going the distance

1996/1997 Annual Report

GMHC
GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS
As the world’s oldest AIDS service organization, Gay Men’s Health Crisis has always set forth into uncharted territory. During 1996-97, GMHC reshaped its programs to address the impact of promising new drugs. Combination therapy with protease inhibitors offered hope for some people with HIV but tragically not for all. Difficult to take and expensive, the new medications are not a cure for AIDS. As many rushed to declare the “end of AIDS,” we struggled with the reality that HIV still destroys too many lives. We refused to mistake hope for victory and abandon the fight.

Sweeping changes in the welfare and immigration laws for some clients and improved health for others brought a flood of fresh questions to our financial, health-care and legal advocates. We helped those once too sick to work but now healthier to make choices about returning to the workplace. With a greater proportion of our new clients having more complex needs—being homeless or beset by psychiatric/drug problems—GMHC expanded intensive case management, and reinforced links to mental health and drug treatment services.

Perhaps our greatest challenge in the new era of protease inhibitors has been education and prevention. While GMHC’s Department of Treatment Education and Advocacy (TEA) played a role in drafting new Federal HIV treatment guidelines, TEA educated more people with HIV about their choices — through cutting-edge publications like Treatment Issues as well as peer counseling and workshops. GMHC once again this year was the largest nongovernmental distributor of educational materials, dispensing over a million pieces. Our Hotline and walk-in counseling service fielded queries from 38,000 people.

New cases of AIDS continued to escalate among women this year, and GMHC responded by creating the new Department of Women’s Education Services. The agency became “A Place for Women,” by developing new literature for them, and woman-centered workshops and support groups. Young gay men are becoming infected with HIV at a rate of up to 4% a year; at that rate, half who are now 18 will be infected by 30. Having once helped pioneer the “use-a-condom-every-time” approach, GMHC is now rethinking prevention to deal with contemporary social and psychological realities. This year, we launched Beyond 2000 (b.2K), a grassroots HIV prevention program, to recruit 2000 gay and bisexual men to help uninfected men stay uninfected through the 21st century. Because community means different things to different people, b.2K includes individual initiatives targeted at black gay men, Latino gay men, and gay youth and young adults from 15 to 25.

As more promising therapies made HIV testing — and early medical intervention — more important than ever, GMHC opened the David Geffen Center for HIV Prevention and Education. The first facility in New York City to integrate testing with a range of prevention, education and other services, it offers sensitive pre- and post-test counseling (in English or Spanish), fast results and sliding-scale fees — a model for HIV testing in a new, more hopeful era.

Making sure that people with HIV could seize that hope shaped our advocacy. GMHC led the campaign to secure $100 million for New York’s AIDS Drug Assistance Program; members of our staff participated on a State committee to ensure equal access to new treatments; and we won first-time government funding for treatment education. In the face of
radical assaults on welfare benefits and attempts to shrink Medicaid, we worked to save medical care for Americans with HIV. In light of requirements that HIV-positive New Yorkers must join HMOs, we negotiated to preserve high-quality medical care for them.

Increasingly, we led coalitions to enlighten elected officials, insurers and health-care practitioners — to secure access to combination therapy, to obtain quality care in a managed care environment, and to provide clean needles for injection drug users. Through our new Community Partnership Initiative, we worked to strengthen AIDS organizations in New York's underserved neighborhoods and help their clients receive the support they deserve.

Sadly, AIDS is far from over. As long as the virus remains a heedless destroyer, GMHC vows to fight alongside every man, woman and child battling HIV. We salute our heroic donors, staff, volunteers, and especially our clients, for plunging ahead and going the distance in a time of unprecedented change. Your courage, creativity and stamina inspire us to carry on.

David Hollander, Chair, Board of Directors

Mark Robinson, Executive Director

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Front row, seated left to right:
William McCarthy, Treasurer,*
Marjorie Hill, Vice Chair,*
David Hollander, Chair,*
Gretchen Dykstra, Secretary *

Middle row, left to right:
Doreen Frasca, Joan Tisch,
Rev. Rosetta E. Dubois-Gadson, Didi Charney,
William Floyd, Esther Chachkes,* Kendall Thomas,
Ann Pollinger Haas, Kenneth Ong.

Back row, left to right:
Phil Donahue, Mark Robinson, Executive Director,
John Green,* Vaughn Williams, Lawrence Van Valkenburgh,* Peter Arnold, Thomas Morgan, III*

Not pictured:
Michael Palm, Senior Vice Chair,*
Charles Borrok, Mario Cooper, Dennis deLeon,
Ethan Geto,* Howard Grossman, Raul Perea-Henze,
Stan Herman, Jeffrey Humber, Arthur Laurentis,
Eric Rudin

*Executive Committee
Client services

If you live with AIDS, every day can be a hurdle — to eat properly, get the right medical care, adhere to complex medication schedules, pay the bills, handle legal matters and maintain loving relationships. Even those who today live longer face a lifetime of constantly pressing needs. GMHC tries to give people with AIDS the strength to surmount each hurdle, to keep healthy and keep going over the long haul, despite setbacks.

........ This year, GMHC:


- Taught 6,000 New Yorkers at monthly forums and presentations about impact of welfare and immigration reform on benefits, paying for costly protease inhibitors, getting comprehensive care from HMOs.

- Responded to the needs of 353 Child Life families — 1,249 parents and kids — with 932 free food packages as well as support groups, excursions, parties and homework-help nights; assisted families in balancing the demands of “real life” with the rigors of medication schedules.

- Provided caring services to 9,081 men, women and children with AIDS, and their families.

- Offered 48 ongoing therapy and support groups to people affected by AIDS; and created new groups for individuals thriving on combination therapies, having problems on new medications, experiencing depression, entering recovery, and being a gay man over 50.

- Offered intensive case management to twice as many clients as last year; these people exhibited a complex tangle of problems — homelessness, poverty, mental illness and substance use.

- Advised the New York City Division of AIDS Services and Income Support on its restructuring so that people in need would get their benefits faster.

- Gave emergency grants to 550 people for food, clothing, utilities, travel to doctors, and arranged for Medicaid to pay insurance premiums for 225 clients.

- Met with HMO executives to persuade them to cover experimental treatments and PWA insurance between jobs.

- Translated fact sheets on protease inhibitors and on HIV-related menstrual problems into Creole.

- Distributed 3,000 copies of a new brochure listing local nursing homes and hospices.

- Served 65,647 tasty, balanced meals (16% more than last year); provided nutritional counseling services that included 781 initial assessments, 1,501 on-site counseling sessions, 53 home visits, and advice to 1,311 clients at nutrition groups and forums.
Advised 8,200 individuals on 11,969 legal matters — including immigration cases; landlord/tenant disputes; wills, health care proxies and powers of attorney; estate planning; debtor/creditor issues; discrimination; and family law cases.

Offered the country's most complete and innovative workshop, "Body & Soul: Eating, Nutrition & Protease Inhibitors," and seminars to help people adhere to diet requirements for succeeding on new drug combinations.

Developed plans with author/illustrator Maurice Sendak for a new, sunny Child Life playroom.

Awarded more than 500 scholarships to clients to attend a broad range of classes at area colleges, universities and schools of the arts.

Enabled 2,577 clients through recreational activities and classes to learn new skills and have a creative outlet, with piano lessons, choir, playwriting, improvisation.

Matched 553 Buddy volunteers to 608 clients, to lend an ear and a hand, and introduced short-term buddies for one-time tasks, phone buddies for the isolated, and HIV-testing buddies to ease the wait for results.

Distributed $1 million worth of donated tickets — 31,209 tickets — for Broadway shows, music and dance performances, and sports events.

Dispensed legal advice, prepared a brochure and made presentations for people benefiting from new combination therapies and returning to work.

Enlarged the Immigrants with HIV Project to serve 3,657 people at more sites in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Provided 2,306 acupuncture treatments on a walk-in basis for stress reduction and sobriety maintenance.

Provided an unparalleled opportunity for clients to get mental health treatment (through our linkage with the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services) and substance abuse treatment.

Handled more than 4,200 matters for PWAs deprived of satisfactory health care, home care and entitlements; and filed 72 complaints against hospitals and home care agencies for shoddy, discriminatory or inadequate services.
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services

education

This year, GMHC:

- Distributed 1,100,831 educational publications and brochures.
- Dispensed 181,396 condoms, 70,000 condom packs for Spanish-speaking and black gay men, and 4,000 of GMHC's first safer sex kits for women.
- Answered 37,238 Hotline calls.
  - Informed and counseled 764 people through our A-team crisis intervention walk-in service.
  - Distributed 10,000 copies of GMHC's first comprehensive HIV prevention brochure for women, and began safer sex workshops for them (in partnership with Lincoln Hospital and Bronx AIDS Services).
  - Pioneered support groups for women testing positive or thinking about testing, and for HIV-positive women on methadone.

- Started women's groups on disclosure of their HIV status, and groups for women who are partners, caretakers or "family" of PWAs: began women's drop-in groups, in English and Spanish, as well as one-on-one counseling, referral and earpoint acupuncture for them.
- Published 30,000 issues of LAP Notes for lesbians at risk for or living with HIV.
- Inaugurated monthly women & AIDS forums on topics like Medicaid managed care, female prisoners, and nutrition and HIV.
- Distributed 50,000 new HIV prevention brochures — revamped HIV & AIDS: The Basics (in English and Spanish) and GMHC's first oral sex brochure.
- Launched b.2K: Beyond 2000 to recruit 2,000 gay and bisexual men to help uninfected men stay uninfected through the 21st century.

- Started Soulfood for black gay and bisexual men — creating a poster HIV prevention campaign; holding discussion groups on body image, sexual identity, safer sex; and conducting 8-week group for HIV-negative men to talk about relationships, sex and HIV risk.
- Began Proyecto P.A.P.I. for Latino gay and bisexual men — creating newsletters and videos; holding support groups in Jackson Heights; creating a brochure, El Diario de Andres: Mantenerse Negativo no es Automatico; and running workshops in Spanish to help HIV-negative men stay negative.
- Launched Peer 2000 for gay, bisexual and transgender youth/young adults, primarily black and Latino, 15 to 25 — reaching 11,278 people by taking peer education, counseling and referral to the streets, ball and house culture, and clubs where at-risk youth congregate; attracted 3,000 to House of Latex ball.
- Began Summer Share education and outreach for gay men on Fire Island.
• Ran 22 ten-week groups, "Sex Is," targeted to young gay men (20s and 30s) who are HIV-negative to explore feelings about sex, relationships, HIV and risk-taking.

• Launched Women's Education Services department for HIV-positive and at-risk women; calling GMHC "A Place for Women" on 500 posters heralding our first Women's Open House.

• Created posters with HIV-positive gay men saying "I'm positive and positive he won't get it from me," displayed at 50 New York sex and gay venues, recruiting HIV-positive gay men to disclosure workshops.

• Offered 1,200 individual assessments and 972 counseling sessions about alcohol/drug use and sex; and 10-week "Steps Towards Change" groups for gay men who use drugs and alcohol.

• Assisted in developing the U.S. Public Health Service's HIV Treatment Guidelines for doctors — expert recommendations on promising new HIV therapies.

• Expanded one-on-one peer counseling to help people with HIV make informed treatment decisions.

• Presented treatment education and information about living with HIV to 6,074 people in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx and New Jersey; held 21 medical treatment forums (in Spanish in Washington Heights, the Bronx and Queens); educating about research advances, long-term survival and living with under 50 T-cells.

• Sent out 200,000 copies of Treatment Issues, the world's largest monthly newsletter on AIDS, and expanded AIDS Medical Glossary to explain new drug options.

• Distributed 17 different treatment fact sheets (in English and Spanish, some in French) on protease inhibitors and opportunistic infections, and developed the first-ever national collaboration of HIV treatment education programs to distribute protease inhibitor information — reaching 200,000 people.

• Informed and counseled over 5,200 gay and bisexual men — with workshops, disclosure discussion groups for HIV-positive men, "Staying Negative" workshops for men who are HIV-negative (or don't know their serostatus).

• Networked with government, pharmaceutical companies and insurers to promote further research after HIV drugs are approved for marketing in order to ensure their safety and efficacy.
Politicians and the public, insurers and doctors can change the course of the epidemic. Their decisions shape the fate of every person battling the virus. In a more hopeful era, GMHC leads coalitions to expand access to medical care and new therapies, to secure benefits under assault, and to increase funding for programs vital to the lives of men, women and children with AIDS.

This year, GMHC:

- Negotiated quality medical care for 100,000 HIV-positive New Yorkers on Medicaid who soon will be funneled into HMOs.
- Led the campaign to secure $100 million for New York’s AIDS Drug Assistance Program to pay for medicine that prolongs life.
- Fought for and helped pass landmark legislation to strengthen the New York City Division of AIDS Services and Income Support, serving 20,000 City residents with AIDS.
- Helped sideline the sell-off of New York City’s public hospitals, where half of New Yorkers with HIV get hospital-based outpatient care.
- Won first-time New York funding for HIV treatment education to teach people about new therapies, helping them make treatment decisions; and sat on State committee to ensure access to new drugs.
- Helped continue guarantee of Federal Medicaid coverage, relied on by 53% of Americans with HIV, and worked to expand coverage for HIV-positive people.
- Pressed Congress successfully to increase AIDS funding by millions of dollars across the board.
- Helped organize the Coalition for AIDS Prevention to press for syringe deregulation in Albany and the National Coalition to Save Lives Now to lift the Federal ban on needle exchange.
- Stalled conservative attempts to weaken the Food and Drug Administration, which ensures the safety and effectiveness of medications.
- Softened Governor Pataki’s radical welfare reform package, helping organize a coalition of people with disabilities to fight its cruelest aspects.
- Improved the Eligibility Verification Review Process that unfairly tossed people with HIV off welfare rolls.
- Opposed onerous HIV testing laws, including involuntary criminal defendant and prisoner testing; mandatory partner notification; and damaging newborn testing provisions.
- Worked with physicians who organized the Association of Physicians in AIDS Medicine to advocate for more enlightened AIDS policies in our state.
- Participated on or consulted for President Clinton’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; New York State AIDS Advisory Council; and the New York City HIV Planning Council.
- Rallied against dread disease insurance policies in New York that would offer inadequate coverage for HIV and AIDS.
- Led coalition to ensure PWA protection when Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield converts from a non-profit insurer of last resort into a for-profit company.
- Helped write HMO consumer assistance programs into New York State law.
- Lobbied Governor Pataki to increase AIDS funding, using a campaign of posters, postcards and handouts that noted his sorry record: 25% more cases, 25% more deaths, no new funding.

Joàn Hands • Fight

- Expanded the New York Citizens AIDS Network (New York CAHI) by more than one-third, enlisting 1,700 activists to press for more enlightened policies; trained grassroots advocates throughout New York State; registered 20,000 voters; phoned more than 16,000 voters and co-sponsored "Hands Around the Capitol" to remind people to vote.
Placed ads in the Legislative Gazette in Albany advocating syringe deregulation and welfare protections, and opposing dread disease legislation.

- Fought against xenophobic immigration reform proposals.
- Separated hope from hype in the wake of the Eleventh International Conference on AIDS, decrease in AIDS-related deaths and public perception that AIDS is over.
- Produced 52 issues of public policy update, In Brief.
- Informed 45,000 people with GMHC bimonthly The Volunteer, which featured issues on protease inhibitors, women and AIDS, prevention in the next era.
- Aired 18 new “Living With AIDS” shows on HIV testing, new anti-viral therapies, new Managed Care Bill of Rights, workplace disclosure.

Arranged press interviews with GMHC experts on complex issues: new therapies, testing policies, return-to-work options, oral sex safety, HMO abuses.

Unfurled our banners and rode our float at Gay Pride parade, vowing that GMHC will be “Going the Distance” to lead the fight against AIDS.
The activities that unfold behind the scenes—raising precious resources to meet expanding needs, training and supporting skilled staff and volunteers, providing research and quality control—bolster GMHC’s service, education and advocacy programs. By partnering with other organizations, we now can help address these needs in underserved communities.

...This year, GMHC:

- Taught volunteers Spanish to enhance services to diverse clients.
- Advised corporations on the development of short-term volunteer teams.
- Deployed 6,600 volunteers, who donated 117,723 hours valued at $2,527,273.
- Hosted the third annual "Show of Hands," for people in recovery.
- Celebrated Volunteer Awareness Month with Kudos volunteer appreciation party, and fourth annual citywide volunteer skillsbuilding conference.
- Linked evaluation of managers’ performance to hiring, retention and promotion of members of diverse communities such as women and people of color.
- Collaborated (with the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, University of California, San Francisco; Rutgers and Jersey City State College) to develop a prevention strategy to encourage HIV-positive men to help negative men stay negative and to study the impact of protease inhibitors on sexual behavior.

- Launched the Community Partnership Initiative in order to strengthen AIDS organizations in New York’s most underserved neighborhoods, offering consultation, mentorships and crisis intervention in areas such as fiscal management, infrastructure development, fundraising and program design.

- Developed intensive technical assistance partnerships with the Bronx’s Young Adults Against Drugs and Alcohol; Staten Island’s Project Build; Manhattan’s Gay Men of African Descent and Positive Health Project; and Brooklyn’s three HIV Care Networks — Bedford-Stuyvesant-Crown Heights, East New York-Brownsville, and Williamsburg-Greenpoint-Bushwick — as well as other Brooklyn groups like the Haitian Women’s Program and United Community Centers.

- Encouraged donors to honor the memory of beloved friends, family, colleagues through naming opportunities in the new building like the Allan Morrow Roof Garden, and the Robert Woolley and Jeffrey Childs Living Room.

- Completed 14 research studies on topics such as young, HIV-negative gay men and oral sex practices; expectations that our clients have about GMHC; our clients’ experiences with managed care; incidence of client depression.
• Reviewed 28 proposals through GMHC’s Research Ethics Committee, to ensure ethical treatment of GMHC clients, staff and volunteers by researchers.

• Launched the Employer Consulting Service, offering customized AIDS-in-the-workplace trainings to businesses and corporations in New York City.

• Trained 1,496 people to improve their professional skills; became an Authorized Training Center (through New York’s AIDS Institute) to teach people to be HIV test counselors; and trained people to work with children and families.

• Expanded Speakers Bureau and gave HIV/AIDS presentations to 6,128 people, 40% more than last year.

• Created a Quality Assurance Department to enhance GMHC performance, productivity, financial stability and safety; worked with our testing facility, client advocacy and recreation programs, to incorporate quality measures.

• Continued to raise vitally needed money for the ‘Fund for the Future’ capital campaign — enabling GMHC to consolidate from five sites to new headquarters at 119 West 24 Street.

• Received $3.5 million, the largest individual gift ever given to an AIDS service organization, from long-time volunteer and Board member, Joan Tisch, and her husband Preston Robert Tisch; and named our new home The Tisch Building in their honor.

• Welcomed a record 18 new members to GMHC’s President’s Council, chaired by Joan Tisch, with David Geffen as Honorary Chair.

• Held steady the commitment of Friends for Life, raising $1.7 million.

• Generated $4.9 million through government grants and contracts, and $3.2 million through direct marketing.

• Attracted 35,000 walkers to the Twelfth Annual AIDS Walk, generating more than $4.8 million, and $181,000 for other AIDS organizations.

• Boosted corporate and foundation funding by 16%, and corporate matching gifts by 25% over last year.

• Mobilized volunteers in communities devastated by AIDS — Bronx’s Morrisania and Melrose sections; at Brooklyn’s Bushwick & Hylan Houses, Brevoort and Sumner housing developments.

• Toasted our benefactors, David Geffen and Joan Tisch, at a gala Carnegie Hall benefit; featured Bernadette Peters in a Grammy-nominated benefit performance.
The new David Geffen Center for HIV Prevention and Education recognizes that HIV testing is integral to HIV treatment and prevention. The full promise of new treatments will only be realized if people know their HIV status. That knowledge also can motivate people to take charge of their lives by protecting themselves and loved ones.

This year, GMHC Health Services:

- Gave clients uninterrupted support with the same counselor administering the HIV test, counseling, and being available by phone during the wait for results.
- Provided fast one-week test results and trained testing buddies to support people while waiting and after getting their results.
- Provided services in English and Spanish.
- Linked HIV testing to support, prevention, and medical care at GMHC and elsewhere — a first for a New York City testing facility.
- Launched advertising campaign, designed pro bono by a major agency — 33,000 posters (10,000 on buses and subways) and 15,000 brochures in English and Spanish — to educate the public about the unique Geffen Center.
The day when Gay Men's Health Crisis can close its doors, tragically, is not around the corner. HIV can become resistant to all the drugs now available. Too many people don’t have access to new treatments. Too many people don’t know that they are infected. Too many don’t practice safer sex or use clean needles. The promise of a vaccine has not yet been realized. With our move to improved quarters, GMHC is taking a huge leap forward in our ability to respond to an ever-changing epidemic. Resolute, we are marshaling all our resources to go the distance until we reach the end of AIDS.
GMHC is grateful to all those who contributed to its building, programs and services during the 1997 fiscal year (July 1, 1996 - June 30, 1997). While it is not possible to list all of our supporters due to limited space, we have printed the names of donors who made gifts of $2,500 or more.

Names in bold are members of GMHC's President's Council.

* Friends for Life Annual Fund Supporters

* Members, Benefactor's Monthly Giving Program

$100,000+
Paul G. Allen
Estate of Frederick Brahm
Edgar Bronfman, Jr./Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc. and Universal Studios

Estate of Richard A. Dana
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The Gap/Banana Republic/Old Navy Clothing Company
Grey Cares/Gray Advertising, Inc.
Guess? Foundation
Agnes Gund
The George Gund Foundation
Alice and Stanley Harris
J. Ira and Nicki Harris
Thomas Healy and Fred P. Hochberg
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$10,000+
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Charles R. Borrok
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Estate of Robert S. Capuzzo
Margo and John A. Catsimatidis
Sandra H. Childs
The Cowies Charitable Trust
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Kelly and Robert Day
Anne E. Delaney
The Donna Karan Company
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Elton John AIDS Foundation
The Engelberg Foundation
F & M Promotions
Katherine Farley and Jerry Speyer
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Nicholas Hytner
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The Esther A. and Joseph Klingenstein Fund, Inc.
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Estate of Jay Mark
Michael C. Mast
Ira M. Millstein/Weil, Gotshal & Manges
Richard Mischaan and Marcia A. Rolfe-Mischaan
Alan G. Munchin
Morgan Stanley Co., Inc.
Estate of Zehman I. Mossesson
New Line Cinema
Paul L. Newman - Newman's Own, Inc.
Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.
Ellen and Max Palevsky
Norman and Mary Pattiz Foundation
Charles A.Pellicane
Martin Perez
Piper, Inc.
Leslie Fay Pomerantz
Addie and Philip Posner
The Paul Rapoport Foundation
Michael A. Recanati
Estate of John-Lloyd Rice
Denise Rich
The Michael L. Riordan Fund at the Peninsula Community Foundation
Jerome Robbins
Peter Rodgers
Andrew Shiva