

RAIN HONORED IN POZ 100



POZ – an award winning online and print resource for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS selected four RAIN staff members for the annual POZ 100 – a special recognition of the contributions of individuals living and working in the South who are committed to ending the HIV epidemic. RAIN honorees included Debbie Warren, President & CEO who founded RAIN 25 years

ago; Chelsea Gulden White, Director of Programs and a nationally recognized advocate for HIV positive youth; Jaysen Foreman, Benefits Specialist, an ACA enrollment expert and medical case manager; and Roberto Olmo, EPY Peer Navigator and PrEP Counselor, making remarkable inroads locally with young adults who are or are at high risk for becoming HIV positive.

RAIN also congratulates other local awardees including Wesley Thompson of Ballantyne Family Medicine and Darrin Johnson of PowerHouse.

The POZ 100 was announced in the December issue of POZ.

The POZ 100 article is online at poz.com/page/poz-100.

SAVE THESE DATES...

**NOVEMBER 11 | GAY BINGO CHARLOTTE
NOVEMBER 30 | WORLD AIDS DAY LUNCHEON**

RAIN CELEBRATES ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION AWARD

RAIN recently received a \$50,000 grant from the Elton John AIDS Foundation to develop a curriculum that will help organizations learn how to develop comprehensive wrap-around programs to support PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis). PrEP is a biomedical prevention intervention that targets individuals who are at high-risk for contracting HIV. The curriculum that will be developed by RAIN will target men who have sex with men (MSM) of color and will be designed to ensure access and retention in medical care which increases the effectiveness of this



ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION

intervention. MSM of color continue to be the most highly impacted demographic nationally. If current trends continue, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC),

the lifetime HIV risk for African American MSM is 50% (one in two), and 25% (one in four) for Latinos. RAIN believes that the widespread use of PrEP can change this trajectory.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

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racism and homophobia drive the huge growth in HIV cases. I see that disparity in the faces of young 20-year-olds who've experienced too much trauma for their years, but are trying to survive and find stability.

In the midst of these challenges, I work alongside a new generation of extraordinary young professionals, some of whom are HIV-positive, who

are leading and re-shaping AIDS organizations. They proactively adapt to changing needs, while remaining committed to the compassionate, personalized care that has always differentiated RAIN.

We at RAIN do see, every day, the young mother, the homeless teen, the senior — individuals who “are everything but average.” We who serve

people living with HIV have overcome many setbacks and we will challenge anyone who disregards the most vulnerable among us. Together we find hope as we advocate for health and healing on all fronts, for all people.

May all be healed, may all be comforted and may all be loved,

Debbie

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

Charlotte is home to many generous businesses and corporations that match the charitable contributions of their employees. Many of RAIN's supporters access this financial resource for us. **Please join the ranks of RAIN donors who apply for matching gifts from their employers!** Contact your HR department for details on YOUR company's matching gifts process.

NEIL BRONCACCIO

Volunteers are so important to RAIN! Some volunteers work during our events, some work with clients in our Buddy Program, and some work regularly in our office. Neil Broncaccio is one of our extraordinary office volunteers. Neil joined RAIN as a volunteer three years ago and works every Tuesday at our front desk greeting clients.

Neil was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio and attended Ohio State University, majoring in Russian Language. (By the way, he is quite the language aficionado, also having learned French and Spanish and growing up with grandparents who spoke Italian and German!) Prior to coming to Charlotte, he lived for 32 years in New Orleans and worked as a Case Manager for the Department of Social Services for 29 years. Neil loves talking with people, having served

hundreds over his career. His most famous acquaintance is Chef Paul Prudhomme who worked at the Maison Dupuy at the same time that Neil worked there before joining DSS.

Hurricane Katrina was a pivotal event for many people in New Orleans and it was also for Neil. Just prior to Katrina's landfall, he evacuated to Charlotte but soon found that he enjoyed it and has now lived here for 11 years. He appreciates that Charlotte is an international city and especially likes the multi-cultural cuisine available here.

Neil is an active member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church where he serves as a Eucharistic and Pastoral Care lay minister. He learned about RAIN at St. Peter's. Neil volunteers at RAIN because he is motivated by the cause and finds the staff and



clients interesting to be around. He appreciates the freedom that volunteering brings – involvement without the stress of employment.

Neil enjoys reading, particularly non-fiction travel and culture as well as books about religion and religious music and art.

We are so grateful to Neil for his dependability and warm, caring approach to our clients. Thank you, Neil, for a job well done!

Are you interested in volunteering at RAIN? We have many opportunities. To know more, please contact Steven Burleson at 704-973-9812 or s.burleson@carolinarain.org.



BE A RAIN SUSTAINER ... JOIN THE RAIN SOCIETY OR RAIN YOUNG AFFILIATES

We are deeply grateful for donors who sustain RAIN through regular financial support. RAIN Society and RAIN Young Affiliates (donors under the age of 40) are individuals who make monthly contributions – of any amount – ensuring that people living with HIV have consistent and compassionate services. Please consider becoming a sustainer! Join today at carolinarain.org/rainsociety or carolinarain.org/affiliategiving. Thank you, in advance!

PACCT: PREVENTION- ACCESS-CONDOMS- COUNSELING-TREATMENT

One of RAIN's newest primary and secondary HIV prevention programs is PACCT: Prevention-Access-Condoms-Counseling-Treatment. PACCT is an HIV prevention initiative for high risk HIV-negative individuals seeking options for remaining HIV-negative. PACCT has two components: PrEP and PEP.

RAIN's PrEP counselor educates potential clients on PrEP medication, symptoms of acute HIV infection, medication adherence and safer sex practices. If the individual decides to become a client at RAIN, he/she is linked to a medical provider that will offer the health screening and prescription to begin PrEP, regardless of whether the individual has health coverage or not. The PrEP counselor assists

the client in overcoming financial/ social barriers to accessing PrEP and supports the client in remaining adherent to PrEP. The PACCT program also assists individuals who may have been exposed to HIV in accessing PEP – medications for post-exposure prophylaxis.

At the end of 2016, PACCT had 36 active clients, had helped 58 individuals access PrEP and eight (8) receive PEP, and provided 24 clients with financial assistance for medication. For more information about RAIN's PACCT program, PrEP or Pep, please contact Roberto Olmo Bermudez, EPY (Empowering Positive Youth) Peer Navigator & PrEP Counselor at r.olmobermudez@carolinarain.org or 704-973-9814.

THANK YOU CHRIS AND WES JOHNSON

On February 11, Wes and Chris Johnson hosted the 25th Annual Johnson Valentine Bash. The Johnson Brothers donate the proceeds from this event to RAIN, for which we are so grateful!



Wes and Chris Johnson.

RAIN 2016 CLIENT STATISTICS

RAIN's programs provided over 335 HIV positive individuals with compassionate services in 2016. Here are some of the highlights:

42% increase in the number of individuals served by Medical Case Management in 2016 vs. 2015.

11% growth compared to the previous year of adolescents, youth and young adults 24 years old and younger supported by EPY (Empowering Positive Youth).

72 individuals assisted in accessing affordable, appropriate health care through ACA (Affordable Care Act) enrollment programs.

26 received financial assistance from RAIN with premium costs.

36 individuals served in the Mental Health program, reaching our annual goal of 25 in the first three months.

RAIN is continually grateful to our many community partners – other HIV providers, physician practices and medical providers, and social services agencies – which provide the additional supportive services essential to the health and stability of our clients.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 22 | NC ADVOCACY DAY TRAINING

Contact Christina at christina@ncaan.org for information and registration.

APRIL 25 | NC ADVOCACY DAY

Contact Christina at christina@ncaan.org for information and registration for the charter bus ride to Raleigh.

APRIL 12, JUNE 14 AND AUGUST 9 | VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

Webinar at Noon or Face-to-Face at 6pm

Contact Steven at s.burleson@carolinarain.org for information and registration.

MAY 6 | AIDS WALK CHARLOTTE

Visit aidswalkcharlotte.org for information and registration.

For a full listing of events/opportunities please visit carolinarain.org or call **704-372-7246**.

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