

# Funding, straight talk, tough love all part of prevention stew

By PEGGY HEINKEL-WOLFE  
The Dallas Examiner

The HIV educators of Renaissance III hit the streets dressed in combat fatigues. With safe-sex kits as their calling cards, they take their outreach into the roughest Dallas parks and public sex environments.

"It is a war," said Anthony Jacobs, project coordinator for minority access at Renaissance III. "We wear fatigues every time we go out. That's for several reasons since we go into some pretty dangerous areas: people know who we are and co-workers can identify each other from far away."

Jacobs said outreach by Renaissance III tries to meet people where they are.

Then they offer them a safe-sex kit with two condoms, a water-based lubricant and candy. He said that the candy helps keep the message light, yet focused on playing it safe. It also builds trust with the outreach effort. "We don't judge," he said. "Then we can offer HIV education information along with it."

Funding for AIDS prevention and related programs has increased in recent years. In 1992, Dallas County received \$3.1 million from the Ryan White Act to fund a variety of AIDS needs. In 2001, federal funding grew to about \$17 million, which included housing and other services.

Across the country, overall federal spending for HIV and AIDS programs rose from \$14.2 billion in 2001 to more than \$16 billion in 2003. Much of the money hits Black communities. Of the \$744 million the Atlanta-based U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention received for domestic HIV and AIDS prevention programs in 2001, about 40 percent of those funds targeted African Americans.

Worldwide, HIV prevention spending in 2002 totaled \$1.9 billion, far short of the \$5.7 billion that United Nations organizations estimate will be needed annually by 2005. Moreover, only a small fraction of the millions of Africans in need of antiretroviral treatment for HIV obtain such medical care.

Doctors who treat HIV patients say the behavioral changes are needed to help stem the increasing HIV infection rates.

Dr. Jan Swanson, who has an Arlington, Texas, internal medicine practice, said some of her HIV clients are still engaging in risky behavior, including participating in bathhouses and attending "circuit parties."

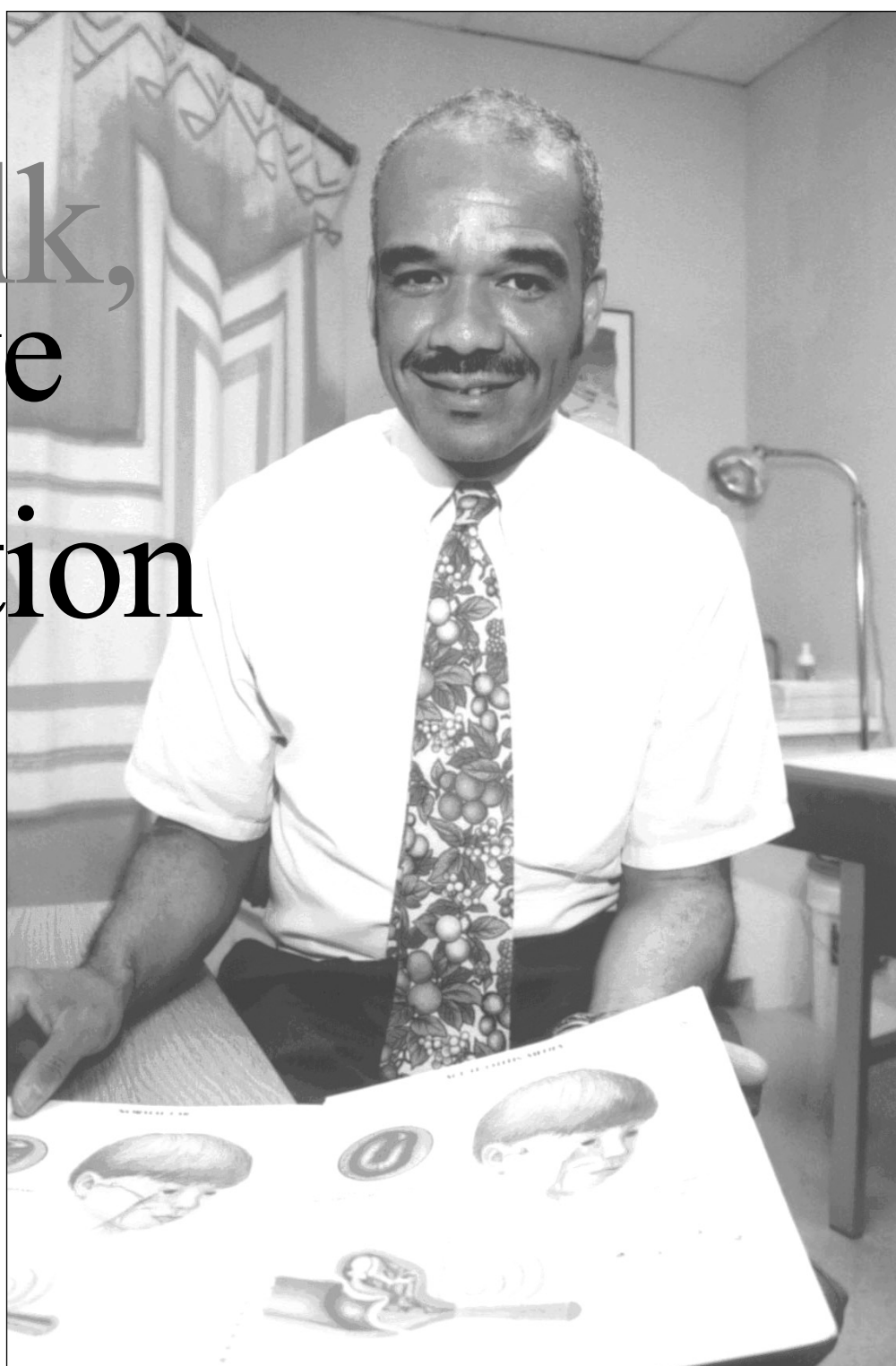
"Some people go out of town to circuit parties, all night or weekend parties where they are not likely to admit their status. They are using party drugs and having unprotected sex," said Swanson, adding that the parties are being held in San Francisco and Chicago. "People need more information on practicing safer sex at circuit parties. Those are areas where people are getting infected and re-infected."

Swanson said HIV clients who are exposed to a different strain of the disease may find that they have a resistance to the latest medications.

She said some clients are also frequenting bathhouses and having anonymous sex without protection.

Swanson recommends her clients get vaccinated for Hepatitis A & B, have a screening for syphilis, always practice safe sex, and get tested for HIV and Hepatitis C.

"I think people need to be proactive about their medical care," she said. "HIV is



Dr. Drew Alexander, whose internal medicine practice treats children and young adults, says it is important to teach individuals healthy behavior so that they can make wise choices. Photo by Deborah Kellogg/Dallas Examiner.

definitely still fatal. Compliance with medications will make a difference."

Dr. Drew Alexander, who treats patients between 5 years old and 25 years old, said changing behavior patterns should start early.

"Probably one of the more important elements for young people is living a healthy lifestyle -- healthy diet, get your sleep and choose carefully those activities in which you're involved," said Alexander, who practices in North Dallas. "If you are proactively doing healthy things, you're less likely to do unhealthy things. They need to hear it at home, at the health-care facility, at the academic community and within the community activities in which they are involved. It needs to be a global, consistent message."

Ann Sivley, a social worker and case management supervisor at AIDS Arms, said her clients have begun taking precautions.

Recently, a manufacturer of female condoms donated 200 units to AIDS Arms. The agency in turn distributed them through their women, youth and family service support groups. After the agency ran out, the women asked for more.

"It's been an interesting turn, to see how women are taking control over their bodies and their health," said Sivley.

Staff writers Kevin Shay and Sharon Egiebor contributed to this report.

## From a mother's loss comes lessons

By BRANDY EDWARDS  
Dallas Examiner



Tina Hornbuckle

Carolyn Puyol has buried one too many relatives.

Her stepdaughter, granddaughter and goddaughter died from AIDS complications.

Adrienne Puyol, a drug user, was 34 when she died in 1996.

Goddaughter Tina Hornbuckle died in 2000 at 30.

Granddaughter Leandrea Puyol, who was born with HIV, was 9 years old when she died in 2001.

Carolyn Puyol, who works for a life insurance and pre-arranged burial company, said that parents, teachers, counselors and everyone who is involved in a teen's life needs to show them what AIDS can do.

"Kids need to see that it can kill brutally," said Puyol, who speaks to teens on HIV/AIDS awareness. "They are told what can happen, but how often do teens go to the clinics and are shown what could happen face to face?"

"I wonder everyday if there was anything I could have done differently to save my family, but they chose that way of life," she said. "When my daughter was on drugs and I knew she had HIV, all I could do was visit her in the drug shelters every year and tell her how much I loved her."

"I knew her lifestyle is what caused her to get HIV. She was heavy into taking drugs. Therefore, I knew she was having unprotected sex and constantly putting herself in danger," said Puyol.

Leandrea Puyol's father was suspected of being on drugs, said Puyol. Leandrea's mother acquired AIDS from another relationship and didn't know she had it.

"I watched my babies suffer through something that they had no control over, especially my grandchild. She was such an innocent soul. The sad thing is that she knew she was going to die," she said.

"I remember when Leandrea was in the hospital. She would write books for the staff, and she always kept a positive attitude. It was heartbreaking to see her succumb to such a fatal illness," said Puyol, who is licensed through the American Red Cross to teach and educate others about HIV/AIDS.

Puyol said Hornbuckle's husband left her a note explaining that he had lived a homosexual lifestyle and apparently had unprotected sex.

Both of them died from complications of the disease, leaving three teenage girls behind.

Puyol said that she doesn't believe in simply telling teens not to have sex.

"The best preventive method one could have when it comes to AIDS is to see what it does to the body, see that your skin can turn anywhere from a pasty yellow to a pale, grayish color, and see that you lose your eyesight, your hair, your teeth, nails, motor abilities—you lose it all," Puyol said.

## Loving life, teen keeps looking toward her future

By BRANDY EDWARDS  
The Dallas Examiner

Shante\* loves life.

She's the wing on her high school varsity basketball team and an avid Dallas Cowboys football fan. Her bedroom is decorated with academic ribbons and basketball and scholarship pageant trophies.

"I love having friends, love going to clubs and staying out late; I absolutely love football games of any level," she said.

Shante was born with HIV. And in the corner of her bedroom sits a small table decorated with prescription bottles, creams and other generic medicines.

Every morning she takes more

than eight pills to keep her immune system functioning, but she doesn't let it stop the rest of her life.

"You hear about it on TV, you read about it only when statistics get high, or someone really young gets it and they go on some talk show or another," said the Dallas sophomore, who asked to remain anonymous.

"But there is more to having AIDS than telling the world about it, or having people feel sorry for you, or saying what a shame it is that such a young person is going to die at such a young age."

Shante played with her dog, Lady, and looked off in the distance from her Oak Cliff home as she remembered when she was first told she had AIDS.

"It was like I didn't, understand what my mom was telling me, I mean I was only about 5 or 6 years old. I really didn't know what AIDS was, didn't, know that you could die from it."

Shante paused and Lady ran off to uncover a buried squeaky ball from under a tree.

"What happened was, I got very sick and being so little, I thought it was just a cold or something, but then the doctor walked in and whispered something in [my mom,'s] ear, then she broke down crying. I couldn't understand why at the time," said Shante. "It was, until about three years later that it hit me and hit me hard."

For a long time, she was bitter toward her mother, who was a single parent.

"There was a point where I hated my mother. I was like 'How could you do this to me? How could you have been so careless?' Then I think about all the mistakes I have made and understand that it is the same thing that my mother did -- made a mistake."

Shante keeps her diagnosis private because there is still a stigma attached to the disease and a lot of ignorance.

"I was playing the usual kid games with some friends of mine. Then this one boy, I guess you could say he was kind of a bully, came and started messing with me. Of course being raised in Oak Cliff I wasn't about to let this kid get the best of me, especially some boy!"

Shante continued, "So he pushed me to the ground. I got up, and we started fighting. Then all of a sudden a teacher ran over and pulled the boy off of

me and shouted, 'Don't do that! You'll get AIDS!' and then she just looked at me ... everyone did.

"Now I look back and think about how ignorant that teacher was, but I felt so ashamed and dirty that until this very day I refuse to tell anyone," she said.

Shante said she plans to live the life she has to the fullest.

She loves playing basketball -- intense practices and heated games -- and especially the way the spectators scream and shout from the stands.

"They give me sort of a rush, they help me know that I can make it. I mean not only make the shot, but make it in life," she said.

Shante's plans include attending Howard University in Washington to major in education.

"I want ... to become a college teacher and teach at an [Historically Black College or University] because I want to teach a class of students who look like me.

"Just because I have AIDS, doesn't mean I have to slow down for anything or anyone. If I have to die, and if I have to die early, then I want to be able to look back at my life and say 'This is what I did,'" said Shante, as she got up and chased after Lady in her front yard.



**AIDS FACTS:** African American children represent 58 percent of all pediatric AIDS cases.

Of the 194 pediatric AIDS cases reported between July 2000 and June 2001, 163 (84 percent) were in African Americans and Hispanics.

Source: National Institute of Health

### Children and HIV/AIDS

There are far more Black children with AIDS in the United States than any other ethnic group. Blacks also follow closely behind whites in the total number of U.S. cases.

U.S. AIDS cases, 1981-2001	Children with AIDS
Black	5,337
White	1,579
Hispanic	2,060
Asian	54
American Indian	31
Total	9,061

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention