



The mission of the CFAR is to provide a multidisciplinary environment that promotes basic, clinical, behavioral and translational research in the prevention, detection and treatment of HIV infection.

NEWS BRIEF:

-It's that time again...The **Triangle Dance Festival for AIDS** is upon us!! The triangle community is invited to join us on the 7th annual evening of performing arts: **Saturday, February 25, 2012 at Memorial Hall on UNC Campus**. TDFA seeks to promote community involvement benefiting local and global AIDS charities. Come witness the Triangle's best in international, modern and urban dance performing groups, with world music, spoken word, and a celebration of the worldwide battle against HIV/AIDS. The show will be followed by a catered reception with hors d'oeuvres, entertainment by a jazz band, and information from local AIDS outreach organizations. For more information, see: <http://sites.google.com/site/triangledancefestivalforaids/>

-From **7am to 7pm on Saturday, February 4th and Sunday, February 5th**, the Graduate and Professional Student Federation, Student Health Action Coalition, and the Student National Medical Association will be hosting a **free HIV testing drive at 200 West Franklin Street**. This event will provide rapid HIV testing for people of the Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Durham communities. Contact Ayesha Lovick at: ayeshanlovick@gmail.com

-The **AIDS 2012: XIX International AIDS Conference** is coming to the United States! The conference will be held from **22 to 27 July 2012 in Washington, DC**. Now is the time to start working on abstracts and booking hotels! For more information, visit: <http://www.aids2012.org/>

CONTACT:

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- **Newsletter written/compiled by Danielle Strauss**
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Center for AIDS Research

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Volume 4. Issue 1

January 31, 2012

If You Build It, They Will Come - A Guest Article by Karine Dube

It was World AIDS Day 2009, in Beira, the second largest city in Mozambique. During one of the worst thunderstorms of the year, we lost power at the newly established Center for Infectious Disease Research. But comes a glitter of hope: we light up one candle, then two, and end up with a serendipitous AIDS vigil all over the new research center. It becomes symbolic, finally meaningful, one of my proudest moments of working in the HIV/AIDS prevention field. We can make a difference. And we did that day. We are able to initiate our first two study participants in a new HIV incidence study under candlelight in a city that looks like it just got bombed.

For two years, we had been working on establishing two brand new research centers out of the civil war ashes of Mozambique, outside of the capital city in Maputo. The first one is located in Beira, a major port city with a railway to Zimbabwe. Beira city, which still experiences biennial cholera epidemics, was devastated during the civil war. We knew HIV prevalence was high, but we just did not expect how high the HIV incidence could be. The Fathers of Beira's Catholic University's Medical School provided us an old bathroom on their campus that we transformed into an HIV prevention laboratory. The Fathers were real HIV prevention champions and they fought alongside us, permitting us to hand out USAID-donated condoms to women at risk for HIV infection in the name of preservation of life and prevention of disease. And they prayed for us, too.

The second research center is located in Chókwe, in the south of Mozambique, where there is still a trend towards increased HIV-I prevalence. USAID wouldn't permit us to build a new research center, so the Catholic Sisters donated their old sewing center and allowed us to transform it into a research center. We built air-conditioned HIV testing and counseling huts out of local materials (*pallotas*, in Portuguese). I'm very proud of those huts, and they look pretty good, too. If I were to have my own private window office anywhere in the world, or need a place to receive my HIV test result, I would choose to be in one of those huts. They're honest, fragile, and human-scale.

In order for this clinical research site development enterprise to work, we had to have an enormous amount of faith. Building the research sites was like building brand new train tracks and having to put the trains on the tracks in the form of HIV prevention studies. We trained over 60 new staff in research methods, Good Clinical Practice, Research Ethics and protocol procedures. We also established

brand new Community Advisory Boards, created laboratories, data management centers and clinical space (well, if we count the huts, too). We did this during a global recession when USAID was under pressure to cut our funding at any time.

But it's a good thing we did. We're having an impact. The epidemiologic data are sobering. HIV-prevalence among women aged 18 – 35 at higher risk for HIV infection is north of 30%. Herpes Simplex Virus Type 2 (HSV-2) is above 70%. Prospective HIV-IC incidence is very high, especially among younger girls.

"If you build it, they will come" (Field of Dreams). We had not quite built it yet, and we did not know if they would ever be coming. It's a miracle that they came, the Fathers said. On Monday, 25 October 2010, during one of my numerous trips to Mozambique, I sat next to Colonel Nelson Michael, head of the U.S. Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), on South African Airways flight 142. I did not know who he was at the time. But he and his research team had just finished an HIV-I B/E vaccine trial in Thailand.

That day changed everything. Colonel Micheal, Merlin Robb and Kathleen Walker had arrived to Mozambique. MHRP, funded by the Department of Defense (DOD) and the National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)'s Division of AIDS, sponsors HIV vaccine research. This research will one day end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The MHRP built us two more huts. They want to continue developing the research sites, with the hope that they will get involved in HIV-I vaccine research. They brought visitors from the Division of AIDS. The research train is finally going somewhere, with new steam. We are also hoping the sites will get involved in tuberculosis, malaria and reproductive health research.

The Fathers believe in miracles. I believe in people. There are people we have to be thankful for: Father Ponsi and Sister Elisa, for having faith in us. The research teams: I am very proud of you. USAID, for continuing to fund our work, and the FHI 360 leadership, for ongoing support. Colonel Michael and Colleagues, you were my angels that day. But perhaps not just mine – everyone's who will benefit from your research one day. This is, after all, a Field of Dreams.



HIV Testing and Counseling Huts, Chókwe Health Research and Training Center, Mozambique

World AIDS Day 2011 - A Partnership of Yoga and Activism on UNC Campus



Dani Strauss assists Maddie Sperling, a UNC undergraduate student, in triangle pose

Anandamurti writes, "Yoga is self-realization and service to the world". On December 1, 2011, the UNC CFAR CODE Office celebrated World AIDS Day and raised awareness about HIV/AIDS through the practice of yoga and meditation. Jennie Dickson, a graduate student from the UNC School of Social Work, and Dani Strauss, community outreach coordinator for the CFAR CODE office, organized and led the event. The goal was to clear people's minds, clarify people's intentions, and empower one another to effect powerful changes in the world of HIV/AIDS during the next year. The event was a great success, with a total of 35 people practicing yoga.



Vice Provost Ron Strauss speaks to the yogis about the importance of health and activism

Vice Provost Ron Strauss started the afternoon with a small talk about the importance of a small group of individuals making big changes by holding each other up, encouraging each other toward action and positivity. Each practitioner found a partner and tied a homemade bracelet on for the other as a symbol of mutual support. Jennie and Dani then led the group through yoga postures and meditation practices geared toward this year's World AIDS Day theme of "Getting to Zero: Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Discrimination, and Zero AIDS Related Deaths". They highlighted the capacity of each individual to take their yoga and intentions "off the mat" and out into the community.

Jennie commented, "I was honored to teach yoga for World AIDS Day. It was so fun creating all that energy outside in the sunshine with our diverse community here at UNC.



CODE Office Manager Vanessa White recruits first-time yogis to practice yoga in the pit

Intention can be a mighty tool, so when people unite their minds, bodies, and spirits for such a critical cause, it is very powerful."

Several individuals who had never practiced yoga participated in the event. Vanessa White, CODE office manager, passed out cards with messages, bracelets, and condoms to raise awareness and encourage people to join in. It was a wonderful collaboration of hearts and minds, and many students came up at the end of the event to comment on how it had moved them emotionally and inspired them for the year to come. Nathan Logan, a UNC student and yoga teacher, reflected, "The sense of community I felt that day and the awareness raised for myself and those around us in the community was enthralling and powerful. To meditate and do yoga as a group with the intent of spreading hope, joy, and awareness about AIDS was something I felt through and through as I relaxed and breathed into down dog and while reaching up to the sun as my heart opened."

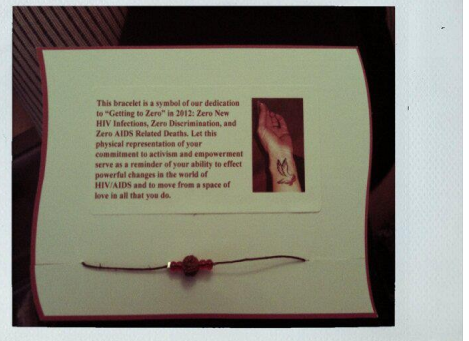
Dani commented, "I've seen the effects that mindfulness, body health, and breathing can have on health outcomes. I was thrilled to see young, new activists practicing yoga with hope and intention. As yoga teachers and healthcare workers, we have a unique opportunity to help people commit to taking care of their own bodies physically and emotionally, which includes protecting themselves from HIV infection. It is my hope that we can

continue to educate others and promote awareness about the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS through events like this that engage people on a physical, mental, and emotional level."

Dylan Hunt writes, "Yoga is a powerful means of elevating our consciousness at a time when great changes are needed to improve the condition of our world." Plans are already in motion for next year's World AIDS Day yoga event. "The World AIDS Day yoga event was an opportunity for people on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus to experience health and healing and to reflect on the challenges of HIV/AIDS in our

world," said Dr. Strauss. "The feeling was calm and yet energized and I was really pleased to see so many students and workers spontaneously join in as participants – getting on the ground in the pit and for many, doing yoga for their first time. You could sense their enthusiasm and openness and it was magical! The message was so clear – heal the world, prevent HIV, and take care of ourselves and one-another."

The CFAR CODE office thanks all those who helped and participated this year to make the yoga gathering such a joyous occasion.



Cards with bracelets and an inspiring message were given to viewers and those practicing yoga. Condoms were included on the back of each card.



Jennie Dixon leads the group as UNC students gather on campus to watch and participate in the yoga event



UNC medical student and HIV activist Jenna Beckham opens her heart in a backbend