Albany Damien Center

728 Madison Avenue, Suite 100
Albany, NY 12208-3302
518-449-7119

For more information, please contact Perry Junjulas at PerryJ@albanydamiencenter.org or 518-449-7119.

For information on how to get involved in the NAMES Project Steering Committee, please contact Jay Shufelt at JayS@albanydamiencenter.org or 518-449-7119.

EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS
Helping people with HIV & AIDS get back to work, improve skills, and navigate benefits & healthcare!

In April of 2019, the Albany Damien Center began offering employment services to members who are interested in entering the workforce.

The Albany Damien Center has long recognized the health benefits for people with HIV and AIDS in going to work, school, or with volunteering. Science has also shown that employment increases HIV prevention efforts, moving us to our goal of Ending the AIDS Epidemic.

We are proud to report over 40 participants are enrolled in this new program with six participants already working in the Capital Region in various businesses, retail, not-for-profit, food service, and civil service positions. All of the employers offer health insurance.

Our employment team provides intensive employment case management assistance with resume building, job searches, benefits counseling, financial wellness information for budgeting and credit scores, internet access in our new computer lab, follow-along services, and much more.

We also have participants that are attending High School Equivalency classes at BOCES, computer classes at the SUNY ATTAIN Lab, or taking peer certification courses.

One of our participants stated, “My experience with Employment Pathways has given me the support and guidance of some dedicated people. They have a clear vision for moving their program participants into opportunities that allow them to overcome the obstacles of returning to work. I have benefitted so much from their efforts, they helped me, help myself.”

Employment Pathways is funded by your generous donations and the HIV Employment Initiative of the New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance (OTDA).

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

THE NAMES PROJECT
NY Capital Region Chapter transitions to The Damien Center!

In September 2019, The NAMES Project, NY Capital Region Chapter became a program of The Albany Damien Center. This local chapter, in existence since 1996, is the only chapter in New York State and one of ten chapters nationwide.

The mission of the New York Capital Region NAMES Project is to use the AIDS Memorial Quilt to provide HIV prevention education. The Quilt provides a creative means for remembrance and healing, and it has proven to increase public awareness by illustrating the enormity of the AIDS epidemic.

The Quilt is a powerful visual tool. Raising public awareness of the AIDS pandemic allows community members to engage in open dialogue, which reduces the fears and stigma attached to the disease.

The Quilt will be displayed at the World AIDS Day Summit in December, at the annual AIDSWalk & Festival in May, and upon request.

We are proud to report over 40 participants are enrolled in this new program with six participants already working in the Capital Region in various businesses, retail, not-for-profit, food service, and civil service positions. All of the employers offer health insurance.

Our employment team provides intensive employment case management assistance with resume building, job searches, benefits counseling, financial wellness information for budgeting and credit scores, internet access in our new computer lab, follow-along services, and much more.

We also have participants that are attending High School Equivalency classes at BOCES, computer classes at the SUNY ATTAIN Lab, or taking peer certification courses.

One of our participants stated, “My experience with Employment Pathways has given me the support and guidance of some dedicated people. They have a clear vision for moving their program participants into opportunities that allow them to overcome the obstacles of returning to work. I have benefitted so much from their efforts, they helped me, help myself.”

Employment Pathways is funded by your generous donations and the HIV Employment Initiative of the New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance (OTDA).

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

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.

How You Can Help!

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 Perry Junjulas, Executive Director, at 518-449-7119, ext. 102.

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 Perry Junjulas, Executive Director, at 518-449-7119, ext. 102.

THE NAMES PROJECT
NY Capital Region Chapter transitions to The Damien Center!

In September 2019, The NAMES Project, NY Capital Region Chapter became a program of The Albany Damien Center. This local chapter, in existence since 1996, is the only chapter in New York State and one of ten chapters nationwide.

The mission of the New York Capital Region NAMES Project is to use the AIDS Memorial Quilt to provide HIV prevention education. The Quilt provides a creative means for remembrance and healing, and it has proven to increase public awareness by illustrating the enormity of the AIDS epidemic.

The Quilt is a powerful visual tool. Raising public awareness of the AIDS pandemic allows community members to engage in open dialogue, which reduces the fears and stigma attached to the disease.

The Quilt will be displayed at the World AIDS Day Summit in December, at the annual AIDSWalk & Festival in May, and upon request.

For information on how to get involved in the NAMES Project Steering Committee, please contact Jay Shufelt at JayS@albanydamiencenter.org or 518-449-7119.

Are you living with HIV and looking to become employed?
Call us today to learn about our new Employment Pathways program 518-449-7119.
This past September, I had the great honor to present the 2019 Damien Center Hero Award to long-time AIDS activist, T. Norman Bea. At the event, Norman provided a moving speech that called upon all of us to increase our efforts to help people with HIV and AIDS—“for us to be heroes in the fight we still wage daily against the horrible effects of the AIDS pandemic we witness right here in our local community.

Norman reminded us that in memory of those we have lost to AIDS, that we do not forget those who are still struggling today—and how everybody like you and me can do extraordinary things to change the world, one person at a time!

Our Board of Directors and I are continually looking for ways for the Damien Center to evolve to meet the emerging needs. New programs this year such as Employment Pathways, the transition of the NY Capital Region NAMES Project Chapter, the evolution of MPower to help our LG&B & TGNC community, and the closing of the Treasure Chest show our determination to change course to go where the need is.

While there is much progress being made in our Ending the AIDS Epidemic efforts, we recognize that HIV stigma, poverty, trauma, substance use, and mental health issues continue to create formidable, and often systemic, barriers to entry for those with HIV. As we continue to leverage existing resources to maximize our mission’s impact locally and on a statewide level, there are many ways to be a Hero. Contribute funds, volunteer, and continue to educate people about HIV and AIDS by supporting this life-changing work we do at the Albany Damien Center seven days a week—and be a Hero as a lasting legacy of helping others. Join me today as we change the world, one person at a time!

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BE A HERO!

The Damien Center MPower Program has evolved to serve all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) and Transgender, and Gender Non-conforming/Non-binary (TGNC) individuals and families, regardless of HIV status.

The NEW MPower! program provides a safe and affirming drop-in space where community members can meet with staff to help address ongoing or emergent needs such as linkage to emergency housing, on-site HIV testing and linkage to STI and Hepatitis C testing, PreP providers, general practitioners, and assistance with obtaining health insurance. The MPower team also provides linkage to affirming Physicians, who specialize in Transgender healthcare.

Through MPower!, people of Transgender or Non-binary experience can receive Employment Services that include assistance with soft skills training, resume development, job application assistance, job placement, and assistance with job retention.

If you are in need of Care Coordination, assistance with food security, housing, employment, or other emergent needs, stop by at 77 Central Ave, FL 2, Albany NY 12206 or call Ryan or Teri at 518-694-2099.

MOVING FORWARD:

SAVING GOODBYE
TO THE TREASURE CHEST

We began The Treasure Chest 20 years ago as a vehicle to raise funds, provide items for our members, and promote community awareness of AIDS. Along the way, we also had many of our members learn valuable skills that led them to future opportunities. But due to increasing costs and the challenges of running a thrift store in an age when the online marketplace rules, we have decided to close the Treasure Chest Thrift Store Program on December 12.

According to Executive Director Perry Junjulas “I am very proud of the accomplishments of the Treasure Chest over the past 20 years and how this program has helped the lives of so many people in our local community. I am especially grateful to Walter Masten and our volunteers for their work to help our members through the Treasure Chest.

Your ability to adapt to changes as an agency is paramount to our looking to the future and how we will successfully fulfill our mission. We will always be grateful to our community’s support of the Treasure Chest!”

Thank you to everyone who has supported and helped at the Treasure Chest over the past 20 years!

HOUSING—MAKING EVERY APARTMENT A HOME

Thank you to our supporters—we have 20 very low-income persons with HIV who were homeless, living—and thriving—in their apartments on-site at the Damien Center and an additional 15 people in scattered-site apartments in the community.

Jessie—one of our tenants—related that sometimes all people want is someone to accept us. She says that “here I’ve found a community where people genuinely care about me.”

We are witnessing first hand how housing is improving the health of each person who is living at the Albany Damien Center. With a full-service pharmacy on-site and dedicated case managers, tenants are back in care and often exceeding what even they thought was possible for themselves.

Sadly, we continue to have persons with HIV and AIDS who are homeless come in for the Damien Center drop-in hours each day who we do not have housing for, as our program is full. Each person receives a hot meal, support, and services during this day only to return to homelessness each evening. By the time members of our community make their way to the Damien Center, most have experienced the demoralizing effects of stigma, poverty, illness, and isolation. For a person living with HIV, this can be life-threatening and far too many people in the Capital Region go without life-saving treatment and everyday necessities.

The holidays are often a very difficult time for our members in need—which makes us double our efforts using your charitable gifts to provide life-changing support for each person who comes through our doors. We remain committed to increasing our support for persons with HIV and AIDS experiencing homelessness in our community.

THE WHISPERING ANGELS OF SARATOGA SPRINGS COMPUTER LAB IS OPEN!

On October 18, 2019 we unveiled our fully furnished Whispering Angels of Saratoga Springs Computer Lab, which was made possible with a generous grant from the Whispering Angels and a grant from the Ernest O. Reaugh Trust Fund.

Too many very low-income persons with HIV & AIDS do not have access to a computer or the internet. HIV stigma continues to isolate too many people with HIV and AIDS, causing adverse health and quality of life outcomes.

Employment Pathways is also using the Computer Lab to help participants with job searches and learning needed computer skills.

This generous donation will allow our members to connect to the world—and be a vital resource for those looking to go to school or return to work!

PAWS: PETS (TRULY) ARE WONDERFUL SUPPORT!

The health benefits of owning a pet continue to help as PAWS Coordinators Diane & Jessie work with our volunteers to assist over 125 of our low-income PAWS members who have HIV and their 145 pets.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR PAWS!

Our Pets are Wonderful Support program could use your help!

• Cat and Dog Food
• Kitty Litter
• Pet Toys & Treats
• Donations to Cover Vet Bills

Please help by donating items at our front desk (open 24/7) or mail to 728 Madison Avenue, Suite 100, Albany, NY 12208.

“Too many very low-income persons with HIV & AIDS do not have access to a computer or the internet. HIV stigma continues to isolate too many people with HIV and AIDS, causing adverse health and quality of life outcomes.

Employment Pathways is also using the Computer Lab to help participants with job searches and learning needed computer skills.

This generous donation will allow our members to connect to the world—and be a vital resource for those looking to go to school or return to work!”

We are so very grateful for the financial veterinary assistance (in 2018 & 2019), I know the PAWS team personally went above and beyond to help us. I will never forget as Mackie is my world. It is just he & I. —Gratefully, Tina and Mackie-Boy

Our Pets are Wonderful Support program could use your help!

• Cat and Dog Food
• Kitty Litter
• Pet Toys & Treats
• Donations to Cover Vet Bills

Please help by donating items at our front desk (open 24/7) or mail to 728 Madison Avenue, Suite 100, Albany, NY 12208.