

Wellness Notes

January, February and March 2009

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE WRIGHT HOUSE WELLNESS CENTER

Hill Country Ride for AIDS 10 Year Anniversary

Serious fun for a serious cause.
The Hill Country Ride for AIDS has raised more than 3 million dollars to support thousands of Texans living with HIV and AIDS. Join the tenth-anniversary ride and get ready for a fun, challenging experience full of breathtaking scenery and unforgettable memories. This year's Ride takes place on April 25, 2009.

There are thousands of people who depend on you and this Ride. In one day of your life, you are making a huge difference for someone for the next 365 days.

There's an experience for everyone.
On the Hill Country Ride you choose the distance that best suits you: 10, 50, 70 or 100 miles. The free training rides will help you prepare for any distance. It's a Ride, not a race, **everyone** is welcome. All routes are fully supported with pit stops, SAG support and helpful volunteers. Children eight and up can ride when accompanied by an adult, and children of all ages will enjoy the Hill Country Adventure for Kids.

Join Team Wright House as we team up and conquer this challenge and keep fighting the battle we face every day to put an end to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and serve those living with HIV/AIDS.



CulinART 2009— An Evening of Community Harmony and Hope

By Mark Johansen

Last year we were blessed to become a beneficiary of ISES, the International Society of Event Specialists who produced a lavish gala as a fund raiser for The Wright House Wellness Center. It was a huge success for all involved and they have chosen to keep us as the beneficiary of this event.

CulinART brings together world renowned chefs and artists who join forces to provide a presentation so amazing that words can't convey the uniqueness and beauty. The event is coordinated by the wonderful members of ISES who are assisted by the volunteers of The Wright House Wellness Center.

This year's event promises to be bigger and better than last year's.

Go to www.thewrighthouse.org to find out more about this event and buy tickets before they are sold out.

A Message from our Executive Director

Happy New Year! As we start this new year and my 11th year with The Wright House Wellness Center, I am reminded of all I am grateful for – having a job I love, a wonderful staff that cares so deeply about our clients and our community, the support of many wonderful people, and you. We are a family at The Wright House Wellness Center and that means we help each other. I encourage you to make 2009 the year of gratitude and giving. Look at all you have around you and see where you can give of yourself. Volunteer with an organization that moves you, give financially to a cause you are passionate about, help a friend or loved one when they need it, or say a kind word to a stranger. It is up to each and every one of us to make our community safer, stronger, and more united. I wish you peace and happiness this year and every year.

Leah Graham
Executive Director

HIV Testing - The Result Was Positive Now That You Are HIV Positive, What Should You Do First?

By **Mark Cichocki, R.N.**, About.com
Updated: July 6, 2008

About.com Health's Disease and Condition content is reviewed by the

[Medical Review Board](#)

It's hard to imagine what could send a chill through your spine more than finding out you are HIV positive. So frightening is the prospect that many people do not get tested just to avoid the possibility of being given the bad news. Although very frightening, finding out you are HIV positive is no longer a death sentence. The advent of treatments and medications to prevent infection has made it possible to live with HIV rather than die from AIDS.

A Long Healthy Life - It Is Possible

Being HIV positive doesn't mean you necessarily have AIDS. HIV is a virus that slowly damages the immune system, leaving the body at greater risk for developing many infections considered AIDS defining. However, one can be HIV positive without having AIDS. And while there is no medicine or treatment to completely rid the body of HIV, there are several medicines that can keep the virus in check, protecting the immune system from damage and thus slowing the progression of HIV to AIDS. Simply put, with the proper medical care and by taking care of yourself you can live a long healthy life with HIV.

Who Should You Tell and How?

With all that being said, the fact remains that despite the good prognosis of today's HIV patient, being diagnosed is scary, confusing, and depressing. And in those first few hours and days after getting your diagnosis, support from medical professionals, family, loved ones and friends will be crucial. You don't need to go through the process alone. But in order to get the support you need, you have to tell someone about your diagnosis - and that can be a daunting task. However, by following a few guidelines, you can disclose your status and develop your support network.

How To Tell - Once you find out you are positive, take a moment and decide who you feel will be supportive and who won't. Consider the following while you are disclosing your status.

- When considering who to tell, first ask yourself what you hope to gain from telling that person. And while you should hope for the support you are looking for, be prepared for the possibility that the one you tell may not take it as you had hoped.

- There is a grieving process that comes with learning you are HIV positive. Keep in mind that those you tell may also grieve in their own way. They may feel sadness that you are sick; anger because you have become infected; or may deny what you are telling them all together.

- Help them accept the news by providing educational materials that helps them understand the disease.

- Give them the time they need to adjust to the news. Just as you will need time to understand and accept your diagnosis, those you choose to tell will need time to understand your diagnosis as well. But with time and some help from you they will move through these feelings and will come to be the support you are looking for.

Who To Tell - Support can come from a lot of different places and people that are a part of your life. Some of the people you can consider telling include:

- parents,
- spouses
- partners
- family members
- counselors or social workers

Important Information!

While who you tell or don't tell is entirely up to you, the only people you must tell are potential sex partners. It is also suggested you disclose your diagnosis to your dentist and health care providers so they can take better care of you. Keep in mind you don't need to tell everyone about your HIV right away. Only disclose your status when you feel the time is right and the person you are going to tell is ready.

Knowledge is Power - Know Your Illness

The next step in managing your diagnosis is getting to know the disease. Learn as much as you can about HIV. It is said that knowledge is power. HIV is the perfect example of how knowing your illness, and knowing your body can help manage your disease.

Go to <http://aids.about.com/cs/aidsfactsheets/a/positve1.htm> for more information.



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Winter Wonderland

By Ana Gutierrez, WHWC Volunteer.

Yes, it was "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" as presented in a Winter Wonderland setting of this year's Third Annual Jingle Bell Jubilee on December 18th, 2008. It was an event like no other for the community of The Wright House Wellness Center with an evening filled with warmth, great entertainment, sumptuous food, exciting gifts. Most importantly it was an opportunity for our community of clients, volunteers, staff, board members as well as our friends and families to share and enjoy each other.

Multiple candles glowed and reflected light from mirror ponds; pretty center pieces of white, green and gold adorned the tables and white tablecloths with splashes of red and green accents along with other adornments created the perfect ambience: It was a welcoming, safe and warm setting for all who attended

Our team of volunteers worked hard with enthusiasm to put together tables, decorations, and food. They also made sure that all of the guests received, as a gift, one of the beautiful scarves individually hand knitted and generously donated by the group "Hearts and Crafts" lead by The Wright House Wellness Center's very own volunteer Courtney Borgman. Courtney also designed the decoration and theme of the event which was awe inspiring and beautiful.

Mark Johansen, Show Director and Emcee for the evening, introduced Leah Graham, The Wright House Wellness Center's Executive Director and Loretta Edelen from Austin Community College who spoke on behalf of their organizations, as well as all of the fabulously talented performers.

The evening was filled with the voices and presence of entertainers such as the Capital City Men's Chorus, who made us feel at home for the Holidays. With favorites like Jingle bells, The Little Drummer Boy and others it allowed us to envision the lure and comfort of Peace on Earth during this Holiday season.

Ms. Deedee Davis, of The United Court of Austin, gave us her rendition of "Hard Candy Christmas" and brought the house down with "PMS Blues". Simone Riviera showed all her incredible energy and heart pounding dancing with "This Christmas All I Want is You".

Bri Brennet, a WHWC Volunteer, made "This Christmas" a very special one as she sang her heart out with all those present providing support and joining her in song as well as clapping to the rhythm of the music.

We were also blessed by the presence, grace, beauty and rhythm of The Holy Cross Liturgical Dancers with their lovely white and gold dresses and beautiful smiles. They performed to "Hallelujah" and "Wade in the Waters". Gorgeous movements along with wonderful coordination made us all wish they could dance throughout the evening.

Other performances included a heart felt poetry reading by Ms. Paige DeShong of Austin Community College and things got hot when Gregg Dodson and Gigi LaRouge performed "Steam Heat" from the musical Pajama Game.

Saffire T. Stone from The United Court of Austin performed "New York, New York" by Liza Minelli to a rousing crowd.

And last but not least, we welcomed the colorful River City Pops, which dazzled the crowd with their renditions of music from the famous musical shows Hairspray and Smokey Joe's Café.

Delicious food with an abundance of variety were presented professionally and beautifully by Maria Rankins and her crew who worked tirelessly to make sure everyone was filled to capacity. There were an array of desserts, cookies and cakes of many flavors, colors and tastes. It was delicious as a proper banquet should be! Thanks to our volunteers, staff, board members and clients for providing these sumptuous treats for us to eat.

Also a HUGE thanks to all of our entertainers, volunteers, staff, and board members for helping make this evening one to be remembered. We are already eager to attend the festivities for 2009.

Thanks to all of you who joined us and shared a good time with us.

For those of you, who did not attend, we hope you join us in December 2009 and create new memories for our Wright House Wellness Center community.



Calendar of Events

Ongoing Events:

-Mondays 5:30-8pm Volunteer Club meets at ECC.
Food is served!

January

01/21/09: Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm.

February

02/07/09 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day at Huston Tillotson University

02/14/09 Valentines Day

02/18/09: Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm.

March

03/05/09 CulinART at UT Alumni Center- see www.thewrighthouse.org for details and reservations.

03/18/09 Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm.

April

04/15/09 Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm.

04/16/09 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner- Kleberg Hall 6-9pm

04/25/2009 Hill Country Ride for AIDS.

**-Volunteer Orientation-3rd Wednesday of each month 6-9pm at 2326 E. Cesar Chavez
Call Mark at 236-8901 or email mark@thewrighthouse.org to sign up for Volunteer Orientation.**