



Bloom - The Iris House Quarterly

Winter 2011

Special Points of Interest

- 3rd Annual Night of Games & Dancing Gala
- Children's Holiday Party
- Summer Interns Speak



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- Ingrid Floyd
Executive Director

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3rd Annual Night of Games and Dancing

October 2010



Left to right: Theresa Mack, MD, Board Chair; Nick Charles, Board Secretary; Sonya Lockett, Honoree—BET Networks; Ingrid Floyd, Executive Director



Debra Fraser-Howze, Honoree
Orasure Technologies

A very big thank you to all our supporters who helped make our 3rd Annual Night of Games & Dancing a truly wonderful event. It was an evening filled with great friends, delicious food and toe-tapping music. Iris House recognizes our sponsors Felix and Elizabeth Rohatyn Foundation, BET Networks, OraSure Technologies, Inc., Invemed Associates, LLC., Leslie Lake, Invus Financial Advisors, Abyssinian Development Corporation, Center for Comprehensive Care, FOA & Son, National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Thomas Roberts, Naima Walker-Fierce, Tibotec Therapeutics, Timothy & Claire Radomisli, John & Kathy Draghi, Jennifer Klot, Shai & Kate Waisman, Grand Wine & Liquor, JTE Spirits, Starr African Rum & Blended Wine & Spirits.

Visit our website to see more pictures from this event

Children's Holiday Party

December 2010

The holiday season is a time when many organizations and individuals help Iris House spread joy by donating gifts. With their help, the children of Iris House had a wonderful celebration and received great gifts they may not have otherwise received. We received donations from Deloitte Services LLP, Frontline, The Gateway School, High Water Women, Holiday Gifts for Children and Seniors, Cubs for Kids, Reverend Ossie Edwards, Stephen & Diane Novis, St. John's AME Church, United Hispanic Construction Workers, Inc. & 132 West 125th Street, Casa V; HRA Food Stamps and Employment Program. Our holiday season was especially joyous due to all their efforts and kindness. We also thank the volunteers of Deloitte Services that participated in the event's success.



A Message from the Executive Director



Ingrid Floyd

March 2011 brings Iris House to 18 years of helping women, families and communities infected and affected by HIV. During this time we have helped thousands of women and men living with HIV understand their diagnosis and more importantly live with the diagnosis. In 2010 the agency serviced over 2600 clients. There were over 540 clients living with HIV or AIDS who received at least one on-site service at the agency. The number of minorities impacted by HIV continues to grow and our services continue to remain critical. In late 2010 the agency also began expanding its services to other areas such as New Jersey. Our Leading Ladies Program funded, by the Office on Women's Health, has been providing prevention education to organizations in NJ ranging from as far south as Camden to the heavily impacted neighborhoods of Newark. We see each day the impact we are having on women and families and it's through our supporters that we are able to continue to make an impact on persons living with HIV. We invite you to visit our sites in Central or East Harlem to see the work firsthand and to hear from those who benefit from your support. As HIV rates in communities of color continue to rise, as health disparities continue to exist and as youth infection rates continue to skyrocket your support now is even more critical than ever. Thank You.

Iris House Participates in Local Community Garden

By Shirley Alves

During the summer Iris House had a vision to revitalize the nearby Elizabeth Langley Community Garden located on 138th between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd and Lenox Avenue. Shirley Alves, Director of Food and Nutrition Services who leads this project, elicited the help of the Deloitte Community Service Day Volunteers. Along with Iris House staff members and newly recruited members from the local community, they helped clear the garden of debris and aided in the building and repairing of new raised beds. In addition, they installed a small herb garden, planted flowers along the street to bring pleasure to the eye of passers-by and gardeners alike, and built a gazebo.

The clients of Iris House were able to plant, and ultimately reap, a variety of vegetables and herbs including tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers, sweet peppers, callaloo, parsley, basil, lemon verbena and sage. During each visit to care for their raised beds, Iris House clients also made an effort to take care of the garden as a whole. Now community members who pass by the garden are grateful to see such a change from a place to store debris to a beautiful garden. They are looking forward to spring planting!





My experience in the Food & Nutrition Department

By Onyca Martin

When I first started at Iris House, I was assigned to the Food & Nutrition Department working with Serge Jean, Assistant Director as well as with Marie Angel, Cook, Kitchen Interns, and the Nutritionists. My first experience at Iris House was not what I expected. However, when I was introduced to the staff, I felt a bit at ease. The knowledge that I obtained about the organization gave me a different outlook about the agency and the services that were offered.

My first impression of the Kitchen was the cleanliness. Everything seemed in order. I learned the importance of food safety tips when handling and preparing meals in order to prevent food borne illnesses. The first rule of the kitchen was hand washing. Hand washing is one defense against germs. Therefore, it was important for me to wash my hands with soap and water before working with raw meat, fish or poultry as well as handling the garbage, sneezing, coughing, touching utensils to make the food and before touching foods that will not be cooked such as lettuce, salads, fruits and definitely after using the restroom. Rule number two was wearing a hair net. Wearing a hair net prevents particles from falling into the food and therefore, it is essential to keep the clients at Iris House healthy when making or preparing meals. Rule number three was wearing latex gloves. Wearing latex gloves can also prevent food borne illnesses.

Also, I assisted with the preparation of lunches for the clients, served lunches, packed pantry bags and entered updates into the department's database. My experience at Iris House has been exciting and it opened my eyes to something that I did not know exists. I realized Iris House is a second home for many of the clients. They know that at Iris House there is always someone here to assist them when in need. Thank you to the Nutrition staff for the great work that you do. I was blessed to have the opportunity to work at Iris House.



Reflection on my work Experience

By Xavier Bullock

Working at Iris House made me feel useful as opposed to other work experiences I have had. Everything I did at Iris House seemed important, like updating databases, helping in the kitchen and making pantry/emergency bags. Iris House is a nice environment. The employees are nice and helpful—reminds me of a family in many ways.

I enjoyed working in the Food and Nutrition department. There was always something that needed to be done. I found it most comfortable down in the kitchen, plus Serge was a cool supervisor. I am sure this is one of the best jobs I have had so far in my working career. Knowing that I helped the clients really feels good. Now I know that they are more than just names on a list. The clients at Iris House are real people and I am happy to be helping them out. Overall, it was a cool job. Honestly, I wouldn't mind being like Serge when I'm older.



My Experience at Iris House

By Ayana McKenzie

This summer, I was one of many candidates who was selected to take part in the New York City Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and was fortunate to be assigned to Iris House, a Center for Women Living with HIV Inc. Throughout the seven weeks that I have interned at Iris House, I must say that I have learned quite a few things. I was assigned to work at the reception desk with Jerry Sheldon, the Receptionist. My duties included the day to day operations of the front desk, including but not limited to, answering numerous phone lines in a courteous and polite manner and routing calls appropriately. In addition, I assisted in ensuring that clients, visitors and guests signed the log book and indicated the individual and/or floor and department they were visiting. I also answered questions about the services, programs and events at Iris House or referred callers to the appropriate staff member for a response. Finally, I assisted in the distribution of pantry bags to clients as well as people in the community; which I found quite hectic at times, but I was able to manage.

My interaction with the clients was fantastic. It was easy for them to accept me as one of the new faces at Iris House and most importantly, I was always treated with dignity and respect by them and the faculty. Throughout the short time that I interned at Iris House, I must say that I enjoyed the experience. I learned how to multitask, which I think is vital at the front desk. I also learned how to work independently and efficiently as well as demonstrated teamwork and open communication at all times.

Last, but not least, I enjoyed working at an organization that values diversity and is free of racism and sexism. Many thanks to Jerry Sheldon for showing me the ropes on how to run a smooth and functioning front desk. My experience at Iris House was a memorable one and that positively enhanced my life. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity.



What's Happening at Iris House

AIDS Walk : May 15: Support Iris House by joining our team, raising money and walking with us.

6th Annual Women as the Face of AIDS Summit: Beyond The Diagnosis:
Friday, June 24 & Saturday, June 25

For more information on these events contact Kimberly Richardson at krichardson@irishouse.org or visit our website: www.irishouse.org.



Iris House is looking for host sites for the SIHLE prevention intervention, a component of YOU! SIHLE is for sexually active teen girls ages 14–18. If your organization is interested in participating please call Debra Bosier at 646-548-0100 *239.



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Please visit our website to learn about upcoming events and new programs.