

The Diocesan AIDS Task Force 2007 Report

The Diocesan AIDS Task Force is a ministry of presence, chartered and authorized by then Bishop Robert O. Miller, in 1989. It is intended that we be an educational resource for the Diocese, specifically reaching out to clergy and youth by providing informational and outreach resources. We do such in response to inquiry, and by presence at annual Diocesan Convention and other venues as requested/approved. We are also a member of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, the point office at the Episcopal Church Center in New York. We also provided scholarship for retreats for those infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS. These retreats are held at Kanuga in NC, Sacred Heart Benedictine Monastery in Cullman, and Camp McDowell. We meet perhaps three times a year, to discuss funding needs, update each other on ministries and opportunities and potential focus here and abroad (as approved at previous Diocesan conventions), as well as administrative and financial details which need discussion and decision. We also have an intake ministry of clothing, bedding, toiletries, household cleaning items, school supplies for children, blankets, etc. as part of the registration process and visits to the annual Diocesan Convention. The gifts are then transported to a local community-based HIV/AIDS outreach organization which puts the donations to use by families and individuals in need. We are available, as a speakers bureau, for invitation by parishes who may wish to have a program on AIDS outreach and "how to" connect to ministries and needs in their respective areas, as well as receive donations of funds which might be designated by outreach decision at respective churches.

There are many opportunities for the Diocese to respond to AIDS in AFRICA. Parish ECW's can connect with Africa's Mother's Unions which is the Anglican Communion's version of our ECW. The Mother's Unions are the "front line" of church-related AIDS outreach in Africa.

AIDS in Haiti is another area for valuable ministry to take place in the coming year. "We advocate, especially for the children orphans, for care, concern, comfort, and outreach for the Haitian people living and dying with HIV/AIDS. Until a few years ago, Haiti had the highest and most staggering rates of infection and death in the AIDS pandemic in the entire Western Hemisphere".

Finally, we are taking a step forward in negotiations with AIDS Alabama to perhaps collaborate in providing education and information as requested by parishes and small groups. However, we are early in those discussions.

For information or clarification, please contact Task Force Chair Frank Romanowicz at 205-871-1815, or far32842@bellsouth.net.

Frank Romanowicz – Chair