

GOGIRL! GRADUATE HEADS OFF TO COLLEGE

Patricia Colon has started a new chapter in her life. In late August, Patricia headed to Delaware State University to begin the college career that seemed out of reach just two and a half years ago, when she joined the Go Girl! program at BAS. Go Girl! is an outreach program that connects with adolescent girls, ages 12-17, who live in the Bronx and who are at risk of HIV infection and substance abuse.

Today, Patricia speaks openly about the death of first her father, then her mother, from AIDS, and about how the death of her mother

was particularly devastating. But in February, 2005, Patricia was reeling from loss: getting into trouble, associating with a group of girls who did a lot of fighting and often getting suspended from school. She acknowledges that she was hanging out with the wrong crowd, and realized that she needed to separate herself completely from this group so that she could concentrate on her studies and successfully graduate from high school.

That's when Patricia responded to a recruitment visit at her Bronx high school and joined Go Girl! She completed the

program's three-month cycle of group sessions and was chosen as a Peer Leader and as a member of the program's theatre group.

Patricia's self-confidence, public speaking skills and overall self-image blossomed as the result of her theatre work, and as a peer leader, she was always ready to inform her peers about HIV prevention on the spot.

"I came to Go Girl! as a lost, confused girl, thinking about the next step in my life," Patricia says. "Now I am a woman about to start my own future and a new life. Go Girl! gave me knowledge and wisdom. Thank you to everyone

who helped me through my hard times." For more information on the Go Girl! Program, contact Program Coordinator Lisa Rosado at (718) 466-6395 or visit our website at www.basnyc.org.



Patricia Colon at her high school graduation in June, 2007

A DAY IN THE BAS PANTRY PROGRAM

Pedestrians and traffic alike are moving slowly up Fordham Road in the Bronx in the early morning summer heat, but BAS Pantry Coordinator David Bell and his assistant Jerome Simpkins don't have the luxury of slowing down. For two weeks each month, they and the other members of the Nutrition Team at BAS are responsible for running the BAS pantry program which provides much-needed fresh and nutritious food for approximately 350 people each month.

Tuesdays through Fridays, they and a handful of dedicated pantry volunteers are usually at BAS by 8:00 a.m. on pantry days, so they

can begin to set up the food bags for the day. By 9:00 they are out on Fordham Road waiting for the trucks carrying food and fresh produce to arrive, so they can check it in, check it for freshness, load it onto pallets and bring it upstairs.

Once upstairs, the food is checked again, this time by Program Director Yessmin Hernandez. David, Jerome and the pantry volunteers set up an assembly line of fruits and vegetables to ensure that each bag is stocked with healthy and nutritious food for our clients. Finally, some educational materials are slipped into each bag.

Meanwhile, down on the street, a line has begun to form. People come by ones and twos, or groups are dropped off by a van. Depending on the weather and the temperature, they may be let up early. Just like at the deli counter at the supermarket, each pantry client receives two numbers, one to present to receive their food bag, and one that will determine their seating at the educational session that takes place after the food distribution.

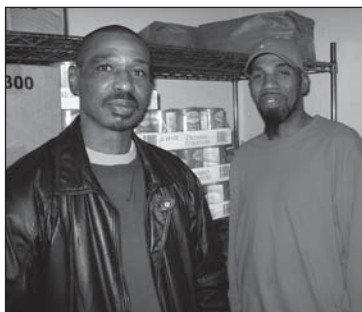
At about 12:30, when the food distribution and nutrition education sessions end, it's time for the team not only to clean up, but to immediately begin to plan for the next day. The Nutrition team projects their needs for the next day, and David or Jerome place an order for another fresh produce delivery for the next morning.

Every Wednesday afternoon United Way/City Harvest makes a delivery. David never knows what the delivery is going to contain, and ironically the team hopes there will be no produce, which cannot be accepted because BAS lacks the ability to refrigerate it. Life is much easier when the delivery is full of juices and other canned goods.

During each two week pantry cycle, David and Jerome try to have about 150 bags set up each day so they can be packed little by little each day. In addition, each month BAS provides 15 to 20 emergency food bags and they must also be prepared and held in reserve for clients in crisis.

Each week, up to 200 people who are living with HIV/AIDS, who would otherwise not have access to healthy, fresh and nutritious food receive pantry bags that will help them maintain and extend their health and quality of life. David Bell recognizes how much people rely on this program and how important it is for it to run smoothly. He says, "We couldn't do any of this without the teamwork within the entire Nutrition Department and the volunteers. To make this happen every day, we all need to be on the same page."

The Nutrition and Pantry Program is one of the BAS programs affected by cuts in Ryan White Title I funding in August 2007, and the funding shortfall translates directly into less people receiving the nutritional counseling that enables them to manage their special health and nutritional needs. BAS is actively seeking private support from generous individuals, corporations and foundations to help offset the shortfalls created by these cuts.



David Bell & Jerome Simpkins in the Pantry stock room.

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OUR MISSION

"Bronx AIDS Services is committed to improving the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. Our mission is to deliver consumer-centered services to people living with HIV/AIDS, to people at risk for contracting HIV/AIDS, and to people affected by HIV/AIDS. We do this through education, advocacy, outreach, direct services, prevention programs and connecting people to care. We commit to being a safe haven for clients, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, immigrant or economic status."

Newsletter Editor

Martha Jordan States

Design and Printing

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CASE MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES

BAS provides a spectrum of case management support services for individuals with HIV and AIDS to help them overcome obstacles that prevent them from getting the services they need. BAS has six dedicated case management teams – four at 540 E. Fordham Road and two at 953 Southern Boulevard, who will develop an individual plan for each client based on their unique situation and challenges.

A letter we received from a client in our COBRA (medicaid-funded) case management program illustrates how powerful the team approach is. Here's an excerpt of her letter to us:

"**Ms. Lavette Bass** brings comforting warmth to the table. She is good at helping women deal with women's issues, especially a mother dealing with the daily plight of AIDS and motherhood ... She always has a comforting supportive word to give which has become very important to me and she has the effect of making me listen and finally hear.

Ms. Lashema Hamby is awesome in dealing with public agencies, like the powers that may be such as H.R.A. (Human Resources Administration). Ms. Hamby is not easily intimidated by outside agencies and she stands up for the rights of the clients ... she is knowledgeable and driven in getting the job done.

Mr. Gregory Torres is my housing specialist. He is professional, direct and to the point, which is what is needed in the everyday world of people trying to receive services such as myself. ... he teaches the client how to empower themselves and not let people walk all over them because they are inflicted (sic) or afflicted with AIDS ... I take my hat off to Mr. Torres for his strength, integrity and honesty.

I would say that all these COBRA Case Managers are great and they are great as a team. They are very

cohesive and yet they are very different in essence which is what makes them so unique and special in dealing with us clients."

— a letter from our client Ms. D.H., dated June 21, 2007

For more information about BAS Case Management Services or to make a referral, call us at (718) 295-5605.



Case Management team members Gregory Torres, Lashema Hamby and Lavette Bass

"When I am confused, they unconfuse (sic) me, when I am unsure, they empower me to be sure and when I am feeling weak, they empower me to be strong."

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- Promoting Primary & Preventive Health Care
- Medical Adherence
- Referrals to Home Health Aides
- Mental Health Referrals
- Escorts to Appointments
- In-House Nutrition & Pantry Referrals
- Work with Family Members
- In-House Legal Referrals
- Rent Arrears
- Entitlements Advocacy
- Housing and Homelessness Intervention
- Job Training Referrals
- Financial Management Referrals

BAS WELCOMES NEW SENIOR MANAGERS:

- Leslie Rodgers to head its Case Management Dept.
- Michael Winter, Director of Finance & Administration
- Martha Jordan States, Director of Development
- Brad Caughen, Director of Prevention Programs

BAS SURVIVES CUTS IN RYAN WHITE FUNDING

The BAS Legal Advocacy Program provides legal representation, advice and advocacy – free of charge – to Bronx residents living with HIV/AIDS. BAS attorneys and paralegals provide legal assistance to clients in a broad range of civil matters, including housing, denial/termination of public benefits, domestic violence, future care and planning and custody and care of children. Each year, the BAS Legal Advocacy Program assists hundreds of clients in avoiding eviction, keeping themselves safe and their families intact, and maintaining the income necessary for them to meet their basic needs.

In August, along with scores of other community-based organizations city-wide, BAS

received formal notification of the cut in Ryan White Title I funding which provides crucial support for the Legal Advocacy Program, along with the BAS Nutrition and Pantry Program. These programs, considered “non-core” (i.e., non-medical) services by the federal government, have absorbed 7% to 9% cuts due to the redistribution of funds that resulted from Congressional reauthorization of the Ryan White Care Act. Assistance through the Ryan White Care Act is funneled to non-profit groups in the form of contracted grants. According to federal officials, nearly half the estimated 1.2 million people living with HIV or AIDS in the United States rely on programs funded by Ryan White dollars, and one of every four people who are in

antiviral therapy has some of the costs covered by Ryan White funds.

This reallocation—and resulting cut – was the result of fierce conflict in Congress over how to adjust to the changing nature of the AIDS epidemic as it affects more regions of the country, and increasingly and disproportionately afflicts women and minorities. More HIV-positive people need aid, and for a longer period of time. The result has been a narrowing view of what core services are. In addition to nutrition and legal programs, housing and domestic violence-related programs have faced funding cuts too.

As a member of the NYC HIV Legal Coalition, BAS joined

with fellow coalition members to advocate for funding of nearly \$1.4 million that would support the city’s legal programs for people living with AIDS, fill the gap created by the Ryan White cuts and help fund the provision of services excluded due to Ryan White restrictions. With the support of City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and City Council members Maria Baez, Helen Diane Foster, and Larry Seabrook of the Bronx and Diana Reyna of Brooklyn, the coalition’s efforts were rewarded. BAS will receive about \$160,000 in funding from the City Council, ensuring that BAS will continue to be able to provide crucial legal services to Bronx residents who are living with HIV/AIDS.



GETS GOING

In September, the Go Girl! Program kicked off its new cycle of programming for adolescent girls ages 12 to 17 years old. Go Girl! (which stands for Girls’ Outreach: Groups Improve Resiliency Learning) is designed as a three-month HIV and Substance Abuse Prevention program that uses an interactive curriculum to engage young women in educational sessions, team building activities, self-confidence, violence prevention and trips outside of the Bronx area. During this past summer, Go Girl! held several special activities that included Kick-Off Day; Career Day; a three-day financial series presented by “World of Money,” Health Week, which included cooking lessons for a healthy lifestyle, self-defense classes, belly-dancing and hiking.

The grand finale was DIVA Day, which included workshops on etiquette, domestic violence, and sexual sensitivity (including HIV 101), and was capped by a theatrical performance by the Go Girl! Peer Leaders. Approximately 150 young

women attended the event, which was held at Hostos Community College. Producing a small stage play – titled “Yeah, We Have Issues Too!” – focused on issues affecting young people today is a challenge that has been met with energetic success by adolescents in the Go Girl! and YMSM programs at BAS. Touching on issues that include poverty, drug abuse, homelessness, domestic violence, and sexually transmitted infections, the short play is a brash, witty, fast paced, and ultimately loving, look at the life struggles of youth. It uses short scenarios to tell stories of love, hate, sexual orientation, and self discovery, based on the experiences of its young Bronx participants. Audiences young and old have been touched by the candor, insightfulness and polish of both the play and the young performers. If you would like information regarding the Go Girl! program, including how to refer someone for enrollment, please contact Lisa Rosado at 718-466-6395.



SETTING THE AGENDA FOR WOMEN AND HIV/AIDS IN THE BRONX

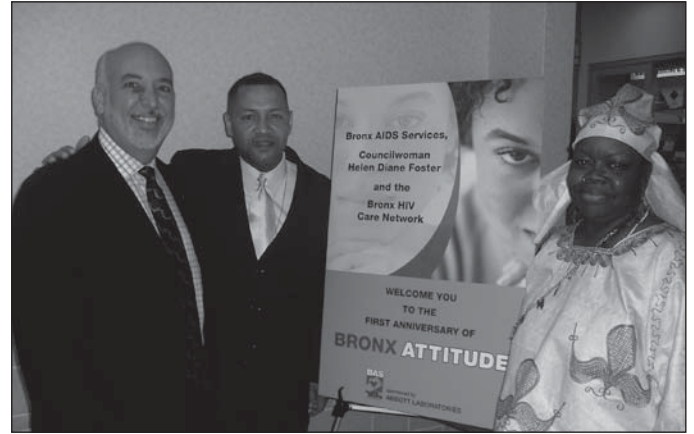
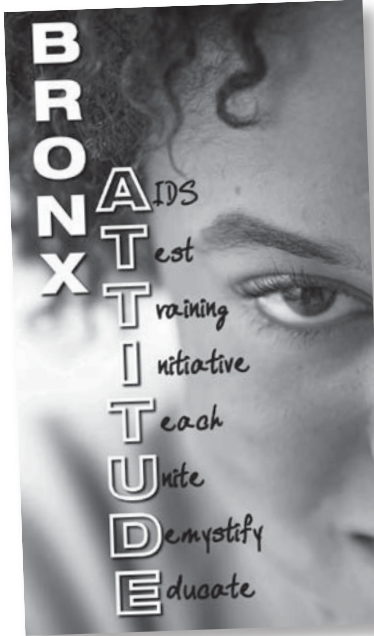
If you, or someone close to you, is thinking about HIV counseling and testing, you are taking control of a vital aspect of your health. Consider the facts: The total number of women infected with HIV has increased from 1 in 10 at the start of the

epidemic to 1 in 3. Women now account for 40% of the new HIV diagnoses in the Bronx, and 75% have been infected through heterosexual contact. Yet many women do not believe that they are at risk for HIV infection.

BAS is at the forefront of encouraging women to take charge of their sexual health, and get tested for HIV. The BAS Bronx ATTITUDE program is a community mobilization for HIV education and access to testing. Bronx ATTITUDE targets African-American and Latina adult women in the Bronx, providing educational sessions on sexual health and the benefits of testing for HIV to groups of women who will leverage their social networks to schedule more sessions with more friends to spread the prevention and testing message. Women who attend these sessions (location can be arranged to meet your needs) become DIVAS, women who are taking action in the fight against

HIV infection by sharing their own HIV testing experiences, providing information about testing availability and organizing community events to offer HIV testing. DIVAS are eligible to obtain a \$100.00 incentive along with lunch/dinner simply for hosting a program presentation with 10 women from their social

networks. These networks can include co-workers, church members, beauty salon associates, book club members, building residents, etc. BAS is engaged in recruitment of DIVAS for the Fall and Winter. If you or someone you know are interested in becoming a DIVA, please call Ms. Herfa Campbell at 718-295-5690.



Jose Davila, BAS Executive Director, Socrates Caba, Bronx HIV Care Network Coordinator and BAS Community Services Coordinator Sojourner McCauley at the first anniversary celebration of Bronx ATTITUDE

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November, 2007

Dear Friends,

We have redesigned our newsletter and I am delighted to share with you some of the exciting things Bronx AIDS Services has been up to this year. I would also like to ask for your help.

As 2007 draws to a close and you begin to think about your end-of-year charitable giving plans, I hope that you will consider making a year end contribution to support our work to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bronx.

HIV/AIDS continues to ravage our poorest communities, and adolescent males and women of color are at greatest risk. Most disturbing, Bronx residents represent 23% of the living HIV cases in the City of New York, yet Bronx-based community organizations receive only 16% of the funds available from federal, state and city agencies that are earmarked for care and treatment.

A recent reduction in Federal funding has had significant impact, particularly on our nutrition and legal advocacy programs. Despite this, BAS continues to be the leading provider of support services to people with HIV/AIDS in the Bronx:

- the BAS pantry program provides food and nutritional counseling to over 500 people each month who are living with AIDS, enabling them to improve their quality of life;
- the BAS legal program attorneys advocate on behalf of clients for fair housing and other legal matters such as child custody, permanency planning, and orders of protection;
- three BAS mobile outreach units take to the street every day - seeking out populations who are hardest to reach, but at high risk for HIV infection

While the face of HIV/AIDS has changed, the need for services that stabilize people, allowing them to access care and treatment, has not diminished. Our mission is every bit as compelling today as it was when we began our work over 20 years ago. With your help, we can do so much for the men, women, young people and families who turn to BAS for compassionate and objective programs and services every day.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and most especially the people we serve, thank you for your support of our work.

Sincerely,

Jose M. Davila
Executive Director

FOCUSING ON ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month and to help raise public awareness about this devastating issue that affects so many of the clients we serve, BAS sponsored the CLOTHESLINE PROJECT on October 18th at Monsignor Del Valle Plaza (at the junction of Southern Boulevard, Hunts Point Avenue and 163rd St.) and on October 29th at Fordham Plaza on Fordham Road. BAS was one of the first agencies in the Bronx to implement services that directly address the widely documented link between HIV and domestic violence. Studies have shown that there is an increased risk of infection among victims of domestic violence and being HIV+ is an additional risk factor for domestic violence. BAS has had an attorney specializing in family law and domestic violence on staff since 2001, and a paralegal specializing in domestic violence since 2006, meeting the unique needs of HIV-positive women and their families. Since then, BAS has been a key player in domestic violence advocacy, being on the front lines in raising awareness and bringing much needed attention to an epidemic that continues to further complicate the lives of HIV positive women.



T-shirts with messages raising public awareness about domestic violence on display at the Clothesline Project at Fordham Plaza.

On September 25th, BAS staff joined hundreds of People Living with HIV and AIDS, Service Providers, Activists and Supporters on the steps of City Hall to urge the New York City Council and Mayor Bloomberg to pass

HASA for ALL—a much-needed piece of legislation that would provide vital Housing, Nutrition, Transportation and other Social Support to thousands of poor HIV+ asymptomatic New Yorkers currently without care.

On September 26th, Lisa Santos and Emily Gerhardt from the BAS Legal Advocacy Program joined New York Latinas Against Domestic Violence at The 7th Annual Bride's March. The Bride's March was conceived as a public awareness event in memory of Gladys Ricart, a Dominican woman who was shot and killed by an abusive ex-boyfriend on her wedding day.



BAS Legal Staff Emily Gerhardt and Lisa Santos at the Bride's March



HIV AND SYPHILIS INFECTION RATES ON THE RISE FOR YMSM

The YMSM programs have been discussing the recent statistical information made available by the NYC Department of Health which describes in detail that the HIV and Syphilis infection rates have risen among Young Men

who have Sex with Men. Since 2001, new infection rates have declined in MSM over 30 years of age, while increasing by 30% among MSM younger than 30 years old. New infection rates among MSM ages 13-19 have doubled during this same period.

BAS' YMSM programs include a continuum of care that ranges from HIV prevention/education, testing and linkage to on-site Primary Medical Care and on-going Case Management. Should you, or someone you know, like

our intervention programs or free and confidential testing for YMSM, please contact Mario De La Cruz or Daniel Rodriguez at 718-295-5690. (Source: <http://www.nyc.gov/doh>)