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Summer Edition

August 2017

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Life **lines**

2017 Client Fall Retreat

AIDS Walk

Remembering Joe Irvin



*Message from Jason
Retreat Coordinator*

APO is gearing up for our 2017 annual fall client retreat. This year retreat will be taking place on September 13th, 14th, and 15th during the weekday.

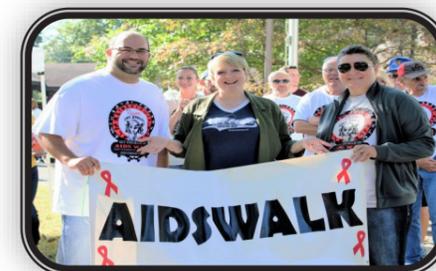
The retreat is a time for individuals to come together in order to make connections, find support, build a camaraderie, share ideas, and see familiar faces once again. It is also a fun-filled time where laughter will surely be found in activities such as boat rides, nights of various games, a big dance party, and even an opportunity to show off your Bingo skills! APO also offers education sessions for retreat attendees where they are able to have an enjoyable time, but also have the opportunity to learn something valuable to take back home with them.

If you would like to attend APO's fall client retreat, please submit your application to APO no later than August 25th.

We are beyond excited for this years retreat and hope to see you there!

It is getting closer to approaching that time of year again when the air has a slight crisp chill, iced beverages are being replaced by a much warmer counterpart, and multi-colored leaves are dancing down the streets. With the fall season coming upon us, we at APO are excited for our annual AIDS Walk that also comes along with the season of fall.

This year APO will be celebrating our 24th annual AIDS Walk and we are more than happy to have you be apart of the festivities! Our 24th annual AIDS Walk will be taking place on October 7th, 2017 at Phelps Grove Park. So get ready to sparkle up your walking shoes, find your favorite sweater, and prepare for a day filled with enjoyment.



It is with a heavy heart we must report that long time staff member Joe Irvin has passed away.

Joe Irvin served the HIV community with everything he had for approximately 25 years. He showed much grace and dignity in the face of his own illness. He was a tireless advocate who cared so much for others living with HIV. He traveled far to educate himself and to educate others about HIV and to be one of the faces of HIV in the Springfield area. He provided newspaper interviews, t.v. interviews and PSA's to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS to help end stigma. He loved APO and its mission with his entire being. He will be remembered forever for his wicked sense of humor and his passion for "the cause."

We Need **Your Support**

AIDS Project of the Ozarks has been at the front line in the fight against HIV/AIDS since 1985-when reliable information about the disease and its treatment was nearly impossible to obtain. All of APO's services to clients and the public, including brochures, publications, testing and education programs are provided FREE of charge.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE! Contributions from our supporters are vitally important and needed to help ensure APO is able to continue providing the same high quality services to our community.



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**I asked, "Why doesn't somebody do something?"
then I realized I was somebody.**

Enclosed is my: _____ Donation _____ Annual membership dues of \$15

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Complete and mail to AIDS Project of the Ozarks* 1901 E Bennett, Suite D, * Springfield, MO 65804

Contributions are tax deductible. All services to clients are provided in strict confidence. APO's mailing list is kept confidential

APO is growing! Meet our new employees

Welcome Annalee Chapell Our new Case Manager



Hello, I'm Annalee Chappell. I began as a case manager with APO in May 2017. Prior to APO, I was a case manager with Greene County Children's Division for approximately 10 years and a transitional living support specialist for Home Base Residential for 5 years. During my time at CD I worked with teens and young adults (and their families) with severe mental and physical disabilities as well as teens dually involved in the juvenile justice system and teens requiring specialized support for gender and sexual identity development. I graduated from Missouri State University with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and minors in Gender Studies and Psychology. If MSU decides to expand their Gender Studies program, I will be the first in line for a Master's, as this area of study has captured my heart and mind. Outside of the office, you'll find me chasing after my 5 year old little boy and a revolving door of foster dogs. My partner and I enjoy music, film, art, dance... basically all things entertaining and creative. I am thrilled to be at APO and to continue serving our community in a new

capacity.

Welcome John Gray Our New Prevention Specialist



John Gray was born and raised in Springfield, MO. He graduated from MSU in Springfield, MO with my Bachelor degrees in Administrative Management and Entrepreneurship with a minor in Finance. Following graduation, I joined the banking industry as a Teller, Commercial Credit Analyst, and finally Relationship Manager. It was at this time that I became involved with APO through its Haven Mpowerment group. Serving as a founding member of such a program opened my eyes to the world of helping others and making a true difference in the community in which I live and absolutely love. After a few years in the banking industry, I found that I missed those connections and companionship; thus, I left the banking industry in 2015 and ventured back to my roots in the world of Restaurant Management where I opened Hotel Vandivort as their inaugural Food and Beverage Manager. After the rush of opening a hotel, I took a few months and

traveled quite a bit. Traveling came with beautiful views and wonderful people, but I missed being home here in Springfield. That's when APO asked me to join their team as a Prevention Specialist. In my free time, I love to garden, do interior design, watch Fantasy series, and cuddle with my Frenchie named "Mousse."

Welcome Jen Gibbens Our new Housing Coordinator



Hello, my name is Jen Gibbens and I am the new housing coordinator at APO. I have been with APO since November of last year and absolutely love it. I have never worked anywhere that gave me the feeling that everybody feels lucky to be part of the team. Before coming to APO, I worked at the department of Social Services for 4 1/2 years, specializing in Medicaid processing. I have lived in Springfield for over fifteen years and am happily married to the wonderful Julie and we have two daughters.

The History of APO with Jim House



The Early Days

When I first saw the sign going up on APO's new building, my thoughts went back to 1983 when a small group of concerned people were meeting once a month at the MCC Church as AIDS Project/Springfield. A man had recently moved back to Springfield from San Francisco and admitted that he had HIV. A confession like that today would be nothing, but back then he was the first person in this area to step forward and admit that he had acquired the disease. He also told us that in San Francisco and other large cities they were forming organizations specifically to help those infected. We realized that if we did the same thing in Springfield, the better off we would be when the epidemic hit here in full force.

We had no money. Just a dedicated group that was determined to do something. Luckily we had the backing of Harold Bengsch, head of the Springfield Greene County Health Department, who looked at AIDS as a matter of public health, and not just as a "gay

disease" which the majority of people in this area felt it was. As a result he was able to get us a small amount of prevention money (\$2,500) to keep us going. We also benefited from fundraisers within the gay community.

We reached the point where we needed some office space but we couldn't find anyone who was willing to rent to us. The Landmark Building (at the corner of Jefferson and Olive) finally agreed to rent us one room. However, we could only put AP/S on the building directory on the first floor. We weren't allowed to use the word AIDS since the landlord felt that would keep other tenants from renting and could cause other tenants to move out.

There were a few rough times financially and we had to ask the person in charge of the organization to step down in a disagreement over target populations. Gary Hoggard, who had just moved back here from Washington D.C. volunteered to take the position of Executive Director at no pay until we got on our feet. Because of that we were able to hire Kenny Cowan as Receptionist/Clerk at minimum wage. Kenny answered the phones, send out mailings and helped with our ever growing volunteer group.



Save the Dates!

- September 18— National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day
- September 27— National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- September 13 - 15— Client Fall Retreat
- October 7—APO AIDS Walk at Phelps Grove Park
- October 15—National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- October 23— National Day of Action to End Violence Against Women with HIV

Welcome Tasha Schill Our New Retention in Care Navigator



Hey ya'll! My name is Tasha, and I fill the role of Retention in Care Navigator. I am a recent transplant to Springfield from Portland, Oregon—where I worked for Cascade AIDS Project as a Peer Specialist for over 2 years. My time there was amazing and I am so excited to bring a different array of knowledge from Portland to my community here in Springfield. As a recipient of services from organizations like APO across the States, I have experienced what it is like to be a client. These experiences have led me on my path to work for organizations, like APO, which have served me over the last 16 years. I am thrilled to provided supportive services to those like me; who have struggled with a HIV diagnosis, medication adherence, addiction, mental health, and homelessness. I am honored to be a part of the APO story.

Welcome Jacob Hunter Our New Insurance Navigator



Hello! My name is Jacob Hunter. I began with APO as a case management intern/practicum student in January 2017. Following the completion of my Bachelor in Social Work from Missouri State University, I became an employee and have served as a medical case manager for the past three months. In August I am transitioning to the Affordable Care Act team to assist clients throughout the 2017 open enrollment season. In my free time, I like to travel and be with my two year old dog named Brutis. I am very excited to be working for such a great agency and thrilled to see where this chapter of my journey in life takes me. I have grown to love APO and all that we do for our clients.

Red Ribbon Ride Review

This years 14th Annual Red Ribbon Ride was an event where even the rain couldn't hold back the fun everyone experienced that day. We had a total of 180 riders of various ages come out to ride all the twists and turns of the Ozark roads and celebrate the day with us! The after party was filled with laughter, great food provided by Galloway Station, opportunities to capture a snapshot with your friends at the photo booth which was provided by our presenting sponsor Grove Pharmacy and Spa, and countless memories.

Thanks to our sponsors, participants, and volunteers we were able to raise \$30,445 and our friends at MAC matched \$11,436!

Moving Day is Fast Approaching

WE ARE MOVING!!! APO OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED SEPTEMBER 18 - 22, 2017. WE WILL REOPEN AT OUR NEW LOCATION SEPTEMBER 25, 2017. NEW LOCATION - 1636 S GLENSTONE, STE 100, SPRINGFIELD MO 65804

Springfield Developer, Mike Fusek, is building a new clinic to lease to APO. APO was able work with the design team to come up with an incredible new space for APO to relocate to. The agency space will almost double in size with approximately 14,500 square feet of space. And . . . Grove Pharmacy will have a full service retail pharmacy in our new space!

This new space will allow us to better serve the Springfield community. With an increased number of exam rooms we will now be able to provide service to the community for primary care medical visits, hormone replacement therapy, Hepatitis C treatment, HIV, PreP, and various other medical services as capacity allows. We will continue to provide case management for



those diagnosed with HIV, assist community members with health insurance sign-up, and provide testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

We want to thank Don Walker of Electronic Systems Company for being such a great landlord at our current location! We have been at the current location since November 1994. Over the last 23 years, Don and his staff have been extremely generous in their support to our clients. They have graciously allowed us to add additional office space even when it meant they had to move their offices. We could not have asked for a better partner these past 23 years! On that note, our current space will be available for lease toward the end of the year. If you know anyone who would be interested, please contact Don Walker at Electronic Systems Company at (417) 887-6620.