



**VERMONT  
CARES**

Committee for AIDS Resources, Education & Services

Vermont CARES' mission is to improve the quality of life, create compassionate communities, and prevent the spread of HIV by working with people affected by HIV/AIDS as catalysts for social and individual change.

*A tri-monthly newsletter of*

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**If you would like to submit an article to *PositiveConnections* or become a member of the Newsletter Team please contact Melissa Farr at the Burlington office.**

**Your comments and feedback are welcome. We want *PositiveConnections* to be a valuable source for you!**

## *Positive Connections...*

March 2009

### Setting Goals for CARES and Hoping for Your Help

By Peter Jacobsen

As we begin another year at CARES, we are positioning our organization to face the future changes and challenges of HIV case management and prevention. With so much changing at the state and federal level in terms of policy, funding, and education, AIDS Service Organizations across the country are taking stock of our assets and areas for growth.

Specifically, we as a nation are facing increased HIV infections each year, significant challenges to our healthcare resources, tremendous strains on housing and entitlement resources, and increasing strains on individual and community finances. These are not new challenges for HIV advocates, but they do represent increased pressures for organizations working to reduce the poverty, racism, homophobia, sexism, and oppression still tied to HIV infection.

Affirmatively, we also face a new federal government that is shifting priorities toward needle exchange, comprehensive risk reduction policy, and more human-focused healthcare; importantly, they seem to be advocating against abstinence-only prevention. With shifts in federal policy and philosophy around health, HIV, and stigma, ensuring better care and prevention for our neighbors affected by HIV may be a stronger federal and state priority. One of our main jobs at CARES is to ensure that focus remains clear, and we are crafting messages and advocacy to ensure our shared issues stay in the forefront.

Through this lens, we are looking at the programs we offer at CARES, and we're trying to establish new goals for the work we do – a master vision for our services and prevention work. Your role in this is integral, and we learn more and more each day about what each of us needs to stay focused on health and wellness; thank you. We hope by establishing a big picture for Vermont CARES, we can manage goals for:

- Housing Access
- Emergency Financial Assistance
- Poverty Case Management & Coordination of Services
- Access to Benefits
- Prevention Projects and Populations at Risk

If you have any thoughts on these goals, please let your program specialist know directly, or join one of our upcoming focus groups at one of the local CARES offices.

Thank you all for your leadership in all the ways you offer it!

**[www.vtcares.org](http://www.vtcares.org)**



**Very important notice regarding HOPWA emergency assistance to clients!!!**

Notice to all clients, as of this past week, we have learned that HUD will no longer allow clients that are receiving any federally funded long term rental housing assistance (HOPWA, Section 8, etc) to receive ANY emergency funding through HOPWA. If you have a Section 8 or HOPWA voucher or live in a HOPWA unit, you were previously eligible to receive Tier 1 and Tier 3 assistance. Based on this new policy, you are no longer eligible to receive this funding.

We realize that this could potentially impact your budgeting for the upcoming months. Please work closely with your case manager to find additional resources in the community you live in. Local Offices of Economic Opportunity and PATH are both good options to assist in rental and utility payments.

We all recognize that this news may be especially hard to take given the state of everyone's economic health right now, and we are always looking for additional funding to assist us in meeting client needs.

For those clients that do not receive any long term federally funded housing assistance, you are still eligible to receive HOPWA assistance.

Please call your case manager with any questions you may have. You can also call Melissa, Services Program Director, at 863-2437 x19.

**Meet a new volunteer!**

I thought this might be a good time to introduce myself. My name is Emilie. I have just recently moved to Burlington from Seattle. I have my bachelor degree in Nutrition which I received from Bastyr University in Washington. I have an innovative and genuine interest in food and the therapeutic effects of nutrients. My knowledge and experience spans throughout all realms of alternative medicine. I am really happy and grateful to become involved with Vermont Cares. If there are any questions please don't hesitate to ask and I will do my best to answer them. I look forward to connecting with you all soon.

Take Care,  
Emilie

Emilie will be attending some socials, teaching us how to make healthy, tasty meals.



## Dalton Drive

By Jose Davila

Things have been moving at a record pace with the makeover at DD and I must say it looks beautiful. I don't have permission to name our very own interior decorator however his taste speaks for itself. For those that have not ventured into the living room downstairs please take a moment to appreciate the nice job done by the painters. The wall that was bulging out onto the sidewalk at the front of the house is long gone. The iceberg that is sitting at the back stairway entrance is not about to melt away soon enough though so be careful if you go out that entrance. For those that are still not aware of that big dog that occasionally runs through the building don't worry it's not real. Just kidding folks! Lilly is the newest member of the house and she currently takes up space on the second floor in apt. # 8. She has been spotted lying down in front of other tenants' doors and jumps to bark when she hears movement in the building. She is the friendliest dog this side of Lassie. She wants attention that is all. Her hair may rise on her back and she may bark or growl a bit when she first sees someone but that is it. By the way she has a tendency to walk between peoples legs, please don't panic I think she was a horse in another place and time. Having said all that it's not about the dog it's about DD. While I don't plan on staying there forever it has been a very nice experience for me. I have to follow that up with the usual problems that any housing situation brings with it; and that is noise. I have learned to live with many people over the years growing up in NYC. I appreciate the quiet, but sometimes the noise lets me know people are alive and well and that is the bottom line for me. We have had issues with noise and too many cars for the amount of people living there and the big one, people not doing their part to clean up after when doing laundry. We still feed 3 clients through our eating well program in collaboration with Meals on Wheels. We look forward to bigger and better things in the coming seasons and I personally want to say to everyone connected to Dalton Dr. along with the tenants that are the community that is Dalton Dr. Thank you for the experience.

## A Get to Know Worlds AIDS Day

By Roy Belcher

Vermont CARES' first ever anti-stigma campaign "Get to Know" was launched on December 1, 2008, World AIDS Day. We chose this day to launch for several reasons. First and foremost, this is a day to remember and reflect on the history of this epidemic and those we've lost to it. It is also a day to remind people that the fight against HIV/AIDS is not over; it is however changing. In the face of this change we wanted to ignite a new fire in the belly of HIV activists, reflecting on their efforts, honoring how far they have brought us and showing them that their energy is still needed.

With new diagnoses on the rise and new challenges facing the positive community all the time people need to be reminded of the importance of this issue. While we do our best to prevent further transmission of HIV through education and outreach we are seeing more and more infections. One of the key missions of Vermont CARES is to create compassionate communities for those living with HIV. We feel the cornerstone of compassion is education. That's why the "Get to Know" campaign aims to reach as many Vermonters as possible. While continuing to connect with communities we already have a strong foothold in, such as UVM, COTS and several area high schools, we are reaching out to new communities we have never brought our message to in the past. We are working hard to get into the faith based community, rural areas and the schools that serve them.

In order to get Vermonters to "Get to Know" we need the help of the positive community of Vermont. The most effective way to educate people and dispel the myths surrounds HIV is by introducing them to someone living with the virus. Introducing people to productive, active members of the community who happen to be HIV positive says more and is a more effective lesson than any presentation we could come up with. There are many ways to get involved with the campaign so if you are positive and interested in helping Vermonters to "Get to Know" please contact Roy at the office!



## Are You or Someone You Know Living with HIV/AIDS?

If so, you may be eligible to participate in a paid research study at the University of Vermont investigating Anxiety and HIV/AIDS-related symptoms

Eligible participants include individuals living with HIV/AIDS between the ages 18-65

You'll receive \$25.00 for your participation

For more information contact Adam Gonzalez today:  
(802) 656-0655 or Agonzal1@uvm.edu

## Could you benefit from our Resource Bank?

By Caitlin Regan & Melissa Farr

Vermont CARES now offers additional services in the form of a Resource Bank. This collection of in-kind assistance is available to clients who are seeking alternative support in addition to the services that we already provide. Upon making a genuine effort and exhausting all other possible resources, clients are simply asked to fill out a short 2-page application detailing their request. Once the request is submitted and received by us, we search through donations already received or get to work contacting local area businesses for new ones.

Clients may request anything, ranging from a monthly supply of vitamins to an oil change for their car that they would otherwise be unable to afford. One might also request larger household items, such as a kitchen table or a mattress. Some other examples of client requests are:

*\*A client requests an alarm watch so that they may remember when to take their medications.*

*\*In efforts to stay warmer in the winter and reduce the heating bill, a client asks that she receive a space heater for her bedroom.*

*\*A client requests a 6-month membership for the local area gym in order to obtain regular exercise and maintain a healthy weight.*

Unfortunately, Vermont CARES' Resource Bank is unable to provide direct financial assistance through this service.

For more information, check out our Resource Bank FAQ sheet on page 5 or contact Melissa Farr, Director of Services, at 802-863-2437.

To obtain a Resource Bank application, please contact your Vermont CARES case manager or print it from our website.



## Resource Bank Fact Sheet



### **Who can apply to the Resource Bank?**

Any Vermont CARES client can submit a request through our application process, as long as the client has made a genuine effort and exhausted all other resources in acquiring what they need. For example, someone who identifies that they need a microwave oven and cannot afford a brand new one might have already looked at local thrift stores, browsed daily newspaper ads, and searched on the internet before concluding that they could not find one. Please take a look at our list of community resources on our website, some of which other clients have found helpful. These are just a portion of the resources that are out there!

### **How can I apply?**

You can obtain a paper copy from your case manager or from any of our three offices in Vermont. Please make sure that you discuss your application with your case manager, as their signature is required. They may also be extremely helpful in helping you find alternative resources in the community to fulfill your request, without applying to the Vermont CARES Resource Bank. Once you turn the form in to your case manager, they will forward it to the Services Director.

### **How many times can I apply? Is there a limit?**

Due to the large number of clients we serve, we only allow each client to receive two requests per year (from January through December). This means that you can continue submitting requests until two of them have been approved. Therefore, you may want to think carefully about what you request.

### **Can my application be denied?**

Your application may be denied, and this could be for a couple reasons. One reason could be that you didn't attempt to access any other resources. Being a non-profit organization, we have limited funds and donations are increasingly hard to come by; we simply cannot afford to honor requests that could be easily obtained within our own communities. Hopefully, you and your case manager have already brainstormed about how to get what you need. Your application could also be denied if it is incomplete.

### **Once I am approved for a request and it is available for me, how do I retrieve it?**

This will depend largely on what type of item you request. If you request a gift certificate for an oil change, this can easily be sent through the mail. Other items, such as a space heater or a set of dishes, can be picked up from your case manager during office hours. (Read below for larger items.)

### **If I request and am approved for a furniture item, is it possible to have it delivered to my home?**

Unfortunately, we cannot assist our clients in moving large household items or furniture. If you request something of large size, you are responsible for moving it from its current location. Please make prior transportation arrangements beforehand.



## Recipe Roundup

By Kara Casey

Chili- cheap, easy and healthy

Recipe for 2 people

### **Ingredients:**

6 oz ground turkey or Textured vegetable protein

1/2 can crushed tomatoes

1/4 can tomato sauce

1 tbsp tomato paste

1/2 chopped onion

1 clove garlic or 1tsp garlic powder

2 tsp chopped green bell pepper

2 1/2 tsp chilli powder (or to taste)

1/2 tsp cumin (or to taste)

Dash of salt

Dash of pepper

1 can kidney beans or can of mixed chilli beans

1 cup corn (frozen works best)



### Directions:

Simmer onions, green pepper and chopped garlic in oil. Add ground turkey, cook until brown (if using TVP skip this step and add TVP into kettle with other ingredients).

Add all ingredients in large pot or kettle, bring to boil then reduce heat to medium. You can add more spices, beans etc. as desired. The longer it cooks, the more flavor it gets!

## Words of Inspiration

From Wendy Kenny

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.”

Helen Keller

*US blind & deaf educator (1880 - 1968)*



## News From Rutland

By MaryKathryn Charbonneau

Hello everyone. We are well into the first quarter of this year and the days are getting longer, it is starting to warm up a bit and it is staying lighter later. So a sure sign that spring is not too far away. Things have been fairly quiet in Rutland county. We had a very nice holiday gathering in December. All of the personal care gift bags have been distributed and the children all received donated toys, games and clothing items. Our thoughts and best wishes for Gus as he heads for his trip to Nepal to visit good friends and continues his advocacy and global AIDS work. He will be back in time to attend the CARES auction this year. Our monthly socials will continue, weather permitting. This is your opportunity to connect with other PLHIV and transportation is provided if you want to attend. The February social at Sugar and Spice is a group fav. The March social will have Roy attending to update folks on the stigma campaign. Check the calendar to time and location. That is the news from Rutland for now....

## St Johnsbury Happenings

By Penni Cleverley



Some of you have had the chance to meet the four legged interns and some have not yet had the opportunity. Mya (Yellow lab owned by Penni Cleverley) joined St. Johnsbury Vermont CARES in October. She is now going on six months old. She recently passed her basic obedience training and will be enrolled in more classes to eventually become a certified therapy dog. Cricket (black lab owned by Bonnie Cleverley soon to be eight months old) joined Vermont CARES in August and has also completed basic obedience classes. Interestingly enough, Cricket's date of birth is National HIV testing day (June 27<sup>th</sup>). Both of these dogs have brought many smiles to clients, including individuals coming in for HIV testing, needle exchange, prevention supplies, education, etc. In the future at some point I do believe that they will also be participating in HIV education in area schools.

Socials have continued to be a success. Several individuals attended the holiday gathering in December. This gathering was held at Tim's Deli in St Johnsbury.

### *Spotlighting some Area resources-*

**North East Kingdom Community Action-NEKCA** 802-748-6040 offers free tax preparation, a food shelf, and limited funding assistance for utilities and fuel assistance. They also offer day old bread products and sometimes limited household items.

**Kingdom Recovery Center-KRC** 802-751-8520 offers free area support for those in recovery. They have a monthly calendar of events that are substance free; these events are open to the public.

**Smoking Cessation-** Contact Rose Shehann 802-748-7532 assistance with quitting tobacco use.



VERMONT CARES

Live & Silent Auction



**Saturday, April 11, 2009  
7-11pm**

**Tickets: \$30 (price includes appetizers)**

The Inn at Essex  
70 Essex Way  
Essex, Vermont

There are a limited number of free tickets for clients only.  
For more info please call Wendy at (800) 649-AIDS.

Sponsored by The Inn at Essex and the New England Culinary Institute.