

THE BAHAMAS AIDS FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The Bahamas AIDS Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in 1992 by the Zonta Club of Nassau.

VISION

The vision as it still is today is to be the premier HIV/AIDS NGO and advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS in the community

MISSION

Our mission is to facilitate HIV prevention and intervention strategies including:

- elimination of mother to child transmission
- HIV/AIDS education, training, research, support, and advocacy
- reduction of HIV transmission

BOARD MEMBERS 2019-2020

We currently have 14 board members (originally 15 with one resignation in March 2020).

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Office staff consist of five persons (two full-time the others are part-time).

COMMITTEES

There are 10 committees established to assist with the ongoing work of the Foundation:

Red Ribbon Ball

Programmes/Training

Outreach Programme

World AIDS Day

Finance and Administration

External Relations

Fund Development/Fundraising Building Committee

Raffle

Golf Tournament Committee

Legal Risk Management

EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS 2019-2020

In September 2019 The Bahamas experienced the most disastrous hurricane in our recorded history. The Hurricane devastated two of our islands and brushed past Nassau damaging some already vulnerable homes in Nassau. Hurricane relief resources have poured into the two most impacted islands (Abaco and Grand Bahama) leaving NGO's in Nassau short of funding. For example, the AIDS Foundation raised \$20,000 less at our major fund raiser this year. Also, the number of children and adolescents in our Outreach Program for Children and Adolescents has increased. While it is good to be able to assist young people in need it also means that the Program needs more resources (manpower and financial), which were difficult to come by this year.

COVID 19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and has caused devastation around the world with high death rates, hospitals stretched to their limits and beyond and economies on the verge of collapse. The Bahamas, a country that relies primarily on tourism, has not been spared the ravages of COVID 19. March 16th the Government of The Bahamas mandated it first lockdown and curfew and we are still undergoing lockdowns and attempting a phased re-opening.

The Bahamas AIDS Foundation has been struggling to care for our clients despite the government mandated closure of all offices/workplaces with few exceptions and the desire to protect our vulnerable staff. An additional handicap was the cancellation of our three fundraisers coupled with many of our corporate partners restructuring in the face of huge revenue losses.

The Bahamas has seen massive layoffs similarly worldwide which has exacerbated the already difficult position many families were in pre-crisis. Our clients, who are among those most vulnerable because of their HIV status are also more likely to suffer from poverty. Similarly, some of our staff are also vulnerable because of their lower socioeconomic status. Unable to purchase necessities for extended periods of time put them at risk of hunger during lockdowns, but also the need to make frequent trips to the supermarket as funds became available and limited access to sanitary products made exposure to COVID-19 evermore likely.

The Board of the Foundation made the decision to continue to feed our clients and to continue to pay our staff. Our Social Worker coordinated a food drive to ensure that our clients did not go hungry. Food was purchased and collected via donations and delivered to 40 families on a weekly basis. The Social Worker and Case Aide maintained phone contact with their clients whilst our Clinical Psychologist was available via an online platform. I am pleased to report that we were able, to-date, to come through this challenge without any of our clients contracting COVID -19

However now in the month of October as we negotiate re-opening and continue to feed our clients, we are ever mindful of our tenuous financial state. The Board is reassessing and exploring fundraising opportunities which we hope to announce in short order. All non-profit organizations, including The Foundation are challenged to be creative and to do more with fewer resources.

STATE OF THE HIV/AIDS FIGHT (as of December 2018)

As of the end of December 2018 the total number of persons living with HIV is 6,025, which is approximately 1.6% of pop. (Ministry of Health)

The number of new HIV cases is declining (Ministry of Health)

Other Statistics:

65% of the new case are males and 35% are female.

Young persons between the ages of 15-24yrs represent 21% (33 persons) of the new HIV cases. In the age group 1-14yrs there was only one new case in 2018. These two groups represent our target population for our Outreach Programme for Children and Adolescents Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS. In 79% of the new cases, the persons reside in New Providence (Nassau). The number of deaths has declined by 36% since 2009. (Ministry of Health)

*Mother-To-Child-Transmission:

2018 – 1 case

(*HIV+ pregnant women are provided with free medication from government which usually saves the babies.)

(Statistics provided by the National HIV/AIDS Programme, The Bahamas Ministry of Health)

Programmes

Outreach Program for Adolescent Infected and Affected by HIV and AIDS:

5 days/wk – 11 months/yr

Objectives:

- Provide a safe place for adolescents where they are accepted, encouraged and nurtured.
- Empower HIV+ adolescents to adhere to their medication
- Improve their quality of life
- Create independent, productive & healthy young adults

Outreach Program Staff (has 15 persons all of whom are part-time)

Outreach Services

- Tutoring
- July Summer Camp

- Counseling
- Referrals
- Computer access
- Prep for National Exams
- Job Preparation
- Clinic Support
- Hot meal
- Life skills
- Peer Support Groups
- Home/School Visits
- Food/Clothing Bank
- Coping Skills
- Health/Nutrition/Fitness
- Vegetable Garden
- Adherence Support
- Clinical Psychologist-2hrs/wk, group & individual therapy
- Psychosocial Interventions
- Food Saturdays- Greek Orthodox Church
- Food 2Xwk– Hands 4 Hunger
- Other food support – Bahamas Feeding Network, Salvation Army

Outreach Participants

AGE	0-2	3-12	13-24	TOTAL
MALES	4	26	18	48
FEMALES	4	34	40	78
TOTAL	8	60	58	126

Successes of the Outreach Programme

- March 8th Our Social Worker was honoured by the Zonta Club of Nassau in recognition of her outstanding and selfless service in the field of Social Work
- Staff participated in an intensive Counselling training session coordinated by The Samaritan Ministries, a lay counselling NGO under the umbrella of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.
- 32 of our young people were working before COVID-19
- Summer Camp 2019 – 50+ kids (no Summer Camp this year due to COVID-19)
- Wellington Adderley Memorial Scholarship - 2 students at University
- Our kids are doing well health wise

- Peer support group meetings (until COVID – 19)
- 13 students were scheduled to sit National Examinations which were postponed to October (BJCs and BGCSE)
- Our productive garden
- Life Skills Sessions were hosted every month (until COVID-19)
- With the generous support of two donors we provided desktops/laptops to All our students to prepare them for virtual learning during the COVID-19 era

Challenges of the Outreach Programme

- Outreach Programme is costly: \$2000/yr/child.
- Seeking qualified educators willing volunteer as tutors.
- Tough job market for our kids who need work.
- A few stateless orphans (children of Haitian descent born in The Bahamas to undocumented immigrants).
- Encouraging some adolescents to adhere to their medications.
- Transporting primary school kids to the programme after school – Social Worker is using a borrowed bus.
- Transportation of kids home after tutoring during Daylight Saving Time because of early darkness.
- Guiding the adolescents to responsible sexual behaviour.
- Need for opportunities for job training/job placement/skills transfer.
- Assisting our kids to apply for government identification documents.

OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Our Boardroom is a meeting space for Samaritan Ministries, a non-profit non-government organization under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Diocese. Samaritan Ministers are lay counselors working with Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

FOOD & CLOTHING BANK

Trying to keep the Food Bank stocked is a challenge. Always seeking donations for the Food Bank.

DOT – Directly Observed Therapy

Social Worker directly observes 8-10 adolescents taking their medication to ensure adherence but this also requires the cooperation of the adolescents who must come to the Foundation and bring their medicines with them. COVID-19 has severely impacted this programme

Education and Awareness

- Nov 2019 Annual Free HIV Testing at University of The Bahamas
Partner: National HIV/AIDS Programme, Ministry of Health
350 persons (students and staff) tested

- AIDS 101 Session conducted by a Mrs. Carlyne Smith McKenzie (Board Member and Public Health Consultant) for Social Service workers
- AIDS 101 Session Simpson Penn August 2019
- Annual Candlelight Vigil November 30, 2019
- Annual Human Red Ribbon November 15, 2019
- Tru Tru Bahamian, Feb 8th & 9th 2020 in partnership with Festival, and John Watlings Distillery

OTHER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Annual Character Day September 19, 2019 (aspects of character strengths are shared with kids in our Outreach Programme via guest speaker).

FUNDRAISING/DONATIONS

2019 Annual Raffle proceeds were down from the previous year- \$23,300 in 2019 compared to \$24,300 in 2018. There were several other raffles taking place at the same time as our raffle. The 2020 Annual Raffle has been postponed due to COVID-19.

Red Ribbon Ball November 23, 2019 proceeds also down from the previous year which we attributed to Hurricane Dorian which struck September 5-6th. Many of our loyal corporate supporters redirected their funding to Hurricane Relief. The Ball generated \$84,000 in 2019 and \$95,000 in 2018.

HURRICANE RELIEF

We did receive 7,500lbs of relief supplies donated by AIDS Healthcare Foundation, in Florida. We partnered with Rotary East Nassau to clear the goods through Customs, to store them and shared the supplies with the Rotary's Hurricane Relief effort. Although Abaco and Grand Bahama were severely impacted by Hurricane Dorian there were negative spinoffs for Non-Profit Organisations on New Providence. All the resources were going out to those devastated islands and charities in New Providence saw their usual resources dry up.

DONORS – a complete list is on the website

GRANTS

CANFAR
University of Ontario Institute of Technology
TK Foundation
Credit Suisse Foundation

THE FOUNDATION'S WISHLIST

- Support for our Sponsor Child Programme – e.g. 1 year = \$2,000.00/yr.

- More volunteers to share skills/expertise e.g. crafts, job training, academic tutoring, masonry, straw work, etc. with our kids
- Donations for our garden to make it more productive, e.g. gardening equipment, hose, sprinkler, rakes, soil, irrigation system, nozzle, etc.
- Building expansion for more classroom space and private counseling space
- Clinical Psychologist – increasing her hours to 4hrs/wk

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