



YOUTH ONLY AIDS LINE

Anonymous and Confidential
Phone Counseling at 1.800.788.1234

run by teens, for teens
monday through friday, 3pm to 9pm

YO Line Newsletter • AIDS Action Committee • 131 Clarendon Street • Boston, MA 02116

October, 1997

SCHOOL

DAYS

Welcome back to a new school year! We hope that you have had a fun, relaxing, and safe summer. Since it's time to head back into the classrooms, we here at the YO Line decided to make this our "back-to-school" issue. New school years bring a chance to start over, to improve something you started last year, to try something new...and along with all these new opportunities come stress and changes. We have included an article on self-esteem and taking care of yourself because these are important to ensuring you stay healthy. One thing we found from talking to teens is that the quality of HIV education varies from town to town - so if you think your school doesn't offer enough HIV education, or

you just want to learn more, check out our back page for resources on where to find it. Lastly, don't forget to enter our World AIDS Day Art & Writing Contest - this year's theme is "Growing Up in a World with AIDS," and we want to hear from you! Have a wonderful school year, and remember to call us for answers to any questions about HIV, AIDS, safer sex, or just to talk ... that's what we're here for.



AIDS Action's HIV Youth
Prevention Programs Staff

by Naoko Takamoto

TOGETHER

Do you sing in the shower? I do. With the soap as my microphone, I sing long and loud until the guy next door gets mad and flushes his toilet so that my water runs cold. This is his message for me to get my act together. At 6:00 am, he knows that I should have been done with my shower and out the door. Still, I insist on remaking the classics. It's okay, I'll just be late and sneak in through the back door. My supervisor catches me and has a conniption. It's okay, I'll just go out with my girls tonight and get hammered. But now I can't drive home. It's okay, I'll just stay with this random man tonight. Mister what's-his-face? Oh it's okay...

But do you see? It's not okay. So stop it, please.

School is starting up again and we shall have more reasons than ever to be cutting corners. And as work piles up, there will be more things to put off for later, coaxing ourselves by saying, 'it's okay, just...' We really can't let things go like that. On top of casual human affairs, we teenagers are required to deal with HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, shady friends, homework, etcetera. It's so hard, but so important, to keep our focus. By that I mean reminding ourselves what it is that we need to be concerned with. For me, that's my schoolwork and activities (including employment); my health; and my friends and family.

I've noticed that shit (excuse me) travels in packs. Problems at work, then problems with friends, then health problems, and a fight with mom dukes... It's not a pretty picture, and to avoid

the dismay of watching the parts of my life fall individually, it's easy to send them all to Hell at the first sign of trouble.

So let's talk stress management. I myself am not the master, but I have learned a lot. First, let me inform you that there is a plethora (ooh - SAT vocab!!!) of resources available to you. Think about sharing some of your problems with an adult counselor, a peer counselor, a good friend, or by calling a hotline. Whether you need to talk to someone about a specific problem, or just get some friendly support, you will be able to find an open door. It's all about you finding those doors and walking through them. People honestly sit around all day waiting to help you. I should know. I'm one of them.

Perhaps you're not one to go and lean on someone else. There are a lot of things to do to clear the air when things get a little overwhelming. Take an hour out of each day to do absolutely nothing. Watch TV. Clip your toenails. Walk the dog. Call a friend to gossip. You get the gist. Or if you are in a particularly productive mood, do some research on your problem. Put it on paper and deal with it like a personal project. I can guarantee that you will do a good job

on it - you will be doing it because you want to.

The problem is, if you *don't* deal with shit, it can build up. And if you feel out of control in your life, that's a bad foundation for making important decisions, like whether to have sex or use a condom. Cutting corners and letting pressure

build up, and not dealing with the things that are important to you, can lower your self-esteem; you might not even want to take care of yourself any more, or you might feel so isolated that you look for comfort in dangerous places. If this is happening to you, put the brakes on and get some help. You do deserve to be safe, and you do have the strength to protect yourself.

And then there are those other reasons some people insist on not using condoms with Mr. or

Stressed out?



Write in a journal

Get some exercise



Relax & do nothing for an hour



Spend some time outside

Eat a really good meal



Do something that

makes you laugh

If you are confused about sex and condom use:

Think about what you want

Think about why you want it

Talk to someone about it

Get information about condoms so you know how to protect yourself

Writing and Art Contest: Growing Up in a World With AIDS

• LIVING WITH HIV OR AIDS • HAVING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WITH HIV OR AIDS • HOW YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND DECISIONS ABOUT SEX HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED • WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND STAY UNINFECTED • HOW YOU HAVE EDUCATED YOURSELF OR OTHERS ABOUT HIV PREVENTION • WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:

OCTOBER 20, 1997

SEE REVERSE FOR DETAILS.



Writing and Art Contest: Growing Up in a World With AIDS



The Contest

PLEASE WRITE AN ESSAY, SHORT STORY OR POEM, OR CREATE A PIECE OF ART THAT REFLECTS ON WHAT IT HAS BEEN LIKE GROWING UP IN A WORLD WITH AIDS.

The Rules

Writing Contest: ALL WRITING MUST BE 250 WORDS OR LESS, TYPED OR PRINTED CLEARLY.

Art Contest: ALL ART MUST BE ON 8 1/2 x 11" OR 11 x 14" PAPER.

Questions? CALL DEB LEVY AT (617) 450-1341



Topics may include

- LIVING WITH HIV OR AIDS
- HAVING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WITH HIV OR AIDS
- HOW YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND DECISIONS ABOUT SEX HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED
- WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND STAY UNINFECTED
- HOW YOU HAVE EDUCATED YOURSELF OR OTHERS ABOUT HIV PREVENTION
- WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS

The Deadline

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY OCTOBER 20TH.

The Winners

THERE WILL BE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PRIZE WINNERS FROM EACH CATEGORY.

Writing Contest Winners WILL READ THEIR WORK ON WFAX DURING THE WORLD AIDS DAY RADIOATHON ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 1ST.

Art Contest Winners WILL HAVE THEIR WORK DISPLAYED ON WORLD AIDS DAY (LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED).

And...

Winning entries WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE WORLD AIDS DAY ISSUE OF THE YO LINE NEWSLETTER.

Prizes: GIFT CERTIFICATES TO FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PRIZE WINNERS

Everyone WHO ENTERS THE CONTEST WILL RECEIVE A YO LINE "RESPECT YOURSELF • PROTECT YOURSELF" HAT.

Growing Up in a World With AIDS World AIDS Day Writing/Art Contest Entry Form

PLEASE INCLUDE THIS FORM WITH ALL SUBMISSIONS. FORM MAY BE DUPLICATED. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY, OCTOBER 20TH, 1997.

SEND TO:

World AIDS Day Contest/YO Line • AIDS Action Committee
131 Clarendon Street • Boston, MA 02116

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
 PHONE _____
 AGE _____ SCHOOL (IF ATTENDING) _____

I GIVE AIDS ACTION PERMISSION TO PUBLISH MY SUBMISSION IN THE YO LINE NEWSLETTER.

CONTESTANT'S SIGNATURE _____

Ms. what's-their-face. Heat of the moment? Too awkward to bring it up? Don't know how to use one? Do condoms make you laugh because they look like miniature galoshes? Ha ha ha. But I shouldn't laugh. When people don't use condoms, that's a serious choice that they make about their health. Honestly, is sex, with or without a condom, so important that you would risk your own health over it? And if someone is about to drop you over a night of no sex (or safer sex), then they're part of that shit that you need to dispose of.

So, this is my good luck wish to you this school year, especially if you are a neurotic senior. Remember that this world is all about you, and it is what you make it. Have the self-esteem, love, and pride in yourself to go and do what you need to. If you need help with anything, go to the appropriate people and services. If you come across a mess, deal with it, break it down, and move on. Stay awake to the fact that Mista/Mizz what-eva could be HIV positive. Don't be ashamed to ask for help. Call us, for crying out loud!! The fact that you are concerned with your well-being commands a lot of respect. So please, do good for yourself. I want to know what song you would sing in the shower. **OKAY?**

PAUL'S INFO



by Paul Cottell-Leary, Jr.

CORNER

Since this is our back-to-school issue, we decided to include a nifty list of school and youth-related resources. Remember that the YO Line (Youth Only AIDS Line) is here for you if you need any questions about HIV or AIDS answered, if you want to talk to someone, or if you need a referral!

AIDS Action Committee Resources

In addition to the YO Line, here are some other resources offered by AIDS Action's HIV Youth Prevention Programs (HYPP). The goal of all the HYPP programs is to provide youth with access to HIV prevention resources through counseling, education, and outreach.

THE TEEN SPEAKERS BUREAU

The Teen Speakers Bureau (TSB) is a good resource for school- and community-based groups of youth aged 12 to 21 who want some EXCELLENT in-house HIV prevention workshops. Just think, wouldn't it be great to break the monotony of health class with a very PHAT workshop run by someone who is fully trained in HIV issues and is around the same age as you? For more information please call Lonnie McAdoo, coordinator of the TSB, at (617) 450-1379. Workshops are available only in the greater Boston area.

THE TEEN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Teen Ambassador Program (TAP) is a youth volunteer outreach program in which students in high school get training in HIV issues and then go back to their schools and communities to disseminate information and educate their peers. If you want to contribute to your community and stop the spread of HIV among your peers, then this is a great way to get involved. If you are interested in volunteering or if you want more information then please call Jessica Flaherty, coordinator of TAP, at (617) 450-1489. The next training is in October!

**IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM,
TALK TO SOMEONE!**

... A friend

... An adult you trust

... A counselor in your community

... A hotline peer counselor

YOUTH ONLY AIDS LINE (YO LINE)

(800) 788-1234

PEER LISTENING LINE: (800) 399-PEER

(Counseling for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth as well as those who are questioning their sexual identity.)

SAMARITEENS: (800) 252-TEEN

(Suicide prevention hotline)

PLANNED PARENTHOOD HOTLINE

(800) 682-6218

Community and School Resources

THE AIDS PROGRAM AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The AIDS Program develops and oversees AIDS curricula for public schools. Staff can help you get an AIDS program started in your school and help you develop a condom availability program. You can also get involved on the Youth AIDS Advisory Panel, which advises the Department on its programs. For more information, call Margot Abels at (617) 388-3300 x376.

GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCES

In 1992 Massachusetts passed the Gay Students Rights Law. This means that you cannot be discriminated against in any public school in Massachusetts based on your sexual orientation or your perceived sexual orientation. This includes forming Gay/ Straight Alliances, or GSA's. Gay and Lesbian students in high school, and their friends, have to deal with homophobia, homo-ignorance, and heterosexism on an everyday basis. GSA's help students cope, find support, and fight all of these. You do not have to be Gay to start or be part of a GSA. The good news is that over one-third of high schools in Massachusetts have a GSA. To find out if your school does, or to find out how to start one, you can contact Kim Westheimer of the Department of Education's Safe Schools Program at (617) 388-3300, ext. 405.

PROTECT TEEN HEALTH

Protect Teen Health (PTH) is an HIV prevention program funded through the Department of Public Health. This program trains youth

peer leaders to do HIV education in their communities. I have been a PTH peer leader for the past three years. My site is BAGLY (the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth). My fellow peer leaders and I develop and lead HIV-related workshops, and are available at our site to answer questions about HIV and AIDS and to serve as peer counselors. To find out about a PTH site near you please contact the youth specialist at your nearest Massachusetts Prevention Center:

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(413) 732-2009, x3007

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