



Bloom - The Iris House Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2013

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Naima Walker-Fierce, *Chair*

Tyrha M. Lindsey, *Treasurer*

Joy Altimare, *Secretary*

Nick Charles

Debra Fraser-Howze

Theresa Mack, MD MPH

Tom Rosato

Camille Nicole Sealy

Cynthia Taylor

Michael Turon

Ingrid Floyd, Executive Director,

HONORARY BOARD

Kate Campana

Christo, Christo Fifth Avenue

Sukey Wagner



IN THIS ISSUE

- Advocacy or Austerity?, 1
- From the Exec Director, 2
- Program Updates, 3
- Weil Cares Fashion Show, 3
- AIDS Walk, 3
- Upcoming Events, 4

ADVOCACY OR AUSTERITY?

By Michael Barret Jones



Since its founding in 1993, Iris House has been providing some of New York City's premiere services for women living with HIV. Though it was founded initially as a way to help Latinas and African-American women prepare themselves and their families in the event of death, within a couple of years, new drug regimens gave these women a hope they hadn't had before: the prospect of being able to raise their families and live healthy, independent lives.

Iris House continues to deliver support programs that help women in these ways: not only case management and crisis intervention, but peer-based support groups, social engagement, advocacy and life skills training.

Despite two decades of delivering these services, Iris House, as with almost all of our sister agencies working in the HIV Services field, finds itself at a crossroads. New priorities under the National HIV/AIDS Strategy coupled with the Congressional Sequester of existing budget lines is forcing us to address these challenges head on.

To quote a recent letter from the National Women & AIDS Collective to US Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, “

Reductions in funding are not just a result of the changes in philanthropy trends but also reflect a shifting public funding environment. The budget sequester and recent policy decisions demonstrate a skewing of priorities away from community-based organizations primarily serving women. Both the US Office on Women's Health (OWH) and the Office of Minority Health (OMH) budget line items for supporting community based organizations that serve females and minorities impacted by HIV were eliminated in the President's Budget for FY2014. These funding cuts, totaling approximately \$3.3 million will not only affect service delivery but will also weaken the infrastructure of the major organizing forces in our communities: women and nonprofit organizations.

At Iris House, that has specific ramifications: we have eliminated (through attrition) positions in our CDC funded prevention programs and our AIDS Institute funded Harm Reduction program. Each of our AIDS Institute programs (Food and Nutrition Services, Women's Supportive Services, Our "Just For Us" program for lesbians and bisexual women) are facing across the board cuts. Moreover, our two signature programs for women, Women's Supportive Services and Women Helping Women, may be completely retired by their funders. Our core mission programs, those which specifically serve women and their families, are in danger of being watered down or eliminated.

(Continued on Page Two)

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The team at Iris House is hard at work meeting the challenges described in our cover story. We are in the midst of creating a strategic plan for our next three years which will encompass some significant changes in the way we look at our business model and the way we deliver our services. However, for as many changes that may be coming down the line, the board and executive leadership here are absolutely committed to doing everything in our power to keep the focus where it has been for the last twenty years: on the needs of women living in our community, both those infected/affected by HIV and those who are impacted by the ongoing health disparities of our community. Our deliverables will grow to encompass more work around Hepatitis C; we will continue to work with the community to address food and nutrition concerns, particularly those around hunger, obesity and diabetes; we are working on programs to add direct medical services on-site and increase our mental health offerings.

In addition to examining our programs, we're also working to strengthen our infrastructure. Since the beginning of 2013, we are proud to have brought four new individuals onto our board: Tom Rosato of Deloitte Consulting, Debra Fraser-Howze of Orasure Technologies, analyst Michael Turon and national health policy maker Camille Sealy. These four have already begun to add their technical and business expertise to the operations of our great board, and we know that increasing our capacity at that level will only help us as we move forward into the third decade of Iris House's work. We look forward to introducing them to you at our events and other functions around town.

Ingrid Floyd, Executive Director

ADVOCACY or AUSTERITY, continued.



IRIS HOUSE DELIVERS.

Our programs and services are in demand. In 2012-2013, we provided:

- 3,122 Rapid HIV Tests
- 252 Hepatitis C Tests
- 4,842 Case Management conferences for HIV+ Clients
- 1,518 Individual Support Sessions for Women
- 227 Support Groups for HIV+ people, serving a range of specific populations: women, women over 50, Latinas, lesbians, men
- 10,761 Meals to HIV+ and other Food Insecure Members of the Community
- 40,000+ meals via pantry bag to our HIV+ clients and neighbors
- 137,144 Condoms in New York and New Jersey
- 712 Individuals participated in Curriculum Based Prevention Education (via SIHLE, NIA, d-UP, SISTA and WILLOW programs)

Additionally, Our HIV 101 programs had more than by 860 participants, many of them between 14-18; Our Annual Women as the Face of AIDS Summit attracted more than 400 people to a day long series of workshops and seminars and had more than 700 people attend our outdoor community health fair. We offered six computer workshops, six financial management workshops, and two cycles of Healthy Relationships training. More than 15,000 people were engaged throughout the year in various prevention outreach programs. Our work continues, unabated until there's an end to this epidemic.

GO TEAM IRIS HOUSE!

The tradition continues with Iris House fielding a strong team of friends and family to participate in the annual AIDS Walk New York, raising nearly \$3,500 for Iris House programs by walking the 10K in the rain!

THANK YOU WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES!

On July 29th, Kito Huggins, Manager of Strategic Business Development Initiatives at Weil, Gotshal & Manges, LLP, produced a men's fashion show at VBH Luxury Gallery to Benefit Iris House.



With a host of fashion and liquor sponsors, including VBH Luxury, Bergdorf Goodman, Carson Street Clothiers, Heights Kenchi, John Varvatos, Louis Purple, Saks Fifth Avenue and Fou-Dre Vodka, this event raised more than \$25,000 for our programs! Thank you Kito, Iris House Board President Naima Walker-Fierce, and

the entire team at Weil!

Donations from individuals support the work we do at Iris House. To make a contribution, call Michael Jones at 646-548-0100 x222, or visit our website at www.irishouse.org.





Ingrid Floyd (far R) thanks a core of Iris House’s many volunteers at our annual Summer Picnic on August 23 in Riverbank State Park.

What’s Happening at Iris House

**Imperial Court of New York’s 5th Annual Nobles Show
A Benefit for Iris House**

Saturday, September 21st, 6–9 PM, Stonewall Inn
53 Christopher Street, \$10 Suggested Donation

National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Testing Events
October 15, 2013

Iris House Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon
November 22, 2013

To volunteer at any of these events, call Kimberly at 646-548-0100 x221

Bloom is published several times a year.
Let us know what format you prefer by calling Michael Jones,
646-548-0100 x222 or email mjones@irishouse.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA and IRIS HOUSE

The team at Iris House is ramping up its efforts to broaden the scope and widen the focus of our communications strategies including active presences on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Come see what all the fuss is about and get daily news in your feed about what we’re up to!

- On the Web:** www.irishouse.org
www.Keepit100NYC.org
www.Keepit100NJ.org

Facebook: Iris House: A Center for Women and Families

Iris House: New Jersey

Twitter: @IrisHouse

@keepit100NYC

YouTube: IrisHouse2010



Main Office

2348 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.
(between 137 & 138th Sts.)
New York, NY 10030
Phone: 646 548-0100

East Side Office

2271 Second Avenue
(between 116 & 117 Sts.)
New York, NY 10035
212-423-9049

Central New Jersey Office

630 East Front Street
Plainfield, NJ 07060
908-561-5057

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK
PERMIT #2031

Please visit our website (www.irishouse.org) to learn about upcoming events and new programs.

Publication of the names or photographs of persons in *Bloom* – *The Iris House Quarterly* or the website www.irishouse.org are voluntarily provided and does not imply the person’s HIV/AIDS status, sexual orientation or any other information disclosed in this issue.