

Virtual Inspiration – A gift you can give that costs nothing

by Deidre Love, Executive Director of Teens With a Purpose-The Youth Movement

Every 9 1/2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV. One of our main goals of Teens With a Purpose is to increase awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Teens with a Purpose was developed in 1996 as a youth ministry and became a community-based nonprofit organization in 2007, with a mission to promote abstinence and help build self-esteem through innovative programs for teens in the Hampton Roads area.

TWP uses peer education, the arts and many other creative forms to spread the message and educate young people. Our latest campaign started recently during holiday season. It includes use of a very powerful medium and a major source of communication for young adults – social media and the Internet.

We are erecting a “virtual” wall, one brick at a time. With each brick we lay, our voices get stronger. As we build it, we become more determined to demonstrate our solidarity and support for the HIV/AIDS movement—“Committed to working for a cure!”

Each of these bricks displays the name

changes.

THE WALL will be featured on the TWP website starting in January 2012. We are seeking the support of churches, schools, business and community organizations, and individuals to spread the word by embedding THE WALL in their social media and web sites. Let's pledge to continue building THE WALL until we reach a cure.

Throughout the year, TWP hosts numerous events and seminars to provide HIV and STD prevention information and focus on preventing gang violence, dating abuse, teen pregnancy, distracted teen driving, and other life-changing issues facing today's teens.

Through open mic's and edutainment workshops, local youth serve as facilitators, presenters, and peer mentors. Additionally, the organization utilizes evidence-based curriculums such as “Community Promise,” “Reducing the Risk” and “Sistah.”

We want to continue to provide young people with a platform to empower one another while using their voices, energy, and talents to effect per-

HIV on the college campus: time for individual responsibility, self-respect



Adrienne Williams

Sadly, many of the faces that display the HIV epidemic resemble mine. This genocidal epidemic does not prey just upon the homosexual community. Although men who have sex with men are at the highest risk for infection, HIV/AIDS is the number one killer of black women ages of 24-35.

Virginia Ranks 13th by state in the number of those infected with this deadly disease, Access Aids Care reports. HIV/AIDS in Hampton Roads is a huge concern. In 2009, blacks accounted for more than 62 percent of HIV/AIDS diagnoses.

There are a number of social and economic reasons that help explain

of gonorrhea reports, 63 percent of syphilis diagnoses, and 55 percent of chlamydia cases.

This often-deadly disease is soaring through our college campuses. The CDC reports that one in every 500 students is infected with HIV. Although many of these students are educated about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, increased knowledge does not always stop their risky behaviors. Factors such as peer pressure, lack of maturity, drugs, and easy access to alcohol put college students at risk for HIV infection.

A recent Michael Baisden newsletter tells about a former Howard University student who, knowing he was HIV positive, had unprotected sex with numerous unsuspecting, willing young ladies. How scary.

Failing to practice safe sex or having multiple sex partners can lead to HIV or STDS. Having STDS weakens the body's immune system, thus increasing the chance of getting HIV/AIDS. The rate of STDs among college-age people is high. This advice from TWP

since it isn't about yourself, it's about

the HIV/AIDS movement—Commit-
ted to working for a cure.”

Each of these bricks displays the name
of a person who has devoted his or her
life to HIV/AIDS awareness and pre-
vention, the name of a person who is
living with HIV, or the name of a per-
son who has lost his or her life due to
AIDS-related illness.

We ask you to give a moment of your
time and stop to commemorate a per-
son affected by HIV/AIDS; it is a gift
that costs you nothing.

We encourage you to participate in
the national campaign for AIDS Aware-
ness – THE WALL. You can participate
by sending the first name and last initial
of someone who meets the qualifica-
tions to be added to the brick wall, then
follow TWP. The Youth Movement on
Facebook, Twitter or the TWP blog to
see what we are doing to effect positive

young people with a platform to em-
power one another while using their
voices, energy, and talents to effect per-
sonal change. There is no doubt in my
mind that it will take this generation,
speaking to this generation to make a
change.

TWP is here for the duration. THE
WALL is just one more way in which we
invite others along with us as we fight to
end AIDS.

To add a name to
THE WALL:
twpwall@gmail.com

For more information about
the organization:
www.TWPTheMovement.org



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There are a number of social and
economic reasons that help explain
why this disease is running ram-
pant throughout our community.
Higher levels of STDs among African
Americans facilitate the sexual trans-
mission of HIV/AIDS. According to
the Virginia Department of Health,
black residents made up 76 percent

The rate of STDs among college-age
people is high. This advice from TWP
sums it up: “Respect yourself: you’re
worth it.”

*Adrienne Williams, a Baltimore
resident, is a senior communications
major at Virginia Wesleyan College.
In December she completed an intern-
ship with Hampton Roads Gazeti.*



TWP file photo

TWP members share their message at a recent community event

www.hrgazeti.com