Silver Anniversary

These AIDS organizations turn 25 this year.

May 6, 2010 By Willette Francis

1985 was a banner year in the fight against AIDS. We had our first International AIDS Conference (held in Atlanta), the Food and Drug Administration licensed the first HIV antibody test, and amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, was founded. But 1985 also saw breakthroughs at a more local level; namely, community-focused AIDS service organizations (ASOs) and initiatives.

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) celebrates its 25th anniversary this year alongside Philadelphia-based Bebashi, the nation's first ASO focused on African Americans. AIDS Walk New York also turns 25 this year, benefiting Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) and 50 other local AIDS organizations.

And while celebrations are indeed in order for this milestone, AFC's president and CEO Mark Ishaug hopes that ASOs will become obsolete before the next 25-year mark rolls around.

"My dream is that there will be a cure and there will be virtually no more HIV transmission in this world in the next 25 years," Ishaug says. "And, of course, I want to be around to put us out of business."

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