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The Long Island Association for AIDS Care recognizes World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day, an initiative intended to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and to support those living with HIV, is celebrated annually on December 1st. According to worldaidsday.org, World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day, held for the first time in 1988. The theme for World AIDS Day 2016 is “Leadership, Commitment, Impact”.

According to the World Health Organization:

- There were approximately 36.7 (34.0–39.8) million people living with HIV at the end of 2015 with 2.1 (1.8–2.4) million people becoming newly infected with HIV in 2015 globally.
- HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, having claimed more than 35 million lives so far. In 2015, 1.1 (940 000–1.3 million) million people died from HIV-related causes globally.
- Between 2000 and 2015, new HIV infections have fallen by 35%, AIDS-related deaths have fallen by 28% with some 7.8 million lives saved as a result of international efforts that led the global achievement of the HIV targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

Additionally, in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, there were 5,942 people living with HIV and AIDS, as reported in the New York State HIV/AIDS Surveillance Annual Report for Cases Diagnosed Through December 2013.

Though new HIV infections are decreasing, there is still work to be done.

In honor of World AIDS Day, LIAAC will be participating in a three-day carnival at SUNY Old Westbury on November 28th, 29th, and 30th, to celebrate the strides made in HIV research over the past thirty years. This carnival will feature a Free Hugs campaign, which was inspired by NAT’s 2015 Kissing Booth, to emphasize that HIV is not spread through casual contact, as well as giveaways, and free HIV testing for all three days. LIAAC will be partnering with SUNY Old Westbury’s Potty Talk initiative to post signs in each bathroom stall across campus that explain that HIV cannot be spread through sharing a toilet seat.

LIAAC will also be participating in a World AIDS Day event held at Stony Brook University on December 1, 2016 from 12 to 9 pm. There will be a showing of the film *Rent*, a screening of the documentary *Blood Brother*, a health fair, and free HIV testing. A screening of *United in Anger* will take place at the close of the event with a question and answer period with the film’s director, Jim Hubbard. Both events are open to the public.

LIAAC will also be participating in a social media campaign, Hands Up for #HIVPREVENTION, which was created by UNAIDS. This campaign will explore the different aspects of HIV prevention and can be viewed on LIAAC’s Facebook page.

For more information on how LIAAC is celebrating World AIDS Day, visit our Facebook events page at <https://www.facebook.com/LIAAC.inc/events> or call our toll free hotline at 1-866-236-3448.

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