

# YOUTH WIRE

connecting Asian & Pacific Islander health advocates

National Asian & Pacific Islander Youth and HIV/AIDS Network

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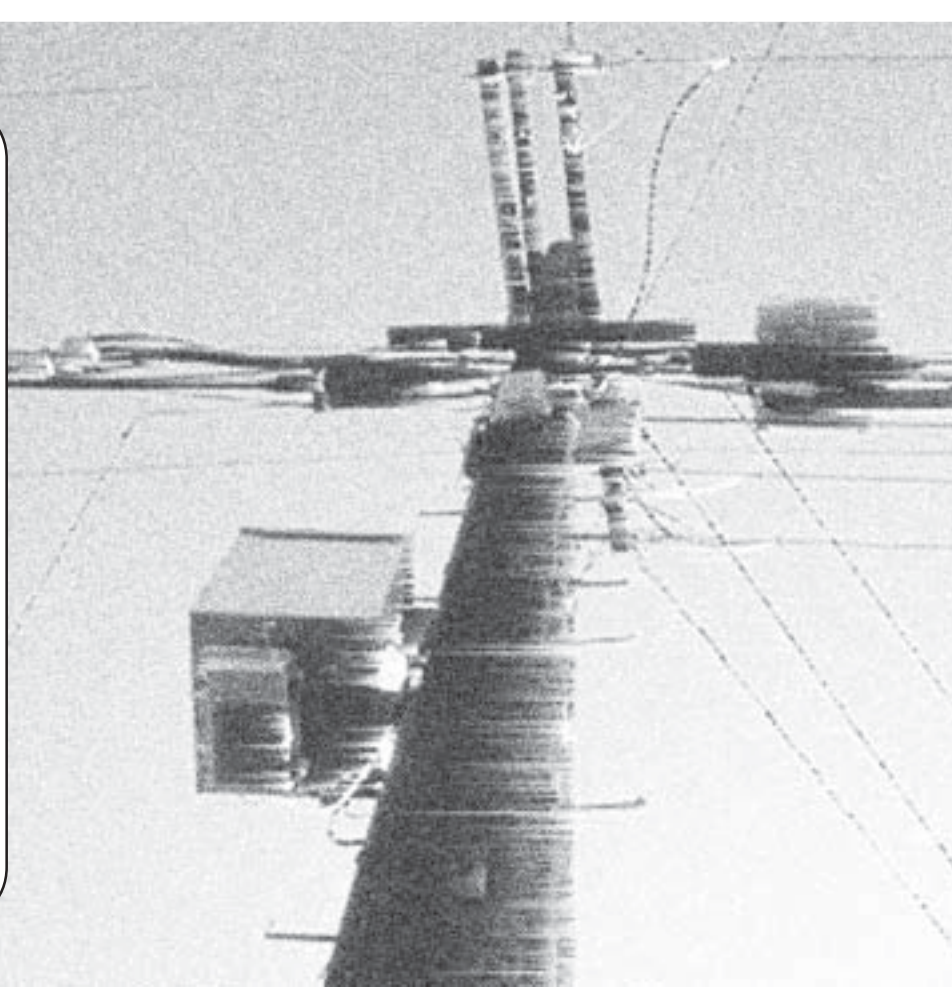
## ABOUT YOUTH WIRE

The National Asian & Pacific Islander Youth and HIV/AIDS Network is youth, youth providers, advocates and allies working together to address the critical HIV/AIDS related issues facing Asian & Pacific Islander youth in the United States, including the Pacific Island jurisdictions. One way we work together is to distribute resources and make connections between people through publications such as *YOUTH\_WIRE*. Currently the network is convening monthly conference calls, meeting in-person twice a year, and working on the following subcommittee projects:

*Leadership Development*

*Resource Development Center*

If you want to help build an Asian & Pacific Islander Youth voice on a national level, and make resources more available for youth on a local level - *join us*.



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## THANKS

*to all the people who contributed to  
this issue of YOUTH\_WIRE.  
to the members of the network for  
the enthusiasm, ideas and vision.  
to the staff of A&PIWC, NYAC and  
APIAHF for the ongoing support.  
and last but not least, to the  
Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention for funding.*

## WHAT IS THE ASIAN YOUTH CENTER?

AYC serves the San Gabriel Valley area in Southern California and provides social service and health programs for youth and families. AYC provides HIV/AIDS and youth information in two main programs, an Asian American Community Teen Theater (AACTT) program that works in conjunction with other local Teen Theater groups (Chinatown Service Center and Korean Youth and Community Center) in Los Angeles County, and an HIV Counseling and Testing program.

## WHAT ARE THE HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS TARGETING YOUTH?

### Asian American Community Teen Theater

The Asian American Community Teen Theater (AACTT) is a touring group of non-professional teen actors, writers, singers and dancers. Scripts are written by youth and focus on creatively educating peers on HIV/AIDS prevention with hip ideas and trendy attitudes. Teens are exposed to opportunities in theater work including acting, directing and script writing. AACITT has traveled to national and regional conferences and has

## WHO DO I CONTACT FOR INFORMATION?

For more information, please contact Maria Pena, Project Director and Ronnie Huynh, HIV/AIDS Health Educator and Teen Theater Coordinator at 626-309-0622. [www.asianyouthcenter.org](http://www.asianyouthcenter.org)

## FEATURE

## ORGANIZATION



performed locally at community organizations and shows. AACITT incorporates all teen issues within performances, with a primary focus on HIV/AIDS peer education, and uses theater as a vehicle for creative expression.

### HIV Counseling and Testing

AYC also provides free HIV Counseling and Testing for all age groups. AYC is committed to HIV/AIDS Prevention Education, and increasing community access to free HIV testing and counseling. Anyone interested in getting tested can make an appointment or visit the AYC office during designated drop-in hours to meet with a counselor to discuss issues around HIV/AIDS and get tested. AYC provides oral HIV-Antibody testing at our center, as well as educational materials and prevention tools to assist people, especially youth, to make healthy choices.

# ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER Y O U T H

**W**hat comes to your mind when I say Hawai'i? Palm trees, beaches, hula girls with coconut bras dancing with tribal men twirling fire? Sure we've got 'em. But once you leave the resort with its manicured lawns and strategically placed tiki idols, you'll find a community much like yours. Homeless youth? Yes. Domestic violence? One of the highest rates in the nation. Sexually transmitted diseases? Definitely.

However, sexual transmitted diseases are not a new issue to the islands. When Captain Cook first "discovered" the Hawaiian Islands, the native Hawaiians had no natural immunity to the syphilis, gonorrhea, or Hansen's disease carried by his crew and the many ships to follow. Throughout the years thousands of Hawaiians died. Nevertheless, the community persevered. Today, Hawaii is a melting pot of ethnicities and cultures, with 58% of its population Asian American & Pacific Islander. This time we rise to the challenge of HIV/AIDS, a virus that has been contracted by many of my dearest friends, allies, and mentors.

A few years ago I started volunteering at the Big Island AIDS project, eventually working as a peer outreach worker to young queer men. Then one day I met a charming woman named Rose-Marie. She had heard of the work I was doing for the youth in my community and invited me to have my voice heard at a statewide Youth Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. Although I was shy and reserved at first, she explained many facts that others had left out. She also explained the community planning process and invited me to sit in as an alternate for the "Youth-at-risk" seat. By the end of the meeting, I was filling out an application to be a regular part of the planning process.

So, here I am, one year later, learning more about the process as each meeting and sub-committee meeting goes by. I can say that it has without a doubt

***Asians & Pacific Islanders are emerging communities across the nation. Is it not the ultimate goal of HIV prevention to get ahead of or in front of the epidemic?***

**SPEAK OUT**

SPEECH DELIVERED IN ANAHEIM, SEPTEMBER 2002 @ UNITED STATES CONFERENCE ON AIDS

*By Kaniela Pano, Hilo, HI*

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*I learned that while my expertise may be limited in certain areas, I always had something valuable to contribute if I was willing to speak up.*

youth driven program. And make the message real to them with HIV+ speakers.

As I look out into this audience, it is so exciting to see the diversity of friends in attendance. Within all of our communities, we need educators, activists, and advocates that are intergenerational, of ALL ages and experiences. We must work together in our common struggle. *Ua mau ke ea o ka 'aina i ka lokahi.* The life of the land is perpetuated in unity.

**The United States Conference on AIDS is the most widely attended gathering in the country with over 3,000 HIV/AIDS providers and advocates.** Kaniela delivered his speech along with four other youth of color, Kathy Rodriguez, Antar Bush, Lesley Lopez-Williams and Angela Lucero in the closing lunch plenary. Look out for Angela Lucero's speech in the next issue of *YOUTH\_WIRE*.

incidence to keep those rates low. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders should not be viewed as a lower priority for HIV prevention simply because of lower reported HIV or AIDS cases. Much more careful data analysis and assessment is needed. Numbers does not EQUAL Reality! \$.99 does not EQUAL \$1.00!

As of August this year, I have begun my fifth school year as a part-time teacher at a local High School and Intermediate School. In talking with the students, many have told me that they are sexually active and did not know easy ways to get condoms. Within our school system, we need to support a more comprehensive sex education program that includes both abstinence AND harm-reduction prevention strategies for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. This would include information on counseling and testing and the proper usage of condoms. However, if bound by an "abstinence only" curriculum, we need to get creative. How? Incorporate our peers with a



been an enriching, although often tedious, experience. I learned that while my expertise may be limited in certain areas, I always had something valuable to contribute if I was willing to speak up.

For example, Asians & Pacific Islanders have higher rates of many preventable diseases that are co-factors for HIV infection, such as tuberculosis and Hepatitis B. In fact, Hawai'i's chlamydia rates are now double what it was in 1997 making it one of the highest rates in the country.

Here's where it ties in to you. Asians & Pacific Islanders are emerging communities across the nation. Is it not the ultimate goal of HIV prevention to get ahead of or in front of the epidemic? We need to prevent its spread in populations with low HIV prevalence and

# RESOURCES

## FACTS ABOUT A&PI YOUTH AND HIV/AIDS

***A&PIs are an emerging community that have the highest rate of growth.***

- The A&PI community has increased by nearly 50% from 1990-2000.
- The total number of A&PIs in the United States is 10,409,327 (single race respondents/Census 2000)

***The A&PI community has proportionately more young people.***

- 20.9% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. are within the ages of 14-24. 16.6% of Asians are within the ages of 14-24. In the overall U.S. population, only 15.3% are 14-24 years old.

***What are the rates in the A&PI community?***

**For youth:**

- Among A&PIs living with HIV, 19% are A&PI youth 24 years or under. Of these, 58% are young males and 42% are young females.
- Among A&PI youth living with AIDS, 74% are young males and 26% are young females.
- The largest age distribution (44%) of A&PIs living with AIDS are in their 30s. This means that the majority of A&PIs got infected in their late teens or early 20s.

**For the whole A&PI community:**

- A&PIs have the largest proportion of men who have sex with men cases (75%) among all other communities of color.
- Heterosexual transmission is the largest risk factor for acquiring HIV for A&PI women (49%).
- Among all racial groups, A&PI women have the highest proportion (22%) of cumulative AIDS cases that DO NOT know or CANNOT identify their risk factors for acquiring HIV. This can be a marker of the degree of stigma faced by A&PI women. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

## API YOUTH

Asian heritage  
(is)

Powerful  
Inside

You.  
Only  
United  
Together  
(we can)  
Help.

We must unite as a whole to work towards progress in our time of struggle. We must look past the shadows that are cast on us by the people in power that divert us from working together. We are all one people, one race; the human race. As youth we have the power of the sun to brighten and make individual shadows disappear and the strength in numbers appear and movements grow. As youth, we are the leaders of now, we cannot wait for the future - it may be too late. Let's stand together and work towards fusion and harmony to build our communities and ourselves up!

*Dimple Rana* is currently the Youth Health Coordinator/Case Manager at the Massachusetts Asian AIDS Prevention Project (MAAPP) in Boston, MA.

POETRY

**WANTED:**

**WRITERS, ARTISTS, poets...**  
**Do you have something to say?**

Please submit your stories, articles,  
 poems, drawings, photos and ideas for  
*YOUTH\_WIRE* to [rgacula@apiahf.org](mailto:rgacula@apiahf.org)

**National Youth Advocacy Coalition's  
 Sixth Annual National Youth Summit**  
**May 30 - June 1, 2003**  
**Washington, D.C.**



[www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org)

Youth and adults representing various communities nationwide will consider the critical issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, while educating decision-makers and opinion-leaders about their lives. Participants in the National Youth Advocacy Coalition's Sixth Annual National Youth Summit will gather for the only national meeting focusing entirely on issues of critical importance to LGBTQ youth.



**10th Annual Ryan White National  
 Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS**  
**February 14-17, 2003 Dallas, TX** [www.rwnyc.org](http://www.rwnyc.org)

The Ryan White National Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS (RWNYC) dedicated to building the HIV prevention health services and advocacy skills of young AIDS activists, youth peer educators, HIV positive youth and those who work in support of young people.

Do you have an event you would like to announce?  
 Please contact Rachel @ [rgacula@apiahf.org](mailto:rgacula@apiahf.org)/ 415.954.9969

**GETTING WIRED GETTING CONNECTED**

*YOU CAN BE PART OF THE  
 NATIONAL A&PI YOUTH AND HIV NETWORK BY:*

**JOINING the electronic MAILING LIST.** Just send a message to [apiyouth\\_hiv-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:apiyouth_hiv-subscribe@topica.com)

**JOINING our mailing list. Get YOUTH\_WIRE in the mail plus other useful goodies.** To subscribe, visit [www.apiahf.org/programs/hivcba/eforms.html](http://www.apiahf.org/programs/hivcba/eforms.html) or just give us a call.

**JOINING a sub-committee** (email or call ManChui at 415.954.9993/ [mleung@apiahf.org](mailto:mleung@apiahf.org))

**JOINING our monthly conference CALLS the third week of every month (alternating Wednesdays and Thursdays).** Dates and times subject to change. Please keep updated about the conference calls by subscribing to the Network's electronic mailing list.

**P** *Who would you like to interview online?*

**O** Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum wants to find out the leaders, community members, and visionaries you would like to dialogue with. Nominate anyone and we'll try our best to get the job done!  
**L** Please email your response to Rachel at [rgacula@apiahf.org](mailto:rgacula@apiahf.org).

## **YOUTH\_WIRE**

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c/o Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

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want more info? visit us: [www.apiahf.org/programs/hivcba/youth.html](http://www.apiahf.org/programs/hivcba/youth.html)