



Inmate organizations collaborate to sponsor first-ever World AIDS Day event at Gowanda December 12, 2013

On Wednesday, November 13th, Gowanda Correctional Facility (Erie County) hosted its first-ever World AIDS Day Recognition Event. Spearheaded by the Latinos in Progress (LIP) inmate organization and co-sponsored by the Positive Change Organization (PCO) and Inmate Liaison Committee (ILC). Gowanda's inmate organizations felt compelled to join in this observance to not only increase awareness of HIV/AIDS among their community inside the fence, but to also carry the message to communities.

The event featured two volunteers from the local nonprofit community agency, Evergreen Health Services, as the keynote speakers. In his address, Evergreen's Director of Behavioral Health, Cord Stone, offered information on Evergreen's intervention programs they provide at three facilities (Gowanda, Collins & Wende) in the Wende Hub, as well as the extensive services they provide throughout the Western New York community.



In keeping with the spirit of fellowship and awareness of this event, the facility Protestant congregation's Philadelphia Choir and Band entertained guests with such inspirational selections as "Don't Give Up" and "It's So Hard to Say Goodbye." LIP Treasurer, Ian Wallen, recited a very moving original poem entitled, "The History of a Monster." The event also featured an extensive information table, where participants could access literature on HIV/AIDS, sexually-transmitted diseases and infections, testing, prevention and a variety of services.

A charitable donation from the LIP, PCO and ILC in the amount of \$300 was presented to Evergreen to be used toward the funding of the services they provide in the community. In his closing remarks, LIP Chairman, Lazaro Lugo pointed out that Gowanda's three inmate organizations share common goals of improving social, educational and cultural conditions among Gowanda's population, while contributing to the outside community in meaningful ways.



l. to r.: Mike Sears, Livingston, ORC / ABC Staff Adviser, Edwin Argon, ABC Program Educator, Reginald Faison, ABC Program Educator, Dr. Aaron Wicks, ABC Deputy Director, Planning and Evaluation, Linda King-Bronner, ABC Director Dept. of Health Services, Valerie Sullivan, Deputy Supt. Programs, Ernest Wilson, Keynote Speaker, Ambrose Nwaimo, ABC Coordinator of Criminal Justice Initiatives

More DOCCS NEWS:

More than 250 inmates participated in Livingston Correctional Facility's (Livingston County) Annual World AIDS Day Program. The program included a skit from the inmate HIV/AIDS Peer Educators, musical selections from the inmate ensemble and presentations from the Action for a Better Community staff. A plaque of appreciation was also presented to Deputy Superintendent of Programs Valerie Sullivan.