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New York, NY 10030

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And much more!

Iris House Changing Lives!

Beverly is a transgendered MTF (male to female) client who was born in Honduras and migrated to the United States seeking asylum in June 2022. Upon her arrival to the U.S., she was placed in a detention center for immigrants in California and was then transferred to Corona, Queens.

In October 2022, Beverly contacted Iris House who met with her and identified housing as a primary need. We then provided Beverly with guidance on submitting an application with the NYC Human Resources Administration/HIV/AIDS Service Administration Supportive Housing Program. Beverly successfully submitted a supportive housing application and upon receipt, Beverly was called into the housing office to complete an intake and interview. She was accepted into the housing

program on October 5th and moved into her own fully furnished apartment on October 20, 2022. From intake to move in, the process only took two weeks! To accommodate her language (Spanish speaking), Beverly was paired with a bilingual Case Manager at Iris House, ensuring that all her needed services were in place, including medical, pharmacy, mental health, and legal immigration services. Beverly shared that she is in the process of transitioning; she receives hormone therapy and recently underwent facial feminization surgery. The Iris House Housing team collaborates with our Food and Nutrition Services team to ensure that Beverly receives food/pantry deliveries while she is recovering at home. The Housing team remains excited for Beverly in her transition and in her journey to becoming a permanent U.S. resident!

STAY CONNECTED TO IRIS HOUSE!

Website: www.irishouse.org
Facebook: [iris.house](https://www.facebook.com/iris.house)

Instagram: [irishouseinc](https://www.instagram.com/irishouseinc)
X: [@irishouseinc](https://twitter.com/irishouseinc)



Bloom

A newsletter of Iris House | www.Irishouse.org



WINTER 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since the last issue of our newsletter, Iris House has enjoyed a whirlwind of activity. While continuing to provide our vital services to clients and community members, including serving thousands of meals, distributing tens of thousands of pounds of fresh produce and proteins, providing housing, connecting clients to pharmacy services, delivering mental health services, and more, we found time to celebrate the milestone of our 30th anniversary. While we don't usually take the time to pause and acknowledge the impact Iris House makes in the lives of women, men, and families, I want to dedicate this issue of our newsletter to just that. Please share in our accomplishments. Your support made them possible.



In addition, Iris House held multiple events to bring attention to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) during PrEP Aware Week, fed hundreds of clients and community residents for Thanksgiving, recognized World AIDS Day, facilitated emotional support groups, and held our Children's Holiday Party (including a surprise visit by Santa). Finally, two former Board members wished to send a message to our supporters which we included on the following page.

Enjoy this issue filled with photos and highlights.

With much appreciation,

Ingrid Floyd
Executive Director

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2024 WOMEN AS THE FACE OF AIDS SUMMIT

SAVE
THE
DATE

Motivated & Mobilized Moving Forward in a New Era of HIV

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024

Bethel Gospel Assembly, 2-26 East 120th Street
New York, NY 10035 • 11am - 6pm

Message from Former IRIS HOUSE Board Members

This past year, Iris House celebrated its 30th anniversary of serving women affected by the HIV epidemic. The elegant event, hosted by the Iris House Executive Director and Board of Advisors, celebrated the community leaders who have been at the forefront of addressing HIV in communities of color and in women specifically. The event, which included Iris House staff members, leaders, clients, donors and supporters, and former members of the Board of Directors, demonstrated the stability of this organization in an environment where HIV/AIDS organizations come and go. Through the years of financial and political upheaval, Iris House has very clearly maintained its connectedness and grounding in the community which is, of course, the source of its strength.

The concept of Iris House was initiated in 1993 at a meeting of women in then Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger's office. It was led by women consumers, community leaders, and healthcare professionals, and supported by the NYC government and healthcare institutions. The discussions addressed the growing understanding that HIV disproportionately impacted women of color. These same women lived in communities without access to basic health services, supportive housing, and food. From these discussions, Iris House was born to address these urgent needs. Iris House was named in honor of Iris de La Cruz, a warrior HIV activist and educator living with AIDS who founded Life Force to educate women and the first women's HIV support group.

From the beginning, Iris House has addressed the changing needs of those affected by HIV in a supportive, inclusive environment. What began as provision of supportive services for women with HIV adapted as the needs of the community shifted. Today, Iris House provides HIV testing, counseling,

education, prevention services, and linkage to care for women and their affected families. Supporting these families and communities directly improves lives.

Walking into Iris House today, one would find the same welcoming environment staffed by professionals who are attuned to the community's needs. Undoubtedly, one will notice that we now wrap this community-based organization in a sophisticated system with access to sustainable services. Iris House plays a national role in HIV and health access advocacy, meeting community needs over a much larger footprint with a far reach.

How did Iris House morph from a small, scrappy but essential idea into the sophisticated service and advocacy organization that it is today? Simply, leadership matters. Ingrid Floyd and the Iris House Board of Advisors have understood how to thread the needle and create an organization that is both responsive to and grounded in the local, regional, and national women's community while establishing the business management practices needed to ensure organization viability. As times have changed, Iris House has risen to adapt to these changes. By doing so, it remains one of the few organizations that has thrived throughout the HIV epidemic and is a leader in the field.

Sincerely,
Cina M. Brown, M.D.
and Kate Campana



Iris House "White House" Lawn Party Plainfield, NJ, October 4, 2023

On October 4, 2023, Iris House held an open house for the community, clients, donors, policymakers, and the media at our new office in Plainfield, NJ. Attended by more than 70 friends, the "White House" Lawn Party welcomed our neighbors into our new office space. The interior is designed as a home to provide a warm and comfortable setting for our clients, community partners, and other visitors. In addition to remarks by Ingrid Floyd, along with the Mayor of Plainfield and other elected representatives, Iris House received a resolution from the State of New Jersey commending its critical work toward our mission of saving lives through comprehensive support, prevention, and education services for women, families, and underserved populations affected by HIV/AIDS and other health disparities.



WORDS OF INSPIRATION

"Here's to all the women, the nameless, faceless souls that died alone warriors in combat."

– Iris de La Cruz, Artist and Activist

"You are more concerned about winning a trophy than you are about our government spreading lies about us in an effort to kill us! You want to know why they want us dead? Because we're Black and we're brown and we're queer. They don't give a shit about us. So we better start caring about ourselves. Show up for your lives. WAKE UP!"

– Billy Porter as Pray Tell on Pose

"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women."

– Maya Angelou, American Poet

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

VOLUNTEER

at Iris House for our Food Pantry and/or Fresh Market Programs. Contact Serge Jean at 646.548.0100, x202

JOIN

ACT NOW: END AIDS (ANEA) a national coalition of community-based organizations, health departments, national policy partners, and activists committed to ending the HIV epidemic in the United States.

DONATE

to Iris House by visiting: **Supporting Women and Families Impacted by HIV (donorview.com)**



WORLD AIDS DAY 2023

On World AIDS Day, December 1, 2023, Iris House staff delivered HIV 101 workshops to nearly 400 young people in New Jersey in addition to our activities reaching hundreds more throughout New York City and via our social media channels.



Iris House's 30th Anniversary Celebration was held on October 19, 2023 at ILA Penthouse in New York City. With the setting of a glorious New York cityscape, 150 guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and music to party the night away. We are proud to have honored the Honorable Inez Dickens of the New York State Assembly with our Impact Award, Dr. Mindy Fullilove with our Changemaker Award, and Dr. Robert Fullilove with our Groundbreaker Award. We also featured a short film by Director William Mosley documenting the history and impact of Iris House over its 30 years.

To see Iris House's 30th Anniversary short film, please visit: [Iris House 30th Anniversary — YouTube](#)



Photo credit: Keston Duke. To see more pictures, please visit the Iris House website at www.irishouse.org.

We would like to thank our very generous event sponsors, including ViiV Healthcare, Merck, Gilead, Naima Walker Fierce, Leslie Lake, Bottom Line Concepts, Gretchen Piller, Drs. Theresa and Jason Mack, Ryan Health, Tau Omega, Elmcor, Kevin China, and ABS Staffing Solutions. Our event was featured in POZ Magazine, [Iris House Celebrates 30 Years Serving NYC Women and Families Facing HIV - POZ](#)

Iris House Annual Client Children's Holiday Party

Helping our parents and making children smile, on December 19, 2023, Iris House hosted its annual holiday party at Bethel Gospel Assembly for the families we serve. Providing dinner for all along with toys for every child from Santa, the holiday spirit filled all our hearts, especially those of our clients and their families. For some, these are the only toys these children will receive this holiday, so it is so important to make these celebrations memorable. We offered photos with Santa for those who wanted them along with prints of the photos at the event. Below are some highlights.



PrEP Aware Week 2023



Iris House organized more than 10 PrEP Aware Week (PAW) events in October 2023, reaching approximately 500 individuals citywide. For example, we hosted one of our PAW events at 4West Lounge, one of the premier LGBTQ+ lounges in Harlem. Troy Weekes, Iris House's 2023 Ambassador addressed the audience on the importance of PrEP among gay men in Harlem and the services offered by Iris House, and Iris House staff provided HIV, HCV, and syphilis rapid testing and referrals to PrEP. Jomil Luna, Pharmacy Representative at the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) spoke about AHF's pharmacy program and seamless referral process to PrEP. Guests were delighted by the signature PrEP cocktail and delicious hors d'oeuvres.

In addition, Iris House held an event at the AHF Wellness Center in the Bronx, conducted a workshop on PrEP and women during an emotional wellness group, and partnered with Parkchester Baptist Church, Wyckoff Medical Center, First Corinthian Baptist Church, Jacobi Medical Center, Exponents, and the Mexican Consulate who also conducted a PAW educational program at their respective sites. Attendees received a PAW t-shirt, educational information, and the opportunity to enroll in PrEP.



AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Holiday Party with Iris House

On December 16, 2023, AHF, of which Iris House is an affiliate, held its annual holiday party. Dancing the night away, AHF showed us a great time!

