

The Albany Damien Center

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Address Service Requested

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WE WANT TO BE YOUR “CHARITY OF CHOICE”

There are so many ways to help The Damien Centers

Make a monetary contribution—As funding to help people with AIDS becomes scarce, we rely on your tax-deductible financial gifts to ensure the needs of our individuals and families living with HIV are met.

Throw a FUN-raiser! A great project for school, church, and employer groups to help raise needed funds and AIDS awareness!

Donate your time and talent through volunteering—Volunteers are extremely important in helping the Albany Damien Center operate each day. There are multiple volunteer opportunities and flexible schedules available.

Make an in-kind donation - We value every in-kind donation we receive whether it is made directly to the Damien Center or through our Treasure Chest thrift store!

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 Maria Vincent, Development Director at 518-449-7119, ext.113.



Damien Center
The Resource Center for People Living with HIV & AIDS

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ALBANY DAMIEN CENTER ENDORSES THE U=U INITIATIVE



The Albany Damien Center is proud to be a partner with the Prevention Access Campaign, an international collaboration with researchers, nonprofits, government agencies, and HIV activists who share the common goals to end the epidemic of HIV and HIV-related stigma.

What is U=U? Quite simply, if your HIV viral load is undetectable, you are unable to transmit HIV. Period. Science is showing us also that if a person with HIV/AIDS takes their HIV medication and attains an undetectable viral load — that their life-span will equal that of someone who is HIV negative.

Evidence has established that the risk of HIV transmission from a person with HIV, who is on HIV medicines (antiretroviral therapy or ART) and has maintained an undetectable viral load in their blood for at least six months, is non-existent. "We can now say with confidence that if you are taking HIV medication as prescribed, and have had an undetectable viral load for over six months, you cannot pass on HIV with or without a condom," says Dr. Michael Brady, Medical Director of the Terrence Higgins Trust. The battle against stigma and discrimination has been part of the landscape for people living with the disease from the very beginning of the epidemic; this is a true game-changer in that fight.

"The scientific evidence is clear. Someone who has undetectable levels of virus in their blood does not pose an infection risk to their sexual partners. This understanding transforms the way that HIV is considered with enormous implications for what it now means to live with HIV and the best ways to prevent it." Statement from NAM aidsmap (February, 2017)

According to Damien Center Director & PLWA, Perry Junjulas: "The Damien Center continues to be a **pro-active leader** in the fight against AIDS in our upstate New York region.

Our goal includes ensuring each person living with HIV attains an undetectable HIV viral load, so they may live a long, healthy life **and** not transmit the virus to others. Too many people continue to go without life saving HIV treatment, which is why the Damien Center will continue to fight to ensure each person with HIV/AIDS has **unfettered access to the care and support they deserve.**"

You are not alone - Maybe you tested HIV+ very recently; maybe you've known it for some time but this is the first time you've reached out for information or support. The Damien Centers creates an environment where people can gather to share information, experiences, and make new friends - friends who understand what it is like to live with this disease.

There's no need for you to handle this by yourself. You are not the only person in our community facing this. Just hearing how someone else has adjusted to living with the virus can be enough to help you realize that life is still good, that you can still have love and laughter.

*We are not alone
And neither are you*

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**GET TESTED.
TREAT EARLY.
STAY SAFE.
End AIDS.**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When I was diagnosed HIV+ over 20 years ago, I clearly remember **the stigma**.

It came from myself, feeling **I was contagious. Dirty. Infectious. Not worthy.** It also came from the community, when people backed up when they found out I had AIDS. When they refused to touch me for fear of catching it. Nobody with HIV shared their HIV status and because of this overwhelming stigma, a group of caring people started a place called the Damien Center in two rooms in Grace & Holy Innocents Church.

Back then, **we dreamed of a day that help would come.** Help - not only to make us physically better - but also help to **stop us from being treated like lepers**, which would lead to us to **not feeling like outcasts who hide in shame.**

2017. The day has come. Full stop. The medical advances have brought us to an incredible moment in the AIDS epidemic. We have medicines that can help people with HIV attain undetectable HIV viral loads - which translates into us being unable to transmit the AIDS virus to others while letting us live a longer, healthier life. For us long-term survivors, **it is what we dreamed of.** Not cured of HIV, but it is the next best thing.

Sadly, not everyone who is HIV+ is virally suppressed. Many people do not know their HIV status and thus have high HIV viral loads. Plus, too many people who do know their HIV+ status simply cannot take the medications as prescribed due to poverty, homelessness, unstable housing, hunger, trauma, domestic violence, substance use, mental health issues.... (it's a huge list that I can keep going on with) combined with one of the biggest barriers still being STIGMA. Stigma is still preventing people from reaching out for help. They continue to be **shamed and ashamed** to come forward.

At the Damien Centers, we are **actively working to reduce and eliminate stigma** by offering a safe, comfortable space for people with HIV to receive services they need to become HIV virally suppressed, which is why we are proud supporters of the U=U campaign. To help each person LIVE with HIV and STOP transmitting the AIDS virus to others.

Your support is critical to our success — and we need your help now more than ever to keep up with the high number of men, women, and children who come to us for help because of the stigma they still experience. **You in?**

Sincerely, Perry Junjulas, Executive Director & Person with AIDS



THE NEW ALBANY DAMIEN CENTER RISES AT 728 MADISON AVENUE



The new Albany Damien Center rises under steady progress at our new home at 728 Madison Avenue. The framing is complete, the roof is in place, and the interior is being roughed in, with space for 22 supportive housing units, as well as program areas, and staff offices. Target completion date is October 2017.

The Damien Centers

Our Mission is to enhance the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS in an affirming environment and to reduce new infections in the communities we serve.

Our Vision is a community where people with HIV/AIDS achieve their desired potential and are respected as coworkers, neighbors, and friends, while striving for an HIV free generation.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT— DONALD

“In 1990, on the car ride home from the doctor’s after my HIV+ diagnosis, I needed to do something to keep me from dissolving. I stopped into the art supply store for supplies and began this painting that night. I worked on it for months on and off, adding images as they came to me. When my dust had settled, the painting slowed, and was finally silent. I did not, however sign it, in case I needed to continue. My last addition was the orchid on the bottom shelf, a symbol of my spirit returning.

This piece has followed me from California to New York, hung on walls or stored in attics for many years now. I finally signed this piece before gifting it to The Damien Center in 2017.

Today I am happily working on other paintings and other joys. Gifted with many years of creativity and friendships, I am always grateful to those who have helped inspire me, given me love and strength and those who put me back together time and again after that frightful day in 1990.” Donald Heintze

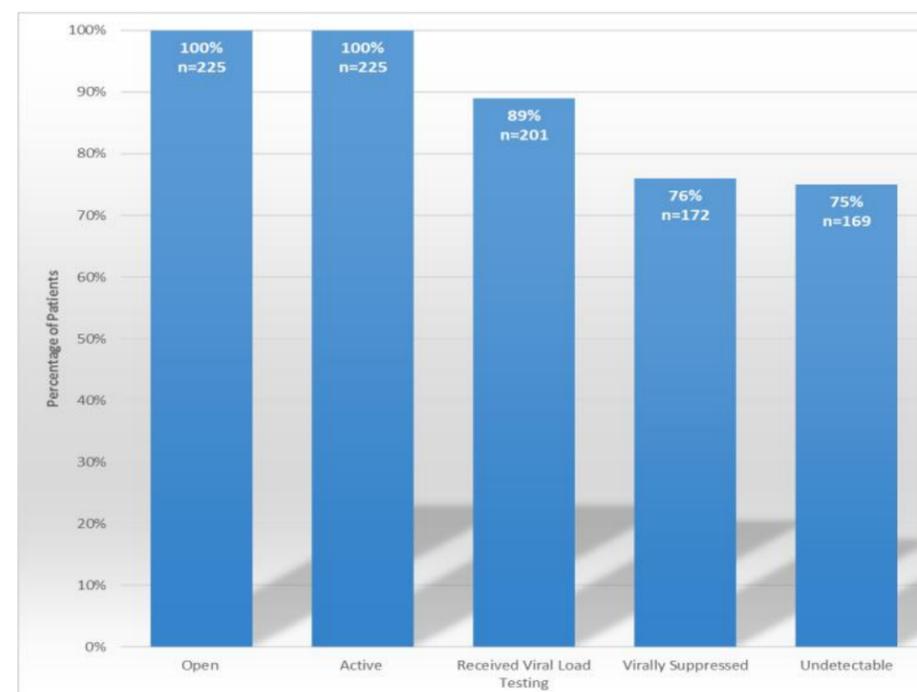


Artwork For New Building Donald’s generous donation sparked an idea for the Damien Center to have original works of art made by persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS displayed at our new building. Thus, we are welcoming donations of original artwork along with a story of how the artwork is connected to the Damien Center and the AIDS epidemic.

For more information, please contact Maria Vincent, Development Director, at 518-449-7119, ext. 113, or mariav@albanydamiencenter.org

DAMIEN CENTER 2016 HIV TREATMENT CASCADE

The HIV Treatment Cascade - is a model that outlines the sequential steps of HIV medical care that people with HIV go through from initial diagnosis to achieving the goal of viral suppression (a very low level of HIV in the body), and shows the proportion of individuals living with HIV who are engaged at each stage. The Damien Center is proud to be using data to drive our programmatic decisions and monitoring of impact in the regions we serve.



Our Goal

95% Virial Suppression for all Damien Center members

Open: All HIV+ clients with any service in calendar year 2016

Active: # of HIV+ clients with a medical visit on record in calendar year 2016

Received Viral Load Testing: # of active clients with a documented viral load test in calendar year 2016

Virally suppressed: # of active clients with viral load <200 copies/mL

Undetectable: # of active clients with viral load <50 copies/mL

THE TREASURE CHEST THRIFT STORE

Through the generosity of our Treasure Chest Thrift Store supporters, **over 1,400 items** have been distributed to our members living with HIV/AIDS in 2016, helping them **make their house a home**. Thank you!

Located at 295 Hamilton Street in downtown Albany, The Treasure Chest has convenient free parking right across the street!

Expanded store hours and services include:

- Open Monday through Thursday, 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Fridays 11:00-7:00 and Saturdays 11:00-4:00
- Discount days! 20% off (does not apply to furniture) with valid ID
 - Thursdays: Senior Citizens 55+
 - Fridays: State, Federal, & County Employees
 - Saturdays: College Students
- The Treasure Chest is available for estate sales. Contact : Walter Mastan, Treasure Chest Manager, at 518-331-3752 to find out how we can help with your estate sale needs.



Coats, pictured here at the Damien Center, are just a few of the many clothing & household items provided to our members in need.

The Most Fabulous Thrift Store in Albany!

The Treasure Chest
295 Hamilton St, Albany

25% off one item
with this coupon
Expires 6/31/17. One per customer.

Volunteers Needed!
All proceeds benefit the Damien Centers!

Open
Mon-Thurs: 11-6
Fridays: 11-7
Saturdays: 11-4

Free Parking
436-7451

DAMIEN CENTER LIVING ROOM

OPEN 5 DAYS A WEEK - STILL GOING STRONG SINCE 1990

Marcus wasn't sure about coming to the Albany Damien Center at first. He came with his Catholic Charities caseworker in the beginning, thinking that the Center was solely for gay men. But as he came back on his own, he became more comfortable with the people at the center, and realized that members came from all walks of life. Marcus felt so welcomed by staff and members, particularly in the early days when he was so frightened by his diagnosis. "I thought it was a death sentence," he says. "But everything was done with love."



As he got to know other Damien Center members as individuals, Marcus found the differences that existed became unimportant to him. "It wasn't about how they lived, but how I lived," he says. One realization that came to him was that all his worrying about what other people might think of him, because of his diagnosis, because of his coming to the Damien Center, was their problem, not his. He felt the sense of shame and stigma lessen, and one day was interviewed by the media here at the Center and

acknowledged his positive diagnosis. "It felt like a burden had been lifted from me," Marcus says.

The practical help Marcus gets at the Damien Center is appreciated, plugging him into a variety of services: assistance with housing and furnishings, transportation, and learning about nutrition. He said he learned so much from the Smart Meals program, leading him to change his diet to include fruits and vegetables, and cutting out soda and salt. He's built an awesome network of people. He likens it to surrounding himself with a wall but "not the kind Trump is talking about," he laughs. "It's a wall of that protects me." He has learned so much from other members and staff about living with HIV, and finds inspiration from those who have managed their illness for many years. At the Damien Center, Marcus found a place where he "could come to be himself, "including being open about his diagnosis. "It's about love," he says.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE HEART: TERRI GONHUE

The Albany Damien Center saved my life. Over 15 years ago, I walked in newly diagnosed and thought my life was over. Little did I know there were beautiful people waiting to change my life in the most profound ways. I was overwhelmed with a new sense of purpose. I went from being scared, lonely, and unique into being fearless, loved, accepted, and not even unusual.

The Center gave me a job, encouraged me to go to college, and be the best Mom I could be. Perry even helped me reconnect with my lost children. I went from being a person living with AIDS into a life where I am still thriving! My diagnosis is no longer the only thing that defines me. I am so much more now!

Thank you Albany Damien Center!



SMART MEALS - SERVING LOVE WITH EVERY MEAL



"What do you do with this?"

Having our Nutrition Educator, Lindsey, give a demonstration on preparing them let her try them for herself and add them to her repertoire. She finds the recipes that come with pantry bags to be helpful when trying to decide what to prepare with what is provided.

But, as Sue notes, there are different things that feed us. The Smart Meals program is more than just nutrition and food. Sue found support among staff and other members when going through difficult times. Coming for meals when she was struggling helped her eat when she had no appetite but knew she needed nutrition. "This place gave me a purpose," Sue says. "It's been a Godsend for me."

Sue grew up in a big family. With six kids around the dinner table, her mother wasn't preparing gourmet meals. "Food was fuel," Sue said. Most everything was done in the pressure cooker to get it done fast and on the table. "Colonel Sanders got his start with a Presto pressure cooker," Sue laughs.

As a participant in the Smart Meals programs, Sue appreciates the practical support it brings. She recalls looking at pomegranates and kiwis and thinking

Foundations for Living Housing Program

Thanks to HUD-sponsored housing vouchers, the Albany Damien Center is working to house chronically homeless people with HIV by assisting them to find a home of their own. Tenants pay 30% of their income toward the rent and The Damien Center provides the balance - along with a host of support and services that aim to ensure people remain stably housed.

Through the Albany County Coalition on Homelessness (ACCH), HUD awarded the Damien Center grants totaling \$261,767 (of which \$200,000 is new funding) to house persons who are chronically homeless and struggling with HIV in our new Damien Center building and apartments in the community

Studies have shown that housing is healthcare and also prevents new HIV infections from occurring. This partnership with HUD is already at work helping Albany Damien Center members build a foundation for living!

Smart Meals Now Serving A HOT Breakfast!

Yes! After years of cereal, PBJ, & toast, we are now serving a **hot breakfast** from 8:30 to 9:30, Mondays through Fridays at the Albany Damien Center!

Join us for scrambled eggs, French toast, and other hot breakfast favorites to start your day right! Then join us for our traditional lunch (12-1:30) and dinner (5-6:30).

All of our meals are from scratch (with fresh & nutritious

THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!



Lutheran Cluster Church hosting our February Community Dinner



Siena Outing Club at our Holiday Party



MAC Cosmetics decorating for the holidays



Michelle helping with decorating



Sigma Gamma Rho at our holiday party



Sally from Congregation Beth Emeth baking at Halloween

FUNDRAISERS HELD FOR THE DAMIEN CENTERS



Santa Speedo Sprint! \$16,000 raised by Albany Society for the Advancement of Philanthropy (ASAP!) to benefit the Damien Center & Albany Medical Center's AIDS Program!

Living Resources: \$350

Hofstra University's Collegiate Women of Color: \$400

Capital District Paralegal Association: Pet food and Supplies



THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR LOVE & SUPPORT

BOWLING FOR PAWS RAISES \$17,000+!

What a great afternoon of bowling at the Playdium Bowling Center on Sunday, February 19 for our 7th annual *Bowling for PAWS!* A mighty shout-out to all our bowlers, donors, sponsors, honorary committee, & raffle donors who raised over \$17,000 to directly benefit people living with HIV/AIDS and their pets through Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS), a program of the Albany Damien Center. Special thanks to DJ John R McEnerney, who kept everyone singing and dancing as we bowled!

Even with postponing the event for a week due to the blizzard, we had 90 bowlers come together in support of this great program that assists with veterinary care, pet food and supplies, and help with pet home care, allowing pets to remain in their homes with the people who love and need them. The demand for this important program is so great that a part-time assistant was recently added, clearing the 25-person waiting list. **Our sincere thanks for your love and support of each person with HIV/AIDS and pet who receives help through PAWS!**



SAVE THE DATES

Volunteer Cruise

September 12, 2017

Our annual cruise on the Hudson honoring our volunteers who donate their time, devotion and compassion to help The Damien Center every day.



AIDSWalk To End the Epidemic!

Coming Spring 2018

Due to our new building activity, we have postponed AIDSWalk until next Spring.

Stay tuned for the return of **AIDSWalk to End the Epidemic** in Washington Park!

Please contact Maria Vincent if you would like to serve on the planning committee! 518-449-7119 x113.

