



Bloom - The Iris House Newsletter

Fall 2019

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The 2019 United States Conference on AIDS (USCA)

The 2019 United States Conference on AIDS: “Ending the Epidemics in Their Memory” returned to Washington, DC from September 5-8th, 2019 at the Marriot Marquis Hotel. This year’s focus was the plan to end the HIV epidemic in America. It was an opportunity for health departments, community-based organizations, people living with HIV, people on PrEP, national organizations, health centers, health care providers, donors, activists, and federal leaders to come together to discuss implementation. Thousands of colleagues celebrated the resilience and diversity of the movement during the weekend event.



The conference featured well over 100 workshops, four plenary sessions, networking sessions and featuring emcee, Joy Reid of MSNBC. Our former Executive Intern from Iris House, Reyana de Verteuil, recently shared her experience on her blog, and we are grateful for her beautiful account.

This past weekend, I had the pleasure of attending the 2019 US Conference on AIDS as part of NMAC’s Youth Scholars program. I couldn’t describe how inspired I was by my peers during this conference. I was fortunate to spend the weekend with around twenty-five young persons, like myself, who were all immensely passionate about playing their part in the movement to end the HIV epidemic. Tears were almost brought to my eyes while these brave young men and women shared their stories with the group. I realized then that ‘power’ was not a trait to be given to you, but it comes to you when you have the strength to stand up and tell your own story.

I left the conference with twice the amount of knowledge about HIV/AIDs, but also with substantial information on what it takes for ME to become a leader in my society, advocating for ANY issue. We had the opportunity to partake in “Getting the Gig Bootcamps”, “Leadership Workshops” and “Emotional Intelligence” seminars—all of which were equally as beneficial to myself and my peers.

One of the things that touched me during my USCA experience, was the U=U campaign, and the stories shared during the plenary sessions and in the Youth Initiative sessions to validate this campaign. I had never seen or heard of cases that actually support ‘Undetectable equals Untransmittable’. However, experiencing this truth truly grounded my desire to spread the awareness of U=U in my home region. In Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean, the stigma attached to HIV/AIDs is crippling to any and most efforts of persons living with HIV to reintegrate themselves into society. These persons are almost always marginalized and accept their HIV diagnosis as a death sentence. I think it is crucial to push this U=U campaign in this region in efforts to open the minds of the people (both those living with and not living with HIV) to the possibility of a healthy, long life with HIV.

I cannot express my gratitude enough to NMAC and to my fellow Youth Leaders for an amazing experience during the 2019 USCA. I look forward, now, to doing my part as a young leader to spreading this ‘End the Epidemic’ campaign to the Caribbean. I also look forward to executing my social media campaign on U=U for my World AIDS Day project. I also hope to attend the USCA with NMAC again in 2020.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Iris House has dynamically entered its 26th year of services to the Harlem and surrounding communities, and the agency continues to provide critical support services to people living with HIV, individuals who are unaware of how to prevent HIV infection, those who are living with other chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension, and persons who are food insecure as well as those facing chronic homelessness. Our services have continued to evolve as we focus on the needs of women, men, and families in communities hard hit by various socio-economic disparities.

The agency consistently implements new programs and partnerships in order to improve. Our most recent affiliation with AIDS Healthcare Foundation, headquartered in Los Angeles, California, has allowed us to expand our services in the form of a new healthcare center. The grand opening event took place on the afternoon of Friday, October 11th at our new Bronx site. This exciting venture will increase opportunities for our clients and the community to have healthcare access not previously available. Iris House staff will be at the daily beginning in November and will be actively conducting outreach in the surrounding neighborhood. We are very proud and excited for this next phase with Iris House and AHF, and look forward to the partnership.

Additionally, our staff is evolving by learning new interventions that can better educate those they serve, and our leadership team stands ready to take the organization into its next phase. During my 14 years of leading Iris House, I have witnessed the tremendous work that the organization does in the tri-state area, as well as the amazing work at the national level on various committees and through our national online support group. I hear countless stories from clients who say that Iris House has saved their life, whether it be a woman who formerly abused substances and had nowhere to turn once she learned of her HIV diagnosis or young men who come for our weekly group for GBTQ men, because it is the only place they feel safe and supported.

As we reflect on 26 years of service and what the future holds, it is our stakeholders that allow me to recognize the worth of the work that we do which really saves lives!

SUPPORT OUR WORK

You can make the difference in someone's day, week or life!
 Your gift on our website will go directly to the clients we serve.
 \$30 will provide ten hot lunches for people living with HIV; \$50 will underwrite a support group; \$100 will provide counseling, HIV and Hepatitis C tests, and connection to care if necessary.

Please consider a gift today at www.irishouse.org.

THANK YOU!

We have lines out the door for our lunch program every day, and on Thursdays, the line for pantry bags can extend around the corner. Food insecurity is a huge problem in our community, particularly for people impacted by HIV / AIDS.
 We're doing our part to help.

We deeply appreciate the leadership support of



The New York Women's Foundation invites you to join us to celebrate the 25th Anniversary Neighborhood Dinner honoring outstanding women community leaders in Manhattan.

THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
Neighborhood Dinner
 25 Years of Celebrating Outstanding Community Leaders

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14th
 Harlem Parish
 258 West 118th Street
 New York, NY

6:00 p.m. Cocktails
 7:00 p.m.- 9:00. p.m.
 Dinner & Program

HONORING

Lifetime Achievement Award
Betty Cheyne Jones
 Activist & Philanthropist

Neighborhood Leadership Award
Cidra M. Sebastien
 Associate Executive Director of Brotherhood/Sister Sol

Ingrid N. Floyd
 Executive Director of Iris House

Spirit of Entrepreneurship Award
Jennifer DaSilva
 Founder of Start Small, Think Big

Ngozi Okaro
 Executive Director of Custom Collaborative

Emcee
Vivian Lee
 Emmy-Nominated Anchor and Reporter of NY1

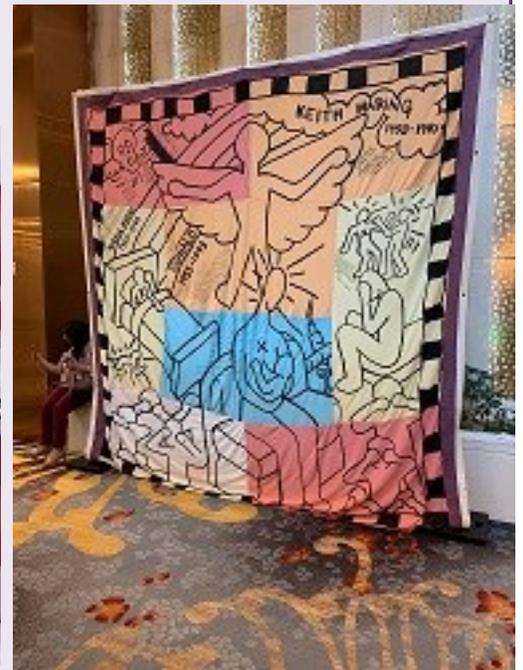
TICKETS

THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
 Radical generosity.

Photos from USCA + Wellness Center Grand Opening

The 2019 United States Conference on AIDS returned to Washington, DC from September 5-8th. This year's conference solidified the importance of convening together in solidarity to continue the important work to end the epidemic.

Our new AHF Wellness/Healthcare Center formally opened with a grand celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, October 11, 2019 in the South Bronx. The center will deliver state-of-the-art HIV/AIDS medical care and services. Below are some of our favorite photo ops!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Name: Nichole Benjamin
Title: Director of Development
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
Time at Iris House: 4 months
Time in the Field: 7 years



What do you Do? I partner with the ED and program teams to lead, develop, and implement fundraising strategy for the agency. I also write foundation and corporate grant proposals, as well as plan fundraising events. My goals include increasing public funding through outreach, cultivation, and stewardship.

What makes you smile: Good food, and also quality time with my tribe

Favorite Song: "Love is Stronger than Pride" by Sade

Favorite Food: Bake and shark: a Trinidadian delicacy

What "feeds" you most about working at Iris house? ? I am committed to getting donors and sponsors on board in the fight for eradicating HIV/AIDS, particularly as it affects women and marginalized/underserved communities at disparaging rates.

Hobbies: International travel; Foraging for new eats; Sewing and creating things

Quote: "She who would attain greatness must make no little plans."
 -Unknown

Upcoming Events at Iris House

Thanksgiving Luncheon

Thursday, November 21st

Kids Holiday Party

Thursday, December 19th

Holiday Luncheon

Thursday, December 19th

To donate or volunteer call 646 548 0100 x 221

SOCIAL MEDIA and IRIS HOUSE

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

Facebook: Iris House

Iris House: New Jersey

Twitter: @IrisHouse

Instagram: Iris_House_ IrisHouse_NJ



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 646 548 0100

Central New Jersey Office

630 East Front Street
 (between Norwood Avenue and Berckman Street)
 Plainfield, NJ 07060
 908 561 5057

South Bronx Wellness Center

655 Morris Avenue
 (corner of E 153rd Street)
 Bronx, NY 10451
 347 736 9046



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