

MOTHERS' VOICES

Talk early. Talk often. They'll listen. Spring 2004

NEWSLETTER

Update 2003 – The Year in Review

As we approach Spring 2004, we would like to give you a brief overview of the highlights of the previous year. 2003 was a year of tremendous milestones, progress and growth for Mothers' Voices and this could not be possible without the constant commitment of individuals, corporations and foundations who have stood behind us, helping us lay the groundwork in the early years.

The numerous requests for our programs only emphasize the urgency and importance of our mission. Parents today are bombarded with images from the media, making them keenly aware of the signals their children are receiving and the need to communicate about these issues. Yet, current funding for abstinence-only until marriage education is at an all time high and teachers are limited by mandated curriculum. Parents are looking to us to help them navigate through this time in their children's lives and in 2003 we surpassed our goals by more than 100% directly reaching 2263 parents, youth and families with our programs and materials.



2003 Extraordinary Voices
Jorge Mursuli, Edith and Seymour Gelber, Judy Weissel



"Friend for Life" Deborah Roffman presents to over 400 luncheon guests.

Here are just a few of the ways we've grown:

- **National Headquarters** - last year marked our new status as Mothers' Voices national office giving us a greater presence and the opportunity to form alliances with national organizations and expand our programs throughout the country.
- **University of Miami Family Care Program** - with a \$45,000 grant made possible by the **Dade Community Foundation**, MV launched a series of programs that targeted HIV+ individuals and their children who receive care and treatment through the U of M Family Care Center at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

- **Conferences** - Program staff, Amber Graham and Alina Orozco presented workshops in Washington, DC at the **Voices 2003 Conference on AIDS**; the **Florida Social Workers Conference** in Orlando, FL; and the **Family Central, Inc. Conference** in Ft. Lauderdale. Sande Gracia Jones, a Mothers' Voices board member and faculty member at Florida International University's School of Nursing, presented a workshop about our programs at the **Caribbean and Central American Nursing Congress on AIDS** in Cuba. MV Founder/Director, Barbara Gaynor was chosen to sit on the Host Committee for the **amfAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research) Conference** held in Miami last March. MV will participate in the national conference again this year.

Exciting plans are currently underway for Mothers' Voices 10th Anniversary Gala to be held in May 2005.

To join the "Power of Red" host committee and participate in this "over-the-top" event please call Susie Becker or Lori Gerson at (305) 347-5467.



The Mothers' Voices table created by DASH students in memory of Roy Weissel. Top - Lori Gerson, Susie Becker, Todd Fogel, Barbara Gaynor, Dr. Cheryl Holder Bottom- Pat Markowitz, Judy Weissel, Lynne Roth, Karen Dillworth

• **Important Grants** – We received the first allocation of \$50,000 from the Pfizer Foundation's three-year Southern HIV/AIDS Prevention Initiative. Mothers' Voices was one of four organizations in Florida selected. The Blue Foundation of Blue Cross/Blue Shield recently awarded MV \$10,000 to support our Raising Healthy Kids programming. In addition, the AD Henderson, Roblee, Knight Leigh, Adams, Campbell, Kramer, and North Dade Medical Foundations as well as BMS Virology and Coral Gables Congregational Church continue to provide their invaluable support.

• **Program Highlights** – Mothers' Voices participated in a two-day conference for Gulliver Preparatory School in South Miami, called "Sex, Drugs, and Violence: Are the Risks too Great?" The conference was attended by almost 800 students in grades 9-12. About 200 of their parents attended a Mothers' Voices program the evening prior. The success of the program generated a similar three-part series for their 7th and 8th grade students in January 2004. In addition, through "I Have a Dream", a program for at-risk elementary students, created and funded by the **Braman Foundation**, Mothers' Voices was invited to make monthly presentations to the parents of these students.

• **Events** – "The best ever!"... "Fantastic!"... These are just a few of the rave reviews heard at the 8th Annual Extraordinary Voices luncheon. Held in May at the new Parrot Jungle Island and attended by over 400 guests, the luncheon raised over \$50,000! "Friend for Life", Deborah Roffman, author and sexuality educator, returned in July to do a two-day workshop for our staff. In October, MV was chosen to participate in **Dining by Design**, an over-the-top affair in the Design District that showcased the talents of local designers, architects, and florists. Presented by Elle Décor Magazine, DIFFA (The Design Industry's Foundation Fighting AIDS) and the Dade Community Foundation, this nationally recognized event raised funds for Mothers' Voices and the Episcopal AIDS Ministries.

The past year's success will take us to the next phase of our growth, with 2004 full of promise and opportunities. In today's tumultuous economy, many non-profits are finding it difficult to stay afloat, but your belief in us has allowed us to overcome those obstacles and flourish with a bright future. In 2004, as Mothers' Voices national headquarters, we will continue to bring our unique programs to families of all walks of life, and help to insure a healthy tomorrow for children throughout the country.



Jeffrey Thrasher, Design Chair; Joe Pena, Dade Community Foundation; Margaret Russell, Ellé Decor; Victoria Taittinger, Taittinger Champagne; Barbara Gaynor at the Dining by Design Event.

Did you know?

- ✓ The Federal Government allocated \$135 million in FY2003 for abstinence-only until marriage education up 83% from the previous year. The proposed allocation for FY 2004 is \$270 million with NO funding for comprehensive sexual health education.
- ✓ Teens who attend schools where condoms are made available are **less** likely to engage in sexual activity than those who attend schools that don't distribute condoms.
- ✓ 4,000,000 teens in this country are infected with a sexually transmitted disease each year.

(Source: Kaiser Family Foundation. www.kff.org)

Stay tuned for information regarding Mothers' Voices "Non-Luncheon" 2004 Challenge Match! Adding your own "Extraordinary Voice" and supporting a great organization without ever leaving your home or office....priceless!!!

MOTHERS' VOICES
thanks  **BELLSOUTH**
for their generous support.



Mothers' Voices Program for social workers at the University of Miami participants earned continuing education credits.

Moms' Breakfast Seminars

Guests who have attended a Moms' Breakfast Seminar all seem to agree that the relaxed atmosphere in a private home is the perfect setting for an interactive and highly informative discussion about sexual health. Mothers' Voices has been presenting our Raising Healthy Kids workshops in English and Spanish to private groups of moms (but dads are welcome too!) of five to 50 participants throughout the community from Pinecrest to Biscayne Park. Some hosts have even chosen our Heart 2 Heart program where each mom brings their adolescent child to also participate.

According to MV Program Director, Amber Graham, "all parents are experiencing the same concerns, but when a group of moms is comfortable together, you can really get some energetic discussion that focuses on the specific issues they are dealing with. These parents become more aware of what is really going on with their child's circle of friends and can support each other when tough situations arise."



Emily Demar, Faye Bochner and Lisa Boas hosted over 50 women last year. To host an interactive and enlightening morning for your friends, please call our office. Programs are FREE and tailored to fit the needs of the group.

Dear Friends,



Think about it: If you don't talk to your child about sex, someone else will. Many parents rely on schools to educate their children about sexuality. But teachers often are constrained by law to present a specific curriculum, which may be lacking in content or contradict your own family's values. More likely, your child will learn about sex from a friend, a sexual partner or the media, all of whom may not have accurate information – or your child's best interest in mind.

You cannot be with your children 24/7, but your words can. If you talk, they'll listen! Don't put it off until the "right moment," which may or may not happen. Some parents are simply not comfortable with the topic themselves; while others worry that they may not be able to answer embarrassing or awkward questions about sex. Mothers' Voices helps bridge that communication gap.

This annual update highlights a very rewarding 2003. The year ahead looks even better. We could not have accomplished so much without your support and without the encouragement of our board of directors. We are extremely grateful to many foundations and corporations for their confidence in our programs and for trusting that we would use their funds judiciously.

It's been almost ten years since my son lost his life to the terrible disease called AIDS. His courage and the courage of many other young men and women will forever inspire all of us at Mothers' Voices. This epidemic will be with us for years to come. Talk to your children. Give them the information to make responsible decisions. Get involved.

Barbara

The goal of Mothers' Voices is to help parents and caregivers provide their children with open and honest information about sexuality, sexual health and HIV/AIDS/STD prevention and guide them to make responsible decisions.

Mothers' Voices Programs

Participants: Program:

- 977 Raising Healthy Kids: A one and a half hour interactive workshop.
- 30 Parents Educating Parents: A two- day training that certifies parents to conduct community workshops.
- 1130 HIU 101: A one hour presentation targeted to adolescents that covers the basics of disease transmission and prevention
- 126 Other : **Communities of Faith**-Sexual health and disease prevention programs in places of worship.
Heart 2 Heart- Workshops for adolescents and their parents/caregivers.
Continuing Education Credits-For professionals in the fields of social work and marriage and family therapy

Evaluations Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Reviews of published evaluations of sexuality education, HIV-prevention, and adolescent pregnancy prevention programs have consistently found that such programs:

- do not encourage teens to start having sexual intercourse
- do not increase the frequency with which teens have intercourse
- do not increase the number of a person's sexual partners

Instead many of these programs:

- delay the onset of intercourse
- reduce the frequency of intercourse
- reduce the number of sexual partners
- increase condom or contraceptive use

Source: Sexuality Information & Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) and Advocates for Youth, Toward a Sexually Healthy America. p.18

Mothers' Voices

believes that abstinence is the healthiest choice for adolescents and that early involvement in sexual behavior poses risks. However, we believe that every child has the right to accurate information on a wide range of sexually related topics including sexual orientation, contraception, masturbation, and STD/HIV prevention. With this knowledge, adolescents will make responsible decisions and learn that sexuality is a normal, healthy part of life.

The mission of Mothers' Voices

is to strengthen family communication about sexual health and HIV/AIDS/STD prevention through education and awareness.



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