



Living Room

“A positive approach to housing”

Find us online at livingroomatl.org

July-August 2011

Vol 13 No 3

Upcoming Events

September 23
Sapphire Ball
Ansley Golf Club, 7-11 PM

October 16
AIDS Walk Atlanta
Piedmont Park, Noon-4 PM

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Additional photos and video of the events covered in this issue can be found on our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/LivingRoomATL

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Visit the blog at:
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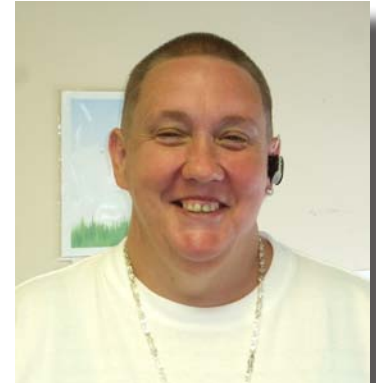


Making The Most of Her Second Chance

“There ain’t nothin’ wrong with me.”

That was the thought going through Tammye’s mind in 1994 when, as a young woman, using drugs and having unprotected sex, she kept putting off getting her HIV test results from the Fulton County Health Department where she would routinely go every six months. When she eventually did pick up the results, she found out she had tested positive.

Tammye was devastated. Pregnant and already the mother of a four-year-old daughter, she felt as if she had received a death sentence. *(Continued on page 2)*



“I could always depend on Living Room for anything I’ve needed.”

Memorial Service Comforts Hearts and Inspires Action

Late on a hot, sunny, Atlanta afternoon this past June, Rev. Kathy Morris, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church welcomed those gathered in her sanctuary to honor the memory of those lost to AIDS.

“I hope that this is a time of healing, a time that you feel a call to action. A time in which you are able to reflect over the past years and what has happened in the HIV and AIDS community,” she stated in her opening comments.



Living Room coordinated the June 4, 2011 interfaith memorial service to mark the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. It brought together diverse speakers, all of whom had been touched by the people and events of the last three decades. *(Continued on page 3)*

Second Chance

(Continued from front cover)

Three years later, in recovery and in need of housing Tammye came to Living Room for assistance for the first time. Living Room was able to save her and her daughters from life on the streets by placing them in Jerusalem House's residences for women and children, where they were among the first 12 residents.

The following years however, were troubled. Tammye was arrested on felony shoplifting charges and incarcerated for 18 months. With no place to call home when released, she reverted to using drugs. The downward spiral continued until one day in 2007 she asked God, "Please help me, I'm tired of this life." And, as Tammye talks about the response to her plea, "He did (help me). I got locked up that day."

In prison Tammye got clean and in 2010, having been drug-free for more than 2 years, she was offered early release and entered transitional housing at Legacy Village. After six months, Living Room assisted Tammye in securing residency at her current home Matthew's Place, which has

**"It's (HIV) living with me,
I'm not living with it."**

assured her stable housing for at least two years.

Today Tammye is reconnected with the daughters she hadn't seen since 2003, working on a bachelor's degree in Information Systems and staying healthy. She is highly motivated and committed to her new life. "It's (HIV) living with me, I'm not living with it. I'm a normal person, I can do everything everybody else can."

Her goals are to earn her degree, stay clean, maintain her health and continue to rebuild her family. "I wasted so many years doing drugs I had to learn from my mistakes," Tammye commented. Speaking about her past drug use and the ever-strengthening bond between her and her daughters, Tammye said, "I can't do that (drugs) no more because I would lose the most precious things to me."

Tammye is grateful for the assistance Living Room has provided through the years that has allowed her to arrive at this exciting phase of her life. In addition to housing placement, Living Room has assisted her with funds for required criminal background checks and drug screenings, housing needs assessments, a security deposit for subsidized housing and a welcome basket upon moving into her new housing. "I could always depend on Living Room for anything I've needed."

For "A Taste of Life" Fund raiser, Glass is More than Half-full

"A Taste of Life," held June 11, 2011 was the largest and most successful "That Was Fun" event in Living Room history.

More than 100 tickets were sold and more than \$5,600 was raised in support of our housing programs and services.



Led by Living Room Board

member Pam Dorsett, Holy Cross AIDS Ministry volunteers transformed the Holy Cross Catholic Church parish

hall into an candle-lit salon where, accompanied by live classical guitar music, guests sampled an array of international wines, and buffet with offerings from



premier Atlanta-area restaurants, bid on silent auction items and

listened to a moving presentation from former Living Room client, Gail. (The video is available on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/LivingRoomATL)



Gail's story about her life-changing experience with Living Room was an inspiring counterpoint to the evening's festive mood and drove home the importance and impact of Living Room programs and services.

Gail impressed upon her listeners that, "Nobody in this room is immune to HIV. HIV has no boundaries, HIV has no color, HIV has no nationality."



Thank you again to Pam, those who contributed goods and services, the Holy Cross AIDS Ministry and all the volunteers who made A Taste of Life so successful!

Memorial Service

(Continued from front cover)

The first speaker, Fr. Juan Anzora of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church lamented the unwillingness during the early years of the epidemic of individuals, society and governments to recognize and act upon the then-young crisis. He observed that, "When fear, ignorance and stigma get together we open the doors for the illness to grow."

Later in the service, Rev. Gerald Durley, pastor of Providence Missionary Baptist Church reflected that, "We need to share about the disease and those it affected, reach out in love, show compassion, practice inclusion, be open, honest



Members of the Amazing Grace Dance Company display remembrance quilts during their performance at the memorial service.

and transparent with our feelings and understand that we need to love each other as God has loved us." During the service's candle lighting ceremony, attendees were invited to fill out and sign commitments to action. Among those commitments made included: **"I will Love more than ever as I've been Loved."**



Living Room founder Sr. Mary Jane Lubinski, who drove from Michigan to attend the service, with former Living Room executive director, Nick Danna.

Rev. Dr. Beth LaRocca-Pitts, St. Mark United Methodist Church; Irene Miranda, Southeastern Conference of Catholic AIDS Ministers; Kathy Parker, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church AIDS Ministry; Paran Pordell, Drepung Loesling Monastery; and the Trinity Chorale.

"Support with my funds housing for those with HIV/AIDS."

"Be more involved in legislative advocacy."

Many thanks to the other speakers and presenters who participated in the service: Amazing Grace Dance Company; Charlie Chasen, Congregation Bet Haverim; Faisal Alam, Al-Fatiha Foundation; Janis and Chester Griffin, Simon's Call Ministry, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church;

Philanthropy Corner

Living Room Salutes Donor Brian Hogan

Long-time supporter Brian Hogan first learned about Living Room in 2004 at his church, The Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Since then, Brian has been an ardent supporter and friend. He has acted as an advocate by spreading awareness about our cause, twice served as a Sapphire Ball table captain and most recently, become the first donor to join the Sustaining Donor Program—a monthly/quarterly giving program that helps us provide uninterrupted year-round support to clients.



Thank you Brian!

What motivates Brian to give and support Living Room? In his own words...

Part of it is a philosophy that there's got to be more than getting up, going to work and personally reaping rewards of what you have in life.

When I went to the Sapphire Ball that was the first time I really heard personal (client) stories. That really affected me. It's amazing that there's such a need out there.

There is something we can all do and if we can do something, we should. If you're fortunate, give something.

Sapphire Ball is HOT, HOT, HOT! 80% Sold Out! Individual Tickets Now On Sale

This year's Sapphire Ball promises to be even bigger and better than last year's event! By attending this year's Living Room gala, donors and supporters will have their best opportunity to make a profound impact upon the amount and quality of services we are able to provide.

The event will be held at the exclusive Ansley Golf Club on Friday, September 23 and feature a cocktail reception, silent auction, dinner prepared by an award-winning catering staff and a dessert reception.

Individual tickets are now available for purchase online at www.livingroomatl.org. At press time, only a few tables of eight remained. Discounts are available for those wishing to purchase or coordinate tables.

For more information about becoming a Table Captain, Sponsor or donating a silent auction item, contact Deanna Mingo at deanna.mingo@livingroomatl.org.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Living Room gratefully thanks the following, without whose support its work would not be possible.

City of Atlanta Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

AIDS United

Atlanta AIDS Partnership Fund

Catholic Foundation of North Georgia

Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

Elton John AIDS Foundation

EZ Agape Foundation

Ford Foundation

Frances Hollis Brain Foundation

John Wieland Homes Second Mile

Kent Richard Hofmann Foundation

National AIDS Fund

AIDS Walk 2011

join our team!

October 16, 2011

Help us make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters living with HIV/AIDS! There are three ways you can be a part of Team Living Room:

1. Sign up as a **walker** (\$10) or **runner** (\$25), and ask your friends, family and colleagues to sponsor your walk with donations to benefit our team.
2. Serve as a **volunteer** and helps us fulfill our required number of community service hours through canvassing and other projects.
3. Becoming a **virtual walker** and raise funds even if you're unable to walk with us.

Becoming a member of Team Living Room is so easy to do:

- Visit aidswalkatlanta.com and click "Register"
- Read the waiver and click, "I Agree"
- Click "Join a Team," select "Living Room" and click "Continue"
- Complete the personal information and pay the registration fee

Each dollar raised directly benefits our programs and services for individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. As an added bonus, Living Room has many fun and engaging events, giveaways and incentives in store to keep you motivated to make a change. So join us today!

For more information on how to join the best AIDS Walk team on the planet, contact Development Coordinator Deanna Mingo at deanna.mingo@livingroomatl.org

Living Room

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