

February 7, 2012 marks the 12th year for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. This day focuses on treatment and services for African Americans living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. The day also focuses on promoting HIV education and testing for a group that is disproportionately at risk for HIV/AIDS.

God's Love We Deliver was founded 25 years ago in response to the AIDS pandemic. In 2011, our clients living with HIV/AIDS made up 30% of our entire client base. Of that, almost half were African American. We have always been committed to serving all people, yet we recognize that, not just in our own client base, but in our country as a whole, HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects the Black community. Today, we recognize and stand with all those in the Black community who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Today there are 1.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States and, of that 1.1 million, Black Americans account for half. While representing just 12 percent of the population, Black Americans also account for 44 percent of new infections. Blacks are also more likely to die of AIDS as compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

Today we also heard from our volunteer, Gerald DeYounge, who has been appointed as Co-Chair of the Rules and Membership Committee of the NYC Planning Council. He currently works as the Linkage-to-Care Provider for Brookdale Hospital Treatment for Life Center. Gerald is member of the African-American community, who came to God's Love as a volunteer through a friend. He considers God's Love a part of his family. Gerald is an advocate, a volunteer, and a messenger to the community.

"My experience with God's Love We Deliver has really opened my eyes. It has allowed me to see the disease on a different way, in the eyes of people who are so happy because they receive food. The food we cook is food for the soul. My work with God's Love has helped me to learn and meet people where they are and I have never felt better doing what we do. Advocacy, outreach and education are so important for all HIV/AIDS communities and I hope that, as a community, we get more people tested, aware and outspoken. The more proactive we are, the better outcomes we will have.

Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is important to me because it allows me to help African Americans to get tested, know their status, and tell others how they can get help. Others can be an example for their friends and family. HIV/AIDS affects us all."

God's Love honors the clients with whom we started and those who benefit from our services and programs today. We encourage everyone to get tested.

Dorella Walters
Senior Director of Program Services

