



The Networker

November 2010

Vol 3 | Issue 4

The Newsletter of the
Rural Aids Action Network

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RAAN

Rural AIDS Action Network

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The Networker is a
publication of the Rural AIDS
Action Network, a 501(c)3
organization.

You can view this newsletter
online at www.raan.org, where
it is in color.



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The Rural AIDS Action Network exists to organize, develop and sustain caring communities of professionals and volunteers who serve and support persons living with, affected by, or at risk for HIV/AIDS in the rural Midwest.

Director's Deliberations *Historic Year*

As I sit down to write this piece for the newsletter, we are less than two weeks away from the mid-term elections for Minnesota and the Nation. Many of the political experts are predicting a historical shift in both the house and the senate with the Republican Party gaining the majority. No matter what the outcome on November 2nd the elected officials will still need to be held accountable for how they respond to these unprecedented times.

In the world of HIV/AIDS, one historic event that happened in 2010 was the development of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy; a first in U.S. history. Minnesota was fortunate to be one of the 14 sites that were chosen to host a community discussion by the Office of National AIDS Policy. These town hall type meetings offered a chance to provide direct input to the people that were drafting this important document and it allowed me the opportunity to highlight the needs of people living with HIV in rural Minnesota. The National HIV/AIDS Strategy has three primary goals: 1) reducing the number of people who become infected with HIV, 2) increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes for people living with HIV, and 3) reducing HIV-related health disparities. This document will hopefully help the United States remain focused on HIV and allow us to measure our response to HIV as a nation.

Another historic event that happened in 2010 was health care reform. No matter where you fall on the political spectrum, most people can agree the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (also know in general terms as Health Care Reform) were historic legislation. When I attended the Ryan White Conference in Washington D.C. in August there were conversations and multiple workshops on health care reform and its potential impact on the Ryan White Care Act. There were very few definite answers that came out of those workshops, but it was generally agreed that the new legislation was not going to eliminate the need for Ryan White programs and the life saving care it is able to provide to thousands of low income people living with HIV/AIDS.

RAAN will continue to monitor the impact of both the National AIDS Strategy and health care reform on people living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk for transmission.

Peace,

Charles C. Hempel

Executive Director

Help us save a tree, and staff time, paper cost, printing cost and postage. If you have email, send a note to staff@raan.org and tell us that you would like to receive our newsletter and other updates by email. We will be happy to add you to our growing list.

Outreach Update – Fall 2010

The **Pride Festival Season** has been our big outreach emphasis over the months of June, July, August, and September. We had a booth at Grand Rapids, Pine City, Brainerd, Twin Cities, Rochester, Moorhead, Duluth, Mankato, and St. Cloud. We offered free, rapid HIV testing at seven of these events. We provided 78 tests at these events, 53 of them with men who have sex with men (MSM). This is a huge endeavor involving significant amounts of staff and volunteer hours. However, since MSM continue to be the highest risk category, it is well worth our efforts. Total estimated attendance at these nine Pride Festivals was 25,750.

Weather was not kind to our Pride outreach this year. We had rain at seven of nine events (and a tenth was canceled due to rain). Our “Excessive Heat Award” goes to Rochester on July 17th. The “Wet Shoes Award” goes to Mankato on September 11th. And finally, our “Tent-Blew-Over Awards” are shared by Twin Cities, Moorhead, and Mankato. We didn’t even try setting up a tent in Duluth due to wind. Despite all of that, we had a great time and will be back at all of them next year.

Other outreach and testing events over the past six months include a wide range of venues. We are very pleased to have Maria Guerrero on our staff. Through her efforts we have had a significant increase in outreach and testing with Minnesota’s growing Hispanic community. A new emphasis for us is participation in numerous Community Connect events. These are held regionally and are designed for Minnesota’s homeless and low income residents. They typically have an attendance in the range of 350 to 400 each. We have offered outreach and occasionally testing at a number of them. Finally, we continue to provide education and/or testing at a wide range of CD treatment facilities, college campuses, tribal events, social service conferences, and other venues throughout the state.

Fall Client Retreat – Nov. 16-17

We have planned a retreat for persons living with HIV/AIDS to be held at Camp Knutson, near Crosslake, on November 16th and 17th. The theme is “Making Sure Your HIV Care Is the Best It Can Be”. This is a workshop which we have offered often in the past. Participants rate it highly both for its practical usefulness and also for the opportunity to share with one another.

Registration is required by November 11th. Time and space are limited. There is no charge to RAAN clients for this retreat. Preference will be given to RAAN clients who have never attended this workshop. Others are welcome to register on an “as room allows” basis. **To register**, call the Little Falls RAAN office at **1-800-966-9735** and speak to Debbie, Roger, or Kathryn.



This group of students from Northwestern University near Chicago spent a week with us in September assisting clients in West Central Minnesota with yard cleanup and painting. They also spent a day at our Little Falls office on a wide variety of projects.

New Staff Member at RAAN!

Kathryn Hansen, Programs Manager

Kathryn Hansen, Programs Manager, joined RAAN in June of this year. Kathryn came to RAAN after working with Planned Parenthood in St Paul for a number of years. Prior to her work there, she managed a housing program for people living with HIV/AIDS in St Louis, Missouri. Kathryn received her Master of Social Work degree from Washington University in St Louis and her undergraduate degree from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

When Kathryn isn’t working she is volunteering with a dog rescue organization, All Dog Rescue. Kathryn fosters homeless dogs in her home until they are adopted. Kathryn

has two dogs of her own; Jade, a 10 year old yellow lab and Georgia, a 12 year old black lab mix. She also has two very tolerant cats, Eve & Ezra.

Kathryn moved to a small town outside of St Cloud when she started working for RAAN. While she hasn’t lived in the “country” before (even with growing up in South Dakota!), she is looking forward to her first winter outside of the city limits. “Let it Snow!”

We are all pleased to have Kathryn working in this important position. She has the attention to detail and an eye upon consistent professional procedures which should keep our funders happy. Yet she also has that compassion for our cause which will help to fulfill our mission.



November 1, 2010

Dear Friend:

I want to thank you for your continuing friendship and let you know you can make a real difference in your community and across Minnesota in the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.

As you may be aware the number of people living with HIV and AIDS who need our services continues to grow. There were 370 new cases of HIV reported in the state of Minnesota last year; the highest number in 17 years. Yet, RAAN's funding remains flat.

Your financial gift will help RAAN provide high quality services and support for Greater Minnesota individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS.

RAAN is the essential lifeline for nearly 250 individuals at this writing. Our compassionate outreach makes a real difference every day. A client in central MN recently shared his gratitude with RAAN:

"I would like to say thank you for your help/assistance on helping me since I arrived here in Minnesota. It really helped me a lot and I greatly appreciate it."

Put yourself in his shoes for a moment. You're HIV positive, isolated and trying to figure out how to pay for life supporting medication. Like this client, half of RAAN's clients are living in poverty. They need medical case management for their complex care, transportation to medical appointments, help with social services, and a supportive ear.

Your generous gift enhances lives – helping fill the gap between the cost of services and our partial government funding. Please send your gift today. We cannot fulfill our mission without community support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Hempeck
Executive Director

P.S. Thank you for your tax deductible gift of \$50, \$100, \$250, or an amount of your choosing. Secure, online donation also is available at www.raan.org. Please give today.

Friend of RAAN:

What if you could help us win \$1000 just by giving 10 bucks? On November 16, with Give to the Max Day, you can.

Last year, more than 38,000 donors logged on to GiveMN.org and gave over \$14 million to more than 3,000 Minnesota charities and nonprofits in 24 hours during Give to the Max Day. This year, the goal is to beat the record by engaging 40,000 donors during the second annual Give to the Max Day on November 16. The Rural AIDS Action Network, together with GiveMN.org – a first-of-its-kind giving website for nonprofits in Minnesota – is working to create a stronger nonprofit community for Minnesota.

GiveMN's Give to the Max Day amplifies your giving impact in a number of ways:

- **Win a Golden Ticket!** \$1,000 will be given to a random donor's charity every hour. You could be that donor! Strategize with your friends and family to on how to increase the chances winning a Golden Ticket such as spreading out your donations throughout the 24 hours.
- **Put us on the Leader Board!** Your donation on November 16 could put us on the leader board to win \$10,000 or even \$20,000 for the most number of donors for our nonprofit. Help us get "on the board!"

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.raan.org AND CLICK ON THE *GIVE TO THE MAX* ICON TO DONATE.

As you consider your charitable end-of-year giving, please consider participating in **Give to the Max Day** Nov. 16. GiveMN is easy to use, and your gift to RAAN will make a huge difference to our ongoing work.

Date _____ Donation Amount \$ _____ (Keep top half for your records)

Detach bottom half and mail along with your donation to: RAAN, 208 2nd St. NE, Little Falls, MN 56345.



www.raan.org **SAVE A STAMP AND DONATE ONLINE!** www.raan.org

Count me in! I want to make sure all persons living with HIV/AIDS in rural Minnesota have access to compassionate and confidential services and support – *in their hometown.*

Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$25 \$500 Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Date _____

E-mail _____

(Receive RAAN communications in a much more cost-effective way.)

My gift is in memory of: _____

Please list me as an anonymous donor in any agency communications.

Please mail me more information about _____

RAAN on the Move

The Red Ribbon Ride had another successful year in 2010! The Ride raised over \$350,000, benefiting eight local HIV/AIDS service organizations, including the Rural AIDS Action Network! Special thanks to the riders and crew — especially our Team RAAN members who put in many hours of training and fundraising! “It was truly inspiring to be surrounded by so many people that were passionate about ending HIV and the crew really took care of the riders,” stated Jeni Kolstad, RAAN medical case manager and first time rider. The July heat did not disappoint again this year with making fluids and ice in high demand and the capital in St. Paul provided a perfect backdrop for the closing ceremony. Mark your calendars for next year’s Red Ribbon Ride on **July 14 - 17, 2011**. You can register to ride or crew on Team RAAN at www.redribbonride.org.



On May 16, members of Team RAAN joined the Minnesota AIDS Project’s Minnesota AIDS Walk at Minnehaha Falls. The beautiful spring day brought together thousands of people and hundreds of volunteers to raise awareness and funds to support those affected by HIV and AIDS. The Walk raised over a half a million dollars and Team RAAN raised nearly \$2,500 that went directly back to RAAN. Marcy Yarger, RAAN medical case manager, participated in her third Walk on Team RAAN and remarked, “I could feel the energy in the air from all the people that participated and it was great to have people from Greater MN take part in this event.” Thank you to the walkers of TEAM RAAN for joining this important event and representing RAAN.



Help RAAN Give to the Max on November 16th!

Give to the Max Day is an initiative to engage donors to maximize their giving online. GiveMN’s Give to the Max Day amplifies your giving impact in a number of ways:

- **Win a Golden Ticket!** \$1,000 will be given to a random donor’s charity every hour. You could be that donor! Strategize with your friends and family to on how to increase the chances winning a Golden Ticket such as spreading out your donations throughout the 24 hours.
- **Put us on the Leader Board!** Your donation on November 16 could put us on the leader board to win \$10,000 or even \$20,000 for the most number of donors for our nonprofit in Greater MN. Help us get “on the board!”

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.raan.org AND CLICK ON THE GIVE TO THE MAX ICON TO DONATE.

give DAY NOV. 16
TO THE MAX

giveMN.org



RAAN
Rural AIDS Action Network
208 Second Street NE
Little Falls, MN 56345

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We need your help in the fight
against HIV in rural MN! Support
RAAN by contributing online
today. www.raan.org

World AIDS Day – December 1, 2010

“As the world enters a 30th year of the AIDS epidemic, we are called to honor and remember everyone affected by this devastating virus, grieve for all who have died, and seek inspiration for the continued work needed to end the suffering.”
(Source: Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Duluth)

Every year we try to assemble a comprehensive list of events connected with World AIDS Day in Greater Minnesota. The following is only a preliminary list. We know of other events still in the planning stage. This year we will be posting and regularly updating our list on our website at www.raan.org. We also share this list with the Minnesota Department of Health – HIV Section for posting on their webpage. It will be listed at www.health.state.mn.us/hiv.

- Alexandria** Fri., Nov. 12, 7:00 pm – **One Voice Mixed Chorus**
Discovery Middle School, 510 McKay Avenue North
For more information, call 877-536-7226
- Alexandria** Wed., Dec. 1, 5:30 pm – **Memorial Service**
First Congregational UCC, 221 7th Avenue West
For more information, call 877-536-7226
- Bemidji** Wed., Dec. 1, 5:30 pm – **Memorial Service**
St. Bart's Episcopal, 1800 Irvine Avenue NW
For more information, call 866-401-4561
- Bemidji** Month of December – **Display Case**, Bemidji Public Library
Bemidji Month of December – **Display Table**,
Bemidji State University Student Union
- Duluth** Tues., Nov. 30 at 6 pm through Wed., Dec. 1 at 10 pm
“30 Years and Counting: A 30 Hour AIDS Vigil”
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 835 West
College Street (218-724-0308) Hourly meditations
and a brief closing service at 10 pm on Wednesday
- Mankato** Mon., Nov. 29 – Wed., Dec. 1 – **AIDS Memorial Quilt**
Mankato State University, Centennial Student Union Ballroom (507-389-5131)
- Mankato** Wed., Dec. 1, 7:00 pm – **Memorial Service**
St. John the Evangelist, 302 Warren Street, 507-388-1969

RAAN Board of Directors

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Jeni Kolsted, Medical Case Manager
Pam Vetter, Medical Case Manager
Marcy Yarger, Medical Case Manager
Cheryl Yarnott, Medical Case Manager

Make a Difference!

Want to make an impact on HIV/AIDS in your community? Join the RAAN board of directors! RAAN is looking for passionate, thoughtful individuals to join this outstanding organization. To find out more about this exciting opportunity contact Charles Hempeck, Executive Director at 800-966-9735.