



HIRE ME!

.....

End AIDS with Jobs

a community magazine by  **AMIDACARE**
in partnership with Alliance For Positive Change, Alpha Workshops Studio School, Cikatelli Associates, Inc., Exponents, The Fortune Society, GMHC, Housing Works, The LGBT Center, National Working Positive Coalition, NYS AIDS Institute, NYS Education Department, and Translatina Network

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HIRE ME!

END AIDS WITH JOBS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

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“WHEN HIV-POSITIVE PEOPLE ARE WORKING, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES, MONITOR THEIR HEALTH, ADHERE TO THEIR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS, AND TAKE THEIR MEDICATIONS. RETURNING TO WORK HELPS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HIV. IT KEEPS PLWH HEALTHY AND IMPROVES THEIR SELF-ESTEEM.” – AWG



MARK MISROK

CO-FOUNDER AND BOARD
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL WORKING
POSITIVE COALITION

HELP WANTED

WE NEED MORE
ACCESS TO BETTER
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

We who are living with HIV in NYC share something in common with those at highest risk of new HIV transmissions. Both groups have experienced unequal access to the economic and employment opportunities in our city. These barriers are seldom discussed and need more attention.

Now more than ever, people living with HIV (PLWH) in New York get the medications and health care we need and are healthier than ever, if we can stick with our treatment and take care of ourselves. More of us get housing support and other services, since eligibility criteria for PLWH have opened up for HASA (HIV/AIDS Services Administration) in NYC's Human Resources Administration.

However, too many New Yorkers living with HIV feel trapped in poverty, with limited opportunity to build futures that are economically secure. For some of us, not working allowed us to focus on improving our health and well-being. Now many of us find that getting help to land jobs that we want may be the only way to escape poverty, build financial security, and improve our quality of life. To consider work and plan for employment, however, PLWH need to know that their housing will be safe and that other needed supports will be reinstated if their attempt to work doesn't work out.

Our friends, family, and neighbors in communities most at risk for HIV confront many kinds of discrimination and other barriers to quality education and employment opportunities. For many of us, our unmet employment needs connect directly to a range of physical and mental health risks, including HIV. Expanding access to a full range of employment supports is an essential investment in the health and well-being of everyone.

IT SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO LEARN ABOUT OUR BROADEST RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES FOR WORK AND CAREERS. MANY OF US NEED AND SHOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES, TRAINING, AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE OUR CHANCES OF GETTING JOBS WE WANT – AND HELP US TO SUCCEED IN THE WORK LIVES WE CHOOSE.

We've learned that addressing the impact and risks of HIV requires more than simply providing access to meds and health care. These days, more programs help people not just to survive, but to thrive. This special publication by Amida Care and its partners highlights information and resources that many of us need to better understand our options, increase our access to job opportunities, and achieve the career goals we choose for ourselves. Our efforts also contribute to the advancement of New York State's pioneering goal to End the Epidemic by 2020.

Mark Misrok, MS Ed, has lived with HIV for over 30 years. He co-founded the National Working Positive Coalition in 2003 and serves as President of its Board of Directors. Mark provides education, training, and technical assistance on policy and program development to improve responsiveness to the employment needs of people living with or at risk for HIV.



JOANN
WINNING
WITH **W.I.N.**

“WHEN I FIRST STARTED, I FELT I COULDN’T DO THIS. AT 56, I THOUGHT I WAS TOO DUSTY. BUT THE COUNSELOR TOLD ME NOT TO GIVE UP, AND GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE I NEEDED. NOW I LOVE BEING A COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER.”

When an Amida Care staff member knocked on JoAnn's door back in 2013, the Brooklyn grandmother had been living with HIV for 15 years. JoAnn had been battling depression, homelessness, and substance use for years, but that home visit helped her get on the road to recovery.

Today JoAnn has been clean and sober for five years, with a suppressed viral load that makes her undetectable. Having trained for her job by completing Amida Care's WIN (Workforce Initiative Network) program, now she is out knocking on doors herself. As a community outreach worker, JoAnn connects with members who have been lost to care.

JoAnn finds meaning in helping others overcome struggles that are similar to her own. Getting a paycheck is great, too. JoAnn's job helps her to support the granddaughter she is raising. Ultimately, her new life makes JoAnn a stronger role model for her adult children, grandchildren, and first great grandchild – born this year.

On becoming undetectable

“WITHOUT A PLACE TO LIVE, IT'S VERY HARD TO BE ADHERENT WITH MEDICATION AND GET PROPER REST AND GOOD NUTRITION... MY T CELL COUNT WAS ONCE AT 400. NOW THAT I'M UNDETECTABLE, IT IS OVER 1,000.”





WAYDE

STARTING A NEW LIFE

“I’M VERY MUCH AN ENTREPRENEUR, USED TO CALLING THE SHOTS AND BEING IN CHARGE, SO THE IDEA OF BEING ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WAS NEVER PART OF MY PSYCHE. IT TOOK A LOT OF HUMBLING TO SAY TO MYSELF: ‘OK, AT THIS TIME OF YOUR LIFE, THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.’ NOW I’M EXCITED ABOUT GETTING BACK TO BEING SELF-SUSTAINING.”

Wayde completed Second Life, a yearlong Housing Works (HW) workforce development program, last summer, and the organization employed him full-time. Now Wayde works as a Care Navigator, doing sexual health advocacy for HW's Youth and Prevention Services program. He connects with young clients at ballroom scene dance parties across NYC, while also teaching an art class and doing office and computer work.

Besides his HW job, Wayde is also a gifted artist and entrepreneur. His artwork has appeared in Amida Care's calendar and elsewhere. Wayde has run his own businesses: a faux-finishing company and online adult novelty shop. He has served on the boards of two health care nonprofits and has been an Amida Care member since 2012.

On HW's Second Life program

"What's most important is having the opportunity to take your time as you go through the workforce development process at Housing Works. Family life comes up, your own health issues come up, and you work through these things. The good thing about the Second Life program is that it's gradual and you can move at your own speed..."



AS PART OF HIS JOB AT HOUSING WORKS, WAYDE TEACHES AN ART CLASS, WHERE HE INSPIRES THE STUDENTS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEIR CREATIVITY.



MONIQUE GIVING BACK

“TODAY I AM A BETTER PERSON BECAUSE OF THE WIN PROGRAM. I CAN PURSUE MY LIFE’S MISSION TO HELP OTHERS UNTIL THEY’RE ABLE TO HELP THEMSELVES.”

Bronx resident Monique M. describes herself as a “proud, self-assured transgender woman,” and she is known for her leadership qualities. Soon after graduating from the WIN (Workforce Initiative Network) job-training program last year, Monique became an Amida Care Community Health Outreach Worker.

“Today I am a better person because of the WIN program. I can pursue my life’s mission to help others until they’re able to help themselves,” she says.

Monique takes an intensive, “hands-on” approach to her job. She strives to be a role model for the young transgender women she works with in the Bronx. To those who are sex workers, she gives the message: “I have been there, too. And beyond, there’s a whole new life waiting for you.”

Sharing the story of her life, Monique says: “I couldn’t find acceptance in a judgmental, hostile world, so I found it within.” At age 16, she began coming to terms with her identity as a transgender woman.

A ROLE MODEL OF TREATMENT ADHERENCE, MONIQUE HAS BEEN UNDETECTABLE FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS. MONIQUE STRIVES TO BE A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THE YOUNG TRANSGENDER WOMEN SHE WORKS WITH IN THE BRONX, AND CONNECT THEM TO CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE. THIS POPULATION IS AT MUCH GREATER RISK FOR HIV AND OTHER HEALTH AND SOCIAL DISPARITIES.





Photo credit:
The Alliance for Positive Change

EUGENE EPPS

POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH PEER TRAINING

“THE ALLIANCE’S PEER RECOVERY EDUCATION PROGRAM CHANGED MY LIFE; I WAS ABLE TO PUT THE STREETS AWAY. I LEARNED HOW TO USE COPING MECHANISMS AND I BECAME MORE CONFIDENT AND LESS JUDGMENTAL.”

Eugene Epps is a brave example of positive change. Growing up, Eugene found new challenges around every corner. He watched his mother sell drugs from their home, lost family members to AIDS, and was sent to foster care after a drug raid.

"I became bitter," Eugene says. He acted out, committing crimes that landed him in prison. After his release, Eugene became very ill, and a test showed that he had HIV.

Eugene felt as if the odds were stacked against him, but he courageously chose to take that first step to live better. He went to the Alliance for Positive Change (then called AIDS Service Center NYC) to get the help he needed. Eugene started as a client, but soon became an example to others. He enrolled in Alliance's Peer Recovery Education Program and completed eight weeks of training.

"The Peer program changed my life," says Eugene. "I was able to put the streets away. I learned how to use coping mechanisms, and I became more confident and less judgmental."

During his paid Peer Internship, Eugene headed to high-risk communities across NYC, talking to people about the importance of knowing their HIV status and connecting to care. "I learned how to be myself, express ideas, and use my swagger to end the HIV epidemic!" he says. Within a year, the Alliance hired Eugene as a Training Coordinator. He is living proof that positive change can happen.

A message to other Peers

"DON'T ALLOW YOUR PAST, WHATEVER IT MAY BE, TO KEEP YOU DOWN. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE. BE BETTER THAN YESTERDAY."





JASON BROWN

FROM PRISON TO HIGHER EDUCATION

JASON GRADUATED FROM AMIDA CARE'S WIN (WORKFORCE INITIATIVE NETWORK) JOB TRAINING PROGRAM AT ALLIANCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE. HE WORKS PART-TIME THERE AS A PEER INTERN AND HAS NEARLY FINISHED EARNING THE 500 HOURS NEEDED TO RECEIVE PEER CERTIFICATION.

Jason Brown has come a long way since his release from prison three years ago after serving a 15-year sentence. Despite coping with lung surgery and other health challenges, Jason has already managed to graduate from Amida Care's WIN (Workforce Initiative Network) job training program at Alliance for Positive Change. He works part-time there as a peer intern and has nearly finished earning the 500 hours needed to receive peer certification. Jason eagerly awaits his next big step: enrolling at Hunter College in January to pursue a degree in social work. He is working with NYS ACCES-VR program for help with tuition (see page 32).

At age 52, Jason is a man on a mission. Rather than regretting the time he spent incarcerated, Jason describes it as "my school – a great experience." He credits his prison time for bringing him where he is today. "I was around good people there, and that's when good things happen," he explains. "I learned so many trades, then got released before I could go to college there."

An Amida Care member since 2016, Jason sings the praises of his WIN program mentor, who took a hands-on, personalized approach to giving support. "He used to call me at 9 o'clock at night to check on me," Jason notes. Now Jason intends to bring that same "personal touch" to the practice of social work, after earning his degree.

On studying social work

"WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND KIND HEART, I WANT TO BETTER MYSELF SO I HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE TO OTHERS. IT'S A RUSH TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE... LOTS OF PEOPLE HAVE HISTORY – WHETHER IT'S CANCER OR OTHER ISSUES – AND SOMETIMES THEY FEEL LIKE GIVING UP. I CAN GUIDE THEM AND HELP POINT THE WAY TO RESOURCES AND INFORMATION... ALONG THE PATH I'M FOLLOWING, I'M GOING TO TAKE PEOPLE WITH ME."



JOEY

ALPHA TO OMEGA

“ALPHA WORKSHOPS OFFERS INDIVIDUALS A CHANCE TO BECOME THEMSELVES AND MAKE THE WORLD A MORE BEAUTIFUL PLACE. I KNEW THAT I WOULD LEAVE THE PROGRAM WITH MY SKILLS ENHANCED AND A FUTURE CAREER IN THE FIELD OF DECORATIVE ARTS.”

Back in 2015, Bronx artist Joey was awarded a \$10,000 Jamie Drake Scholarship, entitling him to nine months of training in decorative arts at Manhattan's prestigious Alpha Workshops Studio School (AWSS). A couple of Amida Care staff members had recently toured the design school, and they encouraged Joey, a member of the health plan, to apply. As Joey recalls, "Both of them were blown away by the dynamic artwork and the impeccable teachers and staff."

Before studying at Alpha Workshops, Joey had never formally studied art. However, since moving to NYC from Mississippi 15 years earlier, Joey had worked in the fashion industry and done visual merchandising for boutiques and store windows. At Alpha Workshops, he learned new techniques including how to do faux-finishing of walls and furniture and how to make wallpaper by hand.

Since graduating from Alpha training in 2016, Joey has blossomed as an artist/entrepreneur. He exhibits his creations at a trendy new Bronx café and attracts new clients via word of mouth and his Instagram account. His latest projects include doing freelance interior design work and window dressing for major retail stores.

Choosing Alpha Workshops Studio School

"AFTER VISITING THE SCHOOL, SEEING THE BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK AND FURNITURE, AND MEETING THE FRIENDLY STAFF, I DEFINITELY WANTED TO BE PART OF SUCH A SPLENDID ATMOSPHERE. ALPHA WORKSHOPS OFFERS INDIVIDUALS A CHANCE TO BECOME THEMSELVES AND MAKE THE WORLD A MORE BEAUTIFUL PLACE. I KNEW THAT I WOULD LEAVE THE PROGRAM WITH MY SKILLS ENHANCED AND A FUTURE CAREER IN THE FIELD OF DECORATIVE ARTS."



**HELPING
PEOPLE
LIVING WITH
HIV/AIDS
GO BACK
TO WORK**

“RETURNING TO WORK HELPS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HIV. IT KEEPS PLWHA HEALTHY AND IMPROVES THEIR SELF-ESTEEM. I HAVE SEEN FIRSTHAND THE HUGE IMPACT THAT THIS WORK HAS ON PEOPLE.”

AWG (as she asked to be identified) has been on the cutting edge of workforce development for her fellow People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Promoted several times since getting hired as an instructor with GMHC's workforce development program in 2004, today AWG serves as the organization's Senior Director, Workforce Development. She runs GMHC's programs in this area, which include MATCH, RISE, YES, and Career Advance.

AWG's passionate life's work began when she was diagnosed with HIV about two decades ago. She quit her job to cope with medical issues, but soon wanted something to do. At the Adult Day Health Care program she attended, AWG fought for HIV-positive clients to gain access to the vocational stipend program. Before long, she was hired as the program's receptionist, then promoted to help run a back-to-work program for people with substance use issues.

GMHC recruited AWG to help launch its Back To Work program. At the 2012 International AIDS Conference, AWG was invited to join a groundbreaking panel on this topic. That discussion put workforce development on the radar for HIV treatment advocates worldwide. AWG remains committed to this cause, and her daily work continues to transform lives.

Working with GMHC's Workforce Development program

"I get up every morning eager to come to work. We have a record of success and need more support to expand what we are doing: helping PLWHA and those at risk to get back into the workforce. Together, we make miracles happen every day."

How returning to work benefits PLWHA

"When HIV-positive people are working, they are more likely to take care of themselves, monitor their health, adhere to their medical appointments, and take their medications. Returning to work helps prevent the spread of HIV. It keeps PLWHA healthy and improves their self-esteem. In more than a decade working at GMHC, I have seen firsthand the huge impact that this work has on people."

On facing the fear of losing benefits

"THEY ASK THEMSELVES: 'WHAT IF I GET SICK AND HAVE TO LEAVE THE JOB?' BUT HAVING A JOB MAKES LIFE SO MUCH BETTER. AT GMHC'S RISE AND MATCH PROGRAMS, WE HELP TAKE AWAY THE DARKNESS THAT HIV CAN OFTEN BRING. TOO OFTEN OUR HIV STATUS CAN MAKE US FEEL LESS THAN OTHERS. YET WHEN WE GO BACK TO WORK, WE COMBAT OUR FEARS, RECLAIM CONTROL OF OUR LIVES, AND THRIVE."



MICHAEL BRUNDIDGE

MANAGER OF BUSINESS SERVICES
THE FORTUNE SOCIETY

BUILDING BRIDGES FROM PRISON TO THE WORKPLACE

MICHAEL HAS WORKED WITH OVER 750 COMPANIES AND HELPED MORE THAN 2,000 FORMERLY INCARCERATED CLIENTS GET HIRED. HE OFTEN EDUCATES HR DEPARTMENTS ABOUT PROHIBITING UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS.

Michael Brundidge first came to The Fortune Society as a client in 2004, after serving 16 years in state prison. Back then, Michael faced many barriers to re-entering society, but finding a job seemed the most daunting. After completing Fortune's training program, Michael started working there as a volunteer.

In his very first year, he helped 127 clients get jobs. Today, more than 13 years and five promotions later, Michael serves as Manager of Business Services. He advocates for clients, working closely with them as they strive to overcome the same barriers he once faced.

So far, Michael has worked with some 750 companies and helped more than 2,000 formerly incarcerated clients get hired. He often educates HR departments about NYS Corrections Law, Article 23A, which prohibits unfair discrimination against people with criminal records. Michael also reminds prospective employers about NYC's new Fair Chance Act, which makes it illegal to ask applicants about their criminal records before making a job offer.

Michael has been awarded a 2017 Bridge Builder Award by Citizens Against Recidivism, a New York State nonprofit committed to helping the incarcerated and their families.

On working at The Fortune Society

“FORTUNE’S HOLISTIC APPROACH GAVE ME ACCESS TO SERVICES I NEEDED TO GET MY LIFE ON TRACK... CHANGE IS POSSIBLE! AT FIRST, I SIMPLY NEEDED AN INCOME. NOW I FIND A LOT OF MEANING IN TRANSFORMING LIVES.”





AIDS INSTITUTE: PEER WORKER CERTIFICATION IN HIV/HCV/HARM REDUCTION

In 2016, New York State began certifying HIV, HCV, and Harm Reduction Peer Workers to meet the goals of the Governor's Ending the Epidemic Blueprint to End AIDS by December 2020. Individuals who are living with HIV/AIDS or hepatitis C or who have accessed harm reduction services are eligible for certification – if they would like to provide peer support, navigation, and other services, and they have a tie to an agency where they can complete a practicum.

Peer Workers who wish to be certified must complete the following requirements:

- (Optional): Foundational Training program to prepare for peer work
- Minimum 90 hours of certification training
- Arrange a 500-hour work practicum at an agency and have a successful Supervisor Evaluation
- Pass an online knowledge exam with a score of 75% or better
- Sign and uphold the Code of Ethics
- Submit an online application, including a resume and Statement of Lived Experience
- Receive final approval from the Peer Worker Certification Review Board

To sign up for trainings, begin an application for certification, learn more about the programs, and/or find more information and resources to help you become certified, visit: <https://www.hivtrainingny.org/Home/PeerCertification>. These trainings are offered free of charge through funding by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute.

If you have questions about this certification, please call Stephen Sebor at **631-444-3209**.

“THE PROCESS ITSELF WAS QUITE SMOOTH. THE WEBSITE WAS EASY TO NAVIGATE. THE COURSES, ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WERE WELL PRESENTED, AND ARE RELEVANT TO MY ROLE AS A PEER.”

–NYS HIV/HCV/HR CERTIFIED PEER WORKER

THE ALLIANCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE: PEER TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Alliance for Positive Change's Peer Training Institute (PTI) is Peer Foundational and Peer Certification Training Center authorized by New York State Department of Health/AIDS Institute. Since 1992, Alliance/PTI has been designing and delivering innovative peer training, peer coaching, and peer placement in the form of paid internships for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Armed with skills and information, trained peer educators maximize the Alliance's impact citywide. Every year, the Alliance provides paid internships for more than 130 peers and places dozens more trained peers in internships with our medical and community partners.

As part of the Alliance's commitment to preparing peers to join the workforce, training graduates are offered job readiness services such as resume-building, interview prep, job coaching, computer skills, and invitations to job fairs.

Requirements: Peer training is provided for people living with or affected by HIV and/or substance use issues.

To enroll: For an application, call the Alliance at **212-645-0875** or contact Deborah Yuelles, Director of Peer Services, at **Deborah@alliance.nyc** or Jean Pierre-Louis, Assistant Director of Peer Services, at **jean@alliance.nyc**. Alliance offices are located at 64 West 35th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001.





THE ALPHA WORKSHOPS STUDIO SCHOOL

The Alpha Workshops Studio School (AWSS) has provided training in the decorative arts to adults living with HIV for more than 20 years. Recently, its services were expanded to include adults living with other disabilities.

With a vision to create beauty and change lives, AWSS trains students to master decorative arts skills such as gilding with metal leaf, color theory, glazing techniques (putting a translucent color over a base color to achieve a special effect), troweled finishes (plaster-based materials applied to walls), and more. Successful completion of this program prepares the student for entry-level work in the decorative arts.

Student applicants must be able to manipulate paints, sit/stand intermittently to perform work, receive instruction on various art concepts and techniques, and function individually, as well as in small/large groups. The program is open to adults living with HIV or other disabilities. Tuition is paid for through public funding or scholarships.

Upon enrollment, students take the 10-week "Introduction to Decorative Painting" course. Those who do well and demonstrate interest and proficiency are invited to take the 26-week Advanced Decorative Arts course. Its cost (about \$10,000) is covered through public funding through ACCES-VR (formerly VESID). In addition, a limited number of scholarships are available for students who exemplify a creative spirit and a desire to excel in this industry.

The introductory course is offered four times a year. Interested candidates may make an appointment to tour the school and learn about the program and enrollment process. For more information contact Peter McMath by phone at **646-692-8091** or email at peter@alphaworkshops.org.



**THE
ALPHA
WORKSHOPS
STUDIO
SCHOOL**

Creating Beauty. Changing Lives.

AMIDA CARE: WIN PROGRAM



Amida Care's WIN (Workforce Initiative Network) program provides job training for members (only) who are interested in rejoining the workforce. WIN is offered in collaboration with several of Amida Care's community partners, including the Alliance for Positive Change, EXPONENTS, and Housing Works.

WIN trainings are held several times a year and go on for about seven weeks. Topics include resumé writing, interview skills, computer training, motivational interviewing, and other classes to help participants better understand HIV patient navigation and concepts related to sex and gender identity. Offered at no cost to Amida Care members, the WIN program requires enthusiasm and a commitment to work with people who have lived through similar experiences.

After completing the program, graduates will be equipped to enter or return to the workforce with the skills needed to serve as health navigators,

administrative assistants, or outreach workers. Those who complete WIN training are eligible to sign up for training in New York State Peer Certification.

For more information or to apply for the WIN program, email WIN@amidacareny.org or contact Nadia Small, Associate Project Manager for Outreach Programs, at **646-757-7606**.





CAI: LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

Launched by Cicatelli Associates, Inc. (CAI) in 1997, the Leadership Training Institute (LTI) is intended to help prepare peer workers. Its goal is to involve peers in their own health care, as well as in community advocacy. Through LTI, CAI now provides a Foundational Training Series (FTS) for New Yorkers who are living with HIV, living with or cured from hepatitis C (HCV), or practicing Harm Reduction.

The FTS helps support participants in promoting their own personal wellness as they prepare to take on a formal role assisting others. First, they gain understanding and mastery of their own HIV/HCV behavioral health care and treatment. Next, they learn skills and best practices for entering or reentering the workforce while managing their conditions.

Approved by the New York State AIDS Institute, the FTS is optional* for people pursuing NYS Peer Certification, but taking it is strongly encouraged. This course is made up of three parts totaling 65 training hours:

- Part 1: 3-day course on Self-Management of Chronic Conditions;
- Part 2: 3-day course on HIV, HCV, and Harm Reduction;
- Part 3: 4-day course on Transitioning from Peer to Employee.

All participants who complete Part 1 of FTS are encouraged to work for six months with an LTI Peer Mentor who is trained in self-management of chronic health conditions, communication, and job readiness skills.

To learn more about the LTI Foundational Training Series, please visit www.caiglobal.org/lti, or contact:

Justin LiGreci, LTI Deputy Director:

JLigreci@CAIGlobal.org, 212-594-7741 ext. 246

Charlene Cooper, LTI Deputy Director:

CCooper@CAIGlobal.org, 212-594-7741 ext. 244

Shannon Ashley, LTI Project Associate,

SAshley@caiglobal.org, 212-594-7741, ext. 250

** Amida Care-sponsored peer workers are required to complete the FTS through LTI.*



THE CENTER: EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Popularly known as The Center, The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center in Manhattan provides career services that are uniquely tailored to LGBT job seekers. Those who are looking for work, need support with transitioning in the workplace, or need information on job training options can turn to The Center for help in achieving their professional goals.

The Center's Career Services focus on supporting LGBT women, transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) community members, and LGBT immigrants. Offerings include Individualized Career Coaching, Career and Leadership Development Groups, Career Exploration Events, Legal Workshops, and Networking Opportunities.

For more information on these specialized programs or about general employment resources, go to The Center's website at www.gaycenter.org/careerservices, email them at opportunities@gaycenter.org, or phone **212-620-7310**.

**THE
CENTER**
THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &
TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER



EXPONENTS: ARRIVE PROGRAM



The ARRIVE program offers free training to build life skills in a uniquely supportive, educational environment. It is tailored for individuals (and their families) who are living with HIV and addiction across NYC's five boroughs.

For those eligible, this program also provides foundational training toward the New York State Peer Worker Certification. This professional development course is designed to lead to employment in the fields of substance abuse and health care, in general.

In addition, ARRIVE offers counseling, support groups, stress reduction and meditation, MetroCards, weekly raffles, networking opportunities, light refreshments, a graduation ceremony on completion, and advanced graduate training. Thus far, ARRIVE has already helped to improve health and and ignite hope for more than 10,500 New Yorkers.

Located at 2 Washington Street in Manhattan, the ARRIVE program is run by EXPONENTS, a nonprofit organization that for more than 25 years has been compassionately serving those impacted by HIV/AIDS, substance use, incarceration, and behavioral

health challenges. Its client-centered, strength-based approach greatly improves health outcomes and promotes overall wellness.

For more information or to register, contact Dana Diamond at **212-243-3434, ext. 125**, or email Ddiamond@exponents.org

“I WAS USING WHEN I CAME TO ARRIVE. I WAS ABLE TO SLOWLY CUT DOWN AND NOW HAVE THREE YEARS IN RECOVERY.” – ROY

“ARRIVE HELPED ME REDUCE MY DRUG USE AND GET MY HEALTH AND FAMILY BACK.” – SHANELLE

“ARRIVE SAVED MY LIFE. I’M NOW A PEER EDUCATOR, GIVING AWAY WHAT WAS ONCE GIVEN TO ME.” – TAMMY

EXPONENTS
Improving health. Igniting hope.



THE FORTUNE SOCIETY: SOFT SKILLS READINESS TRAINING AND TRANSITIONAL WORK

Known for helping formerly incarcerated people make positive contributions to communities, The Fortune Society offers several job-training programs: Soft Skills Readiness Training and Transitional Work, as well as courses leading to certifications in Culinary Arts, Green Building Operation & Maintenance, Environmental Remediation Training, Transportation Training, and Commercial Drivers' License.

These programs, which placed nearly 700 clients in new jobs in 2016 alone, equip formerly incarcerated applicants with the skills to get and keep jobs and thrive in the workplace. These services include job readiness workshops, specialized training in various industries, and placement and retention services. Fortune also offers subsidized internships, known as Transitional Work, to help applicants needing additional hands-on experience to advance in their careers.

The Soft Skills Job Readiness Training program focuses on interview preparation, leading to success in getting and retaining a job. Applicants develop valuable job-search tools like resumé preparation, practice in answering tough interview questions (especially those involving criminal justice), time management, and problem-solving skills.

Requirements: Fortune welcomes all people with a history of incarceration.

For more information call 212-691-7554; email info@fortunesociety.org; or visit their offices at 29-76 Northern Blvd., Long Island City, NY.





GMHC: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

For nearly 15 years, **GMHC's Workforce Development Initiative** has served the employment needs of the HIV/AIDS community – with services now expanded to encompass those at risk.

The **RISE (Realizing Independence through Support and Employment)** program was designed with NYC's HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA). RISE helps HIV-positive New Yorkers who receive HASA benefits become gainfully employed. The program provides job training, internships, employment counseling, job placement, and retention assistance to HASA clients. RISE Orientations are held at 11 a.m. on Mondays at GMHC, 446 West 33rd Street in Manhattan. For details, call **212-367-1030**.

The **MATCH (Moving Ahead Toward Career Horizons)** program, a collaboration with New York State's Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), helps clients succeed in the workplace. Through comprehensive vocational assessment, training, job placement assistance, and retention services, MATCH helps participants build skills and confidence to get hired and achieve success.

MATCH walks participants through every step of the hiring process. Counseling helps clients discover their employment goals. Then participants get supportive training on time management, workplace etiquette, and career development.

Seminars are offered on how to write or revise resumés and cover letters. Classes teach interview techniques, budgeting, and marketing one's skills. The Job Development team works with applicants on job search strategies, interview opportunities, job placement assistance, and retention services.

YES (Youth Empowerment Services) – Created for people aged 18-29 who are HIV-negative and want help finding work. Clients can meet with a job specialist, earn an MOS recertification, take job readiness workshops, and get help with job placement.

Career Advance – In collaboration with NYC's HRA (Human Resources Administration), this program gives job placement assistance to those who receive public benefits. It offers job readiness workshops, Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications, internships, externships, and placement assistance.

To register for these GMHC programs, applicants must attend a Workforce Program Open House. These one-hour sessions include presentations on how the programs help job seekers. For details, call or email Amanda Cruz at **212-367-1545** or amandac@gmhc.org.



HOUSING WORKS: SECOND LIFE PROGRAM

The Second Life Job Training Program (JTP), New York State's first employment training program for homeless people living with HIV/AIDS, was established by Housing Works in 1991. Second Life provides real-world job training in a community that fosters healing and support. Graduates of this 9 to 12 month program are guaranteed full-time employment, so that stable pay and sustained health care are always in sight.

The Second Life program empowers clients by teaching job readiness skills that range from communication and critical thinking to effective interaction with people. The next phase includes on-the-job training as well as continuing education. The goal is to employ graduates in full-time, salaried careers.

On completing this program, trainees are granted full-time employment at Housing Works or an affiliate. For at least six months, they receive post-graduation support from their supervisor to support their transitions to full-time employment.

Requirements: Applicants must be eligible for HRA/HASA benefits (NYC's HIV/AIDS Services Administration, overseen by the Human Resources Administration). For more information about eligibility and the Second Life program, contact Jennifer Lester at j.lester@housingworks.org or call **347-473-7429**


A NYC NONPROFIT FIGHTING
AIDS AND HOMELESSNESS



NEW YORK STATE: ACCES–VR PROGRAM

ACCES-VR (Adult Career & Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation), an office of the New York State Education Department, helps people with disabilities to prepare for and find employment. Applicants must have a documentable physical or mental disability, including chronic medical conditions (like HIV) or conditions that pose limitations in physical functions, such as mobility, stamina, etc. Mental conditions include addiction, depression/anxiety, a learning disability, and so forth.

ACCES-VR considers every person a unique individual, and every Plan for Employment is developed with assistance from a trained, certified counselor. Based on individual needs and policy requirements, some of the services that ACCES-VR provides include career counseling/assessment, vocational training, college financial support, assistive technology, supported employment, and help with job placement.

For example, ACCES-VR could help an applicant determine which types of work best suit that person's talents, interests, and disabilities. Or ACCES-VR could help would-be students figure out whether they are eligible for some sort of financial aid.

To apply for services, locate and contact your local office by checking online at: www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/district-offices or call 1-800-222-5627.



TRANSLATINA NETWORK: TGNC LEADERSHIP SPACE PROGRAM

Translatina Network, an organization composed of transgender individuals working to promote the healthy development of transgender Latina communities, provides a job-training program called TGNC (transgender and gender nonconforming communities) Leadership Space. This eight-week program helps transgender clients with career development, leadership skills, and workplace ethics. Trainees also receive support in all aspects of job readiness, from preparing resumés or cover letters and learning basic computer skills to interviewing and dressing for success.

Program graduates are trained as health navigators, prepared to engage and educate the transgender community about PrEP/PEP and HIV treatment and prevention, as well as to make referrals for health care, housing, and legal services.

Translatina Network helps link those who complete the TGNC Leadership Space program with employment opportunities.

Applicants to TGNC Leadership Space must be 18 or older.

Visit www.translatinanetwork.org for more information, or call **212-367-1550**, or email info@translatinanetwork.org.



GOING BACK TO WORK? CONSIDER THE IMPACT ON YOUR **BENEFITS!**

Congratulations on your exciting new job offer! As you celebrate, it is important to keep in mind how having more income might affect your benefits – including housing or your ability to pay rent, your access to health care (including HIV and other medications), food, and so forth.

Before you join or rejoin the workforce, you'll need to evaluate how your new job might have an impact on your important benefits. Here are some key questions to consider, as you plan ahead:

- ? What if I will be earning too much money to keep qualifying for housing, food, or health care benefits – including Medicaid coverage for HIV medications, doctor visits, etc.?
- ? Can I pay for these expenses with my new income, or are other options available to help me keep access to my housing, health care, and other benefits?

? What if, after I start working, I get sick and need to take a leave of absence to stabilize my condition? How should I handle this?

To get answers to these and other benefits questions before you start working, talk things over with your case manager, care team, and HASA representative. Since each person's situation is unique, it's best to go directly to those who best understand your needs. If you need help contacting your HASA representative, ask your case manager. Or call the main HASA number at **212-971-0626**, or go to their website: www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/hasa-locations.page.

For more information from GMHC's benefits expert, contact Alexandra Rimmel by calling **212-367-1143** or emailing her at AlexandraR@gmhc.org.



“PEER POWER”

FUELS NEW YORK’S DRIVE TO END THE EPIDEMIC

by Sharen Duke, Executive Director, CEO, The Alliance for Positive Change

New York State leads the nation with its pioneering Blueprint to End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic by 2020. Our community organization, The Alliance for Positive Change, and others like us, are partnering in support of this groundbreaking initiative. At the Alliance, we find that “Peer Power” makes a highly effective weapon in the battle to end the epidemic.

Alliance peer educators fan out across New York City’s diverse communities to share information, support, and their personal experiences with HIV, substance use, hepatitis, and other health challenges. Peers set shining examples that inspire others to make healthy choices in their own lives.

Integrated into every aspect of our programs and services, Alliance peer educators train for and are employed as interns in paying positions. To prepare them for their work, we provide foundational and certification training through the Alliance’s State-accredited training programs. By harnessing the galvanizing effect of role models, “Peer Power” achieves social impact. Ultimately, it also helps drive economic development.

In 2016, the Alliance partnered with managed care companies and medical providers to find and connect with New Yorkers who had fallen out of the health

care system. Our peers made contact with more than 500 New Yorkers at risk for HIV, and they achieved a 39 percent success rate at engaging patients who had been lost to care. This outreach and linkage to care helps by identifying New Yorkers who don’t know their HIV status and connecting them with the care they need.

PEERS ALSO HELP PEOPLE STAY IN TREATMENT FOR HIV AND REDUCE THEIR VIRAL LOADS. BY ACCOMPANYING PATIENTS TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS, PEERS ENSURE THAT THOSE SERVED RECEIVE THE CARE THEY NEED. THEY GAIN ACCESS TO MEDICATION AND ACHIEVE VIRAL LOAD SUPPRESSION, WHICH PREVENTS FURTHER TRANSMISSION. IN THE DRIVE TO REDUCE NEW HIV INFECTIONS AND END THE EPIDEMIC IN OUR STATE, PEER-DELIVERED SERVICES ARE YIELDING POWERFUL RESULTS.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:

INVEST IN EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS TO END THE EPIDEMIC

By Doug Wirth, President and CEO, Amida Care and
Lyndel Urbano, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, Amida Care



TO HELP END THE EPIDEMIC IN NEW YORK STATE (NYS), WE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER EMPLOYING PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (PLWH) AND THOSE AT RISK. WE KNOW THAT TAKING PART IN THE WORKFORCE LEADS TO A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINED VIRAL LOAD SUPPRESSION.





Simply providing access to medications and services for PLWH is not enough. While retention in care is critical, successfully living with HIV is about more than medical visits and medications. Organizations that provide health care, especially those of us who serve PLWH, should invest in hiring them at a living wage, so that workers earn enough to afford housing, food, and health insurance.

Health care providers stand to benefit from the expertise that comes from those who offer lived experience with HIV. These workers understand the challenges faced by people living with chronic conditions. They can translate their experience into strategies that help patients engage with and take actions to improve their own health.

Hiring PLWH need not put a financial burden on organizations

The NYS AIDS Institute has created a Peer Certification program that trains PLWH in critical workplace skills. They and their supervisors get ongoing technical assistance to ensure successful integration into the workforce. Using this approach, health care providers can bill Medicaid for the services that these trained and experienced workers provide.

Investing in our communities

Amida Care has employed 600 of our members over the last decade. From 2006 until 2011, the vast majority

of those positions paid only a stipend. While stipends are a good thing, they do not enable people to rise out of poverty. Today, 6 percent of our workforce at Amida Care is composed of members or former members of our plan. These include three staff members who have transitioned to full-time employment here, complete with Amida Care employee benefits.

While Amida Care will continue to employ our members and other PLWH as care navigators, part-time office assistants, community health workers, and any other position for which they qualify, we are also funding an innovative program, supported by NYC Council, to help consumers gain employment in the health care delivery system. To date, five Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) have employed eight consumer workers who serve 135 clients at any given time.

**AS ORGANIZATIONS THAT
SERVE PLWH, WE ADVANCE OUR
MISSIONS WHILE ALSO WORKING
TO END THE EPIDEMIC IN NYS
THROUGH THE CREATION OF
LIVING-WAGE JOBS IN THE HIV
CONTINUUM OF CARE.**

Amida Care thanks NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, as well as Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the Committee on Health, the LGBT Caucus, and the entire NYC Council for championing and giving financial support to the ETE Consumer Workforce Initiative.



SMALL BUSINESSES CAN CREATE JOBS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

By Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. and
Doug Wirth, President and CEO, Amida Care

From his days growing up in Baltimore, Shelton Holt's life was full of challenges – homelessness, a history with the criminal justice system, and living with HIV. As his health improved through care and treatment, Shelton wanted to work, but he lacked the confidence to get the training and the job he wanted. When he enrolled in the Alpha Workshops Studio School, he learned how to harness his skills to become a successful artist. In his career of more than 12 years, he has produced hand-painted wallpaper for some of New York City's most prestigious designers. And he is giving back, as a trainer and mentor helping others build their confidence and skills.

Thanks to decades of advocacy and medical research, HIV is now a manageable chronic condition. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently confirmed that a person with HIV who has an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus to others. We now know that undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U).

For the estimated 1.1 million Americans, including 112,000 New Yorkers¹, who are living with HIV today and have the chance to become virally suppressed through access to treatment, this means more time to enjoy their lives, more time to spend with loved ones, and, as in Shelton's case, the time to pursue education, training,

and careers, and gain a newfound sense of purpose while contributing to their communities.

Improved health has allowed more and more people living with HIV to enter or re-enter the workforce. People who are healthier naturally want to work and be productive. Employment is one of the most important social determinants of health. Having a living-wage job is key to staying healthy – physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.

The more than 190,000 small businesses in New York City are a fundamental part of the city's economic engine, and their success depends on finding and retaining people with skills and talents in a diverse range of fields – sales, retail, business management, construction, the arts, food service, and many more. New York City's small businesses can provide job opportunities to people living with HIV and benefit from this rich talent pool. The Affordable Care Act provides access to health insurance for people with pre-existing and chronic conditions like HIV, so they can access health insurance through the NYS Health Exchange. For part-time work, they may still be eligible to retain Medicaid coverage, so employers are not burdened with the cost of covering HIV treatment.

1 - www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/statistics/annual/2015/2015_annual_surveillance_report.pdf



Amida Care, New York's largest Medicaid special-needs health plan, recognizes the need for job training for its members. Amida Care's Consumer Workforce Initiative program creates living-wage jobs for graduates of peer workforce training programs who are living with HIV. Many of those jobs involve giving back to others living with HIV through positions in health navigation and outreach.

In Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights, partnerships have been formed to increase traffic to neighborhood businesses. Through these partnership and using strategic promotions targeted to customers of Airbnb, Uber, and other popular shared economy platforms, local small businesses have generated a referral system that connects customers to restaurants, shops, museums, and other small businesses. This increased business results in a need for more employees, builds capacity among neighborhood small businesses, and creates more jobs that allow people in these communities access to the benefits they need to stay healthy. Years of progress in our work to end HIV/AIDS have led us to a moment where we have a win-win opportunity: to provide jobs for thousands of people who are healthy and ready to work, and help small businesses in our communities succeed and thrive.

WE CAN AND MUST REDOUBLE
OUR EFFORTS TO REACH OUT TO
EVERYONE LIVING WITH HIV AND
GIVE THEM THE TRAINING AND
SUPPORT TO MAKE THE MOST OF
THE ADVANCES WE FOUGHT SO
HARD TO ACHIEVE.

Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. is a New York City Council Member representing Bedford Stuyvesant and northern Crown Heights. Council Member Cornegy serves as the Chair for the Committee on Small Business and Co-Chair of the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus (BLAC) and on the committees for Civil Service & Labor, Finance, Health, Housing & Buildings, Public Safety, as well as on the Task Force on Affordable Housing Preservation (www.council.nyc.gov/reports/speakers-2014-2015-midterm-progress-report/preserving-affordable-housing/).

BACK TO WORK

*“ WHEN HIV-POSITIVE PEOPLE ARE WORKING, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO
TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES,
MONITOR THEIR HEALTH,
ADHERE TO THEIR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS,
AND TAKE THEIR MEDICATIONS.*

***RETURNING TO WORK HELPS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HIV.**
IT KEEPS PLWH HEALTHY AND IMPROVES THEIR SELF-ESTEEM.”*

– AWG

