come into the office for his results after a routine HIV test. He “knew what was coming.” to make matters worse had reached out to his parents to get in contact with him. “My dad knew right

away and it broke my heart, I felt like I had failed him, my family and myself.” Alex’s family has a troubled history with HIV. He lost his uncle to AIDS and his grandmother is currently living with HIV. HIV as Alex explained to me is a prominent problem in the rural areas of Venezuela. A combination of lack of funding, education, and resources combined with cultural and religious stigmatization of the condition have created the perfect brewing ground for the epidemic. Perhaps it was the prevalence of HIV in his area that lead to the supportive reaction he received from his parents when he was first diagnosed. They rallied around him and assured him that they would stay by his side no matter what. “It didn’t make the pain go away but at least it made it bearable.”

Full Steam Ahead

Alex was 19 years old at the time and just two weeks away from going on the most life-changing journey anyone can take. He had been planning his big move to the United States for quite some time now. “The first thing that came to my mind was the trip, there was nothing left for me in Venezuela and I wasn’t going to let this stop me. The fearless 19 year left his home in Venezuela to make it on his own. Through the transition, his thoughts often drifted back to the family and country he had left behind. “My mother had begged me to stay,” he recalls with tears beginning to stain his face, “She feared that I would be unable to get help, she would often cry on the phone and prayed for me.” He worked hard to stay calm and collected while assuring his family back home that he would be all right. He did his best to carry on alone.

Answered Prayers

For about six months, Alex was out of care. An unlikely source would set him on the right path. Alex disclosed his status to a man he met on Grindr who was kind enough to direct him to the Department of Health. Armed with this new information and a basic understanding of the English language

he found his way to the third floor of the Health Department. Inside the testing room, he held his breath while the rapid test told him what he already knew. Once the test was completed and it clearly showed Alex was reactive, “a miracle happened.” The woman that performed his test was one of the many dedicated staff members of the Health Department. She was trained to handle this very situation and with the skill and care of a seasoned professional, she became Alex’s lifeline and connection into the Ryan White continuum of care.

“FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AMERICA I FELT LIKE I WAS NO LONGER ALONE.”

His mother’s prayers were answered.

A Happy Ending And New Beginning

In a short amount of time, Alex was assigned to a medical case manager.

Overall, it was a short journey of six months from diagnosis to treatment and three more months to receiving the news that he was undetectable. “I called my parents crying, I knew I was going to be alright.” It has now been almost four years, Alex and his family have been reunited, and he is thriving. Alex and his family were lucky. Due to the dire situation in Venezuela, most of the people have lost an average of 20 pounds and the healthcare system has all but shut down except in most of the major cities. “I’m sharing my story because I’m grateful.” He says

“TO GOD, TO THE US, TO THE PEOPLE IN THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT. I HOPE THAT SHARING MY STORY WILL HELP THOSE GOING THROUGH THE SAME THING AND LET THEM KNOW THERE IS HELP. THEY ARE NOT ALONE.”



Relax... It's Just Art!

By Andres Acosta

Everyone has stress. It is a normal part of life. However, how we are managing it is important, as it can have long-term effects on our overall health and wellness. It can lead us to unhealthy coping mechanism like risky behaviors and substance abuse. Well you have a lot more control than you might think. In fact, the simple realization that you are in control of your life is the foundation of managing stress. So what is there for the community to do? Relax...It's Just Art! Embraces the philosophy of locus of control and teaches members of the Central Florida Community how to cope with stress in a healthy and creative way.

RELAX.... IT'S JUST ART IS THE BRAINCHILD OF THE ORLANDO UNITED ASSISTANCE CENTER AND PREPARE.

OUAC was first established as a collaboration between the Orange County Government, City of Orlando and United Way to assist the members of the community in the healing process after Pulse. It has since grown into a beacon of hope and a valuable resource for the Central Florida Community. PrePare is a program of Aspire Health Partners dedicating itself to the mental health of the community as well as providing resources

like PrEP. Since both organizations put mental health and self-care first, it is no wonder they created such an innovative way to help the Central Florida Community.

Relax... it's just art focuses on the healing power of art. It encourages the participants to channel their daily stress into a creative outlet like drawing, painting, or terrarium building! **"WE WANTED TO CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO COME TOGETHER AND HEAL"** Says Gabriella Rodriguez of the Orlando United Assistance Center. "Mental health is a very important issue especially in communities of color who are often less likely to seek help due to cultural and societal stigma." Relax... it's just art manages to provide the joy and fun of a paint night with the stress relieving powers of a therapy session. Best of all, the entire program is completely free. Whereas a paint night at a local gallery or a terrarium building session would cost anywhere from 25-50 dollars per person. "It's all about giving people the chance to express themselves and enjoy activities without the financial burden" Say Maria Buckley of PrePare. "We help build resilience in the community and teach how to manage stress."

The program has been a hit so far. The last session included an aromatherapy

component that left participants at ease and peaceful while painting a rainbow rose that looked stunning. **The next activity is the creation of a Terrarium and will take place on July 18th and August 15th.** Both OUAC and PrePare have active Facebook pages and their events are often reposted to the Central Florida HIV Planning Councils Facebook Page as well.

So if you are feeling stressed, anxious, and ready to blow. Come join these great organizations for a fun night of creativity and relax, after all life is just a work of art.



New Member Profile

By Sam Graper

This is a surprising story. Well, at least for Roy. Well, probably for you too, so let's start at the beginning.

FRUSTRATION. It's a surprising way to start an inspirational story. But really, haven't we've all been there after reading articles about the state of the world? As a result, we wonder if there is even hope? Roy Harry answers this with a definitive "YES - I have hope!". Then he asked "What more can I do?" So, after working in the community for years he found himself wanting to do more. At a larger level that could impact the entire community, but how?

A recent article about rising HIV rates in Orlando brought Roy back to the pain of his own diagnosis. "My diagnosis came with a lot of shame, and feelings of betrayal," he said. He found out he was HIV positive while dating the same guy for years.

"I THOUGHT WE WERE FAITHFUL TO EACH OTHER. I NEVER WANTED TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP AGAIN AND I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT MY STATUS."

So he didn't. HIV stigma took over and silenced Roy. "You don't talk about it and nobody cares. You mention it and it sucks the air out of the room". Roy began seeing a doctor and taking medication. His body responded quickly to treatment but the burden of stigma was slower to lift. It took time. However "it doesn't define me" any more.

The article was a very frustrating moment. To think after all these years, HIV rates are still rising. Roy decided to flip his frustration into inspiration! He decided to use his own story and lived experiences to help others. But again, how can one man help end HIV in Orlando? He wanted something bigger than volunteering at one organization. He wanted his time and experience to help others. To make a big impact and give hope.

Above all, he wanted to help those living with HIV and to help prevent it. He found exactly what he was searching for.

So the surprising way one man is helping end HIV in Orlando? Involvement! Yup. That's the big "secret". Active participation. And this time Roy wanted to go big. REALLY BIG! So after looking around,



know you are in the right place." Then came Senior Co-Chair Sam Graper. "A tenacious and opinionated man who puts the needs of the community first." But in the end it would be the Chair of the PR and Marketing Committee Gabriella Rodriguez that would seal the deal. "She was willing to work with me and help me learn, she believed in me and made me feel valued."

"I KNOW I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH PLANNING COUNCIL. EVERY TIME I GO I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EPIDEMIC, THE DATA THAT DRIVES DECISION MAKING, THE EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY, AND HOW TO REACH THOSE THAT NEED US THE MOST." Roy says.

Then he continues "I'm grateful to have the chance to serve in Planning Council. It has given me the tools to address the needs of my community. The power to create change in the Central Florida area. It gives me the gift to feel at peace with my diagnosis, and help others do the same."

End an epidemic is a tall order for one man. So new challenges are faced every day alongside his fellow members. But they face them together. He has taken on the role of Gabriella's right hand man as the Vice-Chair for the PR and Marketing committee. His new boyfriend is even coming with him to meetings. "I've learned that my status doesn't define me." So perhaps the most surprising way one man is helping end HIV in Orlando is the simplest. Get involved.



You can be the change and work alongside Roy in ending the HIV epidemic. It's simple. Just email us at CFHPC@HFUW and find connection at facebook at [Facebook.com/CentralFloridaHIVPlanningCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/CentralFloridaHIVPlanningCouncil).

Ask Ryan



Dear Ryan,

With the recent celebration of HIV/AIDS Long Term Survivors Awareness Day on June 5, I find myself asking what makes a Long Term Survivor. In addition, why should they be celebrated?

Sincerely

Newly Diagnosed in Brevard

Dear NDIB,

To understand the need to celebrate HIV/AIDS Long Term Survivors Awareness Day and Long Term Survivors we must first understand the historical significance of the date itself. On the 5th of June 1981 the Center for Disease Control (CDC) released the weekly report on Morbidity and Mortality. On this particular day the report contained the shocking news about five young gay men diagnosed with Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia. The diagnosis was a clear sign that they were suffering from a severely compromised immune response that would later come to be known as AIDS. Long Term Survivors Day is celebrated on June 5th as a way to remember those who have lived with HIV/AIDS and have continued to thrive through the years. Now the question of what makes a Long Term Survivor is a bit trickier. The Medical definition refers to "those who have received a who have been diagnosed with an AIDS defining opportunistic infection for at least three years and are doing well with a reasonably good quality of life" (New York University Medical Center). This would mean that those who have found themselves in the grips of AIDS and have been able to rebound in spite of the difficulties would be considered Long Term Survivors. Of Course there is more to it that just the medical definition. Culturally there seems to be two definitions to what makes a Long Term Survivors. There are First Generation Survivors or those diagnosed before the advancement of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy. During the plague years when HIV was synonymous with death sentence (1980's- early 1990's) there were some that against all odds managed to pull through and survive. They are the ones that saw their friends perish one by one and now live with the psychological burden of survivor's guilt. They are the ones that faced stigma and rejection at every turn, and they are the ones who served as the

foundation for the treatment, protection, and movement that surrounds HIV/AIDS today. There are also those who consider the providers, caretakers and spouses who stayed alongside their loved ones during the plague years while remaining HIV-, the ones that saw their loved ones passed while remaining faithfully by their side as Long Term Survivors. Those diagnosed with HIV after the development of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy around 1996 and have been diagnosed for at least 10 years are also considered Long Term Survivors. They are the generation of people living with HIV who were told that it was "no longer a death sentence." They've faced their own challenges and fought their own battles, never forgetting those that paved the way so that they could live with a manageable long term illness. So what makes a Long Term Survivor? Perseverance, strength and above all hope. We celebrate Long Term Survivors because they are the ones that let all of use that are newly or recently diagnosed know that there is hope. We celebrate them because they faced the brunt of ignorance, rejection and suffering and came out stronger on the other side. We celebrate them because their sacrifices made it possible for us to talk about HIV and publicly disclose our status. Because they paved the way for you and me to have access to one pill regimens and culturally sensitive health care providers. We celebrate them because they must be celebrated. My message to you Newly Diagnosed in Brevard, no my challenge to you, is to celebrate and remember them not only on June 5th but every day. As you go about your day and you get ready to take your medication. As you draw the pill closer to your mouth, stop, take a breath, and know that you are not alone. There are those who have faced the same challenges you will go through. There are those that continue to smile, live, and love with the same illness as you. Remember that they are with you and they are the hope that keeps us all moving forward.

Yours in the struggle,
Ask Ryan

Submit your questions to CFHPC@HFUW.ORG with the subject line as "ASK RYAN" and it could appear in the next installment of the Red Ribbon Times. Disclaimer: All questions will be answered by Planning Council Members and staff persons while using experience and data if necessary.



Before you know it, Come Out with Pride Orlando will be upon us. The Festival along with The Most Colorful Parade is the most eagerly anticipated event of Pride Week and will feature nearly 150 groups spanning a 1-mile route through downtown Orlando.

THROUGHOUT THE DAY, GUESTS CAN ENJOY LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT MULTIPLE STAGES AROUND THE PARK, INCLUDING CELEBRITY HEADLINERS.

Visit the Pride Marketplace and enjoy dozens of vendors, businesses and organizations committed to diversity in the Central Florida area. Pride Takes Action, an initiative designed to connect festival-goers with advocacy groups, will be back this year to join the vendor lineup. The night will conclude with a signature fireworks finale on the lake marking the official close of Come Out With Pride 2019.

Admission to the Parade and Festival is FREE! For more information, please visit ComeOutWithPride.com.



After the tragedy at Pulse, people from every continent showered Orlando with love and support. Now we want to show everyone how their love has strengthened and positively impacted our community.

WE WANT TO BRING THEM HERE.

The team at Come Out With Pride has officially submitted an intent to bid to host WorldPride in 2026, 10 years after Pulse. This celebration, held in cities such as Rome, Tel Aviv, London, Toronto, Madrid and New York City this June, is a massive multi-week gathering designed for a global audience.

We predict nearly a million attendees would attend our opening and closing ceremonies, LGBTQ rights conference, and the biggest parade Central Florida has ever seen. Our primary mission though is to continue to change hearts and minds and continue the fight towards progress and LGBTQ equality.

This is just the beginning of a multi-year series of conversations with the community before we present our bid in 2021. More details will be announced in the months and years ahead, but if you would like to get involved and lend your voice, please visit ComeOutWithPride.com/WorldPride and also tune into the press announcement as well.



The 2019 Space Coast Pride Festival & Parade is approaching and we want you involved! Whether you're a vendor looking to showcase your business, march in our parade, or even become a sponsor, we need you!

The 2019 Festival & Parade will be in Melbourne in the Historic Eau Gallie Arts District on Saturday, Sept. 28th, 2019. For more information about events, registration and volunteer opportunities, please visit spacecoastpride.org





NLAAD



NATIONAL LATINX AIDS AWARENESS DAY

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