

## **H.U.B. of Hope HIV/AIDS Ministry 2009 News Review (Helping Us Be)**



### **Ministry History and Description**

The H.U.B. of Hope HIV/AIDS Ministry was initiated by the vision of the United Methodist Church of the Open Door. In July 2003, the Vision Team of the UMCOD approved implementation and resource support of this ministry initiative. The H.U.B. of Hope ministry team was empowered to develop this initiative by moving forward volunteering time and energy, without outside financial help at that time.

The H.U.B. of Hope Ministry's goals are twofold. (1) To provide education about HIV/AIDS to individuals in faith communities through Interfaith Summits, small group events, and Interactive Studies presented by the H.U.B. of Hope HIV/AIDS Ministry and Family Service of Chester County – Project ONE (2) To partner with and support persons living with HIV/AIDS.

### **Key achievements for 2009 include:**

The H.U.B. of Hope's Spokes of Hope presented two community Interfaith Summits in Chester, Delaware County and Kennett Square, PA in partnership with community HIV providers and person living with HIV/AIDS. Summits in these geographic area reflects the ministry's focus on inviting people of color, African-Americans and Latinos who are disproportionately impacted by the virus. 75 individuals participated in these events. Both Interfaith summits represent the ministry chartering new territories in convening a summit outside of Chester County and youth participating in a HIV artistic awareness message challenge and exhibit. The chosen awareness message was used as

the 2009 World AIDS message ad and was displayed in the Daily Local News and Kennett newspapers. (See Appendix 1)

As a resource for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, the H.U.B of Hope ministry was invited by Bishop Peggy Johnson to serve on the worship team to convene the Bishop's World AIDS Day Apart on December 1, 2009. At least 100 clergy attended and highlights of the day included, Dr. Cherian Thomas, Executive Secretary, Health and Relief for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) serving as keynote speaker, and 4 people living with HIV/AIDS from Pennsylvania and Delaware presenting their personal journeys. Two panels from the AIDS Quilt were laid out over pews acknowledging their presence members of God's family. The H.U.B. of Hope Information Station provided resources for the attendees to take back to their faith communities.

State Senator Andrew Dinniman -19<sup>th</sup> District extended an invitation to the H.U.B. of Hope to set up an HIV Information Station at his Annual Sharing the Harvest Event in October 2009. This event highlights services provided by non-profits and faith –based organizations. The event facilitates connecting volunteers to causes that inspire them and match their interests. Over two hundred people attended

The Black United Methodist Preachers and Black Methodists for Church Renewal who sponsored a Fall Revival in Philadelphia and invited the H.U.B. of Hope Ministry to give an HIV information presentation. Approximately 40 individuals attended the evening service.

Forty-two individuals participated in two HIV information presentations given at a U.A.M.E. church in West Grove, PA and a Disciples of Christ Church in Philadelphia to 42 individuals.

As previously reported, on March 7, 2009, **thirty-five people attended the Chester Interfaith HIV/AIDS Community summit. The local and global face of HIV/AIDS was represented with African women from Liberia and Kenya reporting on their experiences with HIV/AIDS. Christians and Moslems broke bread together and shared stories of striving and thriving together on the**

**journey of healing in wholeness in spite of living with and being affected by HIV/AIDS.**

**A second Community Interfaith Summit was convened on October 10, 2009 with 40 in attendance. Kathy Griffith, Executive Secretary with UMCOR –Health, was the keynote speaker. The Kennett area summit was the most diverse representing youth and adults, Anglos, African- Americans, and Latinos. A member of the Islamic faith served as panelist.**

Since June 2009, 12 HIV Information Station packets were provided to diverse faith communities. Eight were requested by United Methodist churches responding to the 2009 HIV Needs Assessment Survey and three were requested by Baptist, Lutheran, Quaker, Presbyterian, and U.A.M.E. faith communities.

In response to the National HIV/Awareness Days calendar, three HIV Prevention/Awareness Messages acknowledging National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day placed in January 2009, National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, October 15, 2009 and World AIDS Day, December 1, 2009. Messages were placed in the Daily Local News and two were placed in Al Dia, a Latino newspaper. Both newspapers have circulation throughout Chester County.

Mobilizing individuals and faith communities to respond in relationship with those living with HIV/AIDS is a key element of the H.U.B. (Helping Us Be) of Hope HIV/AIDS Ministry. Over 500 volunteer hours were rendered in direct service with clients of the local HIV case management program, Project ONE, participation by members of the Spokes of Hope serving on the Advisory Council, staffing information stations at community events, and launching Interfaith Summits.

**Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed:**

The Chester County Health Department and the one existing adult HIV/AIDS case management provider in Chester County continue to be stretched thin and cannot focus time and resources to conduct outreach and coalition building events. In addition, two trends have been observed. It is noted that racial and ethnic minorities account for 71

percent of all new AIDS cases and represent 64 percent of all people living with AIDS. Johanna Crocetto, Program Director of Family Service of Chester County, a HIV case management program serving all of Chester County, cites two prevalent trends:

The Latino community is the fastest growing population in Chester County Project ONE has one bi-lingual case manager providing multi-faceted services in five locations throughout Chester County. An increase in the number of Africans from Liberia and Zimbabwe has also been observed within the past year. The Latino and African communities manifest unique social, cultural, and religious perspectives concerning HIV, medical care, and receiving support from those outside of their family and community.

The church is the tie that binds the diverse communities of Chester County. The Church of the Open Door's H.U.B. of Hope is distinctly poised as a bridge that connects both the secular and sacred.

**On-going Vision:**

Funds will be used to expand a comprehensive media campaign. Currently, the HIV/AIDS Prevention/Awareness messages are placed *Daily Local News* and *Al Dia* newspapers, with circulation throughout Chester County. We are researching placing prevention/awareness messages in the Philadelphia Inquirer and a major newspaper in Chester, Delaware County.

The ministry will continue to provide forums that facilitate faith communities serving in direct service with people living with HIV/AIDS as well as providing in-kind and financial support to local HIV/AIDS service providers.