

## **Annual Report for The Commission On AIDS of the Diocese of Atlanta**

The infection rates for HIV continue to rise and the State of Georgia and the Metropolitan Atlanta Area both remain among the "top ten" for their respective geographic areas. Province IV of the Episcopal Church continues to experience increased infection rates, as has been the case for several years, even when other areas of the United States have leveled off or declined.

During the past year, we participated in planning for the 18th Annual Province IV Network of AIDS Ministries Retreat which continues to be held every June at the Episcopal Conference Center at Kanuga. The planning committee for the retreat is chaired by Lola Thomas, a member of the Commission on AIDS and Executive Director of AIDS Alliance of Northwest Georgia. In keeping with the trend of many years, participants are mostly minorities with women making up a significant percentage. Many participants are visibly ill from the affects of HIV infection. About 85% of the participants require financial assistance to attend the retreat. On the brighter side, virtually all retreat participants consider the annual retreat one of the major highlights of their year.

Anyone wishing to become part of the Retreat Planning Team should contact us. The team meets twice a year and is an integral part of the retreat itself. Much of the work is accomplished via email and telephone, reducing the need for travel.

General Convention 2009 passed several resolutions related to HIV/AIDS. We will be providing additional information about those resolutions before the end of the calendar year.

We continue to have a need for scholarship assistance on the part of the Retreat participants. Despite the passage of a resolution at Diocesan Council several years ago calling upon worshipping communities to contribute a sum equal to the cost of the retreat for one individual (less than \$200), the Commission on AIDS receives virtually no income in support of the retreat.

As always, the Commission on AIDS welcomes your input, participation, your contributions, but most importantly, we welcome your prayers. We invite you to drop by our display table in the exhibit area of the Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta.

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