We’re hiring!

As we continue to grow, we’re looking for dedicated and talented people to join our team. We have several positions open and encourage everyone to apply or spread the word!

If you are interested in working with us please visit www.albanydamiencenter.org/careers to read job descriptions and directions on how to apply.

Items needed for PAWS!

Our Pets are Wonderful Support program could use your help!

*Cat and Dog Food *Kitty Litter *Pet Toys & Treats *Flea Medicine *Pet Grooming Supplies *Donations to Cover Vet Bills

If you can help, please drop off these items at our front desk or mail them to 728 Madison Avenue, Albany, NY 12208.

How YOU can help!

Make a monetary contribution—The need to support people living with HIV still exists, and we are working hard to continue our impact. As we continue to grow, we need your financial support to continue and expand our programs and services. Please consider a meaningful gift today.

Throw a FUN-raiser! Do you have energy, time and passion? Then throw a fundraiser for us! This is a great project for school, church, and employer groups to help raise needed funds and HIV/AIDS awareness!

You can even throw one for your birthday or a special occasion online. Also, we have a new easy system and resources to support your fundraising!

Make a Bequest through Planned Giving — A gift through your will or living trust will continue your support of the Damien Center and people living with HIV/AIDS as an important legacy in our community.

For more information, contact Jonathan Richardson, Director of Development, at 518-449-7119, ext. 213.

Bryant Asset donated gifts for our tenants!

The journey to U=U has been a very personal one for me. From the moment I learned I had HIV in 1995, I felt different. While people treated me different (separate plates/forks, not sharing glassware, and often not wanting to touch me), I also viewed myself different.

In fact, I hated the most HIV stigma on myself - believing I was “dirty”, “diseased”, “infectious”. It was a trauma I know most people diagnosed with HIV know too well. In the very beginning of the epidemic, we did not know much about how HIV was transmitted, so the fear was real. But no more!

Today I am UNDETECTABLE. This means that my HIV medications are working so that the virus in my body is so low, that I CANNOT transmit the HIV virus to anyone. Plus, I feel good, but also in my mind, I feel different. With the studies showing U=U, I finally internally have released the stigma I put on myself. That is such a freeing, life-altering feeling.

We call it, Treatment as Prevention. We help a person with HIV to LIVE and PREVENT new HIV infections at the same time. Sadly, too many people with HIV don’t know their HIV status and too many who do know are not HIV undetectable as they cannot access HIV medications and treatment.

HIV stigma still plays a huge factor in this, but when combined with poverty, homelessness, hunger, mental health, substance use, injustice, isolation, and other trauma, we continue to face an uphill battle to help each person. We need to get the word out that we can END HIV STIGMA!

At the Albany Damien Center, we continue to need your support to reduce and eliminate the barriers people face to getting an HIV test and help those of us with HIV to get unfettered access to HIV treatment and medications.

Please join me in ENDING HIV STIGMA, so we can End this AIDS Epidemic for good!

Sincerely,
Perry Junjulas,
Executive Director & Person with AIDS who is UNDETECTABLE

Let’s END HIV STIGMA

U=U Facts

“The body of scientific evidence to-date has established that there is effectively no risk of sexual transmission of HIV when the partner living with HIV has a durably undetectable viral load, validating the U=U message of HIV treatment as prevention.”

Anthony S. Fauci, MD July 2018

The Albany Damien Center can help!
Call us at 518-449-7119

Are you someone living with HIV or know someone who is looking to become UNDETECTABLE? Call us today to learn about our new U=U program launching in February! 518-449-7119
Adrian Hill: Our Community Builder

Adrian has been surviving and thriveing with HIV for over 25 years. He was never public about his status. However, after some memorable experiences at the Albany Damien Center, he is ready to be part of a statewide campaign fighting HIV stigma, linking people to resources, and building a stronger community.

Adrian has been involved with the Damien Center for many years now and has always supported his fellow peers with their basic and healthcare needs. Last year, he moved into one of our new apartments on Madison Ave and how works as our Front Desk Advocate. He’s grateful for the services the Damien Center has provided for him because now he can advocate and help other people. Helping people is his favorite part about working here.

Last year, Adrian was contacted by a marketing company in New York City looking for models to be part of a new campaign. Adrian was one of the few chosen from the Capital Region to participate. He went to New York for training on how to be an advocate, how to be a spokesperson and how to be a community leader. The campaign is called “I Am U” and is expected to launch this winter!

Adrian hopes this new campaign will help build community. He wants people living with HIV to know that with hard work and diligence, HIV isn’t a death sentence. He can say from personal experience that anyone living with HIV is never alone and there is a place for them at the Albany Damien Center.

For more information on how you can help the Damien Center, contact Jonathan Richardson, at 518-449-7119, ext. 213.

Welcome New Board Members!

We’re excited to announce new board members joining the Albany Damien Center Board of Directors! We asked each member to share with us what they are most excited about serving as one of our board members.

George W. Clifford, Ph.D., MPA — “The Albany Damien Center helps to improve the lives of vulnerable populations. To be able to help the organization do this in a compassionate and fiscally sound way is what drew me to join the board. In the process, we all try to make the community a better place.”

Judy disco — “I am most excited about being on the board of the Albany Damien Center because of the innovative housing and support to our community. To know the humble beginnings of the Albany Damien Center and to experience and be part of where we are today is truly amazing!!”

Libby Post — “I’m looking forward to working with a dedicated group of people who believe in the Damien Center’s mission and strive to create new opportunities for the people the Center serves.”

7 Reasons to be excited for our AIDS Walk & Festival!

Our AIDS Walk & Festival is right around the corner! Join us to:

1. Make an impact in our community!
2. Learn about community resources at our Community Wellness Fair.
3. Hear from Inspirational Speakers on the forefront of fighting the AIDS Epidemic and empowering our community.
4. Engage in fun and healthy activities as well as enjoy local entertainment.
5. FREE FOOD including a catered hot lunch after completing our Scavenger Hunt Walk.
6. Enter a chance to win Southwest Airline tickets if you fundraise!
7. Enjoy a community full of love and support.

For more information on the AIDS Walk & Festival, please visit our website www.albanydamiencenter.org/aidswalk. For questions or how to get involved, please contact Nick Cramer at nickc@albanydamiencenter.org or 518-449-7119.

Did you know the impact our PAWS program made in 2018?

• We served 135 members and 171 pets.
• We distributed 16,782 lbs. of pet food and supplies.
• We provided veterinary care for 116 pets.
• We supported over $7,200 in vet care bills.
• We provided foster or in-home care for 18 pets for 412 days.

Isn’t our PAWS program amazing?

You can keep this awesome momentum going and increase our impact for 2019 by joining us at Bowling for PAWS on Sunday, February 24, 2019, at Spare Time in Latham.

By bowling and fundraising at this event, you ensure that our members living with HIV can afford and care for their pets, especially when they need them the most.

If you are interested in donating and purchasing tickets to Bowling for PAWS, please call 518-449-7119 or visit www.albanydamiencenter.org/bowlingforpaws.

Aunt Des Lives On…

My great-aunt, Despina Kontis Vaccarielli, passed away in November 2016. She was a loving, generous, intelligent, loyal and kind daughter, wife, stepmother, grandmother, sister, aunt, great-aunt and friend. About a year and a half before she passed away, I recorded audio from an interview with Des. In asking what one thing she wanted people to know about her, she responded, “Even to this day I feel this way, I don’t think you should be good to get something back. You should be good because it’s the right thing to do.”

I wanted to find a way to memorialize her name. Soon after, I received fundraising materials from the Damien Center in the mail sharing the opportunity to name a room in memory of a loved one. I first came to know of the wonderful services provided by the Damien Center as a medical student, as I worked to help organize HIV/AIDS Awareness Week at my school. As a student who was unable to donate the room fully by myself with some experience in fundraising, I was inspired to start a campaign.

Des had a strong faith and supported the movements of numerous underserved groups, including the LGBTQ+ community and the homeless, during an era when bigotry and prejudice was the norm. She was very humble and never wanted to be in the spotlight, but people like her deserve to be remembered. Of the available rooms, I decided to raise money to donate the Volunteer & Staff Break Room in her memory. So many generous people donated to the campaign that we ended up going $1,000 over my goal!

In the spirit of sustainable education- and community-focused services provided by the volunteers and staff at the Damien Center supported by a space such as a break room, I think Des may have approved of the room dedication.

Although Des is deeply missed by all who loved and appreciated her, her spirit lives on. - Arielle Gerard

If you are interested in naming a room after a loved one at our new building, please contact Jonathan Richardson at JonathanR@albanydamiencenter.org or 518-449-7119, EXT. 213.

Larry & David: Grateful to Be Here

Larry and David are current tenants in our Madison Apartments and have been together for over 12 years. They are originally from the Southern United States and moved to Upstate New York on a wing and a prayer.

They were looking for support because they were battling homelessness, financial issues, and HIV. So they came to the Damien Center.

Now they have a safe home to easily get their medications, food, support, and love from a new family. Larry said the Albany Damien Center is “a beautiful family environment and I feel so welcomed and so loved. I’m so grateful for the Damien Center and so happy to be here”.

For more information on how you can help our tenants, please contact Jonathan Richardson, at 518-449-7119, ext. 213 or jonathanr@albanydamiencenter.org.