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THE COMMON THREAD

It's All About Life

Fall 2014

Southeast Spotlight

By James Hoagland, Coordinator of SE Services



The Four A's Anchorage office is the hub of lots of activity that includes providing client services, HIV testing, syringe exchange access, developing fundraising events, and all manners of administration functions. Now imagine all of these things happening, but in a satellite location with just one staff member!

The Four A's Southeast office operates as a microcosm of the larger headquarter office in Anchorage. Along with the support of the Southeast Advisory Board and hard-working volunteers, I am able to serve a client roster of 26 individuals living with HIV or AIDS in various towns across Southeast Alaska. Based in Juneau, our client services reach places like Sitka, Ketchikan, Hoonah, Petersburg, and Craig, making sure that HIV+ people anywhere in our region are able to access the care and supportive services they need. Similar to the programs running in Anchorage, we provide case management, medical care and prescription assistance, housing subsidies, and transportation and nutrition support.

To meet the needs of clients who not only live far from the office but also in remote, small towns can be a challenge that requires creativity on the part of service providers. The options for high quality medical care, affordable housing, and even public transportation are not what they are in a more urban setting. A recent example of what I like to call "creative client services" can be seen with one of our clients in a small town. The client is hard-working but makes very little job income. The client was diagnosed with HIV several years ago but never began treatment. Through collaboration with our partners at Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), this client was connected to the closest Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) clinic to establish care with a physician and begin HIV treatment. Starting on HIV meds for the first time can involve multiple visits to see providers and, with the clinic situated quite a distance from the client's home, it was a real challenge for the client to get to appointments in a timely manner. This client did not have access to a car and there was no local public transportation. We all brainstormed and researched and found that we could buy a bicycle for our client in order to help the client maintain regular doctor visits. The client was thrilled with this solution and is now able to get to the clinic more easily. This is just one scenario that highlights the complexities that often come up when working in places with limited resources. It also keeps the work interesting and engaging!

HIV Prevention and Education in Southeast also looks similar in some ways to Anchorage. We conduct free, rapid HIV testing and operate the only syringe exchange in Juneau. I teach monthly HIV Education classes at the Lemon Creek Correctional Center (LCCC), Gastineau Human Services (GHS), and Rainforest Recovery. Our outreach testing events occur at LCCC, GHS, and a bar downtown, The Viking Lounge, on a monthly basis. We rely heavily on word-of-mouth to promote the prevention program, and one excellent example of how well this strategy works happened last month. A young person came to the office for the first time to utilize the syringe exchange and get a rapid HIV test. Although shy at first, which is common, the client eventually told me of finding out about Four A's through their partner. The partner is an inmate at LCCC and attended one of my HIV Education classes and got a rapid HIV test there. During the class, I always describe the programs Four A's has to offer in the event that the inmates are released and need to access them or they know people in the community who do. I was not the only one who was happy that this young person came in to find out their HIV status and exchange their supplies. Their partner, who happened to call during our meeting, was as well.

One exciting thing that is just starting in Southeast is an HIV Tester Training program for volunteers. We have a group of five dedicated individuals who are eager to help us expand our prevention programming. In collaboration with the Four A's Prevention and Education Coordinator, Jamez Terry, we have designed a comprehensive training program to teach our volunteers not only how to test someone for HIV but to deliver the counseling that is essential to the experience of getting tested. Once the training is complete, we will have the ability to test many more people at each testing event. We know that the more people we test, the more people know their status, equipping them to make more informed decisions about their health and future.

When visiting Juneau, keep an eye out for our team at outreach events, or stop by the office to say hi!



Our Mission: To be a key collaborator within the state of Alaska in the provision of supportive services to persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families and in the elimination of the transmission of HIV infection and its stigma.

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www.AlaskanAIDS.org
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1-800-478-2437



Proud to be an Agency Member of
the United Way of Anchorage

2014 Juneau Pride

Juneau kicked off their first annual LGBTQ Pride Week, June 16, 2014.

Juneau Alaska's Mayoral Resolution named June 2014 Juneau Pride Month, encouraging the community to celebrate Alaska's LGBTQ diversity while providing an opportunity to unite individuals, organizations, and community leaders in support of equality for all.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◇ October 15th - **National Latino AIDS Awareness Day**
- ◇ October 22nd - Les Miserables Cabaret 11:30PM @ Mad Myrna's, \$15 in advance, \$20 @ the door
- ◇ December 1st - **World AIDS Day** 5:30PM @ Bear Tooth Theatre Pub



Drag Queen Bingo - Hunger Gaymes: Queens in the Capitol

The Queens were in our favor at the 12th Annual Drag Queen Bingo. This year Four A's took this high energy, phenomenal event to The Boardroom where more than 200 people gathered in the 49th District to pay tribute to the Queens.

Prizes ranging from an authentic signed *Stewie* sketch to home-made high heel cupcakes were among the FABulous items that were auctioned off.

Four A's raised more than \$12,000 for the client food bank.

Philanthropy Hard at Work in Southeast Alaska— An Interview with SE Advisory Board Member Steve Hamilton

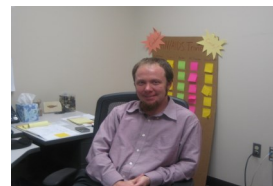
When did you join the SE Advisory Board?
I joined around April of 2006.

Why did you want to join?
I was invited to be a part of the Four A's board by Trevor Storrs (previous Executive Director), who happened to be a guest here at the Baranof Hotel. We met in the Cafe over coffee one morning. I decided to become involved on the board level from the experiences that I have had from various other boards here in Juneau. I have enjoyed being a part of a vital capitol city with my other board experience, including the Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council, and the University of Alaska Southeast Community Advisory Board. I feel I have a background of skills needed to assist the organization in building a new advisory board of such meaningful importance.

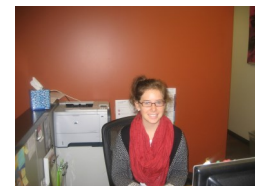
What has been one of your favorite moments as a member of our SE Advisory Board?
One of my favorite things since being involved has been seeing others, especially such a diverse group, come together and not only watch but be a part of the planning, growth, and expansion of our much needed services.

What is one thing you look forward to seeing Four A's accomplish in SE Alaska in the coming year?
I look forward to sustaining our funding to support our local community's needs, and I enjoy seeing more members of the community become involved, giving the Four A's a wider reach into the community.

Anything else you would like to share about your experience with Four A's or the SE Advisory Board?
It has been a real honor to be a part of this amazing organization.



New Additions



Four A's would like to introduce Jamez Terry, HIV Prevention & Education Coordinator and Katherine Nimrod, Jesuit Volunteer. The next time you are in the Anchorage office, stop by and welcome the newest members of the Four A's team.

Prevention—Hard at Work in Southeast

- ◇ **31 HIV Tests conducted in Juneau**
- ◇ **4 HIV 411 Classes taught in Juneau**
- ◇ **85,000 Condoms Distributed in Southeast**
- ◇ **6 Outreach Testing events in Juneau**

From the Executive Director, Heather Davis



This newsletter is dedicated to the work we do in Southeast Alaska. Many people are unaware that the Four A's has an office in Juneau that provides the same case management and HIV prevention services that are available through the Anchorage office. The Juneau office is overseen by one staff person, James Hoagland, who wears a variety of hats. The Juneau office is also supported by a SE Advisory Board made up of eight highly dedicated members who assist in strategic planning, fundraising, and volunteering at events where services are provided.

Last week I received a letter from a client served by our Juneau office. It is a moving letter that clearly tells the importance of providing direct services in this region. The client said I was welcome to print the letter:

"I'm a new client of James Hoagland, and wanted to give you my feedback on my experience with him as my new case manager. James has been very polite, professional and courteous from the beginning. I'm always a bit tentative when I have to ask for assistance or need help with medications, but James has a way of putting you at ease, and my experience with him has been wonderful!"

"I also did not expect or know about some of the services you offer clients. I recently relocated to the region. The culture change has been good but also dramatic. My finances have also been tight due to a car breakdown during my move, which I'm still working to retrieve."

"Thank you ALL so much for the services you offer your clients in need. I was hoping I would at least get my medication but have gotten so much more!"

"Please let James know how much I appreciate all he has done; his efficiency and follow-up does not go unnoticed, and again, Thank You All for the work you do - very much appreciated!"

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June — September 2014

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UAA Charitable Giving Campaign

Make your dollars go further in the fight against HIV/AIDS by utilizing your employer's matching gift program!

A Filling Future

A client in a small community in Southeast Alaska recently underwent a surgical procedure that required recovering in a wheelchair over many weeks. Living alone in a high-rise apartment building and having little energy proved to be big challenges, but it was vital the client receive good nutrition while healing. Because of the Food Box program coordinated from the Juneau office, this client was able to receive a large box of highly nutritional, easy-to-prepare, and digestible food

to get through the critical time post-surgery. The client was able to take better care of their body in a time of need, which in turn kept their overall health intact and led to a speedy recovery.

