

ACLA Update

May 1997

AIDS Coalition of Lewiston-Auburn
P.O. Box 7977/4 Lafayette Street
Lewiston, ME 04243-7977

Our Lives in Our Hands: A Community Responds to AIDS

In January of 1996, ACLA began work on its community planning effort - *Our Lives in Our Hands: A Community Responds to AIDS*. The ultimate goal of this project is to generate a community-wide response to HIV & AIDS in Androscoggin County. Community planning is based on the belief that local communities know best what will work and what won't for providing HIV prevention and AIDS support services.

Since its beginning *Our Lives in Our Hands* has gone through several phases. Early last year the focus was on recruiting community members to serve on a Task Force to create a plan. People from various walks of life, including at-risk populations, were asked to be on the Task Force. The group now includes high school youth, physicians and other health care workers, HIV prevention educators, church folks, and representatives of social service agencies.

The Task Force held its first meeting last June and since that time the group has been gathering information about HIV and AIDS in Androscoggin County. This has been done through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and a review of published data. Task Force members are making recommendations for inclusion in the plan based on this data and on the knowledge and experience each person brings to this work.

At the present time, the Task Force is creating an initial draft of the final plan. *Our Lives in Our Hands: An AIDS Plan for Androscoggin County* will recommend ways in which local organizations, businesses, individuals, and agencies can work together to slow the spread of HIV in our community and provide better support to individuals and families already affected by the epidemic. As a community planning project, *Our Lives in Our Hands* is essential to the health of Lewiston-Auburn and the surrounding towns. The final plan will certainly serve as a useful guide for future community HIV prevention and HIV/AIDS support efforts. For more information about *Our Lives in Our Hands* call Nancy at 786-4697.



Who's Who at ACLA

Here's a brief run down of ACLA staff members and what each of us do:

Claire Gelinas is Director of ACLA. She supervises the other ACLA staff and keeps us focused on the whole picture. She manages ACLA finances, and writes the proposals that get much of our funding.

Sean Douglas, MSM Coordinator, is the person responsible for HIV prevention education and outreach to gay and bisexual men. Among many other things, Sean hosts monthly gatherings, called *Great Sexpectations*, and is currently organizing a *Gay Men's Retreat*.

Gracia Woodward is ACLA's Development Coordinator, responsible for grassroots (local) funding raising and volunteer development. She coordinates the *Maine AIDS Walk* and is creating systems that help ACLA run more efficiently.

Nancy Bullett is our Community Planning Coordinator, responsible for the effort known as *Our Lives in Our Hands*. Nancy also coordinates two youth programs, *Outright/Lewiston-Auburn* and the *Safe Schools Project*.

Syrena Fontaine is a new addition to ACLA's staff and comes to us through Workforce Development. Syrena has quickly become an important member of our team, providing office support for us in a variety of ways far too numerous to mention here!

* **Good News!** *
* Our December 1996 membership campaign *
* was a great success! We gained 49 new ACLA *
* members and raised \$2130 to fund our pro- *
* gramming. The campaign far exceeded our *
* expectations and highlights the fact that the *
* Lewiston-Auburn community really is con- *
* cerned about the AIDS epidemic and does *
* support HIV prevention education. Thanks *
* again to everyone who contributed. *

My address has changed to:

Please take my name off ACLA's mailing list:

Please add this name to ACLA's mailing list:

e-mail: _____

☐ Enclosed please find my gift of \$_____ to further the work of the AIDS Coalition.

☐ Please send me a volunteer application:

Name: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

Coming Soon

Great Sexpectations Social for gay and bisexual men will feature *To Wong Foo, thing, Julie Newmar* star- and Wesley Snipes. Also Britain's most outrageous *Fabulous*. Both videos will be screened Thursday, May 22 beginning at 7 at ACLA office.



Thanks for Every-
ring Patrick Swayze
being shown is
export, *Absolutely*
will be screened

Gay Men's Retreat '97

There's still room for any interested gay and bisexual men for the first annual Gay Men's Retreat. Three days of fun focusing on men's mental, physical, and spiritual health for only \$30. For more information or for a registration brochure, call the ACLA office at 786-4697.

HAPPY SPRING TO ALL !!!



Outright/Lewiston-Auburn

Long-awaited and much needed, Outright/Lewiston-Auburn drop-in sessions have begun! Drop-in times are the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month, from 6:00 to 8:30 PM. The group meets in Lewiston and is open to gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and questioning young people age 22 and under. For more info call Outright at 786-2717.

Special thanks to Rick Grant of Rag Graphics in Lewiston for printing the ACLA Update the last few months while we waited for our new copier!



"Opportunistic Fundraising"

Most of us don't like the idea of fundraising. In fact, asking for money is probably on most people's list of least favorite things to do. But, as with any non-profit organization, ACLA must always be on the lookout for ways increase our funding base. In a recent issue of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, Kim Klein offered a variety of fundraising ideas including this one:

"Consider turning your birthday, anniversary, Christmas/Hanukkah, etc. into a fundraiser. Your invitations can say, 'Instead of presents, please give a gift to [ACLA].' How much more stuff do you need? It is not always possible to tell people that you want them to give a donation in lieu of a gift, but let that be known about you. Tell people that a friend gave you a wonderful gift — a donation in your name to a group you like. Develop a reputation for that. You will have fewer dust catchers and your groups [such as ACLA] will be richer."

P.S....

Volunteer Opportunities!!

We will be putting together a big mailing in May - the *Update* and our annual report. We need helpers on May 22 & 23, during the day. Working on projects such as this is a great way to meet other ACLA volunteers (a wonderful bunch!). If you can help, call us at 786-4697.

From our "worth noting" file:

ACLA is now using bulk mail for our *Update* and saving lots of money! However, what this means is that the post office no longer returns undeliverable mail to us. If you know someone who hasn't received an *Update* in the last two months and is wondering why, you might suggest that person call to confirm his/her mailing address with us.

ACLA
P.O. Box 7977
Lewiston, ME 04243-7977

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LEWISTON, ME
PERMIT NO. 52