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Western North Carolina AIDS Project
P.O. Box 2411
Asheville, NC 28802-2411



Western North Carolina AIDS Project

FALL 2009

RAISE YOUR HAND AUCTION



This year marks the 21st anniversary of the Western North Carolina AIDS Project's (WNCAP) annual *Raise Your Hand* auction and dinner. The event has become quite well known throughout Western North Carolina and is consistently a major fundraiser for WNCAP. *Raise Your Hand* is always a showcase for artists of WNC, and this year is no different. The highly sought-after Signature Piece award went to artist Karen Weihs for her oil paint entry entitled **Wild Angels 2**, a spectacular piece of art with radiant golden hues blending together to create a contemporary angelic figure. **Wild Angels 2** and several other one-of-a-kind masterpieces will hit the auction floor on October 31 at Biltmore's Deerpark Restaurant.



Wild Angels 2 by Karen Weihs

When you purchase a ticket to this year's *Raise Your Hand* event – named the 'Candelabra Ball' as a tie-in to the October 31 date – you can be certain of fine cuisine, beautiful decorations that bring the theme to life, and the opportunity to bid on fine local art, donated antiques, dinners at Asheville's best restaurants, a hot air balloon ride, theater tickets, and an array of 150 items and experiences in the silent auction. Costumes are optional but encouraged. Careful planning and attention to detail are sure to create a memorable night out.

Pam Siekman and Ken Wilson, co-chairs of *Raise Your Hand* 2009, want to make sure you also know what you might miss at such an elegant event – what they describe as *the reason, the need, the crisis* of HIV/AIDS that motivates them and other *Raise Your Hand* volunteers. Below, Pam shares her thoughts about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and what we have to celebrate in WNC.

HIV/AIDS is the disease we don't hear much about any more, the disease that makes some uncomfortable when talked about, the disease that kills approximately 2 million people a year around the globe, according to a recent UNAIDS report. In the United States an estimated 1 million people are currently living with HIV/AIDS and 56,000 become newly infected each year. North Carolina is one of several southern states with a rate of new infections higher than the national average. In fact, the South has the highest number of adults/adolescents living with AIDS of any region in the U.S. [cont. on page 3.]

Asheville Affiliates 10TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY



The Asheville Affiliates, a group of young professionals who plan parties to benefit local nonprofits, is celebrating their 10-year anniversary with a huge party at the Venue on December 3rd to benefit WNCAP and other local organizations that are past beneficiaries of Affiliate events. To find out more about the Affiliates, visit www.affiliatesofasheville.com. To purchase a ticket to the party, visit www.wncap.org.

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**VOLUNTEERS HELP MAKE
THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE!**
(828) 252-7489
Ext. 315

I am pleased to report on several new initiatives at WNCAP. We have begun offering Substance Abuse Services, with an emphasis on serving clients who have difficulty accessing treatment in the Asheville area due to transportation constraints. We will continue to expand with a goal of moving clients toward greater independence and control over their lives.

Another new initiative is the development of a curriculum for young people that will focus on their "need to know" regarding HIV/AIDS. It will be designed mainly for use in after-school settings.

WNCAP will be a lead agency in a new three-year homelessness prevention project for the city of Asheville. This is an exciting collaboration with ABCCM and Eblen-Kimmel Charities that includes financial assistance and housing stabilization case management for individuals who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. Our Hep-C program has also evolved to include case management services in addition to training workshops for professionals and at-risk populations.

On another note, our annual "Raise Your Hand" fundraiser is scheduled for October 31st. A great fun-filled event is planned this year that incorporates the Halloween theme. Get your tickets early, as our seating is limited to 250 people this year. More information is on our website, wncap.org, and elsewhere in this newsletter. Several other opportunities to participate in WNCAP-sponsored events are also available during the upcoming weeks. Hopefully we will see you at all or some of these events.

As always, thanks for your support of WNCAP and our efforts to make life better for those infected with HIV and get the word on HIV prevention out to the entire region. We need you all.

Dr. Ron Curran,
Executive Director

staff updates

Michelle Martin, MPH has recently joined our staff to focus on expanding outreach and HIV/AIDS prevention education for youth in our region. She graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Master's degree in Public Health in May 2009. Michelle has experience working in school wellness, in community health education, and implementing substance abuse prevention programs for middle schoolers. We welcome Michelle to our Health Education department.



Michelle



Stefanie



Roger

Stefanie Kussman has joined our Client Services department as a Case Management Assistant. Stephanie moved to Asheville about a year ago from New York, where she worked as an HIV Case Manager for a nonprofit called ARCS (AIDS-Related Community Services). Her near-term goal is to return to school to obtain a Master's degree in Social Work. Welcome Stefanie.

Roger Blackwell, who interned with WNCAP during the 2008-2009 school year, has completed his DrPH (Doctor of Public Health) program and joined the WNCAP staff as the Hepatitis-C Prevention Education Coordinator.

[Auction cont. from page 1.]

We are so fortunate to have WNCAP in Western North Carolina to help individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS achieve and maintain the highest quality of life possible. We also have something to celebrate. HIV/AIDS prevention education is a core service at WNCAP, and over the past seven years the agency has more than doubled the number of resources devoted to HIV/AIDS prevention education and outreach. Certainly this is one reason why the number of new HIV infections in the western region has been lower than the number of new infections in every other NC region during that same time period.

It is so important that we maintain a strong focus on HIV/AIDS prevention education in our community. Your participation in *Raise Your Hand* helps support the many educational programs currently run by WNCAP. There is SISTA (a small group program for African American women), street and bar outreach in the downtown Asheville area, the innovative *I Need You to Know* campaign launched earlier this year, and weekly outreach and education for youth that takes place in after-school settings. By combining these varied strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention education with essential supportive services for men and women who are living with HIV/AIDS, WNCAP is making a difference in our community. So when you purchase your ticket to this year's *Raise Your Hand* event I hope you have a fabulous evening.... And I hope you remember that by buying that ticket, and bidding on those wonderful items, you are also saving lives.

-- Pam

Tickets may be purchased online at
www.wncap.org

HELP WANTED:



PEER (AGES 18-21) FACILITATORS NEEDED

- African-American Females
- Good Leadership Skills
- Outgoing Personality
- Strong Communication Skills

We are looking for energetic and experienced African American females to serve as Peer Facilitators for a new program developed by African American females. The program discusses dating and relationships and aims to improve a teen's ability to effectively communicate with potential sex partners while enhancing cultural awareness for African American teenage females. Please contact Keisha Hightower, Women and Youth Education Coordinator, at 828-252-7489 Ext. 312.

THE AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT RETURNS TO ASHEVILLE



Last year hundreds of people came to the Pack Place Education, Arts & Science Center in downtown Asheville to see panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt and remember those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. Sections of the Quilt will again be on display in the lobby of Pack Place as part of WNCAP's commemoration of World AIDS Day from November 24 – December 2 (closed Thanksgiving Day). A Candlelight Memorial Vigil will be held on the evening of World AIDS Day, December 1, at 7:00 pm on the lower level of Pack Place.

World AIDS Day is a day of solidarity across the globe. It began in 1988 as an effort to raise both money for and awareness of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Each year a campaign team creates a theme for World AIDS Day, and this year's theme is Universal Access and Human Rights. Understanding HIV and AIDS from a human rights perspective can be challenging because human rights can sometimes be seen as abstract ideals with not much practical relevance for real people.

The slogans for the World AIDS Day materials were designed to bridge that gap and underscore the importance of awareness of Human Rights. Among the key slogans adopted: I am accepted. I am safe. I am getting treatment. I am well. I am living my rights. Everyone deserves to live their rights...Right to Live...Right to Health...Right to access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. (more at www.worldaidscampaign.org). Please join us for this year's AIDS Memorial Quilt exhibit.



A panel created for the Russian-born dancer Rudolf Nureyev, who captured international acclaim as the greatest male ballet dancer of the 1960s and 1970s and died from AIDS in 1993, will be among the panels featured this year. For more information or to volunteer as a Quilt host, please contact Chris Winebrenner wncapvolunteer@wncap.org



CLIENT wish LIST

- Blankets
- Winter Coats, Hats, Gloves
- Laundry Detergent
- Fabric Softener

These items can be dropped off at the WNCAP office.

Moscow Ballet's GREAT RUSSIAN NUTCRACKER



Each year the Moscow Ballet selects non-profits across the country to benefit from performances of its beloved holiday classic, the *Great Russian Nutcracker*. WNCAP is pleased to be chosen as the beneficiary of the company's performance in Asheville this year, scheduled for December 22 at the Thomas Wolf Auditorium. The *Great Russian Nutcracker* is acclaimed for exquisite dancing and spectacular sets and costumes, and for its unique setting of the "Land of Peace and Harmony" in Act II. The performance is sure to be a holiday treat for everyone, and by purchasing tickets through WNCAP – online at www.wncap.org or by calling the WNCAP office – it can also be a way to ensure that our community continues to receive the essential services WNCAP provides. The Moscow Ballet has generously set aside the best seats in the house for us. Special packages that include a pre-show reception and opportunity to meet the dancers onstage after the performance are also available.