

CACVO

Le conseil des africains
et caraïbeens sur le
VIH/SIDA en Ontario



ACCHO

African and Caribbean
Council on HIV/AIDS
in Ontario

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EMBARGO

FIRST AFRICAN/BLACK DIASPORA STREAM ANNOUNCES XVI INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE INITIATIVES ACCHO AND GLOBAL PARTNERS SPEARHEAD EXTENSIVE ROSTER OF AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN FOCUSSED HIV/AIDS SESSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Toronto, ON (Thursday, July 27, 2006)- The African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO), in partnership with its local and international affiliates, including the California-based Black AIDS Institute, will be launching the **FIRST** African/Black Diaspora Stream in International AIDS Conference history with a Symposium and Reception at Toronto City Hall on August 12th, 2006 featuring a keynote address by **Ontario Minister of Health, George Smitherman**, as well as supporting remarks by Toronto City Councilor **Kyle Rae**.

The African/Black Diaspora Stream is a weeklong schedule of sessions taking place during the XVI International AIDS Conference, and examines the reality of disproportionately elevated rates of HIV/AIDS among black populations living in western developed countries of Europe and North America.

The Symposium, entitled “**HIV/AIDS in the African/Black Diaspora: Addressing the Hidden Epidemic,**” will be followed by a reception featuring a special dramatic performance of “**Sometimes I Cry**” by **Sheryl Lee Ralph**, creator of the Jamerican International Film and Music Festival, renowned actor and producer, passionate AIDS activist. Ms. Ralph sits on the board of the Black AIDS Institute.

ACCHO and the Black AIDS Institute are proud to be working together on coordinating the African/Black Diaspora Stream at AIDS 2006, with sessions planned to focus on HIV/AIDS among women, youth, and queer populations. Other activities include the **African/Black Diaspora Networking Zone**, which is open to the public in the Global Village at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Featuring the “Drop it Like it’s Hot Photo and Art Exhibition” and the “Heroes in the Struggle” photo exhibit, as well as poetry, readings and performances, the African/Black Diaspora Networking Zone is a space for the community to discuss, share and exchange ideas, thoughts and feelings about the unique set of challenges when dealing with HIV/AIDS faced by these communities, particularly in the Western Sphere.

“ACCHO has advocated and mobilized human and financial resources locally, nationally and globally to bring this stream to fruition with the hope that African/black diasporic populations, researchers and service providers will come together to charter more effective responses to an emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic within many western countries, “ says ACCHO co-chair Esther Tharao.

Monika Goodluck, Coordinator of ACCHO’s AIDS 2006 activities and the African/Black Diaspora Stream, states, “The development of the African/Black Diaspora Stream at AIDS 2006 has been a labour of passion and will surely stand

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out as a groundbreaking time in the battle against HIV/AIDS in our black communities living in Canada, the U.S., across Europe, and the Diaspora!"

In addition to the Symposium and Networking Zone, ACCHO and its partners are proud to present:

Satellite Meeting

The Way Forward: The State of AIDS in Black America

Post-AIDS 2006 Planning Session: Moving Towards an African/Black Diasporic HIV/AIDS Global Network

Topics will centre around the theme of *Learning from Other Models*: their challenges & successes, producing new links & networks, and setting priorities on identified HIV/AIDS issues for the African/Black Diaspora.

Women's Session: What About Us? African & Caribbean Women from the South Living in the North

A look at models, strategies, & challenges for managing HIV/AIDS among Black women living in the Diaspora.

Queer Session: Being Queer in the African/Black Diaspora

Navigating sexuality when invisible and impact on ability to prevent or cope with HIV/AIDS.

Youth Session: Stereotypes vs. Realities of Youth in the African/Black Diaspora

Providing a platform for youth voices to be heard.

Drop It Like It's Hot: A Sexual Health Guide for Urban Youth

This group intervention is designed to give youth practical strategies for safer sex negotiation, condom use, and understanding the connection between common Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI).

Drop It Like It's Hot Edutainment

This event will host creative works from local and international performing artists to address the issues of safer sex education through form theatre (Theatre of the Oppressed), spoken word, dance, reggae, Hip Hop/Rap, Rhythm and Blues, Reggaeton, Bhangra.

Hip Hop and Reggae Dance Hall Kings and Queens: Dropping It Like It's Hot Panel Discussion

Hip Hop and Reggae Dancehall music have been seen as having an enormous impact on the sexuality of its audience, both negative and positive. Can they be used to create an effective group sexual health intervention program for youth?

Da Real Deal/Reality Rules (Theatre Presentation)

A group of at-risk youth combines their creative energies to impart sexual health knowledge on their peers through the use of educational theatre.

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ABOUT ACCHO

The African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO) is made up of organizations and individuals committed to HIV prevention, education, advocacy, research, treatment, care and support for African and Caribbean communities in Ontario. The 21 members include community organizations, researchers, government, health institutions, individuals, and private sector organizations. At least two-thirds of the 18 voting members must be African and Caribbean people.

Earlier this summer, ACCHO launched a groundbreaking, community based, public awareness campaign across Ontario along with a resource website, www.preventaids.ca.

ABOUT THE BLACK AIDS INSTITUTE

The Black AIDS Institute, founded in 1999, is the only HIV/AIDS think tank in the United States focused exclusively on Black people. The Institute's mission is to stop the AIDS pandemic in Black communities by engaging and mobilizing Black institutions, leaders and individuals in efforts to confront HIV. The Institute offers trainings, technical assistance and capacity building, disseminates information, and provides advocacy and mobilization from a uniquely and unapologetically Black point of view.

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For a complete, up to the minute schedule of events, please visit
www.accho.ca or email aids2006@accho.ca

For media inquiries, to arrange interviews, or to RSVP, please contact:

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