

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***“Hope, Healing and Remembrance”* will be Solano’s Theme Commemorating World AIDS Day on Dec. 1**

The Solano County AIDS Quilt signifying ***“Hope, Healing and Remembrance”*** will be unveiled by the Solano HIV Prevention Network Dec. 1 at the Vallejo Ferry Building. Ceremonies starting at 4 p.m. will include inspirational music, dance and poetry and conclude with a candlelight vigil and words of hope.

“Community members created the quilt to illustrate ***“Hope, Healing and Remembrance”*** as a way to memorialize loved ones who have died of HIV/AIDS,” said Renee Smith, Health Education Specialist who coordinated the quilt-making project. “The quilt will be put on permanent display as an enduring memorial to the more than 1,000 Solano residents, family and friends affected by AIDS.”

The Solano AIDS quilt, modeled after the National AIDS Memorial Quilt, began as an idea put forth by the Solano HIV Prevention Network and has grown to include contributions of many community members who wished to honor friends or family lost to HIV since the beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s, said Peter Turner, MPH, Solano County Supervising Health Education Specialist.

“Constructing the quilt panels has proven to aid in the continuous process of healing,” Turner explained. “We hope the quilt will grow as more families remember those who have died. The quilt is a physical manifestation of this year’s theme, *‘Hope Healing and Remembrance’* and a visual reminder that HIV still impacts Solano County.

Since 1983 in Solano County, a total of 1,407 people have been diagnosed with AIDS and 696 have died. Turner estimates there are between one and two thousand individuals infected with HIV living in Solano County (excluding California Medical Facility in Vacaville). Many of these individuals have never had an HIV antibody test and do not know they are infected.

The observance of World AIDS Day started in 1989 and in Solano County in 1995 to raise awareness, educate and fight prejudice. As of 2005, 40 million men, women and children worldwide are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS and 22 million have died. Globally last year alone, approximately 15,000 people a day were newly infected with HIV.

In the United States, 980,000 people are now infected with HIV. Despite the fact that new AIDS

drugs are giving years of productive life to many with HIV, the rate of new infections remains high in the U. S., with 40,000 new infections reported in 2004.

“It is important to recognize that the AIDS epidemic can only be controlled through education and activities that prevent new infections such as HIV testing and access to treatment for those already infected,” Turner said. “We offer FREE, anonymous HIV antibody testing at sites throughout Solano County. Call 553-5552 for information about testing.

“By coming together as concerned individuals and organizations in our response to HIV, we can promote greater community awareness of how HIV/AIDS affects us locally, nationally and globally,” Turner said.

Local World AIDS Day Events

Sections of the National Memorial AIDS Quilt will also be displayed at the following locations throughout Solano County:

- Vallejo - the Fetterly Gallery 3467 Sonoma Blvd, Suite 10.
- Dixon - Dixon Family Practice, 131 West A St.
- Vacaville - St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 101 West St.
- Fairfield -Health and Social Services Dept., 275 Beck Ave.
- Suisun - Solano Community College, 4000 Suisun Valley Rd.

The Solano HIV Prevention Network is a partnership of community members and providers of HIV prevention services dedicated to promoting prevention and AIDS awareness. If you're interested in finding out more about the Solano HIV Prevention Network, please contact Peter W. Turner at (707) 553-5557.

[For more information about World AIDS Day or to schedule an interview with an HIV infected person, please contact Renee Smith at \(707\) 553-5556 or Peter W. Turner at \(707\) 553-5557.](#)

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