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**FIRST ANNUAL FAITH-BASED CONFERENCE ON  
HIV/AIDS and SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**MAY 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> 2003**

“Building A Foundation For Effective Collaboration”

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**The Conference**

“The whole conference not only motivated us but empowered us Ġ “Informative and insightful as well as practical” Ġ Reality, holistic healing; family reunion with spiritual sisters and brothers that was much needed” Ġ “This was the best information that gave me hope of a father with a disease that didn’t infect me and my daughter”

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On May 14, 2003 the Prevention Partnership hosted -- at the Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan, WI -- the first annual Faith-Based conference on HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. The focus of the conference was on the expansion and enhancement of faith-based HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention programming, with an emphasis on the Black community. Prevention Partnership’s philosophy that “there is a clear need for HIV disease prevention services that target communities of color, that are culturally relevant, that address the issues of substance abuse and mental health, and that involve local institutions in these communities” served as the impetus for designing and conducting the conference.

This three day event impacted the lives of those in attendance both professionally and personally. This impact resulted from spirited testimonials and educational sessions delivered from such professionals as: 1) Beverly Watts Davis, Director of Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention; 2) Dr. Lucille Perez, immediate past president of the National Medical Association; 3) Bishop Simon Gordon, Pastor of Triedstone Full Gospel Baptist Church in Chicago; 4) Dr. Elizabeth Harris, Director of

the Southern California Operations for Evaluation Management and Training; and 5) Ms. Denis Stokes, AIDS Educational Consultant just to name a few.

## The Sessions

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The high caliber of sessions was well received by the attendees, who were quite vocal in their responses on the daily *evaluation* forms. The sessions included but were not limited to such content areas as: 1) Using HIV/AIDS peer health educators in your substance abuse prevention program; 2) Strategies for developing and improving aids ministries in the faith community; 3) A loud killer in a silent community; 4) Reclaiming and addressing the needs of women involved in the sex industry; and 5) Community mobilizing and networking: a personal perspective of a dynamic spiritual community ministry.

Moreover, conference attendees clearly illustrated their pleasure and sincerity for the diligent work exhibited by the Prevention Partnership staff, the execution of the assigned speakers, as well as the overall focus of the conference – Bringing faith-base institutions together with prevention professionals. Their sincerity for the conference message was passionately articulated when asked to evaluate the sessions:

- "All of the workshops were excellent. Thanks for all your efforts and for having copies of the handouts available."
- "The workshops provided me with the best tooling for what I am charged to do."
- "The amount of knowledge the presenters were able to distribute enhanced the information needed to assist the faith-based organizations (communities)."
- "The emphasis of spirituality in doing this work. It made me feel strong as an individual part of a collaboration or network, this validates the purpose."
- "It was one of the best conferences I've attended and I attend lots! You all did a great job!"

## The Findings

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The conference structure, speakers, and lodging were evaluated all three days of the conference. Understanding the *power of evaluation* when embarking on innovative

programmatic endeavors, the Prevention Partnership was rigorous in their quest to capture the impact the conference made on those in attendance. An evaluation form was administered at the end of each session and the Prevention Partnership staff was instrumental in collecting a significant number of forms per day. Using a five-point likert scale (5 = Excellent thru 1 = Very Poor) and a pointed format, the findings yielded a 4.0 or better mean score (average) for the conference structure, each speaker, and lodging accommodations.

**Table 1 Overall Conference by Mean Scores**

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**DAY ONE (N = ranged from 29 to 35)**

- The church’s position on HIV/AIDS ministering to parishioners and their families (4.8 mean)
- Historical perspective on the pandemic and the journey a head (4.7 mean)
- Evaluating HIV prevention programming in faith-based settings (4.6 mean)
- Lodge’s conference meeting facilities (4.5 mean)
- Overall, how did you feel about today’s activities (4.5 mean)

**DAY TWO (N = ranged from 8 to 33)**

- A loud killer in a silent community (4.4 mean)
- Reclaiming our youth (4.8 mean)
- Strategies for developing and improving AIDS ministries in the faith community (4.4 mean)
- Introduction to networking with the faith community (4.4 mean)
- Caring for the care givers (4.4 mean)
- Using HIV/AIDS peer health educators in your substance abuse program (4.7 mean)
- Reclaiming and addressing the needs of women involved in the sex industry (4.9 mean)
- How to evaluate your program and why many groups fail (5.0 mean)
- Community mobilizing and networking: a personal perspective (4.6 mean)
- Program development, planning and proposal writing overview (4.5 mean)
- The continuum of care: the role of primary care, hospital and hospice (4.4 mean)
- Importance of comprehensive HIV/AIDS and substance abuse services (4.8 mean)
- Optional alternative activities (4.7 mean)

**DAY THREE (N = ranged from 13 to 26)**

- HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention services (4.8 mean)
- Where do we go from here (4.6 mean)
- One girl’s story (4.9 mean)
- Reflections – our collective stories of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse (4.7 mean)
- Conference offered an adequate networking opportunity (4.7 mean)
- Conference enhanced my professional development (4.6 mean)
- Pre-conference registration brochure was effective in communicating the conference program (4.3 mean)
- Conference increased by understanding of faith-based prevention efforts (4.7 mean)

- How would you rate the conference lodging (4.5 mean)
- How would you rate today's activities (4.7 mean)
- Quality of food (4.4 mean)