

2007 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

Inside Our 2007 Annual Report:

Our Mission	2
2007 Program Accomplishments	2
Auditors Report	4
Financial Statement	4
Board of Directors	4

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. ■

2007 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 **Family-Centered Case Management Program** continued to strengthen its work with women and families living with HIV/AIDS. The Women's Collective family-centered 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.

Our **Mental Health Therapies** program provides therapeutic services for women living with HIV/AIDS and their families. The program encompasses individual, couples and family counseling in addition to the provision of therapeutic support groups..

We continued our **Complementary Therapies** program through the provision of both seated and full-body massage and auricular and full-body acupuncture women living with HIV/AIDS in need of pain and stress relief. We saw more women become comfortable with these therapies and build sessions into their health care routine on a regular basis.

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.

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

Accomplishments

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.

We successfully completed our **Propser! Prevention with Positives** program through the **GENERATIONS: Strengthening Women and Families Affected by HIV/AIDS** initiative. Generations is a unique partnership between the National AIDS Fund, Johnson & Johnson and the Washington AIDS Partnership. In response to an alarming increase in rates of HIV/AIDS infection among women in the United States, Generations funding was established to address the unique needs of women and families whose lives have been impacted by the physical, emotional, financial and social tolls of HIV/AIDS. Generations funding enhanced the program with technical assistance and capacity building from the **Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS)** at the University of California San Francisco. Our program interventions were aimed at protecting the health of the infected individuals and others in their communities by preventing or delaying adverse health outcomes among individuals already infected with HIV.

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 three and began year four 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 CTRS at hot spots through out the District with our CTRS 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 began 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 also completed year one 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. ■

Independent Auditor's Report and Financial Statement

We have audited the financial position of The Women's Collective as of December 31, 2007, 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, 2007, and the changes in net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with general accepted accounting principles.

March 3, 2008

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

**The Women's Collective, Inc.
Statement of Activities
For the Year Ended December 31, 2007**

Support and Revenue

Grant Awards	\$1,219,712
Contributions	\$224,756
Interest Income	\$20,850
Other Income	\$450
Total Revenue	\$1,587,025

Expenses

<i>Program and Services</i>	
HIV Care Management	\$488,020
HIV Prevention	\$701,708
Policy & Advocacy	<u>\$115,962</u>
Total Program Services	\$1,305,690
Fundraising	\$92,311
Management and General	<u>\$47,863</u>
Total Expenses	\$1,445,864

Board of Directors 2007

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