ACR Health is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ACR Health offers its services to anyone without discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political affiliation, marital status, handicapped status, or mode of transmission.

Join us as we brighten the holiday season for those affected by chronic diseases (including HIV/AIDS) by providing needed items as gifts for ACR Health clients.

I’ve been giving a lot of thought to forgiveness lately – about how challenging it can be to consider, much less extend. I’ve also been thinking about apologies, and how difficult they can be to offer. I blame the media…!

Not really, but the media does reflect what seems to be a growing militancy in ‘public opinion land’, regardless of the issue: ‘I’m right; I’m offended; why should I apologize?’!

Now that I think of it, I blame Congress.

Closer to home, and the reason for these reflections, are my experiences here in the office – especially as we are changing and growing at a rapid pace: fertile ground for misunderstanding and hurt feelings. New health care directions/directives, many poorly thought out, in my opinion, are coming down fast and furious from the Feds and the State, and we are being required to adapt quickly or be left behind, risking 30+ years of expertise, not to mention critical services to our clients!

Mistakes, mostly in the communication arena, have definitely been made: feelings have been hurt, and resentments have formed. However, as far as I can see, mistakes, mostly in the communication arena, have definitely been made: feelings have been hurt, and resentments have formed. However, as far as I can see, there has been absolutely no ill-will involved: everyone trying to do their best, believing that good intentions are justification enough to move forward with or without ‘buy-in’ from others who will be affected. Would that it was so…

Some of these conflicts do end up at my door – especially if a long-term staff member is involved.

October 12, 2014
Blowout Fantasy Hair Show - Circus Freak!
3:00 p.m.
Bruce M. Wright Memorial Conference Center
1291 Faichney Drive
Watertown, NY 13601

Events@ACRHealth.org

October 12, 2014
Big Gay Hat Party - A Time to Remember
Annual fundraising cocktail party in Utica
Events@ACRHealth.org

October 19, 2014
15th Annual First Frost AIDS Walk/Run
presented by Empower Federal Credit Union
1:00 p.m.
Thompson Park Zoo, Watertown

Events@ACRHealth.org

November - December 2014
Holiday Angels
Join us as we brighten the holiday season for those affected by chronic diseases (including HIV/AIDS) by providing needed items as gifts for ACR Health clients. Call 800.475.2430 for more information.

Syracuse, Utica, Watertown, and the Mohawk Valley. ACR Health has numerous support group meetings in Syracuse, Utica, and Watertown. Call 800.475.2430 to sign up.

ACR Health has numerous support group meetings in Syracuse, Utica, Watertown, and the Mohawk Valley. Participants are grouped by ages from 8-26.

The Q Center for a full listing

Syracuse youth group meetings are at the Q Center
617 West Genesee Street

Information: 315.701.2431 or qcenter@ACRHealth.org

Mohawk Valley LGBTQ Youth Groups
Information: 315.701.2422

Utica LGBTQ Youth Groups
Information: 315.701.2422 or glbtqyouth@ACRHealth.org

Watertown Area Gay Youth
Information: 315.386.4493 x 151

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter: information@ACRHealth.org or 800.475.2430.

This newsletter is printed with soy ink.

Keeping our community informed and healthy.

Copyright 2014 ACR Health. All Rights Reserved.
Groundbreaking HIV Prevention Program Expands

In 2008 ACR Health and the New York State Department of Health established a syringe access program at Harvey’s Pharmacy in Syracuse designed to reduce a significant pathway for HIV infection. The program was so successful the state asked ACR Health to make ESAP (Expanded Syringe Access Program) services available in Utica.

Syringes are distributed free of charge by Garro’s Pharmacy to individuals presenting a voucher from ACR Health. Heroin is the injection drug of choice in Utica, and its use is growing exponentially. Heroin powder is cooked down, strained for impurities, drawn into a syringe, and injected into a vein. Without a prescription syringes are hard to come by; injection drug users often share needles, and in the process, expose themselves to HIV and Hepatitis infection.

ACR Health has taken additional office space at 835 West Genesee Street in Syracuse (two blocks from ACR’s main campus) to house Health Insurance Navigator services. The move is made possible by the Capacity Building Initiative ADVANS (Advancing and Developing the Value of Nonprofits in Syracuse) program of The Gifford Foundation which provided a generous grant of $41,500. The first $25,000 was used prepare and furnish the expanded office space. Use of the remaining $16,500 of the grant is still to be determined and will be used to increase ACR Health’s capacity to better serve our community.

New York State was able to effectively reduce the rate of HIV transmission among injection drug users from 54% in 1990 to less than 3% in 2012 through making clean syringes accessible. Expanded Syringe Access Program in Utica, available through Garro’s Pharmacy, is the newest public health initiative to reduce infection rates. ESAP in Utica will work this way: ACR’s mobile street outreach unit takes prevention workers into targeted neighborhoods where they educate about the dangers of sharing needles and offer a voucher that can be redeemed at Garro’s Pharmacy for ten new syringes.

Despite proven success, providing sterile syringes to injection drug users remains controversial, admitted Garro’s Pharmacist Gary Athmakuri. “It was a dilemma. I asked myself, are we helping the devil? Then, are we helping to stop the disease? This needle exchange is better for society.”

Pharmacist Gary Athmakuri wants to make society better.

Beginning in September, ACR Health will distribute syringe vouchers in neighborhoods where they already work. Getting a person to accept and redeem a voucher is just the first step, according to Prevention Health Advocate Michael Johnson. “Harm reduction is the ultimate goal, and community support literally opens doors for people.”

Athmakuri’s motivation to reduce the incidence of HIV and Hepatitis C infection and to provide people who inject drugs the resources to do so without spreading disease, was stronger than any concerns Garro’s had about what ‘people might think;’ continuing the drug store’s century-old practice of providing for the pharmaceutical needs of Utica.

ACR Health Navigators Relocate to New Office

To make way for a growing number of programs and services, ACR Health has taken additional office space at 835 West Genesee Street in Syracuse (two blocks from ACR’s main campus) to house Health Insurance Navigator services. The move is made possible by the Capacity Building Initiative ADVANS (Advancing and Developing the Value of Nonprofits in Syracuse) program of The Gifford Foundation which provided a generous grant of $41,500. The first $25,000 was used prepare and furnish the expanded office space. Use of the remaining $16,500 of the grant is still to be determined and will be used to increase ACR Health’s capacity to better serve our community.

The new location offers consumers a convenient location with a private, confidential atmosphere with ample parking and workspace,” said Steve Wood, Assistant Director of Support Services. “In addition it is a one-stop shop for insurance needs whether it is enrollment or advocacy.”

Our Mission...

- To provide support services to those who are living with chronic diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
- To prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- To promote sexual literacy and improved medical outcomes.
ACR Health Celebrates Interns and Volunteers

Even for an organization that consistently depends on volunteers and interns, this past year has been exceptional in the number and diversity of those helping out.

We played host to our first-ever Jesuit Volunteer, Paige Williams-White, who fit seamlessly into the fabric of ACR’s countless activities and programs. Paige was in high demand; she was fantastic with Q Center youth; reliable coordinating activities like newsletter mailings; and tireless in assisting the Development Department with events like the AIDS Walk/Run and the Sled for RED.

“The best thing about Paige, though,” said Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Doody, “was this indefatigable quality that made her an instant friend to the people she met. She’s left her mark on ACR Health.”

And our first-ever intern from Denmark, Lasse Lober, whose keen interest in developing anti-bullying strategies served him well while working with youth at the Q Center. Having completed a Masters in Public Relations from the Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University, Lasse developed a Q Center website featuring interviews, pictures, and videos, and skillfully handled social media sites. Lasse’s summer takeaway: “The more you invest in something, the more you get back.”

Samantha Schuffenecker, pursuing a Masters in Public Health at University at Albany, developed a training presentation for ACR Health staff on PrEP, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, a medication for HIV-negative individuals to reduce their risk of HIV infection.

“There has been an increased push recently to provide PrEP to high risk individuals due to increasing evidence of effectiveness, strong support from HIV/AIDS organizations, and Governor Cuomo’s plan to ‘bend the curve,’ in which he calls for providing access to PrEP for individuals at high risk for HIV infection as one of three strategies to end the AIDS epidemic,” said Samantha.

Recent clinical trials provide evidence for the efficacy of PrEP. In the population that took the PrEP medication regularly, PrEP decreased HIV incidence by 92%.

Samantha has spent her summer at ACR Health as a paid intern courtesy of SRC. In the past two years, 50 young people, student dependents of SRC employees have interned at Central New York businesses to gain skills and on-the-job experience. Seven of those interns have volunteered at ACR Health. SRC, headquartered in Syracuse, is an independent, not-for-profit, research and development corporation which was created by Syracuse University in 1957 as Syracuse University Research Corporation and then spun off from the university to become an independent organization in 1970s. For more than 55 years, SRC has supported a broad range of federal government organizations and agencies and developed a national reputation in a wide array of technology areas.

Surprise Thank You for ACR Health Treasurer

It’s an exciting time and I’m proud of how staff is handling all the changes. We’re going to have continued growing pains, but I believe in the daily witness of how committed everyone remains to the quality of their work and the depth of their compassion, despite the inevitable miscommunications and endless re-adjustments.

So, apologies and forgiveness, especially those offered to me, will stay on my mind, ideally informing and motivating my decisions and behavior. I want to emulate my big-hearted role models… And don’t I wish I was the one who offered the apology…

Viewpoint Continued...

Of 3,600 stores worldwide, GAP selected just 45 for special recognition, and Kim’s Old Navy was one.

Old Navy Store, Great Northern Mall, July 21, 2014 - Kim Rieppel was surprised and delighted by special recognition from his employer, Gap, Inc. ACR Health staff were in on the surprise, and turned out to cheer Kim on at his party.

Kim Rieppel was just going about a normal day as Old Navy store manager in Great Northern Mall, when he was interrupted by a surprise Thank You Party sponsored by Old Navy’s parent company Gap, Inc. The retailing giant encourages employees to volunteer in their communities.

Kim has volunteered at ACR Health for years, beginning by walking in the AIDS Walk/Run, then organizing Camp Old Navy, an internship program for youth, and many additional generous acts. “Kim often steps up to the plate when we need something done,” said ACR Health Development Director Carrie Portzline-Large. “He is most passionate about the Q Center, which he has helped to improve significantly.”
“Great!” “I loved it!” “I’ve never had so much fun!”

The Great New York State Fair’s first-ever running event, the Bubble Blast Run, presented by Tim Hortons, attracted hearty souls who poo-hooed showers, drizzle, and slippery obstacles to cross the finish line to applause and the question: how was it? (Answer above.) Will they run again next year? “Yes!”

“I have never heard so much laughter,” said Carrie Portzline-Large, ACR Health Development Director. “Everybody’s acting like a kid!”

In fact, more than a third of the crowd was young, which brought enormous energy, spontaneity, and meaning to the frothy fun. Meaning, because 100% of proceeds from the Bubble Blast Run benefit two local not-for-profits whose mission is to make life better for youth and others, here, and around the world. “Watching these families come through the race course and cross the finish line together with these amazing smiles on their faces, it was not lost on me there are many youth in our community that don’t have that support or safe family unit, yet everyone deserves it, regardless of sexual orientation or commitment to being an ally,” said Q Center Development Associate Maureen Harrington O’Neill.

ACR Health Youth Services include the Adolescent Health Initiative and the Q Center which offer comprehensive youth HIV/STD prevention programs. ACR Health, a legacy of AIDS Community Resources, serves the counties of Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and St. Lawrence in New York State.

Operation Walk is a not-for-profit volunteer medical services organization that provides free surgical treatments for patients in developing countries and in the United States. These patients suffer from debilitating bone and joint conditions, such as arthritis, and do not have access to medical care. Operation Walk also educates local orthopedic surgeons, physical therapists, and other health care professionals on the most advanced treatment of hip and knee joint diseases.

Heartfelt thanks to our Presenting Sponsor Tim Hortons, Media Sponsors HOT 107.9 and FOX 68, and sponsors:

- Payment Processing Consultants, Inc.
- Crouse Radiology Associates
- Gianelli Sausage
- New York Spine and Wellness Center
- Syracuse Orthopedic Specialists, PC
- Alzheimer’s Association-CNY Chapter
- Beltone Hearing
- Bennetts & Huyssen Architects, PC
- Bousquet Holstein PLLC
- Carbone Automotive Group
- Com Source
- Elvis Duran & The Morning Show
- Famosamania
- Kohl’s
- Mr. Shop
- St. Joseph’s Hospital Foundation
- Walgreens
- William Graber MD
- Wood & Smith PC

Jonathan was at home one early morning in July when a neighbor pounded on his door screaming “Fire!” Jonathan ran, escaping with only his cat and the clothes on his back; flames roaring behind him as he ran down the stairs. The fire consumed all of his earthly possessions.

The Red Cross stepped in and paid for three nights in a hotel. But Jonathan was entirely broke. He had paid his rent in full at the beginning of the month. His next check wouldn’t come until August. Having no money for a security deposit or a month’s rent, he contacted a number of agencies for help, but, no luck.

ACR Health funds had paid for a week in a hotel and provided deposit and rent so Jonathan could move in to his new place. “You don’t understand what it means to lose everything, until you do. I landed on my feet because ACR Health went to bat for me.”

“So for all of you who participate in our events, large and small, thank you from the bottom of Jonathan’s heart for helping him through his “emergency client need.”

“Great!” “I loved it!” “I’ve never had so much fun!”

At every fundraising event we explain to ACR Health supporters what we do with their money and we always include the phrase “emergency client needs.” Exactly what do we mean by that? Read on...

EMERGENCY CLIENT NEEDS

“IT wasn’t until I called Barb at ACR Health that things started happening for me. I don’t know what she said or did, but the same agencies that couldn’t help me before now started stepping up to the plate.”

Care Manager Barb Lane says Housing Specialist Sherry Wilson is the one who saved the day. “Things really started hipping when I got in touch with Sherry,” said Barb Lane. “Sherry knows everybody who has anything to do with housing in Madison County and within days, Jonathan was in a new apartment, and getting his life back to normal.”

“You don’t understand what it means to lose everything, until you do.”

ACR Health Youth Services include the Adolescent Health Initiative and the Q Center which offer comprehensive youth HIV/STD prevention programs. ACR Health, a legacy of AIDS Community Resources, serves the counties of Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and St. Lawrence in New York State.

ACR Health goes to bat for us.”

“People need a person to be there, not a program,” said Barb Lane. “Sherry is that person. She is there, day after day, to help clients with housing, food, and utilities.”

“You don’t understand what it means to lose everything, until you do.”

“It was an emergency. People need to know that ACR Health is there.”

ACR Health went to bat for me.”

Heartfelt thanks to our Presenting Sponsor Tim Hortons, Media Sponsors HOT 107.9 and FOX 68, and sponsors:

- Payment Processing Consultants, Inc.
- Crouse Radiology Associates
- Gianelli Sausage
- New York Spine and Wellness Center
- Syracuse Orthopedic Specialists, PC
- Alzheimer’s Association-CNY Chapter
- Beltone Hearing
- Bennetts & Huyssen Architects, PC
- Bousquet Holstein PLLC
- Carbone Automotive Group
- Com Source
- Elvis Duran & The Morning Show
- Famosamania
- Kohl’s
- Mr. Shop
- St. Joseph’s Hospital Foundation
- Walgreens
- William Graber MD
- Wood & Smith PC

Counting Down, Gearing Up for the First Frost AIDS Walk/ Run

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!

Registration is now open for the Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks in Watertown!