

**Dublin AIDS Alliance Ltd**

**Annual Report 2008**





## Background

Dublin AIDS Alliance (DAA) is a registered charity operating at local, national and European level. The principal aim of the organisation is to improve, through a range of support services, conditions for people living with HIV and AIDS and/or Hepatitis, their families and caregivers, while further promoting sexual health in the general population. Since 1987, DAA has been pioneering services in sexual health education and promotion, and has consistently engaged in lobbying and campaigning in the promotion of human rights.

DAA is acutely aware of the cultural and economic barriers that can affect life choices, rendering both men and women more vulnerable to HIV. Our support, prevention, education and training programmes are therefore rooted in capacity building and experiential learning techniques, which enable the negotiation of safer sex and/or injecting practices. While supporting service users around the choices available, DAA's approach broadly reflects a harm reduction model, which emphasises practical rather than idealised goals.

DAA's individual and group interventions are at all times age appropriate, and sensitive to the psychosocial needs, learning abilities and life experiences of our clients. We operate under an ethos of equality and are committed to making a positive contribution towards a humane and just society. DAA strives to ensure an environment that promotes equal opportunity and prohibits discrimination, while further enabling our staff, volunteers and service users to experience dignity and respect at all times.

Dublin AIDS Alliance is a voluntary non-profit organisation, linked to various local and national networks. DAA is the NGO representative for the Eastern region on the National AIDS Strategy Committee (NASC) and the Education and Prevention Subcommittee. DAA is a member of the HIV Services Network (HSN), the Prevention and Education committee of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD), The Irish Association of Addiction Counsellors (IAAAC), the Gay Health Network (GHN), the Drugs Education Workers Forum (DEWF), and the Prevention and Education sub-committee of the North Inner City Drugs Task Force (NICDTF). DAA is a FETAC registered provider. DAA is affiliated to the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE), and the Inner City Organisations Network (ICON). Other initiatives supported by DAA include Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Union for Improved Services, Communication, and Education (UISCE).

## Our Mission

Working to improve conditions for people living with HIV and AIDS, their families and caregivers, while actively promoting HIV and sexual health awareness in the general population.

## Our Vision

To contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of HIV in Ireland

## Organisational Objectives

- To support those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS
- To confront the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS
- To increase public awareness through the promotion of HIV and sexual health education
- To influence policy through partnership and active campaigning

## 2008 in Summary

Service Category	Number of Individuals Accessing Services 2008	Number of Interventions 2008
Community Support Programme	3,687	5,235
Prevention, Education & Training Programme	6,944	6,944
Public Information Distribution and Access 2008 (including Library Access)	-	64,532
FASNET – Prevocational Training Initiative	5	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,636</b>	<b>76,711</b>



## Chairperson's Foreword

The Board of Dublin AIDS Alliance is pleased to present its Annual Report for 2008. During the year, DAA has continued its commitment to delivering quality services to our clients, both through direct support to people living with HIV and through raising awareness of HIV and related issues.

As long as the rate of HIV infection continues to increase, and those living with HIV continue to experience stigma and discrimination, the need for organisations like DAA will remain. With its emphasis on education and prevention, as well as advocacy, care and support for those affected by HIV, it remains as relevant today as when it was started twenty two years ago.

Through its many activities DAA has ensured that HIV remains in the public eye, necessary education and prevention work is carried out, and HIV-related stigma is tackled on a national level. The Community Support Programme saw a significant increase of 24% from the previous year in the number of clients accessing services, with a total of 3,687 clients receiving a service. DAA's Community Support team also continued its work with minority ethnic groups through an innovative outreach programme.

The amount of training sessions delivered by the Prevention, Education and Training (PET) Department rose by 25% in 2008 to a total of 116 training sessions, compared to 93 sessions in 2007.

During 2008 Dublin AIDS Alliance continued its work in influencing both regional and national policy to ensure that HIV is kept on the public and political agenda. For example, DAA played an active part in the writing of the *HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan 2008-2012* published this year, and will continue to press for its recommendations to be implemented.

None of this work would be possible without the continued support of our funders, in particular the HSE, FÁS and the North Inner City Drugs Task Force. We are also increasingly dependent on donations from the general public and on our own fundraising initiatives which have enabled us to develop innovative projects, which continue to enhance our service into the future.

On behalf of the Board I would like to express our sincere thanks to all the staff of DAA for their ongoing commitment particularly at times of staff shortages. This report outlines in greater detail their achievement during 2008. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their

invaluable contributions throughout the year and their ongoing dedication and enthusiasm for the work of DAA. Finally, on behalf of the staff and Board of Director's of DAA we would like to extend our thanks and sincere appreciation to all those who have supported the work of DAA in various capacities throughout 2008.

In 2008, DAA lost a much loved and respected colleague. Noel Walsh, HIV activist, GCN columnist, and member of National AIDS Strategy Committee (NASC), died in November 2008 and this report is dedicated to his memory.

**MAEVE FOREMAN**

Chairperson

## Executive Director's Foreword

Figures published in 2008 by the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) show that a total of 405 new HIV diagnoses were reported in Ireland. This represents a 3.6% increase on 2007. Also in 2008 the United Nations General Assembly stated that important progress had been made globally in response to HIV particularly in areas of access to antiretroviral therapy. Notwithstanding this positive development the report also points out that in many countries new infections continue to outstrip the expansion of treatment programmes, and commitment to HIV prevention remains inadequate.

In Ireland in 2008 the Minister with responsibility for health promotion launched the *HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan 2008 - 2012*. This plan has very positive recommendations including expanded provision of needle exchanges in a variety of settings, wider provision of HIV/STI testing, and free availability of condoms. The report also stressed the importance of HIV prevention and stated that 'it can have a major impact in halting and reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS and can also impact in reducing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and improving sexual health'. Dublin AIDS Alliance welcomed this report and its recommendations and has called on Government to resource and implement it, in addition to advocating the establishment of a National Sexual Health Strategy.

However, the economic downturn and the reduction in funding to services in the sector is a challenge to the implementation of this plan. In 2008 demand for many of our services increased and this is outlined in greater detail in the report. New challenges have emerged in recent years which have demanded innovative approaches in engaging new communities in our services. Many of these services have been developed despite reduction in funding.

While it is accepted that the economic downturn is a current reality in Ireland, sustained investment in HIV prevention is essential. The policy approach adopted by UNAIDS in 2005 recommended that all countries intensify HIV prevention efforts. Investment by Government in prevention needs to be prioritised. The cost of ignoring prevention will only result in increased medical costs in the future. To achieve this, we need strong political leadership. Dublin AIDS Alliance calls on Government to provide this leadership, if we are serious about addressing HIV in Ireland.

**MARY O'SHEA**  
Executive Director



## Community Support Programme

The Community Support Programme at DAA provides for the information and support needs of HIV+ people, their families, and caregivers. Additionally, this programme facilitates access, via street outreach, to testing for those who may be at risk of HIV or Hepatitis transmission. Experienced and highly qualified staff, with whom both health care and other professionals seek consultation and advice relating to HIV, deliver this long established programme.

Statistical analysis of services provided by this programme between January and December 2008 is outlined below.

### Numbers Accessing Community Support Services

A total of 4,187 clients accessed the services of Community Support in 2008, an increase of 1,214 on the previous year. 283 were known to be HIV positive (see Table 1.0) a slight decrease of 38 people from 2007, with 1,601 interventions in total, averaging 5.6 per HIV positive client (see Table 1.1). Overall interventions recorded with carers, street outreach, the general public, and professionals totalled 4,134 (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2)

### Client Profile

Table 1.0 - Number of Service Users 2007 & 2008

	Male 2007	Female 2007	Total 2007		Male 2008	Female 2008	Total 2008
HIV + Clients	218	103	321		175	108	283
Carers/Significant others	12	20	32		9	18	27
General Public	345	657	1,002		963	415	1,378
Outreach	1,069	486	1,555		1,524	899	2,423
Professionals <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a	63		25	51	76
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>2,973</b>				<b>4,187</b>

<sup>1</sup> Gender breakdown not ascertained for this category of service user



**Table 1.1 - Number and Category of Interventions for HIV+ Clients 2008**

	<i>Adv/ Med</i>	<i>H/HV</i>	<i>Welf</i>	<i>Pri</i>	<i>Fin</i>	<i>Leg</i>	<i>1-2-1</i>	<i>Coun</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Train</i>	<i>Drop -In</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Female	331	32	39	0	63	21	96	21	38	19	15	<b>675</b>
Male	352	34	82	1	65	28	107	85	61	28	83	<b>926</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1,601</b>

Average Number of Interventions per HIV+ Client = 5.6

**Table 1.2 - Number of Interventions per Other Categories of Clients 2008**

	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Carers	24	35	<b>59</b>
Street Outreach	899	1,524	<b>2,423</b>
General Public	497	1,071	<b>1,568</b>
Professionals	n/a	n/a	<b>84</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4,134</b>

### **Type of Service**

In relation to services, the most frequently availed of service for HIV+ clients was that of **Advocacy and Mediation**. Of the total 1,601 interventions made on behalf of HIV+ clients in 2008, 42.6% (n=683) were in this category (compared to 49.7% (n=881) in 2007). The vast majority of these interventions centered on homelessness or housing difficulties and complaints made about both statutory and non-statutory agencies.

The second most availed of service was **One-to-One Support**. There was a significant rise in this category of interventions compared to other categories. In 2007, 11.7% (n=208) of total interventions were 'One-to-One.' In 2008, 29.7% (n=203) of overall interventions were in this category.

The third most frequently availed of service was **Financial** (128 interventions). This represents individuals seeking financial support in relation to paying bills or debts, or buying essential electrical goods or furniture.

Community Support conducts home and hospital visits to meet the needs of those unable to access in-house services. In 2008 there were 66 home and hospital visits, just over twice the number conducted in 2007 (n=32).

### **HIV+ Client Profile**

Of the 283 HIV + people availing of Community Support Services, 62% (n=175) were male, 38% (n=108) were female. 65% (n=184) of these were first time clients.

52.3% of the total number of clients (n=148) were self-referrals, 11.3% (n=32) were directly referred by an NGO, and 5.3% (n=15) by a hospital. 5.0% (n=16) were referred to DAA by family/friends, and 7.8% (n=19) were referred by a statutory agency. 1.8% (n=5) were referred by other agents. Referral information on 14.8% of clients (n=42) could not be ascertained.

46% (n=133) of clients were from County Dublin, with Dublin 1 and 8 most highly represented. 10% of clients were homeless at the time of their data entry.

Of the 283 HIV+ individuals using the services of Community Support, 20.1% (n=57) identified themselves as Gay, .4% (n=1) identified himself as a Male Bisexual, 37.8% (n=107) identified themselves as Heterosexual and 41.7% (n=118) did not identify their sexual orientation.

Of the 283 HIV+ clients with a known age bracket (n=148), 27.7%, (n=41), were aged between 31-35 years with the second highest age group being 41-46 years old, (25.6%, n=38). 21.6% (n=32) were aged between 36-40 years old. 14.1% (n=21) were under the age of 30, the youngest being 14 years old. 10.8% were over 47 years, (n=16), the oldest client being aged 71 years. 47.7% (n=135) of the total number of clients did not identify their age range.

The numbers of known HIV+ non-Irish nationals using the services of Dublin AIDS Alliance decreased from 135 in 2007 to 90 in 2008. However, the vast majority of this year's non-Irish national group were new clients (83.3%, n=75).

Table 1.3 - HIV+ Clients by Gender and Sexual Orientation 2008<sup>1</sup>

	Gay	Bi-sex	Hetero	Orientation Not Described	TOTAL
Female	0	0	67	41	108
Male	57	1	40	77	175
TOTAL	57 (20.1%)	1 (0.4%)	107 (37.8%)	118 (41.7%)	283 (100%)

Table 1.4 - HIV+ Clients by Drug Use 2008<sup>2</sup>

	Non Drug Use	Meth	Meth And Heroin	Meth and Co-caine/ Crack	Meth, Heroin and Cocaine/ Crack	Benzos	Other Amphet	Cannabis only	Not Known	TOTAL
Female	27	15	1	12	1	1	1	0	50	108
Male	32	24	4	12	1	1	0	1	100	175
TOTAL	59	39	5	24	2	2	1	1	150	283

Table 1.5 – HIV+ Clients by Gender and Age Band 2008

Years	0-16	17-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-46	47-52	53+	Unknown	TOTAL
Female	0	0	4	7	19	15	9	2	1	51	108
Male	0	1	1	8	22	17	29	5	8	84	175
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>283</b>

<sup>1</sup> Self Identified

<sup>2</sup> Self Identified

### Client Profile – Other

In 2007 there were 2,715 interventions for the 'Other' category of clients (those whose status is unknown including the general public, those met on street outreach, and professionals accessing information or support services). This year, that number rose significantly to 4,134.

The number of the **general public** using Dublin AIDS Alliance in-house services rose significantly from 1,002 last year to 1,378 in 2008. The vast majority of these individuals continue to be 'walk-ins', accessing condoms and/or sexual health information or requesting information on drug related harm reduction or pre-test counselling.

The numbers of individuals engaged through **street outreach** rose significantly from 1,555 in 2007 to 2,423 in 2008. This was due to the advent of the Volunteer Outreach Team who disseminate sexual health and drug use information to the 'hard to reach'.

The number of **professionals** seeking advice or support from Community Support rose slightly in 2008. In 2007, 63 professionals contacted Community Support; in 2008 this number increased by 13 to 76. This category does not include interactions with professionals in the field in relation to mutual clients (which would be logged under "interventions"). Rather, it includes field-related professionals seeking personal support/advice or non-field related professionals such as teachers, social workers, and community leaders needing information or advice about HIV/ sexual health/ drugs related policies or situations.



## **Ethnic Minority Project**

Street outreach engaging new communities was expanded considerably in 2008. Thirty four new outreach environments were established. An information stand commenced in the Moore Street Mall in March 2008 and this is now operating on a weekly basis. The increased outreach allowed for a wider distribution of the 'Don't Panic' guides which were published in 2007.

In addition to this, three new partnerships were established in 2008:

- The Arab Community Forum
- The African Churches Network
- AkiDwa (The African Women's Network)

## **Volunteer Project**

In line with Dublin AIDS Alliance's Strategic Plan 2006-2008 to recruit and train peer volunteers to increase outreach to new communities, eight volunteers were recruited and completed the volunteer training programme in 2008. Community Support along with PET trained these volunteers in sexual health awareness and outreach field work in order to disseminate sexual health information to hard to reach ethnic groups. The volunteers come from a number of countries and between them speak sixteen languages: English, French, Swedish, Portuguese, Kurdish, Arabic, Farsi, Russian, Georgian, Shona (Bantu), Sinhales, Lingana, Swahili, Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa. Since completion of the training, the volunteers have participated with the team on a number of outreach events. Their effectiveness in engaging new communities and identifying specific languages and cultural nuances is a very positive step for this aspect of our work into the future.



***Volunteer Project 2008***

## **Focus Groups**

Community Support, in conjunction with UISCE, held a client focus group (n=9) with representatives of Boots Chemists to ascertain the needs of drug users using Boots services. On behalf of the NACD, Community Support also facilitated a focus group of LGBT drug users (n=8) to look at issues affecting this community. The information gleaned was brought back to the NACD to inform the new Drugs Strategy.

## Prevention Education & Training Department

The Prevention Education and Training (PET) Programme provides targeted HIV prevention and sexual health promotion initiatives, while combating the prejudice, stigma, and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS through informational and experiential workshops.

Raising public awareness about issues of social exclusion, marginalisation, HIV, HBV/HCV, sexual health and drug user prejudice is an important part of our work. Consequently, training and education initiatives, while focusing particularly on HIV/Hepatitis prevention and sexual health promotion further encompass a broad range of issues that endeavour to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural change among participants. Our prevention education and training programmes are therefore rooted in capacity building and experiential learning techniques, which enable the negotiation of safer sex and/or injecting practices. PET's individual and group interventions are, at all times, age appropriate and sensitive to the psychosocial needs, learning abilities, and life experience of our clients.

### Training Summary & Client Profile 2008

In total, the PET Department delivered 116 training, education and information sessions in 2008, which represents a 24% increase on 2007 (see Tables 2.0 and 2.1).

**Table 2.0 – Numbers of Training & Education Sessions 2008**

	Schools	Colleges	NGOs	Statutory	Total
January	3	1	0	0	4
February	5	1	1	2	9
March	1	0	6	5	12
April	0	2	9	4	15
May	1	0	5	0	6
June	0	0	8	0	8
July	0	0	3	0	3
August	0	0	9	0	9
September	4	1	6	2	13
October	4	5	15	1	25
November	1	2	9	0	12
December	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>116</b>

**Table 2.1 – Number of Individual Participants 2008**

	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Colleges</b>	<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Statutory</b>	<b>Total</b>
January	113	20	0	0	133
February	151	300*	8	14	473
March	85	0	76	34	195
April	0	400*	97	35	532
May	18	0	58	0	76
June	0	0	89	0	89
July	0	0	28	0	28
August	0	0	76	0	76
September	150	700*	68	23	941
October	150	3,616*	141	28	3,935
November	60	320*	86	0	466
December	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>5,356</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>6,944</b>

*(\*Numbers participating in events held in colleges are estimated based on the amount of information disseminated)*

NGOs constituted the highest category in 2008, 61.2%, (n=71), availing of, in the main, the Sexual Health & Drug Awareness Training for Trainers, but also Sexual Health Workshops and Safer Sex Negotiation Skills Training.

12% (n=14) of training and education sessions were delivered to statutory organisations, availing of Sexual Health, STIs, HIV, and Hepatitis training and information.

16.4% of sessions were delivered to schools, availing mainly of one-hour HIV and sexual health information sessions, and 10.4% of sessions were delivered to colleges, availing of Sexual Health information stands, inclusive of Durex National Condom Week activities.



**Table 2.2 – Individual Participants by Gender 2008**

	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Colleges</b>	<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Statutory</b>	<b>Total</b>
Female	267	2,271	567	101	3,206
Male	460	3,085	160	33	3,738
<b>Total</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>5,356</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>6,944</b>

The gender breakdown of participants engaging in sessions is demonstrated in Table 2.2 above. 46.2% (n=3,206) were female, and 53.8% (n=3,738) were male.

Sexual Health Workshops and the Sexual Health & Drug Awareness Training for Trainers Programme were the most sought after training, representing 61.2% of all training delivered in 2008. Safer Sex Negotiation Skills Training represented 12.1%, Information Stands 8.6%, and all other training constituting 18.1%.

#### **NICDTF-funded Programmes**

- A HIV and Hepatitis C training initiative funded by the North Inner City Drugs Task Force (NICDTF) is now in its fourth year. This Sexual Health & Drug Awareness Training for Trainers Programme, which is FETAC level 5 accredited, is primarily for youth and community leaders working in the North Inner City area and aims to train and up skill the participants to enable them to promote safer sex practices and engage the client group in their care in sexual health and drug awareness education. Three programmes were delivered in 2008 to a total of 39 participants (7 male / 32 female).
- A Safer Sex Negotiation Skills training initiative funded by the NICDTF primarily aims to provide 'at risk' individuals/groups with the skills necessary to make safer sexual choices, reducing primary and secondary HIV and STI transmission. The training for trainers programme is FETAC level 5 accredited. In total 158 individuals participated in this training (49 male / 109 female) throughout 2008.

## **Training Programme Development**

- Tailored-specific sexual health workshops were developed and delivered to Community Health Workers in two Traveller Primary Healthcare Projects in Dublin, in consultation with the HSE and Community Health Workers in the projects. The workshops included training on HIV, STIs, Hepatitis, Sexual Health, and Contraception.
- In partnership with the Community Support Department, a Sexual Health & Outreach Training Programme was developed as part of the Community Support Volunteer Programme funded by Dublin City Development Board. The programme included training on HIV and AIDS, STIs, Hepatitis, TB, Legal & Cultural Issues, Sexuality, Boundaries & Confidentiality, Interventions & Crisis Management, and Outreach training. The programme was delivered by both the Community Support and PET teams.

## **Quality Assurance in Training**

As part of our FETAC accredited training programmes, an application for agreement of Quality Assurance Procedures was completed and submitted to FETAC in 2008. The application was accepted and agreed by the Quality Assurance Council, and Dublin AIDS Alliance is now registered with FETAC to offer programmes leading to FETAC awards in the National Framework of Qualifications.

## **Gay Health Network (GHN)**

The PET Department represents Dublin AIDS Alliance on the Gay Health Network (GHN). Established in 1994, GHN is an All-Ireland network of individuals and agencies whose purpose is to promote HIV prevention and sexual health awareness among men who have sex with men, with a focus on men living with HIV, and to combat the stigma associated with HIV. Activities of the network throughout 2008 included:

- Development of a three-year Strategic Action Plan.
- Development and publication of a PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) information booklet.
- Launch of a new safer sex campaign at the Dublin Pride Festival 'Don't Risk It – Rubber Up with Pride', and co-ordination of a 'condom workshop' at the launch of the festival.

- Re-design and launch of the network's website [www.ghn.ie](http://www.ghn.ie). The website includes all GHN publications in nine languages (English, Polish, Spanish, Irish, French, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, and Arabic).
- Launch of a new quarterly newsletter 'On the One Road' which aims to provide organisations with updated information in relation to HIV and sexual health for men who have sex with men.
- Distribution of safer sex packs at the Bingham Rugby World Cup held in DCU in June 2008.

### **Durex National Condom Week 2008**

In partnership with Durex, the PET Department co-ordinated activities in a number of third-level colleges for National Condom Week 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008. Sexual Health packs including condoms and information on sexual health and condom use were distributed throughout the week.

### **Awareness-raising Initiatives**

The PET Department Resource Library continued to be a valuable source of information throughout 2008 for schools, colleges, NGOs, statutory agencies, youth and community organisations, and the general public. Dissemination and distribution of HIV and sexual health leaflets, postcards, information booklets, posters, videos/DVDs, etc, totalled 64,532 in 2008.



*DAA staff at the D.C.U. Health Fair  
02/04/08*



## **FÁS and FÁS Special Needs Education & Training Scheme (FASNET) Employment Initiatives**

In June 2008, approval was secured from FÁS for the renewal of the 16th Community Employment Scheme. The scheme continues to operate on-the-job skills and appropriate training, which facilitates over a period of time access to the mainstream labour market. At Dublin AIDS Alliance, a percentage of participants are seconded to external organisations including Cairde, Outhouse and New Communities Partnership. A number of participants come from a variety of countries including Kosovo, Algeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Romania, Nigeria and France. In 2008, three participants secured employment and one progressed onto full time education. A number of participants completed modules for FETAC level 5 courses in addition to participants availing of training in their own time supported by FÁS. Courses include Addiction Studies, Computers (ECDL), Book-keeping and Certified Payroll Technician by the Irish Payroll Association (IPASS).

The scheme also continues to operate FÁS AIDS Special Needs Education and Training (FASNET), an innovative programme supporting marginalised and educationally disadvantaged people affected by drug-use and/or HIV and AIDS. FASNET is a pre-vocational training initiative that is sponsored by FÁS under the Community Employment Programme, and endorsed by the North Inner City Drugs Task Force (NICDTF). Operating from principles of empowerment and equality, the programme seeks to address social exclusion by affording participants the opportunity to avail of capacity building training and development opportunities that enable the expansion of life choices and facilitate access to positive social and community experiences. This is a three year programme due for completion in 2009. Each participant attends for 19.5 hours per week over a three-year period; the syllabus is broad based with an emphasis on life skills.

### **Participant Profile**

While the vast majority of participants are resident in the north inner city, a smaller number are referred from drug treatment services citywide including, Dublin 1 and 10. Of the 5 participants involved in the scheme in 2008, 1 (20%) was female and 4 (80%) were male. The age range was between 30 and 45.

The majority of participants experience difficulties with concentration and have poor social, communication, and literacy skills. Low levels of self-esteem, poor self image, low levels of educational attainment, lack of family support and compromised physical and mental health



frequently affect participants in terms of both their attendance and progression. In order to operate effectively, FASNET must be flexible enough to accommodate regular hospital visits, clinic appointments while coping with participant relapses into drug use.

### **Progression**

In 2008, four participants were successful in completing Junior Certificate English. Additional courses included CV preparation, job seeking skills, art, computer skills and First Aid. Five of the group completed FETAC level 3 in Communications, Food and Nutrition. Five participants remain on the FASNET Programme for additional support/mentoring provided by the FASNET Supervisor.

## Highlights - Additional DAA Activities in 2008

### Irish AIDS Day

On Irish AIDS Day, 15th June 2008, Dublin AIDS Alliance raised concern at the 7% increase in newly diagnosed cases of HIV in Ireland in 2007 and called on Government to:

- Develop and implement a National Sexual Health Strategy modeled on the National Drug Strategy
- Remove VAT from condoms and called for the availability of free condoms in targeted settings
- Expand primary healthcare services to include services for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Continue the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) component of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme (SPHE) to senior cycle, as it is currently limited to primary and post primary junior cycles.

Dublin AIDS Alliance welcomed the publication of the *HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan 2008 - 2012*. Dublin AIDS Alliance is a member of the Education and Prevention sub-committee of National AIDS Strategy Committee (NASC) which produced this report.

Activities organised to mark the day included:

Distribution of red ribbons at the Bingham Rugby World Cup on 15th June. Prior to the event, DAA, in partnership with Johnny and the Gay Health Network, prepared and distributed safer sex packs, specifically targeting MSM, which included information booklets, postcards and condoms. The packs were distributed to players and fans as part of 'welcome pack' in DCU.



***Bingham Cup World Cup***

## Pride Festival

DAA, in partnership with Johnny, co-ordinated a condom workshop in The George, a popular gay pub, in support of the Pride initiative in addition to distribution of red ribbons. Later in the month the staff of DAA participated in the Pride March.

## World AIDS Day

On World AIDS Day, Peter Power, Minister for Overseas Development, launched a report on "HIV Related Stigma and Discrimination in Ireland Today". The report was commissioned by the Stamp out Stigma steering committee. Dublin AIDS Alliance was actively involved with this committee throughout 2008. The report combined the findings from three separate studies and demonstrated that people living with HIV experience significant levels of stigma and discrimination across a wide range of areas. The campaign is a partnership of HIV positive people, domestic and international development agencies working in the field of HIV & AIDS. It was co-funded by Irish Aid and the Department of Health and Children. Continued funding for this campaign remains uncertain.

## Fundraising and Media

Three fundraising events were held in 2008:

- A music quiz organised by Phantom 105.2 in June 2008

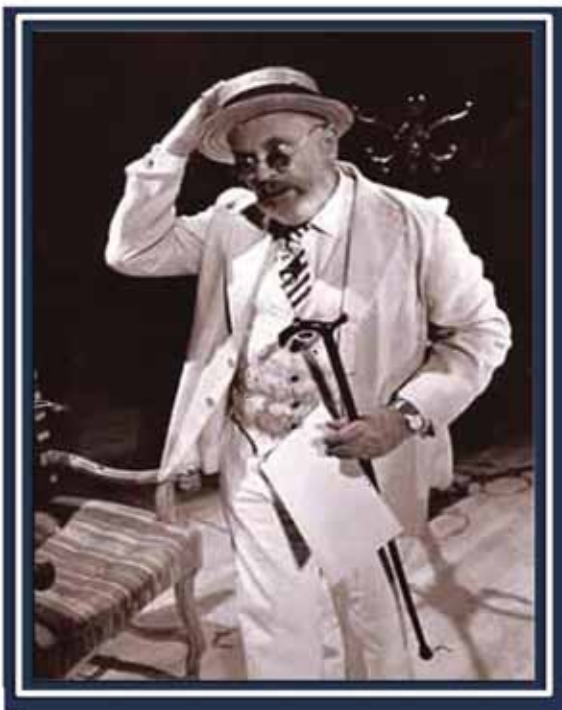


**Phantom 105.2 Fundraising Quiz**





- The Women's Mini Marathon June 2008 fundraising campaign organised by DAA. The theme for the 2008 event was 'HIV in Ireland – we still have a marathon to run' and those participating in support of DAA were supplied with themed t-shirts for the event.



- Senator David Norris' one man show on James Joyce in the O'Reilly Theatre at Belvedere College on November 30<sup>th</sup>, the eve of World AIDS Day, was also organised by DAA. The Lord Mayor of Dublin attended the David Norris event.

All events were successful in raising funds and awareness of both HIV and Dublin AIDS Alliance.

Three press releases were issued by DAA in February, June, and December of 2008 and received extensive media coverage in the National and Regional newspapers. The Executive Director was interviewed for a number of radio and TV programmes including RTE, Newstalk, Today FM, and a number of regional stations.



## Acknowledgements

Dublin AIDS Alliance would like to express sincere thanks and appreciation to all who worked with and supported our organisation throughout 2008.

The Director's holding office during the year were: Anna Quigley (Chairperson), Mairéad Lyons, Stephen Rourke, Paul Quigley, Maeve Foreman, Declan Montgomery (until September 2008) and Maurice Fines.

**Executive Director:** Mary O'Shea **Administration:** John Ryan (Office Manager from February-December 2008), Martin Ade-Onojobi (CE Supervisor), Patricia Dillon-Killeen, Angela Sanfey, Nazhat Ali Ryan, Alice Laffin, Ellen Conway (retired March 2008), Marcella Wynne and Esther Gathura. **FASNET Programme:** Bernadette Black (FASNET Supervisor), Bernard Curran and Brian O'Shaughnessy. **Prevention Education & Training Programme:** Susan Donlon (PET Co-ordinator), Sue Carter, Jane Toolan and Danielle Taliercio. **Community Support Programme:** Erin Nugent (CS Co-ordinator), Lily Hyland, Richard Boyle and Rebecca Seery.

**Our Volunteers:** Christian Betu, Joel Biongo, Ismael Khudri, Guylaine Mbaki, Zoleka Mtonjana, Evonne Mushonga, Marthe Mutanda and Dimitri Shelia.

### **Our express thanks to our principle funders...**

Health Service Executive, Northern Area; FÁS, Jervis St; North Inner City Drugs Task Force

### **...and additional organisations and individuals for their support in 2008:**

Durex/Myriad Public Relations Ltd, Phantom 105.2, The Bingham Rugby World Cup, all those who participated in the Women's Mini-Marathon, all colleges who participated in the Durex National Condom Week, Form, Dublin City Development Board, Dublin Bus Community Support Programme, Staff of the Moore St. Mall, Sports Against Racism (SARI), Gil Berkovich and the Ireland League Of Nations, Abdul Zeroug and the Arab Communities Forum, Boots Chemists, PNI Mortgages Ltd, Pastor Amos Ngigi, Wallace Construction Ltd, The Academy, Silver Trap Salsa, Bridgy Hynes, Lisa Cahill (volunteer), Andrea Leahy and the team at Lark Solutions, Enda Markey, The Dublin Pride Committee, Mark Hooper and the team at the Picture Works, David Norris, Belvedere College, Eibhlin Byrne (Lord Mayor of Dublin in 2008), Alternative Miss Ireland (AMI), AWAS, Basic Instincts, Glorney Charitable Foundation, Protestant Aid, Nevan Bermingham, Brian Meelough, Paul Neale, Minister Peter Power (Minister for Overseas Development), Belvedere College, John Doyle, Oliver and Philo Seery, IADT Students Union, Joseph Carey

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**CHY 10858.**

This report is dedicated to the memory of Noel Walsh, HIV activist, GCN columnist and member of the NASC who died in November 2008.

