

How To

FREE

# yell

zine #

2

FIGHT  
AIDS!

TEACH  
SAFE  
SEX

ACT UP



youth education life line

# Why? WHY? why?

Why does a 'zine like this HAVE to exist? Why do young people have to learn about a deadly disease from an underground publication as if we were living in a police state? Because your school isn't telling you about it. Your parents aren't telling you about it. TV isn't telling you about it. NO ONE is telling you about it, even though it could kill you!

The disease is AIDS. Oh, yeah, maybe they are telling you that the disease exists, *but are they giving you specific information on how to avoid it?* I bet they aren't! I **BET** they are just telling you "just don't have sex and you'll be okay." Maybe, if you're really lucky they'll tell you to use a condom. But are they telling you there is a correct and an incorrect way to use one? Are they telling you that you don't even have to use one if you and your partner just masturbate each other? Are they telling you about all the other ways you could get the disease? Like, if you share needles for home-made tattoos and piercings, or if you, like so many kids today involved in sports, share needles to shoot steroids, did you know you could contract HIV that way?

Did you know that? I **BET YOU DIDN'T!** You know why? Because your parents don't wanna think about you having sex. Your school doesn't wanna deal with your parents not wanting YOU to know about sex! In this case, however, what you don't know can **KILL YOU!**

Hey, maybe you have cool parents who tell you stuff. But even cool parents might not know *everything* about how people can get AIDS. But don't ya think YOU SHOULD know? So many people think "oh, that won't happen to me," or maybe **THEY DON'T EVEN THINK AT ALL!** Then they do something in ignorance and they turn around and find out that they have contracted this disease because **NO ONE** told them what they could do to prevent it. Don't be one of those people. If you haven't gotten infected with the HIV virus then **STAY THAT WAY!**

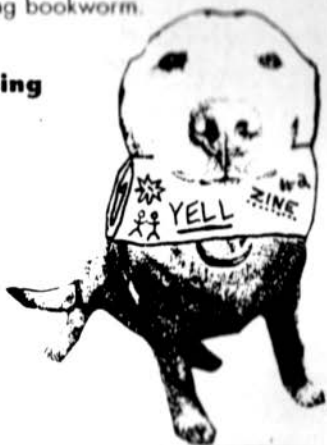
Find out everything you can about AIDS and how it is transmitted. Read this 'zine for a start. Write to us with your questions! It's better to be aware now than to be sorry later!

## **YELL is currently made up of**

- Barry: a Morrissey-worshipping Indian-food-eating writer.
- Erik: a web-site generating office slaving Midwest refugee.
- Jonathan: a Sonic Youth-listening high school junior political theater performer.
- Karen: a hip-hopping sex-loving closet drag queen.
- Kate: a vegetarian Trekkie Catholic-choir singing science nerd.
- Tom: a Chaka Khan-grooving magazine-editing bookworm.
- Tony: anonymous boy, punk rocking cartoonist.

## **YELL would like to thank the following for making this 'zine possible:**

Broadway Cares  
Dennis and David  
James Wentzy and AIDS Community TV  
Learning Alliance  
New York Foundation for the Arts  
Rhode Island Project AIDS  
Richard Deagle



# So What's Going On in the



# WORLD OF YELL

## DEMAND TREATMENT ACCESS!

## ACT UP

### 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ACTION MARCH 24, & ACTIVIST CONFERENCE MARCH 21-23 N.Y.C.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL  
(212) 966-4873 OR VISIT OUR  
WEBSITE AT [www.actupny.org](http://www.actupny.org)

The 1997 Youth Summit  
April 11-13, 1997  
Hampshire College  
Amherst, Mass

A National Multi-issue conference by and for youth activists. Workshops on HIV, child abuse, child labor, using the internet to organize, political theatre, overcoming racism, and much, much more! To register, help organize, do a workshop, etc. contact:

Kate Barnhart  
National Coordinator  
9701 Barwell Terrace  
Brooklyn NY 11209  
(718) 630-5242  
[kbf93@hamp.hampshire.edu](mailto:kbf93@hamp.hampshire.edu)

COPE: Conference of Peer Educators  
May 11, 1997 10am-4pm  
Union Theological Seminary  
NYC NY

A one day conference by and for youth from the NYC area who are doing peer education, AIDS activism, etc. For more information, contact:

COPE  
C/O All Souls' AIDS Task Force  
1157 Lexington Ave.  
NYC NY  
(212) 678-0134

ACT UP 10th Anniversary  
March 21-23: National AIDS Activist Conference  
March 24, 7am: A massive demonstration to protest corporate greed and AIDS drug pricing. Starting at City Hall Park, NYC.  
For more information:  
(212) 966-4873  
[www.actupny.org](http://www.actupny.org)

# Hey kids!

## A letter to YELL!



Dear Sir or Madam,

I can't know how bizarre or weird this is going to sound (if it does at all) but I am almost 30 years old, and I have been very concerned and supportive of gay rights/gay pride, against homophobia, etc. even though I'm straight. More recently, I have joined in the fight against AIDS. It really upsets me to see homosexuals treated differently, just because their sexual preferences happens to be different from what is considered "the norm", as well as the fact that television and movies are still stereotyping gays & lesbians, as well as using them as the butt of jokes in sit-coms.

Anyway, I do have a few questions that I hope you don't mind answering for me, specifically, when and why was this organization discontinued, as there anyway I can join or is there an organization in Canada similar to ACT UP that I can join, and could you please send me any information (brochets, posters, etc) about ACT UP that you may have?

Thank you so much for your time. I'm looking forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincerely,  
Eland

Dear YELL c/o ACT UP,

I read an article about you group in Tell and decided to write to say: I think what you're doing is great. I am a 13 year old and I live in Spooner WI. I think AIDS is a major problem that needs to be addressed.

Since I live in a small town in the Midwest there isn't much of a problem up here but there is a bigger problem than most think, we have around 6 cases of AIDS in our high school alone and our town only has 2,464 residents. I know that there may not be much I can do from up here but support is needed everywhere if anything is going to get done. I myself have had experience with terminal illness (cancer) my brother died from it and I plan to dedicate my self to finding cures for these horrid diseases.

Could you please send me some more info on YELL?

I read in the magazine that you have mailings and I was wondering if I could get on your list. If there is anything else you would like me to do in Spooner I'd be happy to do it.

Sincerely,



*Due*



Write to us!!! We love it. If you want your letter to be printed in the next YELL 'zine, please be sure to let us know whether it's OK to use your real name. If you don't give us permission, we'll make up a name.



I would like to know more about your organization and what I can do to help. I am also the editor of my high school paper, The Tiger Growl. If there is anything that I could have printed up in the newspaper to increase awareness of your organization and/or its cause, please send that too. Please understand that I am just a student, and I don't have a really powerful position at this school, but I will do my best and even if they don't accept it, I will support you on my own.

*Mary*

# HOW TO START A GROUP AT YOUR SCHOOL



by Jonathan Berger

Right now, I am a junior in high school, busy organizing around AIDS education, among other issues, both inside and outside of my school. However, five years ago my situation was quite different. I knew that my school did not have an adequate AIDS education curriculum or a condom distribution plan, but I knew close to nothing about political organizing.

What I found was that *Step One* in organizing within your school is making connections. There is most likely someone else in your school who feels the way you do about this issue, so the key is finding him/her. Of course, it usually helps to look in the more progressive student organizations for potential AIDS education supporters. It is also critical to make as many connections of support within the faculty and administration as you can. Working with someone from these two areas on a regular basis will give you insight into how the administration and faculty is handling the work you are doing and also, hopefully, allow your group to have someone sticking up for you and supporting your cause within the school power structure.

In addition to making connections with students and faculty who support your cause, it is important to get involved with groups outside of your school or at other schools that deal with the issue. I found YELL through a student in my school who was a YELL member; involvement with YELL as an outside group gave me many ideas and strategies as well as lots of experience to bring back to the organizing I was doing at school.

Once you have networked and, hopefully, have a few active supporters, you are ready to start assembling an action group. Through working with various student organizations in my school, I was able to assemble an action group of four people who work on direct action and negotiation around AIDS education in my school. One student took it upon herself to write up a petition which demanded a condom distribution plan at our school. She got 80% of the student body to sign and shortly after, the plan was approved by the school. Monitoring the school's progress, or lack thereof, when it came to the implementation of this plan has been my group's job.

Group maintenance is an important part of making your actions, whatever they may be, successful. You should make an effort to meet on a regular basis even if you aren't in a position where you are reacting to the administration. There are always other things that you could be doing on the education front which may not seem to be as necessary or important as chaining yourself to an administrators' door, but believe me, they are. Every effort should be made to educate and keep the student body up to date on what the issue(s) you're working on are and what the current situation around these issues happens to be at the time. Remember, it never hurts to build interest and support among your peers. It will most likely end up helping your cause.



*Shimika: I try to be involved. I think it is something that everybody should be involved in and care about. Why? just because AIDS can kill anybody. It is not just a specific person or a specific type of disease for a certain type of person. I think everybody should be involved to get together and try to find some kind of cure or at least help people with AIDS. I think it is important.*

- 16 years old

# How to Organize an **ACTION** @ your SCHOOL HERE'S HOW Do it NOW!!!



There are a couple of things you should keep in mind when planning an action. First, you should decide among your group exactly what the point is you want to make and then move on to figuring out what is the best, most effective, and creative way to make your point. In my experience, it is a very good idea to keep all that you are planning quite *secret*. Most school administrators are not fond of any kind of activism which puts blame on the school system, so make careful choices about who exactly you decide to share your ideas with.

Each situation you will find yourself in will be different and will, therefore, require different approaches to getting your demands met. **IT IS CRUCIAL THAT YOU NEGOTIATE FIRST.** Before you can protest, you must have something to protest about. Even if you know what the answer is that your administration will give you, it is still important to negotiate through a meeting with the administration. You can use their response as evidence of what their stance is on a given issue. Set up a meeting with the person in the administration who has the most direct connection to, or control over, the aspect of the school you are talking about. It never pays to go straight to the big powerful people in a school administration because they, most likely, will send you to someone in a less significant position. Start at the bottom and work your way up. For example, you might talk to the health education teacher before you talk to the principal.

When you meet with administrators or faculty, you should always know what exactly you object to in the school; know why and how it should be different, and have a detailed description of what you would change and what you would propose to be implemented. You must remember that you must know exactly what you want as well as how and by when you want it done, if you expect any administrator to take you seriously.

Play by their rules. Do petitions and surveys of the student population and present the results to the administrator(s) you are dealing with. All of this will boost your credibility and will lower the number of things that the administration has to hold against you. If it turns out that your group's demands are not being met, then you will be able to say that you have done everything the school suggested you should do to have your issue addressed. You have spoken to the appropriate and recommended people in the administration about your issue, and you have a proposal for change as well as data to back it up.

You must negotiate repeatedly with the administration. Only when it is absolutely clear that they have not, and are not going to meet your demands, is it time to take direct action or to do an act of civil disobedience.

After making demands of the School Board of Directors to allow distribution of condoms in high schools, members of YELL disrupted a Board meeting and were arrested for "obstructing government" (yeah, right!) Charges were dropped. Here is K → with her arresting officer after they gave us pizza for dinner. ☺



# IT WORKED IN OUR SCHOOL!

In February of 1993, as a result of massive petitioning and numerous articles in the school newspapers, my school made condoms available to the student population via "condom buckets" in the school bathrooms. By the start of the next school year (Sept. '93), the school had run out of their supply of condoms and had not placed an order to receive another shipment.

The group I was working with, "The Gay/Straight Alliance," formed a sub-group of five people who began to monitor the newfound fault in my school's condom distribution plan. We automatically began to make trips to the bathrooms twice a week, checking the "condom buckets" and every time finding that they were completely empty. This survey was done for two months, at which point we agreed that the time to speak to the principal about the matter had come.

We took with us all the petitions and articles used to get condoms in the school originally, as well as our survey of the bathroom "condom buckets" which remained empty. After meeting with him, we were referred to another faculty member who allegedly was the "head" of the condom distribution program. He claimed that this title actually belonged to a completely different faculty member. She claimed that she didn't even know she was supposed to have anything to do with the whole program at all. And so, feeling remotely like a group of ping pong balls, we bounced back to our principal and questioned the disorganized and ineffective program, which hardly existed at this point, anyway. We were told that we expected too much from the administration and that we were acting like "spoiled brats" for wanting condoms so immediately.

It was now the end of November and we began to feel as though the administration was simply paying us lip service, so on December first, (which is World AIDS Day and Day Without Art), our group hung a huge banner in the cafeteria that said "where are the condoms?" On the same day, an article was published in the school-wide paper questioning the dysfunctional condom distribution plan as well as supporting the actions our group had taken.

The next week we had a meeting with the principal (yet again) and set a date by which time we wanted the condoms in the bathrooms and a legitimate director of the distribution program chosen. Sure enough, or luckily, I should say, both of our demands were met on time and that chapter in the school's condom saga was over.



*Halley: High school in Texas is still conservative where they don't want people showing you how to use a condom or going into the details of how to protect yourself. How did I learn about condom use? I guess just kind of around. The actual how to use a condom? I don't know that I ever actually learned. I guess since I don't have to put a condom on, I don't have to worry about it too much.*

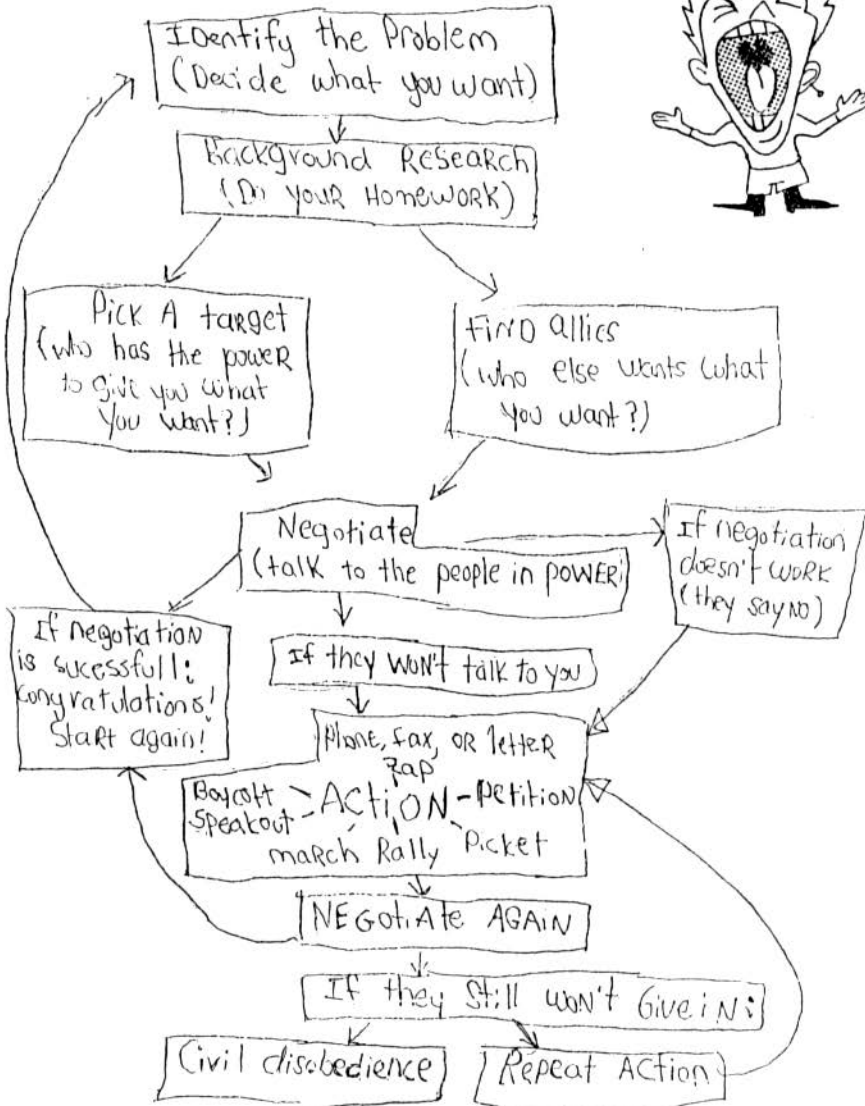
*-18 years old*





# KATE'S

# Step-by-Step MODEL FOR ORGANIZING YOUR OWN DEMONSTRATION



# Taking Action

There are lots of ways to take action - some are more in-your-face than others, some take more people, some are easier to organize, and some involve risking arrest. The only "musts" in organizing an action are: choose a target that makes sense (someone who can give you what you want); have clear demands (know what you want); do your research (so you know what you're talking about and sound like it); and be aware of and prepared for any possible consequences. Below are some ideas for kinds of actions - mix and match them any way you want - your imagination is the limit when it comes to designing an action!



## 1. Zaps



**Fax:** A fax zap is similar to a phone zap because it is both a way of communicating your demands and a way of inconveniencing your target by keeping their fax machine busy. To do a fax zap, give out a sheet with your demands on it and your target's fax number and have people fax it whenever they want, as often as they want. Another way of doing this if you only have access to one fax machine, is to feed one copy of your flyer through the fax machine. As it comes through, tape on another copy to form a loop. Once the loop is created you may either be able to set the fax machine to automatically redial and keep sending over and over or you may have to stand there and keep dialing.

**Phone** A phone zap is when a number of people call a target to make a demand. Phone zaps serve a double purpose: they let your target know how many people support your demands, but they also make it hard for your target to conduct business as usual because they keep the phone lines busy, making it hard for an office to function. To conduct a phone zap, find out the phone number(s) of your target, write a sample script with your demands and some facts about the issue, and put it on a flyer with the phone numbers. Give it to as many people as possible, and start calling.



**Letter:** The point of a letter zap is to show, by generating a flood of mail, how many people support your demands. There are two ways to do a letter zap. The first is to have lots of people write individual letters to your target - this is particularly powerful because it gives a human voice to your demands. Sometimes it's not possible to get enough people to actually write individual letters, so the other way to do a letter zap is to write a form letter to your target outlining your demands and make a lot of copies. All people have to do is sign the letters. It helps to have each person individually put the address and their own return address on the envelopes because if the letters are obviously all the same they won't be opened. Letter zaps can also be done via email.



Hey y'all  
it's time  
to ZAP!



## 2. Petitions

A petition is similar to a letter zap because it demonstrates how many people support your demands. Unlike the zaps outlined above, it does not cause any inconvenience to your target and so it is a good early step. To organize a petition, draft a fairly brief (two paragraphs is a good length) statement outlining who you are (Ex.: "We, the undersigned, are students at Smith High School . . ."), what the problem is (ex.: "we are concerned that large numbers of our classmates are becoming pregnant, contracting STDs, and putting themselves at risk for HIV infection through unprotected sex"), and what you are demanding (Ex.: "We are demanding that condom vending machines be placed in every bathroom at Smith High . . ."). Below the statement put space for people to both sign and print their names. If you are conducting your petition in a school, grade level and student ID number might be good things to include. If your target is an elected official and the people signing your petition are voters make sure they include their addresses so the politician can see that these people really live in the area he/she represents. Remember, the statement must appear on top of every sheet of signatures so that no one can say that people didn't know what they were signing. After you've gotten as many signatures as possible, make a copy of the entire petition. It is important that you keep a copy in case the petition accidentally or intentionally disappears. In order to increase the pressure on your target, it often is a good idea to present the petition at some type of public event, like a rally, speak out, or press conference. Having reporters there also increases the pressure.



## 3. Speak Outs

A speak out is an event where a bunch of people give testimony about a particular issue. The people speaking can be "experts" giving factual information to educate the audience and media, or they can be individual people who are personally affected by the issue talking about their lives, or a combination of both. Speak outs can happen in a variety of settings - for instance, you can organize a bunch of people to testify at a public hearing that has been set up by the Board of Education. Or you can create a setting of your own - you can end a protest march with a speak out, have a speak out as part of a conference, or choose a symbolic location for your speak out, like the steps of the Board. Of Ed. Or City Hall. The most important thing in organizing a speak out is making sure people will be able to hear the speakers - megaphones, sound systems, or handing out copies of what they are saying will help.



## 4. Boycotts/Walk-Outs

Boycotts can be very effective ways of putting pressure on a business. If you get enough people to stop shopping at a store or buying products produced by a company, they will start to lose money, and become more willing to negotiate with you. When organizing a boycott, it is essential to make sure the store or company knows what's going on - there are lots of reasons a business might lose money and you want to make sure they know it's because of what you're doing, not because customers don't like their new window display or found a better price down the block. Start by informing the target that if they won't negotiate with you, you will organize a boycott. Once the boycott is in progress, have people go in periodically to tell the shop-keeper why they aren't shopping there, or have people write letters to the company. The main task in organizing a boycott is to educate the consumers so they can change their buying habits. Posters, leaflets, and standing near the store (but not on their property unless you are prepared to move when they tell you to or risk arrest), and talking to people are all effective ways of educating people about your issue.

A walk out is the school version of a boycott - if you think of education as a product, then students are the consumers. Unlike a boycott, walk outs can have negative consequences for the people who participate - there is no law saying people must buy a product, but there is one saying youth must go to school. If you are planning a walk out, be sure to consult a lawyer, sympathetic counselor or a friendly teacher, so that you know what the possible consequences are and prepare for them.



# CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE what's it all about???)

## Civil Disobedience --

### What is it?

Civil disobedience has a long history as a form of protest and resistance. Literally it means to peacefully break a law. It can be done as a symbol or more directly. For example a direct civil disobedience would be handing out clean needles to addicts to prevent the spread of HIV, in this case you are breaking the exact law you disagree with. On the other hand taking over an office at the School Board to draw attention to a bad policy is a symbolic civil disobedience because you don't mean to change the laws about trespassing, but you do want to get attention to the lack of AIDS education (or whatever your topic is). Different types of civil disobedience include breaking a specific law you object to, taking over an office, blocking traffic, basically any way of disrupting business as usual. Above all else civil disobedience is non-violent. It is best when the CD can be seen as somehow connected to the issue you want to draw attention to, like when the civil rights activists did a sit-in to integrate a segregated lunch counter, or when students do a sit-in at a health official's office to demand better AIDS education policy.

### Why do it?

Civil disobedience is a method to force change by drawing attention to a problem and influencing public opinion. Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King here in the United States are 2 of the famous figures from history who used civil disobedience to help make change. People often turn to CD when they feel very strongly about something, strong enough to put their body and freedom on the line. I say that because CD usually means doing something for which you might be arrested, which means you might not be home in time to watch your favorite programs on TV that night.

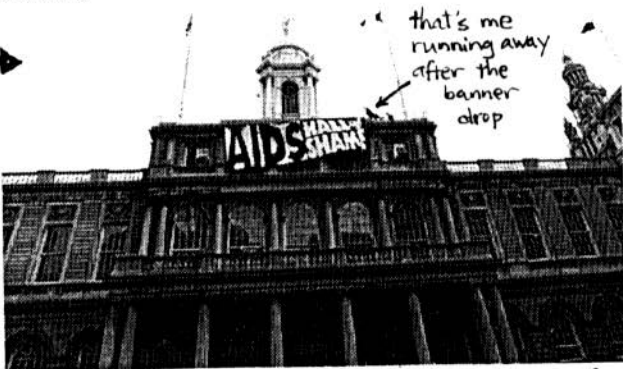
### What are the ramifications?

It is always important to consult with a sympathetic lawyer when planning a civil disobedience. Find one who is open to the issue you want to promote. The lawyer can give you suggestions on what the possible risks are, & what type of legal charges can be brought against you (i.e. trespassing, traffic violation, or even in some cases a felony charge). In our experience, people under 18 have a much easier time with the police, though they will alert your parents if you are arrested so it is best to warn them in advance.

### When to use civil disobedience?

Civil disobedience often looks spontaneous at the time it happens, i.e. a bunch of people run out in the street and lay down in front of traffic, or walk into an office and take over. But it is far from spontaneous. It takes time to plan and think out all the results, work on the press contacts, make sure cameras are there to document it, and that you have support people to follow you through the police system if you are arrested (what jail you go to, call your close relations, etc). It is not the first step you start with, but it is one of the most strong and extreme tactics because it really says something when you are willing to be arrested for something you believe in!

We snuck into City Hall,  
got on the roof by telling  
them we were city contractors  
and dropped a 40x10 foot  
banner indicting Mayor  
Juliana for his neglectful  
AIDS policy. (Nyx 1994)  
-Karen  
(it was fun + we weren't arrested.)



# QUESTIONS ANYONE?

Q: I know you can get AIDS from oral sex with a man, but can you get it from a woman? If so, is there a device such as condoms for men except for women?

A: Yes, you can contract HIV from performing oral sex on a woman, because HIV is found in both semen and vaginal secretions. The device used for safer oral sex on a woman is called a dental dam. It is a 6" by 6" square of latex that is used to cover the vagina during oral sex to prevent vaginal secretions getting in the giver's mouth. Dental dams can be difficult to find (try your local health department, AIDS organization, a dental clinic, or a shop such as Condomania in NYC). If you can't find a dental dam, you can make one by cutting up either a latex glove or an unlubricated condom. The basic idea is to put a layer of latex between someone's vaginal secretions and your mouth. In an absolute emergency, you can use non-microwaveable saran wrap, but it is not made or tested for these purposes and therefore is not that reliable.



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS, whatever they may be, TO:

**YELL**

9701 Barwell Terrace  
Brooklyn NY 11209

DONT HOLD BACK!

If we can handle this one

**WE CAN HANDLE YOURS!!!**

Q: If you were a cannibal and you ate someone with AIDS, would you get it?

A: There has been no research done on this topic.



I had unprotected sex in my room this afternoon and I think I might have contracted an STD (sexually transmitted disease). What is the action I should take?

First, make a commitment to yourself not to have unsafe sex again, so you don't put yourself at risk of contracting another STD and so you don't put anyone else at risk. The next thing to do is seek medical attention. STDs do not go away by themselves, and they can cause nasty long-term effects like sterility and impotence if left untreated. There are many sources of free or low cost STD treatment and they do not require parental consent. Clinics like Planned Parenthood offer these services, or you can contact the local Department of Health, or your private doctor. If you are having trouble locating help, call the National AIDS hotline at (800) 342-AIDS and they can refer you to a service in your area. Once you have been tested and treated for STDs like Syphilis, etc., you still have to decide whether to be tested for HIV. If you decide to be tested, you will have to wait at least three months before you get the test, so you will get an accurate result.

We Answer  
any questions

on  
**AIDS**  
**HIV**  
**STDs**  
**SEX**  
**SEXUALITY**  
and **ACTIVISM**



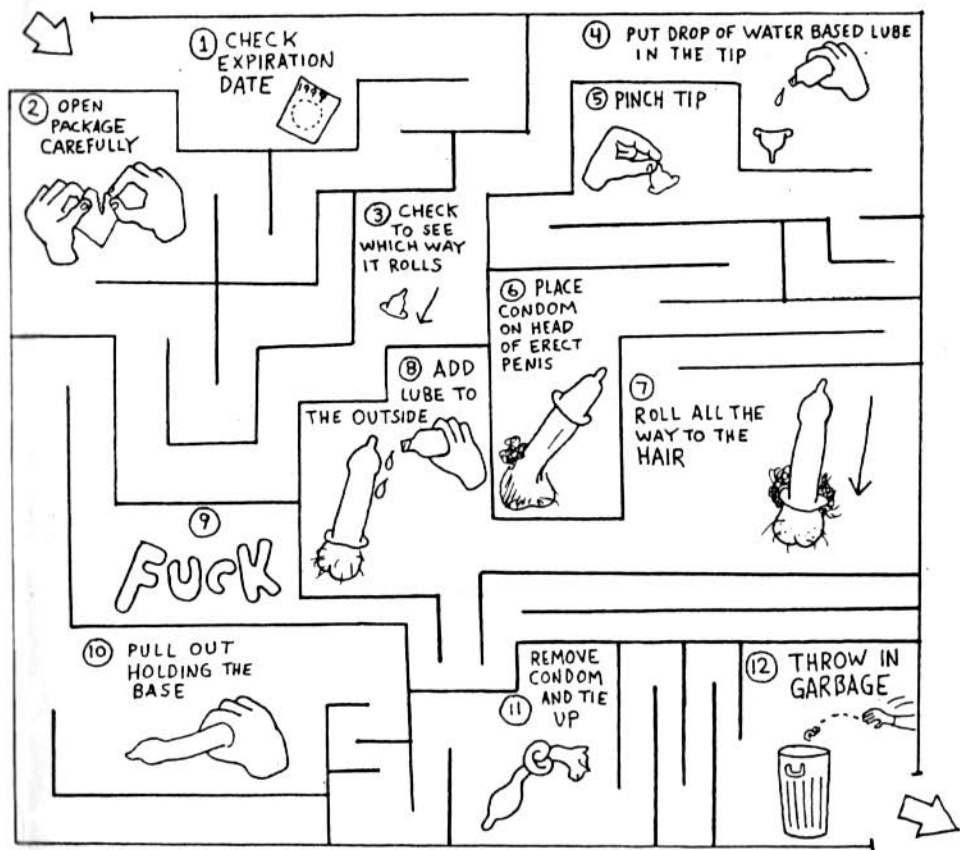
**Q:** What can one do if they are raped or forced to have sex by a person infected with HIV or AIDS?

**A:** First, anyone who has been forced to have sex should seek counseling because rape is an extremely traumatic experience. Look in the yellow pages under "rape crisis" for a service in your area. Unfortunately, there is no immediate way to determine if someone has been infected from a sexual encounter. The person in question should wait three months and then be tested for HIV. They could consider being tested at six weeks, since many people will test positive at six weeks if they have been infected, but a negative test at six weeks does not mean they are not infected. There is also a new type of test called PCR that can give accurate results sooner, but it is expensive and hard to find.



# WORK YOUR WAY THRU THE MAZE OF CONDOMS

DO YOU THINK USING A CONDOM IS AS EASY AS PUTTING IT ON AND THAT'S IT? **HA!** THERE ARE STEPS YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW TO DO IT RIGHT! THERE IS ONLY ONE CORRECT PATH THROUGH THIS MAZE! SEE IF YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS.



USE "CONDOM SENSE": DON'T RIP OPEN THE CONDOM WRAPPER WITH YOUR TEETH, BECAUSE YOU CAN TEAR THE CONDOM THAT WAY! DON'T USE THE SAME CONDOM MORE THAN ONCE.

# Cardinal attacks plan to give kids condoms



VS.



## How to Get Condoms In Your School

### 1. Do your homework:

- A. Find out if anyone ever tried this before in your school or other schools near you. If so, what happened?
- B. Figure out who has the power to put condoms in your school. Is it the principal? The school board? Find out as much as you can about them. What do they care about?
- C. Gather information. Statistics about youth and HIV, rates of STDs, teen pregnancy rates, etc. can all be helpful. Do a survey and find out how many other students want condoms and support you.

### 2. Find Allies:

Find other students, teachers, parents and community members, and organizations who support condoms in the schools. Some examples of people who might be on your side include: the school nurse; a local AIDS organization; local clinics; especially those that serve teens or deal with sexual health issues like Planned Parenthood; students at other schools who've done this already; the health department; local gay/lesbian organizations; etc. Meet with your allies to develop a strategy.

### 3. Prepare:

Try to figure out what kinds of arguments people on the other side will make and how you can get around them. For instance, they may cite condom failure rates. But according to the Centers for Disease Control (part of the Federal government) condoms are 98% effective when used correctly and consistently. The main reason for condom failure is improper use, so it makes sense for young people to be taught how to use them.

### 4. Present Your Request:

Request a meeting with the principal or school board. If you're dealing with the school board, you may want to approach each member individually first. Send a delegation from your group - if you can, include a variety of people (for instance, a teacher, a parent, and a student). Be prepared to present a convincing argument with lots of information and have materials to give out. Use both statistics and stories. If you can find young people who've gotten HIV, an STD, or become pregnant and are willing to share their stories, their testimony can be very powerful. If you have people who are too uncomfortable to share their own stories, you can present them as things that have happened to friends, without mentioning names. Make sure your requests are simple and clear.



*Kaheem: Sex has always been the kind of thing that people didn't want to talk about. It has always been that 'hush hush' thing. If you do it that is your business and that's it. But the way people break it out in the media, like on TV and in ads, to they might as well go to the schools and teach kids something.*

*Sexual wise there are a whole lot of people out there having it, sex-unprotected, living for the moment. And education, there is not enough of it. Today's kids won't listen to a person who comes up in a 3 piece suit. They're not from the hood or they're not totally in with the crowd. What I'm saying is, anybody can go in and teach you about sex, anybody, but if you're not from the streets it will just go in one ear and out the other. But if I go in there as a peer-educator and I break a rap out the kids will listen to, they can relate to it. These are the things that really make a difference. - 19 years old*

## Condom Sense Spoken By Students Themselves

### 5. Negotiate:

If the principal or school board member is not on your side, listen carefully to the arguments he/she is making. Try to figure out what his/her concerns are. This will determine your next step. If the principal/school board is worried about what parents will think, then you need to get parents who are on your side to speak out. If the issue is paying for the condoms, then you could offer to raise the money. Sometimes the opposition's concerns will not be rational - they may be based, for instance, on personal religious beliefs, and you will not be able to change that.

### 6. Negotiate Some More:

If talking to and reasoning with the person in power fails, you may be able to go over his/her head. For instance, the principal of your school has a boss - the school district if it is a public school, or the Board of Trustees if it is private. Find out who is next in the power structure. Go up a level and try making your case again. As you work your way up, you may eventually come to an elected official on either the State or local level. Remember that elected officials are especially sensitive to pressure. Keep trying to negotiate until you have been turned down at every possible level.

### 7. Take Action:

Once you've made your case and been turned down by everyone who could possibly give you what you want, it's time for pressure tactics. See "Kate Chart"; "Organizing Within Your School"; "Taking Action"; and "Civil Disobedience"; on other pages of this 'zine.

### 8. Do It Yourself:

One type of action that's specific to the condom (also clean-needle) issue, is a distribution. To distribute condoms, either create your own flier about how to use condoms or get one from somewhere else (feel free to copy the one in YELL 'zine #1. If you don't have zine #1, write us!). Wrap the flier around the condom, tape the condom in, and hand them out. You may also want to hand out other items, like dental dams or latex gloves for people performing sexual activities that don't involve penises. If you distribute safer-sex materials inside the school, expect to be asked to stop. Decide ahead of time whether or not you will stop. If you decide not to stop, you may get in trouble and even be suspended. Be sure you have legal help in case this happens. Your other option is to hand out condoms off school property, standing somewhere that students pass by but that is not on school grounds.

### 9. If Nothing Works:

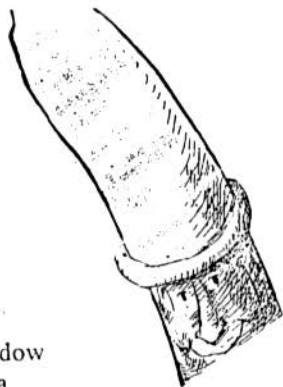
Remember that schools are not the only places young people go. Figure out where young people in your community spend their time. Hand out condoms and fliers wherever young people are. This way, your peers are getting life-saving information even if the school won't give it to them.

NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT ONE 

## Condoms

I have been handing out condoms for too long;  
Everything reminds me of them:

Socks hanging on a clothesline  
My dad's cigars, encased in metal cylinders  
Fire hydrants ejaculating into the gutter  
Thin loaves of bread cooling in the baker's window  
The little bag my friend slides over her umbrella  
The nightstick swinging by a policewoman's side  
The long skinny balloons the zoo clown twists into animal shapes  
Sausage casings hanging from the butcher's rack  
Dachshunds being walked by old women in the park  
Slowly ripening summer squash  
My mother's rolling pin, drying in the dish rack  
Hot dogs, boiling in a pot on the stove  
Even the trees look naked to me  
Nothing should exist without a layer of latex.



I HAVE BEEN DOING CONDOM  
DEMONSTRATIONS for TOO LONG!

*Tanya: I was doing a speech project at school, talking about whether condoms should be legalized in school or not. My statement was, "Everybody is doing it, why close your eyes on it! We need to be responsible and educated." A lot of teachers were disagreeing with that, saying that it just wasn't the 'proper behavior' but if you don't give kids what they need to protect themselves... definitely teenagers will not go to a grocery store and buy a box of condoms. I know as a teenager I won't do it. But if you have a condom in your bookbag just hanging around, then in a spare moment you can get it, you know what I'm saying? I feel that it is an important thing that we should have in every classroom, just a little box or something, not everybody would see you, but you could get to it. That's the way to do it, not say "if there are no more condoms in school then they won't have sex," because that's bull.*

- 16 years old

Condoms in Schools: The Right Lesson

**ANGER ERUPTS  
AT BOARD OF ED**

Condoms Can  
Save Kids' Lives

**AIDS activists**

**YELL for info**

Parents  
rally over  
sex-ed  
outrage

**FREE CONDOMS  
IN HIGH SCHOOLS**

*Christian Right to Meet Act Up in School Board Brawl*

*60% of New Yorkers Favor Condom Plan*

**ACT UP to fight  
board on condoms**

Imagine, 7,137,360 Condoms

**THE NEW A B Cs**

*That's C for condom & cucumber  
Bananas or zucchini acceptable*

**City High Schools Begin Condom Distribution**

**CONDOMONIUM!**

## The YELL Media Primer

The media can be an important tool in getting your message out to a wide group of people. If you've organized a demonstration, for example, you may reach a large group of people who see your demo. But if the television news, radio, or newspapers cover your action, you can reach many more people with your message.

Many people are intimidated by the media, thinking, "We'll never get them to pay attention to us." Often they're right: The media are fickle, and young people and activists can both have a hard time getting coverage. Youth activists have a doubly hard time. But with a little bit of advance planning and some hard work, you can get better media coverage of the work you're doing.

Once you've decided upon an action you want to organize, you need to decide if media coverage is an important part of the action. Sometimes it isn't. For example, in February of 1994 YELL decided to do a Valentine's Day zap of the AIDS advisory council to the New York City Board of Education (they were responsible for a dangerous and distorted revision of the junior high school AIDS curriculum). We planned to arrive at their meeting and deliver each member of the council with valentines explaining that young people fall in love and need accurate safer sex information to protect themselves. We didn't feel that the media was likely to cover such a small action, and our main goal was simply to put the advisory council on notice. So we only sent out a small press release, but didn't make a big effort to get media coverage. Other times, you may feel that the action won't be a success unless there's a reporter there to cover it. Decide what kind of media coverage (if any) you want in advance, and plan your action accordingly.

But I don't know anything about writing a press release, you're saying, much less orchestrating T.V., radio, and newspaper coverage of an action. Well, here are five easy steps toward becoming a media activist.

1) **Read the newspapers.** Watch TV news. Listen to radio news. Pay attention to who is covering youth, AIDS, or education issues in your local area. Keep track of their names—when it comes time to do media for your action you'll want to focus on these reporters. It will also give you a sense of what kind of job the media is doing in covering youth and AIDS issues—if they're getting covered at all. When you see bad or inaccurate reporting, write a letter to the editor. Or call the station to lodge a complaint. Better yet, organize your friends to call or write too.

2) Write a press release. Once the group has decided on an action and set a date for it, write a press release that can be sent to all the local media. A press release should ideally be no longer than a page. You don't have to say everything about your action—just enough to get the right reporters interested. News reporters are looking at a lot of press releases every day, so yours needs to be short, punchy, and attention-grabbing. Here's the basic press release formula:



For immediate release:  
March 20, 1996

## MEDIA ADVISORY



Contact: Alice Eisenberg  
917-614-6913 (beeper)

### AIDS ACTIVISTS GIVE NYC BOARD OF ED FAILING MARKS FOR AIDS EDUCATION

NEW YORK CITY—AIDS activists will present the New York City Board of Education with a report card on AIDS education today, Wednesday, March 20, during the Board's 3 p.m. meeting in Room 210 at Board of Education headquarters, 110 Livingston Street in Brooklyn.

Members of YELL, the Youth Education Life Line of ACT UP, give the Board failing marks in 7 crucial areas relating to AIDS education:

- **Educational Mandates.** City schools regularly fail to meet mandates requiring AIDS lessons be taught in every grade.
- **Classroom Condom Demonstrations.** Schools do not teach students proper condom use, a basic method of HIV prevention.
- **Queer Youth.** AIDS curricula fail to provide lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth with accurate lifesaving information.
- **Condom Availability.** The condom availability program is neglected and poorly implemented by the Board.
- **The HIV/AIDS Advisory Council.** The Board's HIV/AIDS advisory council is stacked with ideologues opposed to teaching safer sex.
- **Peer Education.** Youth educators teaching their peers about HIV prevention receive no support from the Board of Ed.
- **Parent Involvement.** The Board of Ed has failed to meaningfully involve parents in AIDS education.

"The Board of Ed is flunking AIDS education," says YELL member Kate Barnhart, 20, "and it's the students who lose out. They're not getting the education they so desperately need."

YELL has been advocating for comprehensive AIDS education in the New York City public schools since 1989. Four members of YELL were arrested at 110 Livingston Street in October 1994 when they disrupted a meeting of the conservative HIV/AIDS advisory council.

###



Once you've written the press release, fax it to the local reporters whom you've identified as covering the youth, AIDS, or education beats. Send it out widely—you never know whose interest might be sparked and show up. Increasingly, e-mailing the press release is an option too. You'll probably want to send it out about 24 hours before your action. If you send it too early, reporters will be too preoccupied with breaking news to pay much attention to it.




3) **Make follow-up calls.** If there are particular reporters who you especially want to cover your action, call them up several hours after sending the press release to make sure they got it. If you can get them on the telephone, this is another chance to succinctly explain what your action is and why you think they should cover it. It's also a chance to answer any questions they may have and assure them that there will be good visuals at the action, interesting, knowledgeable people to interview, etc.

4) **At the action.** Be sure to have at least one person designated to do your on-site media work. (If possible, another person should be at the phone number you gave on your press release, ready to field any calls before, during, and after the action.) The on-site media person should have several press kits made up—folders containing your press release, any handouts that may be part of the action, background materials (press clips about your issue, for example) and general information about your group. At the action, seek out members of the press, greet them, give them copies of your press kit, and offer to hook them up with spokespeople. The more helpful you can be to reporters at the action—clueing them in to what's going on—the more likely they'll be to respond to you in the future. Above all, be sure to take down the names and phone numbers of all reporters who came; you'll want to get in touch with these journalists again in for your next action.

5) **Keep in touch.** Once your action is over, keep in touch with reporters; especially the ones who took the time to show up for your action. Don't necessarily wait for your next action to call them up. If there's something in the news relating to your issue (the Board of Education votes to remove condom demonstrations from the classroom, for example), send out a press release with a response to what's happening—you might find yourselves quoted in the newspaper. And once reporters know that you're following an issue, they may put you in their rolodex and call you up whenever they need a young person to respond to an issue. Then you're really getting your message out!

These are just 5 guidelines for dealing with the media as a youth AIDS activist. You may find that any one of these steps is too difficult for you—there aren't enough people in your group, say, or you don't have access to a fax machine or copier. But to whatever extent you can work toward some of these goals, you'll find that you can use the media to get your message out for you—and be a more effective activist too.



Drug  
mega-companies  
are making a  
killing with  
outrageous prices,  
which are  
bankrupting  
government aid  
programs and  
jackin g up insur-  
ance premiums.

**10<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
ACTION**

**ACT UP  
ON  
WALL  
STREET  
DEMAND  
AIDS  
TREATMENT  
FOR ALL**

**CRASH  
THE  
MARKET**

**MONDAY MARCH 24  
& ACTIVIST  
CONFERENCE  
MARCH 21-23 N.Y.C.**

**3/24 Demo 7:30 am  
City Hall Park Fountain**

Meetings Mondays 7:30 p.m., Lesbian & Gay Center, 208 West 11th Street, N.Y.C. (212) 966-4871 [www.actupny.org](http://www.actupny.org)

# Meet Lam Duc Kim.



**Hi Lam. Tell us a little bit about yourself.**

My name is Lam, and I'm an immigrant. I'm an refugee also—born in Vietnam in '71. I just turned twenty-five last Thursday. I'm HIV positive. I'm an American citizen, and I'm living, I guess.

**What was it like growing up in New York City?**

I grew up mostly in Queens. My family moved from neighborhood to neighborhood when I was young. I lived in Sunnyside at one point, and Flushing at another point—now I'm in Richland, which is very close to Brooklyn.

**How old were you when you found out you were HIV positive?**

I was 21.

**What were some of the things that made you test?**

Actually, I tested twice before, and I was negative, and I hadn't tested for a long time—two years.

**Was there anyone you felt you were able to confide in?**

Yes. My lover. He worked in AIDS [organizations] for a long time. We met in Boston. He moved down here and now works with APICHA.

**Is he also HIV positive?**

He is HIV negative.

**What are some of the ways you have viewed living with HIV?**

One of the things that really got to me ever since AIDS was around was a lot of gay white men kept on saying, 'Oh it's changed my life. It's a big revelation. I'm going to live life to the fullest,' and I never thought that way. I mean, it has changed my life in a number of significant ways—like I have to go to the doctor more often. So I pretty much think the same. I've grown a little maturer I guess you could say.

**What kind of work do you do?**

I'm an office manager/bookkeeper. I work at an agency called APICHA, Asian and Pacific Islander's Coalition on HIV and AIDS. I'm part of the administrative staff there.



**LAM DUC KIM**





## **If I were a youth who just tested positive where could I find support other than family?**

There are a lot of support structures out there. There's Project Reach. New York City has a great wealth of listings of people who you can get support from. You can start where you tested, and they can always refer you to support groups. It's not an easy thing to do. A person who has just tested positive, and is willing to go out and start disclosing and all that...it's just a very brave thing to do. So hopefully you get a really good counselor who tested you; that counselor should be supportive and talk about your options and what you can do, and not just throw you out in the street and let the cruel world take you on. There's a lot of decision making things you could do. There's also the fact that you don't have to do anything. Be who you want to be and do what you want to do.

## **What are some of your biggest day to day struggles?**

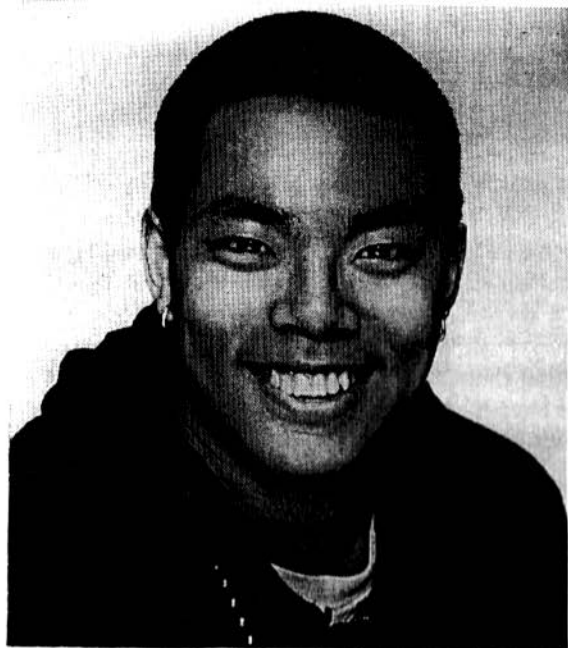
Making money [He laughs]. Surviving. Making ends meet. Paying off my bills, going to work, dealing with people at work, dealing with people outside of work, trying to be part of the community at an activist level.

## **What are your feelings about sex?**

Well, what I do with my partner...I'm not going to talk about what I do because I don't think it's anybody's business. I think that it is something that can be done freely with people, and however they decide how to do it is their own choice, and we shouldn't judge them for what they do. With or without a condom. Humans are not machines. Humans want to feel, want to touch, want to have fluids exchanged. And that's reality. Individuals need to make their own choices and not impose on others. Education is important, but education should not be about fear.

## **Do you have any adventurous fantasies?**

Traveling across the country on a motorcycle. I'm hoping that my lover would be with me.



# YELL'S FAVORITE BOOKS

The Voices of AIDS  
Michael Thomas Ford  
Morrow Junior Books, NY  
1995

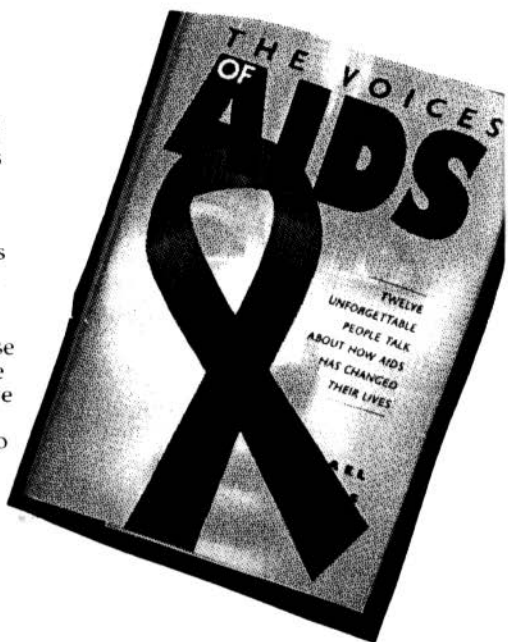
This book consists of 12 interviews with people involved in AIDS in various ways, interspersed with factual essays, on subjects such as "How Does HIV Cause AIDS."

The interviews include a young gay man who tested positive at 17, and is now 19.; a mother whose 24 year old daughter was diagnosed with AIDS in 1989 and died in 1991; a 17 year old young man whose sister was diagnosed with HIV when he was 14; a woman who started an AIDS education organization in response to the death of a friend from AIDS; a woman who cares for children with HIV; a woman who wrote a novel for young adults about AIDS after losing a close friend; a woman who spent her youth working as a prostitute and using drugs, contracted HIV, and became an HIV educator and counselor; a mother living with HIV; a producer who organizes projects to raise money for AIDS work; a young positive woman who now works as the executive director of a major AIDS organization; the author's friend, a young woman who died in 1994 at age 23; and a young AIDS activist.

This book offers both clear, correct information and inspiring examples of people actively working to end the AIDS crisis.

Have you read any  
good books about  
**YOUTH + AIDS?**

Write and let us  
Know about them!!!



**Tanya:** We would have maybe 10-20 people who would get paid to be peer educators and it was like an after school thing, where we would get flyers together. We would do musical shows. We would rap about it and do a lot of songs about it. And we did art & we put out a newspaper, & flyers. In the summertime we would go out on the boardwalk & give out pamphlets, flyers & condoms, walk around chasing kids asking them, "do you know what this is?" And it worked. A lot of times it worked because they would be like, ha ha ha," but you'd see them put it in their pocket and walk away with it and you felt safer. - 16 years old

**Kaheem:** I was just some kid sitting up on the corner who'd bust a fly rap that everybody would listen to, but I got more respect when I walked down the street & people said, "Yo there goes that AIDS education guy. Yo can I get a condom, can I get 3?" I was happy to give it to them because for one night someone went and did what they had to do safely. - 18 years old

# Resources

## Activism 2000 Project

PO Box E  
Kensington MD 20895  
1-800-KID-POWER  
Fax: 301-929-8907

Produces an excellent guide for youth activists called "No kidding around: America's young activist's are changing our world and you can too," which costs \$18.95 plus \$4.00 postage and handling but is well worth it. They also offer a guide to producing public service announcements, an 8-minute video of youth-made PSAs and a variety of free fact sheets, including "young people's advice to adults on collaborating with youth."

## National Alliance of Positive Youth

Sam Scott, National Coordinator  
1242 Market Street, 3rd Floor  
San Francisco CA 94102  
(415) 487-5777

Organizes an annual conference by and for youth (under 26) living with HIV.



## National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)

11101 14th St. NW 5th Fl.  
Washington DC 20005  
(202) 408-4600  
Provides advocacy and information on issues of sexuality and reproductive freedom through a network of local chapters.

## Reality

c/o Health Initiatives for Youth  
1242 Market St. 3rd Fl.  
San Francisco CA 94102  
(415) 487-5777  
A zine by and for HIV positive youth.  
Welcomes submissions!

## National AIDS Information Clearinghouse

Centers for Disease Control  
PO Box 6003  
Rockville MD 20850  
(800) 458-5231

Provides current information and both national and local statistics on HIV and AIDS. Also has a national database of AIDS organizations and resources that they will use to help you find resources in your area.

## American Civil Liberties Union

132 West 42nd Street  
NYC NY 10036  
(212) 944-9800

Provides legal assistance, particularly on issues of free speech and rights violations.

## MetroTeenAIDS

PO Box 15577  
651 Pennsylvania Ave. SE  
Washington DC 20003  
(202) 543-9355

Organizes an annual national "Ryan White" Conference for young people working on AIDS issues in their schools/communities.

## National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)

1413 K Street NW  
Washington DC 20005  
(202) 898-0414

Provides youth living with HIV to speak at schools and community groups, through the Youth Speakers Bureau. Advocates for the needs of people with HIV/AIDS. Provides a variety of fact sheets and informational publications.

Look for more INFO  
IN YELL ZINE #3

Photo by Meryl Levin/Impact Visuals



## BANNER FOR THE POPE

October 1995, people from ACT UP drop a banner in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City with a message to the Pope as he drives by, "CONDOMS SAVE LIVES."

*Weeks before the action we went into Saks Fifth Avenue store and scouted out which windows faced the cathedral. Then the day of the Pope's visit, 2 from our group went out on a small balcony outside the windows & dropped a 40 foot banner while 10 of us blocked the police from reaching the windows too quickly. Eventually however, we were arrested, but got out of jail after 6 hours. The charges of trespassing were later dismissed. Photos of the banner appeared in newspapers across the country.*