

AIDS Legal Council of Chicago

PRESERVING, PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH HIV

Winter 2003

ALCC Wins Mayor Daley's Excellence in Care Award

ALCC was honored on Monday, December 2nd with the **Richard M. Daley 2002 Award for Excellence in HIV/AIDS Services**. Award winners are nominated every year by the Chicago Department of Public Health as part of the city's activities around World AIDS Day. ALCC was selected from among 60 HIV service providers that CDPH funds.

Christopher Brown, assistant commissioner of the Division of STD/HIV/AIDS Public Policy and Programs presented the award during a ceremony at Chicago State University. "Each year we try to find a shining star." Brown said. "The AIDS Legal Council was clearly a shining example and we were honored to give them this award this year."

This is the second time that the AIDS Legal Council has received this

prestigious award. Winners are selected on the basis of merit by an independent review panel and awarded \$20,000 to continue providing and improving their HIV-related programs.

Executive Director **Ann Fisher** accepted the award on behalf of ALCC. "We are so delighted and honored to have been twice selected for the Award of Excellence in HIV/AIDS Services. We will use the award to support our immigration rights work helping HIV-positive immigrants."

The HIV+ Immigrants' Rights Project, which began in September, has been assisting a growing number of people with legal issues including clients from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador, England, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iran, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Spain, Venezuela and Zambia.



2003 Marks 15 Years of AIDS Legal Council Service

For 15 years, ALCC has fought prejudice and discrimination on behalf of people living with HIV and AIDS. Started in December 1987 by a concerned group of volunteers working out of a Lakeview living room, the Council has grown to eight legal staff members serving over 1,000 clients every year at our Chicago Loop office, CORE Center satellite office and at other AIDS provider sites.

ALCC case manager Justin Hayford has been with the Council for more than 11 years. He started as a volunteer in July, 1990 and recalls, "Back in those days, we worked out of our first rented office - one room with phone cords hanging down from the ceiling, cheap folding tables and dented file cabinets - all donated. Because we couldn't afford legal pads, we wrote on scrap paper. Stigma was so intense that people were afraid to come to us. So we would meet them in abandoned buildings and all sorts of strange places. I had one client pick me up and drive

around the block over and over while we discussed his case."

"We worked in a constant crisis mode, with the majority of our cases being end-of-life issues. At least once a week we would rush to someone's bedside to draw up a will. We also fought the rampant and flagrant discrimination that was going on. We helped people who were getting kicked out of their apartments, denied medical care, fired from employment and who experienced other unjust treatment because of their HIV status."

When asked how things have changed at ALCC, Justin stated, "Most of our work these days is in fighting bureaucracies on behalf of people with HIV. We help folks being unreasonably denied health care and public benefits, such as Social Security Disability Insurance. But ALCC still delivers services the same way. We have never had a waiting list and we still rush to clients' homes or wherever they need us to give them quick access to legal help."

"We are so delighted and honored to have been twice selected for the Award of Excellence in HIV/AIDS Services. We will use the award to support our immigration rights work helping HIV-positive immigrants"

- Ann Fisher

Equal Justice Works and the Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust are generous sponsors of the HIV+ Immigrants' Rights Project

AIDS Legal Council Files Complaint Against Area Nursing Home for HIV Discrimination

Lexington of Chicago Ridge Nursing Home cited for denying admission to HIV+ man

ALCC filed a complaint with the Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights on behalf of Mr. Richard Roe (not his real name) on the grounds that he was refused admission to Lexington of Chicago Ridge Nursing Home because of his HIV status.

The complaint alleges that on December 17, 2002, Mr. Roe's social worker contacted the director of admissions at Lexington of Chicago Ridge to arrange for Mr. Roe's transfer upon his release from Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Mr. Roe had been admitted to Northwestern to undergo testing for throat cancer.

However, when the director of admissions at Lexington learned of Mr. Roe's HIV-status, she immediately declined to admit him, citing staff inexperience in dealing with people with HIV. When Mr. Roe's social worker suggested some referrals to train Lexington staff, he was turned down again and informed that Lexington would not admit his patient because he was HIV-positive.

"It is hard to believe that this kind of discrimination continues to exist in the health care field after 20 years of the AIDS epidemic", said ALCC's Ann Fisher. "Other nursing home facilities routinely care for people with HIV, yet Lexington claims that it cannot accept our client despite the fact that it is licensed by the state of Illinois to provide skilled nursing home care. Lexington's claims are clearly based on prejudice."

Mr. Roe had originally requested to be placed at Lexington of Chicago Ridge because he has family in that area. He has since been admitted to another nursing home facility.

"By now, it should be clear to all health care providers in Illinois that discrimination against people with HIV is unlawful and that hiding behind excuses will not protect them from legal action," continued Fisher. "We hope to send a clear message to Lexington of Chicago Ridge and others who discriminate that this kind of conduct will not be tolerated."

Around the Council

Michelle Jackson joined the Board of ALCC this fall. A graduate of DePaul University College of Law, Michelle currently is Associate Director of the Illinois Attorney General's Gang Crime Prevention Center. She has also worked at the Cook County Office of the Public Guardian and Metropolitan Family Services Legal Aid Bureau. She completed a clerkship for Hon. Judge Allen Goldberg of the Cook County Circuit Court.

In July we welcomed our new bilingual administrative assistant, **Dana Cowden**. Dana came to us as a graduate of Ohio University with a BS in Communications. "When I first came to the AIDS Legal Council, I was truly amazed at the amount of devotion and caring the staff demonstrated to their clients and put into their work. I knew I wanted to be a part of this organization of passionate individuals."

Thanks to the National AIDS Fund and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago,

ALCC welcomed a new AmeriCorps Member - **Maggie Connell**. Maggie is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison with degrees in Sociology and Women's Studies. She assists ALCC legal staff in research, client intake and in reviewing client medical records in preparation for hearings for public benefits cases.

Two of ALCC's attorneys were recruited to participate in sub-committees for Governor Rod Blagojevich's Transition Team. Executive Director **Ann Fisher** served as Vice Chair for the Health Subcommittee on HIV/AIDS, which developed priority recommendations for the Executive office in the fight against AIDS. **Linella Lim Gavin** was invited to serve on the Governor's Transition Team Welfare Subcommittee to make recommendations regarding welfare.

Board members, **Stephanie Poulakidas** and **Derrick Harden** have moved to new positions. Stephanie is now a director at FTI Consulting and Derrick is an Associate at KPMG.

To date, the ALCC has recruited the following top donors to become members of the newly formed Advocates Circle:

Jim Adams
Michael Bauer & Roger Simon
Robert & Sheila Berner
Bernard Bradshaw
Don Budzinski & Ron Sangthong
Dr. Mardge Cohen
Steven Coursey
Chris Dickinson & Joe Datu
Jeffrey DeJong
William Drewry
Stuart Graff & Rob Chambers
Linda Coon
Bill & Ann Fisher
John & Cynthia Frahm
Jacquelyn Freeney
Linella Lim Gavin & Chris Gavin
Nancy Gerrie & Rich Bowen
Vincent Getzendanner
Jay Giusti
Jerry W. Glover
Derrick Harden
Robert F. Harris
Michelle Jackson
Jeffrey Janson
Ed Jeske & John Hern
Julie K. Kwon
Jean & Robert Langie
Jorge Leon
Gregory Lewis
Dr. Paul Linden
Robert D. LoPrete
Prof. Martin Malin
Sarah Marmor
John Myers
Wayne Paschke
Stephanie Poulakidas
Smith T. & Eva Janzen Powell
Gloria Pruzan & Eli Pick
Kathleen Roach
Jeffrey Roberts
Jim Schwartz
Gabrielle Sigel
Risë Terney & Michael Adell
Luis Vera & Margot Gordon
Randall Ward
Charles Wintersteen



*Michael Bauer,
Michael Hires,
Roger Simon*

ALCC Launches Advocates Circle and Welcomes its First Members

The AIDS Legal Council has unveiled a new program that will recognize the generous support of its top donors while improving the Council's financial outlook in times of economic uncertainty. Since its beginning just a few months ago, the new **Advocates Circle** has grown to include many friends who have made or pledged annual gifts of \$250 or more.

To welcome new members and to celebrate the early success of the Advocates Circle, ALCC recently hosted an intimate evening of wine, champagne and dazzling

culinary creations by New York's **Les Amis de la Table**. Seventy guests sampled selections from a savory menu of appetizers and desserts at the spectacular home of ALCC Board Member **Derrick Harden** and **Jim Adams** on November 13th. **United Airlines** and **Fox & Obel** helped to

make the event possible with generous underwriting. The wonderful team of **Paul Altizer** and **Gary Blanks** of Les Amis de la Table donated their time and talent to make the evening (and the menu!) a hit with the guests. We eagerly look forward to future collaborations between ALCC and our generous event sponsors.

For more information on the Advocates Circle and its membership benefits (including other fabulous events), please call Ricardo Cifuentes at (312) 427-8990.



*Gary Blanks,
Cynthia Frabm,
Paul Altizer*



*Patrice Ball-Reed,
Robert Harris*



*Joe Datu,
David McCabe,
Randal Collins*



*Stephanie Poulakidas,
Rob LoPrete, Tim Grabon,
Marc Foster*



Derrick Harden

Many thanks to our friends and underwriters: United Airlines, Fox & Obel, Les Amis de la Table, Chicago Magazine, Derrick Harden and Jim Adams

Board of Directors

Robert D. LoPrete, Esq.
President

Robert F. Harris, Esq.
Vice President

Wayne Paschke, Esq.
Secretary

Stephanie Poulakidas
Treasurer

Christopher C. Dickinson, Esq.

Jacquelyn Freeney

Derrick Harden

Michelle A. Jackson, Esq.

Julie Kwon, Esq.

Alexis MacDowall, Esq.

Sarah R. Marmor, Esq.

Robert Muriel, Esq.

Susan C. Salita, Esq.

James L. Schwartz, Esq.

Staff

Ann Hilton Fisher, Esq.
Executive Director

Luis G. Vera, Esq.
Director of Litigation

Linella Lim Gavin, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Melissa Samuels, Esq.
Attorney, Equal Justice Works Fellow

Justin Hayford
Case Manager

Carey Nachtigall
Paralegal

Kate Miller
Paralegal

Dale Green
Outreach Advocate

Administrative Staff

Cynthia H. Frahm

Ricardo Cifuentes

Kevin Beaney

Dana Cowden



Main Office

188 West Randolph Street
Suite 2400

Chicago IL 60601

Phone 312 427-8990

Fax 312 427-8419

Email info@aidlegal.com

James Monroe Smith Outreach Project at the CORE Center

2020 West Harrison
Room 4-260

Chicago IL 60612

Phone 312 572-4766

Fax 312 572-4766

www.aidlegal.com

Statement of Mission

The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago exists to preserve, promote and protect the legal rights of men, women and children in the metropolitan Chicago area living with HIV/AIDS. The Council provides direct legal services to people in need, educates the public about HIV-related legal issues and advocates for social policies that ensure fair treatment for all people with HIV/AIDS.

Address Service Requested

188 West Randolph Street, Suite 2400
Chicago IL 60601-3005

AIDS LEGAL COUNCIL OF CHICAGO

ALCC



Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit #662