



GHARP HIGHLIGHTS!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST: AS OF FEBRUARY 2007

- 10,774 persons reached through A&B Programs
- 73 persons trained to promote HIV/AIDS through A&B
- 6704 persons reached through one-on-one peer education
- 675 individuals provided with HIV-related palliative care (excluding TB/HIV)

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MOH/PRIVATE SECTOR BOARD/GHARP HIV/AIDS AWARDS

As part of their mandate, the Private Sector Advisory Board initiated the 2007 HIV/AIDS Awards which were presented on 9th March 2007. Through this awards program, the Advisory Board recognized the valuable contribution made by individual entities and their leaders in their response to HIV/AIDS and identified and promoted new examples of best practices.

Scotiabank was the company to capture the award for Excellence in the Workplace. They recognized the need to join in the response to HIV/AIDS in Guyana and their employees volunteered in large numbers and formed the Scotiabank Guyana HIV/AIDS Steering Committee. The committee collaborated with GHARP to provide Workplace Training, development of a corporate policy, assistance to Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Peer Education Training and Community Inclusion.

The Award for Excellence in Innovation went to the National AIDS Program Secretariat Mobile Outreach Team. This outreach treatment and care programme was established in the last quarter of 2005 and its aim is to provide a complete package of comprehensive treatment, care and support to people living with HIV. They have been working in the

hinterland and this includes Regions 1,7, 8 and 9.

The Institute of Private Enterprise and Development (IPED) captured the award for Excellence using Core Competency. IPED's mission is to target the poor and other disadvantaged groups. They saw an opportunity for assisting



Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Health, presenting Dmitry Nicholson of Youth Challenge Guyana with Award for Excellence in the Community

persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and launched a program which would provide loans to PLWHAs in December 2005. As of December 31, 2006 a total of 42 loans with a value of \$2.8M had been disbursed to 36 PLWHAs.

Dereck Springer, Chairman of Lifeline Counselling Services was given the award for Individual Leadership. Mr. Springer has been the driving force behind Lifeline's success and in the early days he

traveled all regions of the country conducting HIV and AIDS awareness sensitization and educational programmes.

The Award for Excellence in the community went to Youth Challenge Guyana (YCG). This NGO was established in 1990 to offer young people from Guyana and across the world an opportunity for personal development; leadership and problem solving experience. Since the establishment of YCG, they have been able to directly expose more than 4000 in and out-of school youth in all ten regions to challenging and worthwhile community service projects ranging from health, literacy, environmental research, community infrastructure and HIV/AIDS/STI education.

The final award for Individual Care Provider went to Mr. Rajnauth Jaggernauth who is a senior social worker at the Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic. Mr. Jaggernauth is a counselor who works with patients with varying types of STIs including HIV/AIDS. He has been doing this for the past 30 years. Mr. Jaggernauth also heads the counseling department of the GUM Clinic and supervises counselors and outreach workers who conduct these daily activities.

Positive Living—Terry and Sarah*



VYC Peer Educators in Training

in making sound decisions as they develop and often get involved in intimate

relationships long before they are emotionally or physically ready. Without the proper guidance from their parents they often make mistakes which

could be costly in later life.

As a young adult moral rights and wrongs prove the greatest challenge. Most times the choices made are not good ones and very few



Positive Living continued from page 1

are lucky. The results are often school dropouts, teenage pregnancies and the possibility of contracting HIV. Now however, there is now a very strong and effective program to combat these issues.

The members of Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC) felt strongly that this problem should be tackled at its' root. Young people were being infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and something needed to be done. To stem the spread of this disease required much time dedicated to education and behavioral change. They felt they should get involved with this fight and help the young people who they were charged with assisting.

In January 2006, through the use of the formal school system, a massive drive to raise awareness on abstinence with one thousand in-school youths was launched. Since it's launching the program called 'In-School Peer Education Program' has been introduced to fourteen schools across regions 4, 5 and 6 and has trained fifty-six (56) students who are now Peer Educators.

This program has enjoyed some success as the effects on the lives of some youth can be noted. Most compelling are the reports of how the education gained by the few is rippling through the schools; indicating that awareness simply must not stop here.

Two young people who were both suffering from neglect and inadequate care came to the attention of VYC. They were two separate individuals living in different places but both vulnerable to the effects of an unforgiving environment. One was the product of a household headed by siblings, and she suffered from frequent bouts of anger, defiance of other adults and early sexual activity. The other, a classic example of juvenile delinquency as he was often violent and "out of control."

Both were frequent visitors at the schools' welfare department and there seemed no hope for the two. Just when everyone had all but given up on the two youth the Big Brothers Big Sisters Guyana (BBBSG)

program was introduced by VYC in Guyana. BBBSG is a mentorship program which lends assistance to orphans and vulnerable youth in schools.

As the two were virtual outcasts anyway there was nothing to be lost from one more attempt at working with them. The program was aimed at helping children who face many obstacles and are at a risk of not performing to their fullest potential, it was an ideal beginning.

Terry* behaved like a hoodlum; storming through the school waging war whenever he felt like it. His peers feared him, his teachers were practically sickened at the sight of him; he would do what he wants when he wants. Whenever he went to school, gambling would be the lesson for the day, which most times ended with "big brawls" about the



VYC Peer educators during a training session.

school compound. Terry* had no reservations at just age 16 boasting about the number of girls that were pregnant for him. His teachers and parents feared that one day one of his frequent gang rivalries would lead to a fatal end.

There was very little it seems that anyone could do to temper Sarah's* outrageous anger spells. When Sarah* was not lashing out at her teachers or peers for "seemingly nothing at all" as the teachers explained, she had a timid personality. Sarah* had many siblings and only a father for parental guidance. He was never around however as he was always busy trying to make ends meet. Sarah* was practically brought up by her siblings and had no friends. Her school teachers were aware of her circumstance and tolerated her best as they could. The

frequency of her anger spells became overwhelming however and they were all out of ideas of how to deal with her. They needed help and needed it urgently.

Both Terry and Sarah were signed on as mentees in the program where they were visited regularly on a weekly basis by mentors¹ on the program. Once in a setting where they could be engaged on a one on one basis, new discoveries were made and a whole new way of life started to unfold. They both had enormous potential which was over-shadowed by their living situation.

In less than a year the teachers were reporting on the progress of the program and the positive development in Terry's and Sarah's approach to school and the people around them. They were soon recommended to the in-school Peer Education program as their progress had been tremendous once enrolled in the BBBSG Program. They did and were among the batch of recently graduated in-school Peer Educators. To see Terry or Sarah stand in front of a batch of youth like themselves facilitating sessions on a positive lifestyle is testimony to the benefits of this program and more than anyone could have imagined.

Two great examples of strength are Terry and Sarah; both faced with challenging circumstances, both willing to be led, to tap in to the their untouched potential.

Poet Maya Angelou once wrote *"I can be changed by what happens to me. I refuse to be reduced by it. In the face of such uncertainty believe in two things – you are stronger than you think and you are not alone."*

* Names have been changed to protect their identity.

Kaieteur News Joins 20 New Private Sector GHARP Partners



Mr. Glen Lall, Publisher of Kaieteur News receiving Plaque from H.E. David Robinson, U.S. Ambassador to Guyana

of public and media events among other things.

Lall noted that his decision to become more actively involved in the

battle is in acknowledgment of the potential of the media in creating widespread awareness on HIV/AIDS, to promote positive attitudes towards people living with the virus, and influencing people to change high risk behaviour that makes them vulnerable to the infection.

“The media have a pivotal role to play in the fight against AIDS. It is a well known saying that “education is the vaccine against AIDS,” Lall said.

He pointed out that since the world is working to combat a disastrous and growing emergency, the tool at everyone’s disposal should be used.

HIV/AIDS is the worst epidemic humanity has ever faced, he noted, adding that it has spread further faster and with more catastrophic long term effects than any other disease. Its impact has become a devastating obstacle to development.

“The media have tremendous reach and influence,

leads to denial and rejection of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) at personal and societal levels, he said.

In such a process, Lall noted the media have the potential to influence public opinion and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, including attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

“When the media focus on a particular issue,



Mr. Ian Hercules, PRO of Banks DIH Limited receiving plaque from H.E. David Robinson, US Ambassador to Guyana.

Kaieteur News has broken new ground in the local media fraternity by becoming the first media outfit to partner the USAID/Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction and Prevention Project (GHARP) in its private sector partnership programme which aims at confronting the challenges of HIV/AIDS.

This newspaper was one of 21 entities that formalised this arrangement last Friday evening by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation when the Health Ministry and GHARP held their Private Sector Advisory Board HIV/AIDS Awards and signing event at the Umana Yana.

This brings to 43, the number of private sector entities that have signed on to the programme since last year. This latest group of partners represents a diverse spectrum of organisations and their distributors.

They are AH&L Kisson Ltd, Banks DIH Ltd, Demerara Distillers Ltd, John Fernandes Ltd, Guyana Trades Union Congress, National Milling Co, Abdools & Abdools Insurance, Guy America Furniture Store, Guyana Rice Development Board, National Media and Publishing Company (Kaieteur News), CARICOM Rice Mills, Woodlands Hospital, Guyana Gold & Diamond Miners’ Association, Liana Cane Interior Ltd, Restoration Assembly of God, Rupununi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Lethem, Region Nine, North American Resources Inc. Ltd, Town Clerk, Mayor & City Council, Beharry Group of Companies, Guyana Revenue Authority, and Ram & McRae, Chartered Accountants.

Publisher of Kaieteur News, Glenn Lall, made a public show of his commitment to enhancing and improving the local response to HIV/AIDS by signing on behalf of the company.

As a USAID/GHARP partner, Kaieteur News has committed to helping protect employees in the workplace through a variety of education and training initiatives designed to prevent and reduce HIV/AIDS.

The company has also committed to initiating workplace training, development of an HIV/AIDS Corporate Policy and sponsorship



Mr. Daniel Gajie, President of the Rupununi Chamber of Commerce and Industry receiving plaque from H.E. David Robinson, US Ambassador to Guyana.

particularly with young people, who represent the future and who are the key to any successful fight against HIV/AIDS. We must seek to engage these youths and educate them in an interesting manner.”

Lall stressed that the media represent one of the instrumentalities which facilitate and gives a directional thrust to the efforts to cure the disease if not to treat it.

“If medicine can treat HIV/AIDS, then the media are capable of preventing it with an ultimate goal to cure it through its capabilities to impart education and awareness.”

He also noted that besides creating awareness and providing a knowledge base about HIV/AIDS, the media’s role is also to remove the misconceptions about the transmission of the virus and the social ostracism of affected persons. Lack of information

there is a higher degree of public awareness and support to tackle that issue. Attitudes affect how people respond to HIV/AIDS and how PLWHA are treated or cared for by their peers, employers, families, communities, the health care system and the justice dispensing system. We have the capability to bring about transformation in the thinking pattern of the society in respect of PLWHA thus sowing the seeds of attitudinal changes. The media can be a great facilitator for preventing the process while imparting the need for a healthy behaviour towards the section of the society and those individuals most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and those individuals affected by it.”

The Publisher also believes that in combating HIV/AIDS, the media need to be extra cautious while reporting and there is an urgent need for the media to change the way it reports on HIV/AIDS.

He added that he has committed his media house to play an important and determining role in educating the public, creating awareness among them and transmitting crucial information so that people will become aware, remain alert and take measures to prevent its occurrence. “We all know that information is power, and that awareness therefore empowers.”

Noting that HIV/AIDS education sessions will be undertaken within Kaieteur News, Lall said that the media has enormous potential to undertake the challenge of fighting with AIDS, but to perform its responsibility with utmost efficiency requires the clear understanding of the

Kaieteur News Joins..... Continued from page 2 ——— By Melanie Allicock

challenge and the obstacles to spread the education about AIDS.

According to UNAIDS and the World Health Organization, as many as two-thirds of new HIV infections projected to occur globally by 2010 could be averted with more effective prevention and public education efforts.

A UNAIDS report stresses that the most practical and fastest way in which one can change any phenomenon is through media.

During the last year and half, USAID/GHARP in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the International Labour Organisation has helped to engage 22 private sector partners in workplace programmes ranging from prevention training, workplace development and implementation, peer education and in-house prevention education activities.

These efforts have reached an estimated 12,000 workers and their families in Guyana and much work has been supported by partner Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as the USAID/GHARP staff.

Some of the companies have also offered support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children as well as a range of media and community events and programmes, including micro loans for those living with HIV/AIDS to help build their entrepreneurial skills.

Director, Technical Services Unit USAID/GHARP, Dr Jomo Osborne said a special effort was made in the selection of the new partners to

focus on conglomerates and umbrella organisations.

He estimates that an additional 10,000 workers will be reached in the coming year through this new collaboration, exclusive of their direct family circle.

He added that what makes the commitment of the new partners special is that in addition to helping to protect their own workers from HIV/AIDS, instituting workplace policies that honour and protect workers rights, and linking them to Voluntary Counseling and Testing, many of the organizations have made a commitment of going beyond their communities.



Dr. Leslie Chin, Chairman of IPED receiving Award for Core Competency from H.E. David Robinson, US Ambassador to Guyana

“Some will do this by sponsoring events and

committed to going beyond their workplaces and into their communities. Others will do this by sponsoring events and community awareness activities while others do this by providing their products and services to help those infected and affected.”

NGOs, community leaders and individual care providers also make up a crucial web in all of the private sector programmes.

Supporting the entire effort has been the USAID/GHARP Private Sector Advisory Board. Established nearly a year ago by a committed group of Chief Executive Officers and industry leaders, the group has grown into one of the most robust coalitions within the Caribbean.

In the next few months, this group will be recognized as the Guyana Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS which will embrace a wider cadre of other public/private sector partners, including those that work with the ILO, the CDC, as well as organizations that have natural ties such as the Private Sector Commission, Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security; PANCAP; UNAIDS, and other donor and stakeholder organizations involved in private sector and workplace activities.

He expressed the hope that the coalition will become a self-governed, self-sustainable organisation and will serve to organize and coordinate the private sectors’ response to HIV/AIDS in the years ahead.

Focus ON —Hope Foundation

Hope Foundation is a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) established in 1996 and is located in Bartica. This organisation is responding to HIV/AIDS and other Social issues in Bartica and environs communities within Regions 3, 7 and 10.

Hope Foundation provides Education and Training, Counselling, Voluntary Counselling & Testing, Condom distribution, Prevention from Mother to Child Transmission, Orphans and Vulnerable Children services, Community Home Based Care service, HIV/AIDS Workplace programs, Youth Friendly Services and Capacity Building. They are reaching out to all those infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Regions #3, 7& 10.

Over the past ten years, Hope Foundation has mobilized various segments of the Bartica community around HIV/AIDS and youth friendly services. The organisation rallied businesses, local media, schools, and the Faith Based Organisations to put efforts together towards awareness campaigns, outreach activities, educational programs and training, fundraising events, and community development programs. Hope Foundation has also successfully mentored Peer groups within fifteen Riverain communities and two

NGO’s Hope For All in Region # 2 and RESLOCARE in Region # 3.

Hope Foundation was created with the intent to provide all environs of Bartica and surrounding Riverain/Interior communities with the dissemination of HIV/AIDS/STIs information and education towards a greater response without discrimination of race, religion, age, sex, or creed. (An estimated population of 35,000 people).

Hope Foundation has a pool of dedicated volunteers with a wide scope of skills and abilities. This organisation now serves as a resource center, providing services useful and necessary to Youth in school and out of school. Workshops on HIV prevention have been conducted in twenty Riverain Communities, ten Faith Based Organisations, workers within five Private Sector and various youth groups in Bartica and environs. Working with these Communities have proven to be enjoyable and worthwhile.

The volunteers of Hope Foundation have distributed thousand’s of pamphlets-(IEC Materials) on HIV/AIDS and STIs, as well as a variety of other community development issues. A Notice (Bill) Board was also erected in Bartica. They have televised and reproduced videos on HIV/AIDS/STIs and Youth Friendly Issues, hosted TV programs and call



Ivor Melville, Project Coordinator, Hope Foundation

shows that deal with youth issues, HIV/AIDS/STIs. Educational workshops were held for high-risk communities; counseling center was set up in Bartica

Currently this NGO is establishing a multi-disciplinary team in order to address the psychosocial issues surrounding HIV/AIDS/STIs; Clients and Youth who have difficulties in understanding and over coming their challenges.

Future plans include the establishment of a drop in centre in Bartica; a hotline service; a completed Youth Friendly Center; Big Brother/Big Sister Chapter in Bartica and the expansion of the HIV/AIDS services in Region 7’s riverain communities.