

## 2008 ANNUAL REPORT:

### Living with AIDS Shouldn't Mean Living Alone

When I was diagnosed with HIV, I isolated myself from help and support. I thought I had to deal with this by myself. I wallowed in this self-imposed exile for several years before I realized it was no way to live. And living with HIV is what I had to do.

I founded The Women's Collective to find, support, and organize women with HIV/AIDS. Today we provide support and programs for women living with, and at risk for, HIV/AIDS, and their families in a compassionate, loving environment.

Every day, I'm awed by the spirit and resourcefulness of the vibrant, amazing women we serve. Every time a woman walks through our doors for the first time, I recommit myself to empowering women living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS to live full, productive lives.

Patricia Nalls

Founder/Executive Director



We are...

compassionate  
positive  
capable  
powerful  
authentic  
supportive  
empowering  
safe  
genuine  
hopeful  
reliable  
dependable  
warm  
cheerful  
gracious  
hospitable  
responsive  
secure  
healthy  
trustworthy  
considerate  
sanctuary  
affirmative  
honest  
true  
optimistic  
confident  
strong  
able  
energetic  
hearty  
vigorous

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# Our Mission

Our work began in 1993 and grew out of the life experience of our Founder and Executive Director, Patricia Nalls, a woman living with HIV/AIDS who used her personal lessons learned to create a community-based organization run by and for women living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS in the Washington, DC area.

The mission of The Women's Collective (TWC) is to meet the self-defined needs of women and their families living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS, reducing barriers to care and strengthening their network of support and services. As a Washington DC-based nonprofit organization led by women with HIV and their allies/advocates, we work to fulfill our mission by:

- Providing services that are peer-led, women-focused, family-centered, and culturally appropriate.
- Providing a safe, non-judgmental environment for all women, regardless of their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, income, educational level, marital status, personal appearance, place of residence or business, family responsibilities, school enrollment, political affiliation, or source of income.
- Providing a voice for women who are at risk for or living with HIV and their families through advocacy at the local, national, and international levels.
- Creating partnerships among service providers, governmental, non-governmental and private entities.

Our services are divided between three programs: **HIV Care Management Program** for women and families living with HIV/AIDS; **HIV Prevention Program** for women and families at risk for HIV/AIDS; and **Policy and Advocacy** for women locally and nationally to advocate for themselves and others whose voices are often not heard at policy tables.

Recently the Department of Health released devastating statistics showing District-wide trends of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and that women are leading the way in new HIV infections. More specifically, Black women accounted for 9 out of 10 of all HIV and AIDS cases reported during 2001-2006. Given these trends efforts to stem the tide of the epidemic nationally and locally, increasingly depend on how and to what extent its effect on women and girls is addressed. ■

# 2008 Program

The Women's Collective rises to the challenge of meeting the needs of the women, children and families that come to us for services and support. While over the last year we have met this challenge—we are reminded that the numbers of women with HIV/AIDS in this community continue to increase and are staggering.

Our **Medical Case Management Program** continued to strengthen its work with women ages 18+ living with HIV/AIDS and their families. The Women's Collective medical case management program grew to include more staff, programming and strengthened program infrastructure and protocols all which reflect a rapidly changing service delivery system that is more responsive to the needs of women and families.

HIV care management team members facilitated 11 monthly **Coffee House** support groups for over 40 unduplicated women living with HIV/AIDS. These groups are peer-driven but co-facilitated by an HIV care team member with experience in counseling. Groups include free time to talk about immediate issues as well as structured time that introduces skills building and educational segments to support women's questions and interests. Guests are invited to present based on women's interest such HIV and menopause. These groups are another creative unique way to get messages to women, increase dialogue and peer support. Seated massages were also provided during groups.

HIV care management team members provided a series of **family support activities** that included the distribution of 35 Easter food baskets to family; a Mother's Day celebration for 36 women; a school supply drive that resulted in the distribution of uniforms, school supplies and backpacks to over 65 families; candy basket distribution; a turkey dinner basket drive that provided Thanksgiving dinner baskets to 150 families; and a holiday party for 250 family members that included food, entertainment and over 600 Christmas presents for children and 100 gift cards for moms. Through agency efforts we have captured the attention of community leaders who volunteer significant time and talent to the agency and women and families.

In response to the increasing need for food for families and the decrease in food bank funding locally, TWC maintained its own **Kitchen Pantry** program that is a responsive emergency food bank for women and families. In three years the kitchen pantry program has served over 250 families.

# Accomplishments

We completed the first year of an intensive and unique HIV prevention program sponsored by the Office on Women's Health (OHW) titled **Intergenerational Approaches to HIV/AIDS Prevention Education with Women Across the Lifespan Pilot Program**. The intent of the program is to provide group level interventions complemented with therapeutic counseling sessions to Black women ages 12+ in the District. Our innovative program interventions are designed to reduce risk, change behavior, encourage HIV counseling and testing, and promote effective communication among women across family and kinship networks.

We successfully implemented the **Between Us Girls (BUG)** program with support from the MAC AIDS Fund. Through BUG we aimed to: 1.) Equip young African American girls and women ages 12-25 with skills to be positive spokeswomen for safer sex behaviors, HIV testing, and HIV/AIDS prevention with peers and female members of their families or kinship networks through the utilization of art, dance, music and theatre and 2.) Increase the representation of HIV/AIDS prevention messages by and for young African American girls and women between the ages of 12-25 in the DC metropolitan community through youth designed service learning projects. We presently conduct these programs at our offices and also at various locations across DC. We hope that through both of these programs we equip as many young women with self awareness and the HIV prevention skills that will keep them HIV free and positively impact their lives.

We continued to strengthen our woman-focused **HIV Counseling, Testing and Referral Services (CTR)** program and expand our hours of testing and outreach to include late nights and weekends. We see the provision of HIV counseling, testing and referral as a critical link and conduit to all of our other services. We are able to provide this invaluable service to women in our community in a safe and comforting environment both at our offices and aboard our mobile testing van.

We completed year four and began year five of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sponsored five-year project designed to provide **woman-focused rapid testing** in the District of Columbia using the OraQuick Advance rapid HIV test where test results would be available in 20 minutes. We are excited by the opportunity of enhancing the options for women to get tested and in conducting

outreach and CTR at hot spots through out the District with our CTR mobile testing unit.

We provided **Comprehensive Risk Counseling and Services (CRCS)** services with the goal of promoting the adoption of HIV risk reduction behaviors by women at risk for and living with HIV/AIDS with multiple, complex problems and risk reduction needs.

We also completed year two of a three-year **Ford Foundation** supported policy and advocacy program. TWC advocacy efforts are focused on a national level with building a coalition of women living with HIV/AIDS, with emphasis on women of color, to advocate around timely issues such as **microbicide** development. In addition, the program will document the **TWC model** of service delivery and empowerment in order to benefit communities that are hard hit in the epidemic and need assistance in building women-centered programming locally, nationally and internationally.

In addition, we continued to strengthen the **agency infrastructure** through the development of policy and protocol manuals for our HIV care management and prevention programs. We also launched our **new website** that is easy to use and navigate.

Staff continued to engage in **professional development activities** that included attendance at local and national conferences and trainings to build their knowledge, ability and skills. Staff participated in local policy planning meetings for both care and prevention services and leant their voice to the debates.

Until there is a cure, we will continue to do everything we can to provide quality services and ensure women's voices are heard. We are committed to sharing our stories and saving our lives-one woman at a time. ■



*SisterAct Institute graduates participating in a local health fair as part of their service learning project.*

# Independent Auditor's Report and Financial Statement

We have audited the financial position of The Women's Collective as of December 31, 2008, and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion. In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Women's Collective as of December 31, 2008, and the changes in net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with general accepted accounting principles.

June 1, 2009

Chaconas & Wilson, P.G., Certified Public Accountants

**The Women's Collective, Inc.  
Statement of Activities  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2008**

**Support and Revenue**

Grant Awards	\$1,301,841
Contributions	\$530,368
Interest Income	\$30,975
Other Income	\$6,986
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,870,170</b>

**Expenses**

<i>Program and Services</i>	
HIV Care Management	\$419,297
HIV Prevention	\$753,752
Policy & Advocacy	<u>\$180,974</u>
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$1,354,023</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>\$124,640</b>
<b>Management and General</b>	<b><u>\$110,312</u></b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,588,975</b>

**Board of Directors 2008**

Omar Abdul-Malik, PA-C  
Marcia Ellis  
Adina Ellis  
Alana Nalls  
Endrea Frazier  
Paulette Johnson  
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