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Time: 10:30-11:15 AM
Location: 1313 Vine
Subject: AIDS Project Los Angeles
Tour and Meet Staff

APLA is not the only
game in town.
Many of the minority
programs feel over-
shadowed by APLA &
feel they are not
getting their share of
funds.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

AIDS Project Los Angeles

History

The Beginning

Unconditional love. That was the philosophy that guided the founders of AIDS Project Los Angeles.

In October, 1982, the four founders of APLA -- Nancy Cole Sawaya, Matt Redman, Ervin Munro and Max Drew -- were among those who attended an emergency meeting at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. They listened to a representative from San Francisco's Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation talk about GRID, or Gay Related Immunodeficiency Disease (the original name for AIDS).

Fears about the new disease were spreading rapidly, so they decided to set up a telephone hotline to answer questions. They gathered whatever information was available and began hotline trainings later in October, with twelve volunteers in the initial group. The first hotline office was literally a closet in the community center, where volunteers answered a single telephone and read information from a one-page fact sheet.

Realizing that funds were needed to educate the community and prevent the spread of the disease, Nancy, Matt and Max enlisted the help of other friends (who became many of APLA's early volunteers) and held a Christmas benefit. The party raised more than \$7000, which was the seed money for the organization.

Shortly afterwards, a steering committee was elected. Recognizing that AIDS was not just a gay disease, the founders decided to name the organization AIDS Project Los Angeles. The first Board of Directors was elected on January 14, 1983.

Soon APLA moved into its first office, on Cole Avenue in Hollywood.

Client Services

The number of clients served by APLA grew at a staggering rate. In the beginning, there were five clients. At the end of 1983, there were 100, and by the middle of 1984 there were 200. By the time of APLA's tenth anniversary in late 1992, the organization had assisted 11,500 clients, in addition to the many thousands of others for whom APLA had advocated and provided education.

APLA's first client service started when early volunteers began visiting patients at their hospital beds. Support groups were also organized to help people with AIDS and their loved ones.

When a professional social worker joined the small APLA staff in late 1983, client services became fully established. One of its earliest programs was "Home Health Assistance/Hospice Services," which later changed its name and became well-known as the Buddy Program. To this day, the Buddy Program trains volunteers who provide one-on-one social interaction and emotional support to persons living with AIDS.

APLA created new programs during the ensuing years to meet the growing needs of people with AIDS. The first program to address housing needs was Mansfield House, a three-bedroom home in Hollywood that opened in 1984, and has since been superseded by an entire housing program. In March, 1985, a dental clinic was founded to treat people with AIDS who were denied services by other dentists.

An early food voucher program evolved into the Necessities of Life Program (NOLP). This groceries-distribution center officially opened its doors on November 1, 1986. NOLP has since provided sustenance for thousands of persons. In addition, it now helps other food pantries for people with AIDS by giving them groceries, technical assistance and financial support.

Other groundbreaking programs included medical transportation, home health care, and counseling on mental health, legal, insurance and public benefits issues. These were later joined by case management, chemical dependency counseling and treatment education.

Supporting all of APLA's programs are highly dedicated staff members, extremely committed board members, and remarkably generous donors. Instrumental to the success of APLA's programs are thousands of incredibly devoted and caring volunteers who give enormous amounts of time and effort -- as well as heart and soul -- to the organization and the clients it serves. During APLA's first ten years, volunteers contributed nearly one million hours of service.

Education

AIDS can be scary. But it was especially frightening in the early 1980's, when so little was known about the disease. "Reduce fear" became an often stated aim of early volunteers and board members.

One of APLA's first acts was to produce and distribute a brochure about AIDS. The February, 1983 brochure, printed in both English and Spanish, answered basic questions about the disease. APLA has educated the community ever since to prevent new cases

of HIV infection and to empower and improve the quality of life for people who are already infected.

APLA's first major educational campaign was launched in 1985. The now-famous "LA Cares" ads were produced in conjunction with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. They featured a sweet and motherly character who taught her "boys" about safer sex. The campaign consisted of billboards, public service announcements and print advertising, and also included graphic safer sex guides for gay men titled "Can We Talk?" and "Mother's Handy Sex Guide." For a wider audience, APLA and the Center ran a "Southern California Cares" campaign, with the theme "Fight The Fear With The Facts."

APLA's educational publications have included "Living With AIDS: A Self-Care Manual," which was first published in 1985 and is regularly updated; "Sex on Earth and Other Planets," a 1992 comic book about AIDS written by teenagers, for teenagers; and numerous brochures, fact sheets, and safer sex kits. Many of these materials were produced in both English and Spanish.

Other education programs include the Speaker's Bureau, the HIV Testing Outreach Program, "Saber Es Poder" (Knowledge Is Power) Spanish-language workshops for Latino adolescents, AIDS In The Workplace seminars, "Speaking of Sex" negotiation-skills workshops, condom-distribution efforts and community education forums.

APLA's original program, the hotline, is now named the Southern California HIV/AIDS Hotline. It remains a crucial resource for the community. In 1992 alone, it handled more than 70,000 telephone calls.

For over a decade, APLA has been at the forefront of increasing AIDS awareness and fostering prevention efforts.

Public Policy and Communications

Efforts to influence public policy have long been a part of the mission of AIDS Project Los Angeles. As early as May, 1983, APLA sponsored a candlelight march at the Federal Building in Westwood which brought out a surprisingly large crowd of more than five thousand people. The march was a turning point for community involvement in the struggle against AIDS.

From the earliest years, APLA took an aggressive and far sighted approach to public policy, recognizing that advocacy at all governmental levels is vital to protecting the rights of people impacted by AIDS and to increasing funds for care and research. In August, 1985, APLA coordinated testimony in front of the Los Angeles City Council on discrimination against people with AIDS, and Los Angeles became the first city in the

nation to bar such discrimination.

When the need for a stronger voice on AIDS issues at the national level became apparent, APLA helped to support a number of new national organizations. APLA also played a leadership role in the creation of the Washington-based AIDS lobby now known as the AIDS Action Council, and remains one of the staunchest supporters of that organization.

In 1986, APLA established a Government Affairs Department (later named the Public Policy Department). Its goals were to increase state and local resources for AIDS prevention, education and care, as well as to promote fair and humane AIDS legislation.

In 1990, APLA's policy efforts expanded with the creation of the AIDS Project Advocacy Services unit in Sacramento. APLA's representatives in the state capital work with coalitions of AIDS, health, and gay and lesbian organizations. Together they fight for the rights of all Californians affected by HIV, lobby for prevention education and health-care funding, and enact model legislation.

The Public Policy Department continues to face the challenge of influencing legislators and government policymakers. It also sponsors two grass-roots efforts: the Neighborhood Network, which arranges meetings between elected representatives and people affected by AIDS, and the Citizens Network, which alerts its members to write letters or send telegrams to government officials on breaking issues.

Supporting all of APLA's programs is the Communications Department, which produces several newsletters for people affected by HIV; works with reporters on news stories, arranges press conferences and media briefings on important AIDS issues, and produces public service announcements and advertisements on AIDS awareness and safer sex.

Development

The first APLA fundraiser raised over \$7000. In the following decade, APLA raised more than \$77 million to help people affected by AIDS.

Many early fundraising events were held in gay bars and discos, as the gay and lesbian community courageously mobilized to fight the disease. A fundraiser at Studio One in March, 1984, featuring Joan Rivers, raised \$45,000 for APLA, Shanti and Aid for AIDS.

APLA held the world's first AIDS Walk on July 28, 1985. Organizers of AIDS Walk Los Angeles hoped to raise \$100,000. But a human tide of 4,500 walkers rolled forward from the starting point at Paramount Studios, bringing in \$673,000. The Walk is now an annual ritual in Los Angeles, with the 1992 Walk bringing in more than \$3 million from 17,000 walkers.

After Rock Hudson disclosed that he had AIDS, Elizabeth Taylor helped to spearhead a drive by the entertainment community to confront the disease. By lending her support to APLA, Taylor helped ensure the success of the first Commitment To Life event. The fundraiser, held at the Bonaventure Hotel and honoring former First Lady Betty Ford, raised \$1.3 million. The Commitment To Life benefits, much like the AIDS Walks, have become major annual events.

The first annual AIDS Dance-a-thon was held in 1989 at the Shrine Auditorium Exposition Hall. By 1991 the event outgrew that venue and was moved to the LA Sports Arena. APLA proudly donates a portion of each year's Dance-a-thon revenues to other AIDS organizations in Los Angeles.

Creative and determined volunteers have been responsible for setting up dozens of fundraising events, from the small to the enormous, from the elegant to the unusual including premiere screenings, theater benefits, art openings, photography exhibits, fashion events and special concerts.

APLA has also been the beneficiary of grants from city, county and state agencies; gifts of money and in-kind services from businesses and corporations; grants from foundations; and generous contributions from a multitude of individual donors.

Many of the most generous donors are people who are highly familiar with the organization -- APLA's volunteers, as well as members of the Board of Directors and Board of Governors. Board members are themselves volunteers who contribute extraordinary quantities of energy and enthusiasm in leading the organization, setting policy and planning for the future.

The Future

Today APLA provides direct services to thousands of people, educates tens of thousands through the hotline and other programs, informs hundreds of thousands through its media efforts, and advocates for all persons affected by HIV through its policy efforts. The organization strives, as it always has, to raise the quality of life for people living with AIDS.

APLA is not alone in the struggle against AIDS in the Los Angeles area. Many other organizations have emerged to help meet the needs of the ever-growing population of those infected and affected by HIV. APLA is committed to working with these organizations through joint projects, partnerships, and the provision of technical assistance and financial support.

Although everyone at APLA is proud of the organization's accomplishments, we all share the same hope: a cure for AIDS, and a time when the services APLA offers will

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no longer be necessary.

Until that time comes, we draw strength from the incredible courage of people fighting HIV, and inspiration from the remarkable vision of members of our community. This building is a testament to that courage and that vision.

APLA's volunteers, staff members, board members and supporters remain committed to nurturing hope, promoting compassion, reducing fear, and staying true to our founding ideal: unconditional love.

Written by Paul Lerner and Cindy Cramer

APLA services

APLA's AIDS in the Workplace Program focuses on employer policies and procedures toward employees with HIV/AIDS. Lee Kiosinski, (213) 993-1521. ♦

APLA's Benefits Program provides counseling, education and assistance in identifying and accessing public benefits programs and advocacy concerning insurance and public benefits issues. Monthly public benefits and insurance seminars are open to the public. Jacques Chambers, (213) 993-1473. APLA clients are offered expedited eligibility processing for Medi-Cal benefits through the Rancho Park Pilot Program. Jeff Enoklen, (213) 993-1478. ♦

APLA Buddies provide social interaction, emotional support and limited practical assistance for APLA clients. Being matched with a Buddy will require a longer wait in some areas of L.A. County than in others. John Sallot, (213) 993-1447. ♦

APLA's Case Management Program is designed to assist clients who have demonstrated high need through the intake process. Case managers assist the clients through service coordination with outside agencies and referrals to APLA programs. (213) 962-1600. ♦

APLA's Chemical Dependency and Addictive Behaviors Program provides individual counseling, substance abuse groups, life skills workshops, literature and referrals to treatment and 12-step programs for people affected by HIV and alcohol, drugs and sexual compulsiveness. Milly Steller, (213) 993-1446. ♦

APLA's Clientline, (213) 465-4162, provides immediate referrals and information about services and benefits for registered APLA clients. 10 A.M. to 6 P.M., Monday through Thursday; 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., Friday. Calls to Clientline are always an-

swered by staff, not recording devices. ♦

APLA's Communications Department increases public awareness and involvement on AIDS issues. Lauren Llewellyn, (213) 993-1354. APLA publications—*POSITIVE LIVING*, published monthly and *CUTTING-EDGE*, published quarterly—are free to APLA clients and offered to members of the public for a suggested annual donation of \$12. Lauren Llewellyn, (213) 993-1354.

IMPACTO LATINO is a monthly publication in Spanish published by APLA. Gabriela Hernandez Lape, (213) 993-1357. APLA's *AIDSVISION*, featuring Alison Armitage, is broadcast at 8 P.M. on the last Saturday of each month on Century Cable. ♦

APLA's Free Community Education Forums provide practical information on issues surrounding HIV disease. Topics include long-term survival, public benefits, insurance, nutrition; AIDS 101 (The Basics) in English and Spanish; AIDS 202 (Signs, Symptoms, Therapies); hospital savvy; and women and HIV (knowledge and empowerment). Most forums take place at APLA. Glenn Gayford, (213) 993-1508. ♦

Contact volunteers phone APLA clients regularly to ensure they are provided with services and referrals. Bob Bergerson, (213) 993-1305. ♦

Free creative-writing workshops for people who are HIV-positive or have AIDS, and for care-givers, are offered by APLA's artist-in-residence on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays in fall, winter and spring. Irene Berger, (213) 962-1500, Ext. 1136. ♦

APLA's R.E. Greene/Ronald LeBaron Dental Treatment Center offers dental services to registered APLA clients, as well as clients of other AIDS-service organizations. 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Monday through

Saturday, (213) 993-1388 or the Clientline at (213) 465-4162. 1,2 ♦

APLA's Education and Training Division works to increase HIV/AIDS awareness, foster and maintain behavioral change to prevent transmission of HIV, encourage HIV testing when appropriate and promote early intervention, management and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Jim Suthers, (213) 993-1526. ♦

Free comprehensive eye examinations are provided for APLA clients by Dr. Mark A. Chung on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, by appointment. Call your APLA case manager at (213) 962-1600 or the Clientline at (213) 465-4162. ♦

A Guide to Self-Care for HIV Infection is available at no charge to new clients through APLA's Intake and Assessment Department. Registered APLA clients may obtain a free copy of the book by calling their case manager at (213) 962-1600, or the Clientline at (213) 465-4162. The book is also available to the public at \$14.95. Sharon Aronoff, (213) 993-1487. ♦

APLA's HIV Testing Outreach Program produces television and radio public service announcements, brochures, posters, videos and other collateral and outreach materials designed to reach people at risk for HIV infection, including African-Americans, Latinos, gay men, sexually active women and youth, and to encourage and promote HIV-antibody testing. Dean Vieira, (213) 993-1512. ♦

APLA's Home Health Program provides medical case management services and home health nursing care, including R.N. visits, home health attendants, mental health counseling and referrals. APLA has two Home Health Programs serving 200 clients: The Pilot Project and the Medi-Cal Waiver Program. APLA

clients who meet eligibility requirements may request to be placed on a home health program. Call the Clientline at (213) 465-4162. 2,3 ♦

APLA's Hospital Visitation volunteers and volunteer message therapists provide emotional and physical support for hospitalized individuals and their families. Corey Roskin, (213) 993-1433. ♦

APLA's Southern California HIV/AIDS Hotline's trained volunteer listeners provide information, counseling and referrals for nearly 80,000 callers every year. In the L.A. area, call (213) 876-AIDS or call toll-free (800) 922-AIDS (English); (800) 400-8IDA (Spanish); (800) 553-AIDS (TDD). For recorded information in Asian and Middle Eastern languages, call (800) 922-2438. 9 A.M. to 9 P.M., Monday through Friday; 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., Saturday and Sunday, and all holidays. Messages may be left when listeners are not available. ♦

APLA's comprehensive Intake and Assessment and Case Management programs assess the ongoing needs of people with AIDS and symptomatic HIV disease to ensure that each person is connected with all appropriate services and programs. Call (213) 993-1301 for appointment. Case Management hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.; Wednesdays, 10 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. (213) 993-1342, 993-1388 or 993-1343. 1,2 ♦

APLA's Legal Services Department provides assistance to those with HIV concerning debtors and creditors, landlords and tenants, wills, financial and medical powers of attorney, employment, housing discrimination and public benefits. (213) 993-1503. ♦

APLA's Medical Transportation Department coordinates rides to and

More APLA services

from non-emergency medical appointments, support groups and other AIDS-service organizations for APLA clients, with a minimum of two working days' notice. RTD bus passes may be purchased between the 25th of each month and the 10th of the following month for \$10, during Medical Transportation office hours: 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., Monday through Friday. Justin Alkin or Frances Meira, (213) 993-1320. 1+

APLA's Mental Health Program provides crisis intervention, short-term counseling, support groups and referrals to AIDS-sensitive mental health services for people affected by AIDS, and their loved ones. APLA also provides outreach to mental health providers. Call your APLA case manager at (213) 993-1600 or the Clientline, (213) 465-4162. 1,2,6+

APLA's Necessities of Life Program provides supplemental groceries for APLA clients who meet income eligibility requirements. Nutritional counseling is available by appointment, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 10 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. on Thursday; and 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. on Saturday. Garry Hensel, (213) 993-1327. 2,3,4+

APLA's Phone Buddies provide emotional and practical support by telephone to APLA clients biweekly, and help identify problems and make appropriate referrals before they reach a crisis stage. Paul Rossi, (213) 993-1307. 4

Podiatric exams and physical therapy are offered to APLA clients by Dr. Larry Bjorklund of North Hollywood. Surgical or orthopedic supports are not included. APLA's Clientline, (213) 465-4162, or Larry Bjorklund, (818) 900-5600. 4

APLA's Public Policy Department with offices in Los Angeles and Sac-

ramento, interacts with national, state and local governments and advocates to increase public funding for HIV/AIDS services, and to affect public policy in the interests of those with AIDS and HIV disease. The department also directs the Citizens and Neighborhood Networks, two concerted grass-roots campaigns designed to foster change by increasing community participation in the legislative process. (213) 993-1355. 4

APLA's Residential Services program offers three housing programs for APLA clients: Our House (14 beds) is for clients with hiv and substance abuse issues; Casa del Sol (7 units) offers low-income, affordable housing for APLA clients. Residential Services has provided more than 600 Section 8 housing certificates for homeless people with HIV disease. Call your APLA case manager at (213) 993-1600 or the Clientline at (213) 465-4162. 1,7+

APLA's Saber es Poder is a free, four-hour workshop presented in Spanish for mono- or bilingual Spanish-speaking adolescents ages 13-19. Audrián Morales-Pittman, (213) 993-1520. 4

APLA's Significant Others For Each Other is a one-on-one peer support program for the significant others, spouses and primary caretakers of people affected by AIDS. Sally Jue, (213) 993-1458. 4

Social Security Forms workshops are offered from 8:30 to 8:30 P.M. each Tuesday at APLA. (213) 993-1478. 4

APLA's Speakers Bureau Program offers basic information and education on HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention and testing to organizations, schools/universities and businesses throughout Los Angeles County. Ken Mosesian, (213) 993-1531. 4

APLA's Spiritual Advisory Committee assists clients, their friends and families with issues of faith and spirituality in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner. Members of APLA's Spiritual Advisory Committee offer free one-on-one non-denominational consultations from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. each Tuesday and Wednesday, and from noon to 3 P.M. each Thursday in Room 154 at APLA. Scheduled counselors: Karen Baker, Sept. 8; Joe Fedora, Sept. 23; Cliff Galt, Sept. 30; Jose Gonzalez, Sept. 7, Sept. 16, Sept. 29; Sandy Krueger, Sept. 14, Sept. 15; Jack Lewis, Sept. 1; Allen Newman, Sept. 22; Dick Peterson, Sept. 2; Andrew Robinson-Gallagher, Sept. 28; Lisa Sharin, Sept. 21. Appointments not necessary. (213) 993-1376. 4

APLA offers weekly drop-in support groups for people affected by AIDS. Call Lori Huerta, (213) 993-1432 or Damian Goldverg, (213) 993-1434. Current groups: ■ A free support group for people with AIDS meets from 7:30 to 9 P.M. each Tuesday in Room 214 at APLA. ■ A free drop-in support group for Spanish-speaking people with AIDS meet at 1:30 P.M. each Tuesday in Room 214 at APLA. ■ A free drop-in support group for family members and significant others of people with AIDS meets at 7:15 P.M. each Wednesday at the Valley Community Clinic, 6648 Vineland Ave., North Hollywood. ■ A free new bereavement group meets on Tuesday nights at APLA. ■ A free support group for people with AIDS meets on Thursday nights in Sherman Oaks. 4

APLA's Ticketline offers free tickets to theater presentations and special events for APLA clients and volunteers. Recorded announcement: (213) 993-1382. 4

APLA's Treatment Education Program provides treatment information/education and advocacy regarding access to approved and experi-

mental drugs against HIV disease, as well as alternative therapies. Individual appointments are offered to anyone interested in expanding their treatment options. The program also has an alternative therapy drop-in support group which meets at 6:30 P.M. on alternate Wednesdays at APLA. Stephan Korale, (213) 993-1482; Marty Majchrowicz, (213) 993-1484. 4

Videos on HIV issues available for loan from APLA. Topics include nutrition, public benefits (English and Spanish versions), insurance, experimental treatments, Self Advocacy, Speaking of Sex and Legal Issues (English and Spanish). Videos are available for loan by calling Jim Suthers, (213) 993-1600, ext. 584. Videos also sold for \$25 each. Call Sharon Aronoff, (213) 993-1487. 4

APLA sponsors a free weekly yoga workshop from 2:30 to 4 P.M. each Monday at APLA. (213) 993-1600. 4

FUNDING SOURCES

1 Partially funded by the County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services 2 Partially funded by the City of West Hollywood 3 Partially funded by the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (FEMA) 4 Partially funded by the County of Los Angeles Department of Community Services 5 Partially funded by the state of California Department of Health Services 6 Partially funded by the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health 7 Partially funded by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles 8 Los Angeles County Community Block Services



WELCOME TO NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK!

WHO ARE WE?

We are a group of concerned citizens in the greater Los Angeles area who have joined together to fight the burgeoning AIDS epidemic.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

After eleven years there is still no vaccine or cure, and our government has had no master plan to deal with this disaster. President Clinton has promised to do more for AIDS than the past two administrations. However, promises must be turned into deeds. In addition, Congress must treat the AIDS epidemic as an emergency and disaster and not "business as usual." More than 160,000 Americans have died and millions are infected. We want an end to this cruel epidemic now!

WHAT DO WE DO?

Neighborhood Network volunteers meet face to face with their lawmakers to express their views on AIDS issues. We meet with officials at federal, state and local levels and urge them to support responsible legislation and funding.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Neighborhood Network training and briefing sessions are held monthly. We stay up to date on the latest and most critical AIDS issues. We then schedule meetings with our elected officials to express our views in person.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Join Neighborhood Network today! For more information, call (213) 962-1600 extension 507.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

► A Program of AIDS Project Los Angeles
6721 Rembrandt Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048
(213) 962-1600 ext. 572 fax (213) 962-0871

Thank you for your interest in the Neighborhood Network. Your participation in the Neighborhood Network will make a profound difference in the lives of people impacted by HIV. The tragedy of the AIDS epidemic has been incalculably compounded by well-funded, well-organized right wing extremists playing on the fear, ignorance and prejudice of the people of this nation and their elected officials. Without your generous help and support, the consequences could be devastating.

INTRODUCTION

Activism does not only occur in the streets. What seems to come across most people's minds when they hear the word "activism" is militant demonstrations involving run-ins with the police. Activism can be as simple as sending a letter once a month to the "powers that be." Activism may also take on a more personal nature. If you ever helped a family member or loved one get to and from medical appointments, or helped them to fill out a form for disability benefits or other public benefits, you have taken on the role of an activist. The Neighborhood Network can be looked at as a new way to get involved to accomplish goals that an individual cannot accomplish alone.

BACKGROUND

Somewhere along the way our policymakers got the idea that they had all the power and control over our lives. How? We gave it to them.

Have you ever heard an airline pilot leaving the cockpit and turning the controls over to the passengers, simply because he/she decided that he/she was too busy or just didn't care anymore? Of course not. But that is exactly what we do when we turn the control over to our elected officials.

Now a revolution is forming. People are uniting in one powerful voice. Why? Policymakers will not give up their power without a fight. It's time to let them know that we are in charge.

The media provided extensive coverage of the epidemic in 1988. Approximately 140 AIDS bills were introduced that year. Lawmakers felt obligated to do something, and passed many of those bills.

Although AIDS is one of the most important medical issues of our time, the media no longer follows every new development in AIDS. Politicians no longer feel pressure to create new and sound AIDS policies. California, once at the forefront of the epidemic, is no longer the national leader in state government spending on care for people with AIDS.

Think of a neighborhood in need of a streetlight. The safety of your neighborhood is definitely an issue that you and your neighbors are concerned with, but it's not "hot" enough to warrant news coverage. It's up to you and your neighbors to rally together and demand that the streetlight be installed. Right or wrong, this is how AIDS is viewed today. There is a mentality that "since AIDS doesn't affect me, I don't need to worry about it. Let someone else take care of it." What many of these people do not realize is, if this epidemic is not contained, and contained soon, and the proper funding is not appropriated for crucial education, support services, and care and treatment for people with AIDS, it will just be a matter of time before every individual is directly affected by this horrible disease.

WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

The purpose of the Neighborhood Network is to effectively mobilize citizens who live in the same neighborhoods, on behalf of people affected by AIDS. Lawmakers in Washington, Sacramento and locally need to be reminded of the importance of ensuring that people with AIDS are able to maintain the best possible quality of life. Our power rests in people who are willing to express their concerns about AIDS to their elected officials. We must continue to apply pressure.

As noted earlier, right-wing opposition to compassionate AIDS policy is well organized and has great influence with representatives in promoting discriminatory AIDS legislation. Some of these extremist groups can generate up to 100,000 letters within a two-week period. We must be prepared to match the opposition with a strong, unified and well-organized effort. The Neighborhood Network, along with its companion program, The Citizens Network, are two ways to beat back the opposition.

In order to succeed, the Neighborhood Network must overcome obstacles which include:

Inconvenience

Neighborhood Network meetings are designed to fill a social and a political need. It is preferable to have these meetings hosted by someone the attendees already know, in a place that's accessible, friendly and safe. In addition, gathering people together from the same neighborhood or area means that members of the group are more likely to be represented by the same elected officials. Even if they are not, two groups or more can be coordinated together, rather than starting up new groups of complete strangers.

Lack of Motivation

Most people view themselves as powerless when dealing with government. Motivation is heightened when volunteers see tangible results. Educating people on the potential influence of local mobilization is essential to empowerment. Attendees are also more likely to get involved if they see their friends getting involved.

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Complex Political System

The education of the legislative process must be easy to understand and relate only to the issue at hand. The first meetings of a Neighborhood Network group explore the process of neighborhood mobilization. Next there is discussion about current issues of concern for the group and who to target on those issues. This way, Neighborhood Network activists learn a great deal about our political system over an extended period of time. This education empowers some Neighborhood Network activists to undertake advocating on other issues as well.

Lack of Tangible Results

Each planning meeting will include the scheduling of a meeting with an elected official. Since most of the issues being worked on will move rather quickly, a summary or updated results will be available and will be given to the group.

AIDS Project Los Angeles, through the help of a part time Neighborhood Network Director and a part-time Neighborhood Network Coordinator, will provide planning assistance in the form of research, material gathering, scheduling appointments, and making sure that refreshments are provided.

HOW A NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK MEETING WORKS

Welcome & Introduction

All participants introduce themselves, explaining a little about what they do for a living, any other information of interest, and perhaps why they are motivated to join the Neighborhood Network.

Everybody is an Activist

Since some Neighborhood Network members may have been recruited by friends who may not have participated before in grassroots activities, it must be explained that help or assistance offered to a friend or loved one with AIDS is a form of activism.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a proven method to get someone to hear your point of view. We may advocate the position that HIV infected individuals incarcerated in the state and county jails are entitled to a community standard of health care. But the issue has more impact when we hear that a man spent seven months in the County Jail not knowing if he would receive his AZT; be able to shower; spend another interminable night in a cold, dark cell, without proper clothing or blankets; suffer days on end with little or no human contact, or go without support for the mental anguish that he goes through in dealing with this horrendous disease. Stories like this have motivated the Director of Medical Services at the County Jail to provide better care for HIV infected individuals.

The Importance of Coalition Building

The Neighborhood Network advocates on behalf of all people living with AIDS in Los Angeles County, not only APIA clients. APIA cannot provide all services, to all populations, in all geographical locations, or for all people living with AIDS in the County. Not only is it our job to advocate for more resources, but to ensure that the scarce resources that do become available are used in the most effective and efficient manner. Just as it is difficult for a single individual to create change alone, it is difficult for a single organization to unilaterally create change. The Neighborhood Network creates an opportunity to bring AIDS service providers together to develop unified strategies.

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Specific Agenda Item

Critical issues requiring immediate action are constantly surfacing. Sometimes these issues have been anticipated and a well thought out strategy is in place. Other times the issues hit suddenly. The Neighborhood Network Director and APLA's Public Policy Department evaluate these issues, and, with the host(s) of the Neighborhood Network groups, consider what other service providers or lobbyists are doing, the amount of time available to act, the population(s) affected and how this legislation impacts people with AIDS.

Scheduling the Next Meeting

A short Neighborhood Network meeting is scheduled a day or two before the meeting with the elected official to go over the background information on the specific agenda item.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A MEETING

Five to ten people from a Neighborhood Network group may be in attendance at the meeting with the elected official. However, only three people are necessary to make the presentation. The basic components of a Neighborhood Network visit with a public official are:

- The first Neighborhood Network member will ask each member to provide a short introduction explaining what he or she does for a living, how they became personally affected by the AIDS epidemic or how they became involved with the Neighborhood Network. Members are encouraged to thank the elected representative for any past work they may have done on AIDS issues. It is important that elected officials know that members of the Neighborhood Network are not professional lobbyists. It is also important for the elected official to understand that a diverse cross section of society cares about people with AIDS, not just one segment of society.
- The next person is considered the "entree" person who gives the elected official a briefing about why the group felt it was important to make the visit to him or her, and provide background information about how certain decisions will affect the lives of those infected, on their families and loved ones and how those decisions will affect sound public health policy. There may be times when a Neighborhood Network group will be meeting with an elected official's assistant or aide. Many times it's the assistant or aide who specializes in health matters. Usually it will be this aide who is the expert on the matter and has researched it in great detail. If this person can be convinced of your position, he or she will advise the elected official to vote accordingly.
- The closing person makes brief remarks about what action they believe the elected official should take. The most common request will be asking the elected official to support or oppose pending legislation. Sometimes, the Neighborhood Network may ask that an elected official investigate the viability of a government program to be sure that adequate services are provided to those infected by HIV. The closing person will also thank the elected official for time spent with the group.

SUMMARY & CLOSE

Every year lobbyists are paid hundreds of millions of dollars to capture the attention of elected officials even if it's for just a few minutes. Many organizations pay thousands of dollars for a 30 second television commercial to influence politicians.

Constituents are much more powerful. The elected official knows that he or she won election on the vote of the people. Their chief consideration is keeping that seat or to move on to higher office. In either case, that elected official knows that they must be held accountable. For this reason, constituents are practically guaranteed an appointment with their representative. This time is worth literally millions of dollars to other lobbyists. You can have it for the asking.

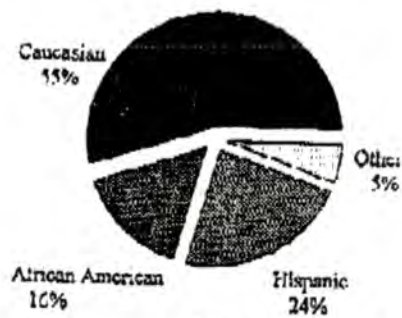
Elected officials are generally not experts in any particular field. Politicians constantly scout for *reliable* sources of information. It is our vision that elected officials will begin to view members of the Neighborhood Network as experts on the issue of AIDS, and that eventually, the elected officials will start contacting members of the Neighborhood Network about the need for new legislation or advice on pending legislation. You may be wondering how useful it is to visit representatives who already have a good record on AIDS issues. It is extremely useful. Politicians are no different than anyone else. They need to be told when they are doing a good job, especially when taking a strong stand on such a controversial issue as AIDS. There have been times when politicians have stuck their neck out on an issue, gone unrewarded, and then decided it was not worth the political cost to stick their neck out again. Positive reinforcement also provides encouragement for that representative to go a step further on an issue. For example, your elected official may have voted consistently "the right way" but never took a leadership role. This constant reinforcement may encourage them to take their position a step further either by actively convincing their colleagues on a particular stance, introducing new legislation, or demanding more funding.

As a Neighborhood Network activist, you are part of the next wave of the AIDS advocacy movement. You can ensure that people living with AIDS maintain the best quality of life. Agencies from across the nation are watching your efforts closely to use as a model to develop programs like the Neighborhood Network in their areas.

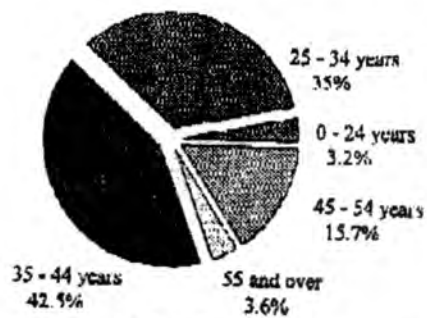
Keep it up. It's working.

Client Statistics as of June 1993

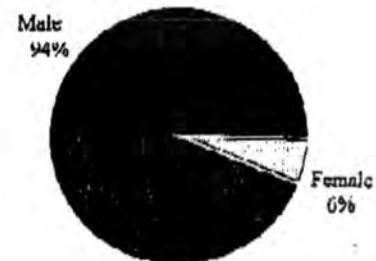
Demographics



Age



Gender



AIDS Project Los Angeles ♦ 1313 North Vine Street ♦ Los Angeles, California 90028