$330K in Grants to 5 Groups Battling HIV in the U.S. South

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The Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) has partnered with The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAF) to offer grants to organizations fighting the HIV epidemic in the U.S. South. This year, five groups will receive a total of $330,000, according to an EJAF press release, noting that $100,000 of the funding comes from ETAF.

“Poor access to HIV testing and good health care, as well as pervasive inequality for people most vulnerable to the disease, continue to make the U.S. South an epicenter of today’s AIDS crisis,” said EJAF chairman David Furnish in the press release. “This is particularly true for LGBTQ individuals and black Americans living in the Southern states. A recent CDC report has projected that if HIV infection rates remain unchanged, half of all black gay men will test positive for HIV at some point in their lifetime, as well as one in four Latino gay men, and one in 11 white gay men. By making these grants, both foundations commit to relentless advocacy and investment until we see meaningful and lasting change in the course of this epidemic.”

ETAF managing director Joel Goldman added: “Far too many people are denied equal rights and equal access to health care in this country, especially in the Southern U.S. This partnership helps to address the serious inequities that exist in the provision of education, diagnosis, and treatment for the people most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.”

EJAF describes the five groups receiving grants:

- A Birmingham, Alabama center providing a safe, supportive, and affirming space for LGBTQ youth
- A Georgia-based advocacy center focused on the impact of HIV/AIDS on young black gay men
- A Jacksonville, Florida organization providing young LGBT people with access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)

- A Memphis, Tennessee program supporting the needs of black gay families

- An Atlanta-based community organization engaging transgender people of color, the larger LGBTQ community, and supportive allies to advocate for the end of policies that criminalize HIV/AIDS.

In other EJAF news, its annual Academy Awards Viewing Party raised over $6.2 million this year. The event included a five-course dinner prepared by chef Gordon Ramsay, performances by Sir Elton himself and a surprise auction lot donated by Lady Gaga—the “Till It Happens to You” songstress gave up “the other halves” of the mismatched patriotic Gucci shoes she wore when singing the National Anthem at the Super Bowl last month, a gesture that fetched a $55,000 winning bid.

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