Milestones

March 1, 2000

Tribute

AANNY
1987–1999

Thirteen years ago most schools and youth organizations knew nothing about HIV, and most AIDS agencies did not understand how to deal with young people. A group of social workers—all of whom were women, not coincidentally—recognized this double bind and founded the AIDS and Adolescents Network of New York (AANNY). But on World AIDS Day 1999 of all days, in the midst of an ever-present fiscal crisis and a search for a new director, the group's board officially closed the organization. They never consulted the community groups that helped establish AANNY, and staff and volunteers were given only one week's notice.

Few youth agencies in the mid-'80s saw AIDS cases among teenagers because of the virus' lengthy incubation period. Those who cut through the general denial to subtract 10 years from the age of those getting sick recognized what was happening. But only a trickle of AIDS money went to youth agencies in those days anyway. And in the school system, there was more controversy over a few openly HIV positive children attending class than there was about the thousands of students becoming infected every year.

Liz Schnee and Kathe Karlson, like AANNY's other founders, were dedicated to increasing the flow of funding to youth services and sounding the alarm. According to Richard Haymes, the first man and PWA to join, "It was a place for enlightened people in mainstream organizations to come and get support." Teri Lewis, the executive director from 1991 to 1996, was there when AANNY had to keep educating hospital workers and state agencies until youth were no longer illegally denied testing or treatment if they didn't have parental permission. They went on to fight successfully against mandatory testing for youths in foster care. When Erica Zurer, a Brooklyn parent activist, came to AANNY in 1991 to work toward explicit education and condom distribution in schools, parents and students were brought together to join a fight that had been waged mainly by AIDS service organizations. That victory made international headlines, and Zurer went on to lead AANNY's Parent AIDS Initiative for five years.

AANNY brought young people to the fore of the group with unprecedented success. "We had youth on staff who would meet with policy makers," said the organization's last executive director, Maggie Brennan, who left before the board decided to shut the doors. "They did a damned good

job of it." The last Youth Action Day brought 300 young people to Albany to lobby for youth services and education.

This young contingent has survived the death of AANNY. Nairobi Shellow, now 21, started as a peer educator with the group at 14. He led AANNY's Youth Fighting for Change committee and is organizing an independent group, Youth Organizers United, to continue the battle. Now the grownups will have to decide if we have the will to get our act together and join them. —Andy Humm

The New York AIDS Coalition (212.629.3075, ext. 104) and ACT UP's Youth Education Life Line (212.553.6637) will continue to work in AANNY's spirit. Contact them to make a donation or get involved.

Awards

Hydeia L. Broadbent (POZ, October 1997), now 15, was named one of the **Ms. Foundation** for Women's Top 10 Female Role Models of 1999, alongside such luminaries as the U.S. Women's World Cup team. "Once you meet Hydeia," read the foundation's proclamation, "you will never forget her."

Careers

In December, **National Association of People with AIDS** (NAPWA) head **Cornelius Baker** was named as the replacement for Whitman-Walker Clinic's ousted chief executive, **Elliot Johnson**. During Johnson's four months at the helm of Washington, DC's largest AIDS agency, multiple board and senior staff members resigned. At press time, Baker—a board member since 1994—was set to start his new post in March. No word yet on who will fill his shoes at NAPWA.

Government health agencies were tapping AIDS-trained policy advocates left and right last fall. In September, President Clinton announced the appointment of **Tim Westmoreland**—widely considered to be among the nation's top experts on AIDS policy—to head **Medicaid**, which provides benefits to more than half of all PWAs in America. Three months later, **Daniel Zingale** (below) ended his three-year tenure as **AIDS Action's** executive director to head California's new Department of Managed Care. Zingale, who originally hails from Sacramento, was hand-picked by longtime associate Gov. Gray Davis (D). He is in charge of ensuring quality health care by the state's HMOs, including MediCal.

In 1997, New York's **Queens College** landed a pledge from famed HIV codiscoverer **Luc Montagnier** to chair a new molecular and cellular biology research lab. But after two years, the AIDS breakthroughs were still nothing but hype: The lab hadn't been built, Montagnier had yet to arrive and the school was still $6 million short of matching the $15 million thrown in by the state. So in December 1999, the City University of New York (CUNY)—which oversees Queens College—took over. CUNY has promised that it won't abandon the proposal, but an academic panel has been assembled to "fully evaluate all options," said a spokesperson, including the possibility of a joint venture with other schools or science institutions.

Deaths

Angela Daigle, an AIDS and needle-exchange activist, died November 12 of undisclosed causes. When Daigle, 26, arrived in New York City in 1997, the University of New Hampshire graduate had no experience with needle-exchange politics, but after attending a workshop at ACT UP's 10-year anniversary conference, she decided to volunteer with the Brooklyn-based Moving Equipment, a harm-reduction collective. "She went from walking into a meeting to being a policy advocate with an amazing understanding of the issues," said the group's Tim Santamour. Daigle, who grew up in Maine, was soon coordinating the women's program at the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Coalition. "We watched her blossom in so many ways," said Drew Kramer, the coalition's executive director. A Saturday night drop-in center for women sex workers that Daigle initiated will continue in her memory.

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