

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**AIDS FOUNDATION OF CHICAGO LAUNCHES
NEW “WITH ME COMES A CURE” CAMPAIGN**

Chicago, IL – Timed to coincide with National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (February 7th, 2009), the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) is launching a new public awareness campaign designed to educate African-Americans about the innumerable ways in which they can bring an end to the epidemic.

Entitled, “With Me Comes A Cure,” the citywide awareness campaign calls on African-Americans to use their talents, passions and resources to stop the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. With sections tailored for gay men, youth and women, the campaign encourages a range of actions, from getting tested regularly for HIV to volunteering for an AIDS vaccine trial to combating homophobia. In the words of the campaign, “Any action is better than no action at all.”

“The main selling point for the campaign is that every person in the African-American community has the power to heal the community and end the spread of AIDS,” said Rev. Doris Green, AFC director of correctional health and community affairs. “We want to challenge the perception that ‘the AIDS epidemic is out of control in the black community, and acting as an individual, there is nothing I can do about it.’”

The campaign is driven by a website, **withmecomescacure.org**, where people can take action, dialogue and connect to campaign. The website also highlights “faces of the cure”: individuals and organizations who are working to prevent new infections and improve the lives of those affected by the disease. Campaign materials feature a blank box sandwiched between the word “With” and the phrase “comes a cure” in which individuals are asked to insert an idea or action which that they believe will help reduce the spread of HIV in their community.

For example, a hip-hop artist skilled in the craft of lyricism might insert the word “hip-hop” into the box so that it reads: “With hip-hop comes a cure.” The website then asks individuals to explain what their word means and encourages them to act. Thus the campaign is designed to be interactive, featuring language, artwork, and ideas from the community as opposed to a standardized medical campaign.

“The thinking behind the campaign is that we can’t just talk about vaccines in isolation without spurring widespread awareness about HIV/AIDS in the black community,” said AFC communications director Johnathon Briggs. “We hope to remind African-Americans that the black community can heal itself – has to heal itself – and they can play a role.”

The campaign has been under development since May 2008 and is partially funded by a \$8,500 grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases HIV Vaccine Research and Education Initiative. It also features CTA ads, radio commercials and outreach materials, including t-shirts, church fans, condom cases and compact mirrors.

Founded by community activists and physicians in 1985, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago is a catalyst for local, national, and international action on HIV/AIDS.

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