

The Women's Collective

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Patricia Nalls

Founder & Executive Director

Biographical Notes

Patricia Nalls is the mother of two children—Alana, age 25 and Shawn, age 21—and she is a community AIDS activist, locally and nationally, for the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS and their families. She was diagnosed with AIDS in 1986, after the death of her husband and three year-old. Patricia has been a long-time activist for women in the Washington, DC community. After years of frustration at not finding appropriate support for women, she founded The Women's Collective, an AIDS service organization (ASO) dedicated to empowering women living with HIV/AIDS, with special emphasis on women of color. The Women's Collective provides service, support, and most importantly gives women and their families the hope they need to live not die. Under her leadership, what began as a support group in her home is now an organization with a full time staff of fifteen, and twenty part-time peer educators who currently serve over 600 women living with HIV/AIDS and reaching and educating thousands of other women on HIV/AIDS primary and secondary prevention strategies. The Women's Collective program model has been shared with women activists from Africa, Ukraine, Guyana, Spain, Canada and Brazil among other countries as well as around the USA.

Patricia, over the years, has been an outspoken advocate for women and their families. She served as a consultant on a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Special Project of National Significance (SPNS) that focused on bringing women living with HIV/AIDS to the policy table where decisions were being made about their very lives. She has organized dozens of community focus groups, speak outs, and information sharing meetings as well as assisted with the publication of various research and policy documents designed to target policy makers to assist them in better understanding the needs of *all* women living with HIV/AIDS. She has successfully advocated for women and families at all levels including policy forums and with the Ryan White Title I Planning Council where she has made a difference in breaking down many of the barriers that women face in accessing services.

Patricia is an activist both locally and nationally and is currently a member of the Ryan White Title I Planning Council, the PWA Committee, and the DC HIV Housing Planning Council. Nationally she was involved in the Executive Committee for the 1999 National Conference on Women and HIV/AIDS, the Ms. Foundation's Innovative Health Care Model for Women living with HIV/AIDS, and is involved in chairing a committee through the HIV/AIDS Administration that is looking at a Medicaid waiver for the District. She also speaks on Capitol Hill to address the issues that women living with HIV/AIDS and their families face in the fight against AIDS.

Patricia has been featured in the media representing women living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS and their families on a variety of critical issues. She appeared in *Essence* magazine; the *Washington Post*; *People* magazine; *Little India*; *San Pablo Avenue Times*; and on *WUSA 9 News* and the *Audrey Chapman Show* among others. Links to many of these articles can be found at www.womenscollective.org.

Patricia was the 1999 recipient of the *Courage Award* from Whitman-Walker Clinic, which recognized her outstanding leadership in the battle against AIDS. Patricia received the *1999 Award of Merit* from Solutions 2000 for her organizing work. She is also the recipient of the *2000 Linowes Leadership Award* from the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region in recognition of her tireless commitment to improving the lives of women living with HIV/AIDS; the *Thurlow Evans Tibbs Jr. Award* for championing HIV prevention and support services in the African American community; the *2003 Caribbean People's International Award* for her HIV/AIDS work in the Caribbean-American community. Also in 2003 she received the *Washington Free Clinic Community Leadership Award* and the *WJLA Channel 7 2003 Tribute to Working Women Award* for her tireless work to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. In 2004 Pat received the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) *Certificate of Recognition* of efforts on behalf of women living with HIV/AIDS in DC and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Youth Council of DC's *Outstanding Leadership Award in Health 2004*.