



Community Spirit

A Service Partnership Tackles AIDS ®

(NAPSA)—Kristin sits in a small room in a run-down Chicago neighborhood. She tells the young man sitting across from her that he tested negative for HIV. Tears of joy well up in the young man's eyes. All he can say is "Thank you." He's fortunate, and Kristin is hopeful that the prevention information she shared will help the man remain negative.

Kristin provides HIV counseling and testing with an organization called Chicago Recovery Alliance. This story and hundreds like hers happen every day thanks to a partnership between the National AIDS Fund and the AmeriCorps national service movement.

The National AIDS Fund AmeriCorps program is beginning its 12th year of increasing the capacity of numerous HIV service organizations, like the Chicago Recovery Alliance, across the country.

This resource exists during a critical point in the epidemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that at the end of 2003, as many as 1,185,000 persons in the United States were living with HIV/AIDS. Nearly 25 percent of those individuals were not diagnosed and were unaware of their HIV infection.

In response to these startling trends, the innovative partnership between AmeriCorps and the National AIDS Fund unites individuals and organizations in the first multisite program focused on HIV/AIDS. Forty AmeriCorps

members dedicate a year of their lives to provide necessary services that help stem the further spread of the virus and serve those already infected.

Members are assigned to organizations within six cities throughout the country that include Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago, Ill.; Detroit, Mich.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Washington, D.C.

Service positions, like Kristin's, can vary based on the needs of the community. For example, the member at Our Place in Washington, D.C. provides HIV prevention education to incarcerated women. The Regional AIDS Interfaith Network AmeriCorps member in Tulsa, Okla. transports clients living with HIV to their medical appointments and other activities crucial to daily life.

This particular AmeriCorps program exists thanks to a public-private funding partnership that includes the Corporation for National and Community Service, the MetLife Foundation, the National AIDS Fund and its local partners.

The National AIDS Fund AmeriCorps program will continue to bring resources to communities to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. More important, the program will continue to touch the lives of hundreds of individuals daily, like the man at the Chicago Recovery Alliance.

To learn more, visit the National AIDS Fund Web site at www.aidsfund.org.