

Patricia Nalls
Founder/Executive Director
Biographical Notes

Patricia Nalls is the mother of two children—Alana and Shawn—and a new grandmother. She is a community AIDS activist, locally, nationally, and globally for the rights of women, girls and their families living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS. She was diagnosed with AIDS in 1986, after the death of her husband and three year-old daughter within six months of each other. Says Nalls of that time, “When I was diagnosed with HIV, I isolated myself from help and support. I stayed in self-imposed exile for two years before I realized I wasn’t dying and I wasn’t actually living either. And living with HIV is what I had to do for my children’s sake and mine.”

Patricia has since been a long-time activist for women in the Washington, DC community. After years of frustration at not finding appropriate support for women, girls and their families she founded The Women’s Collective (TWC), an AIDS service organization (ASO) dedicated to empowering women and girls living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS, with special emphasis on women of color. The Women’s Collective provides care, prevention and policy advocacy services that ultimately give women, girls and their families the hope they need to *live* healthy lives. Under her leadership, what began as a support group in her home is now an organization with a staff of over twenty five employees and countless volunteers. The TWC program model has been shared with women activists from the USA, the continent of Africa, Ukraine, Guyana, Spain, Canada and Brazil, among others.

Patricia 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 women. She has successfully advocated for women, girls and families at all levels including policy forums and with the Ryan White Planning Council where she made a difference in breaking down many of the barriers women face in accessing services. She has sat on several other committees, including, the PWA Committee, the District of Columbia’s Mayor’s Task Force on AIDS; was Co-chair of a committee that looked at Medicaid waiver for DC. Currently she is engaged as member of the National Center for Behavior Change’s National HIV Prevention Policy Formulation and Education Workgroup and Coalition. She also speaks on Capitol Hill to address issues that women and girls living with HIV/AIDS face in the fight against the disease.

Patricia has been featured in many media venues on a variety of critical issues facing women. She appeared in Essence magazine; People magazine; Newsweek; the Washington Post; and on national and local television. Patricia is the recipient of several awards recognizing her work in the community including: the Courage Award; the Linowes Leadership Award from the Community Foundation; the Caribbean People’s International Award; the WJLA Channel 7 Tribute to Working Women Award. Pat also 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 the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Youth Council of DC’s Outstanding Leadership Award. She was recognized as a Hero in the Struggle, an honor of the Black AIDS Institute among other honorees such as Coretta Scott King and Dr. M. Jocelyn Elders and received the prestigious Gloria Award from the Ms. Foundation for Women.