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## **Make a day of it, AIDS Walk and World AIDS Day Health/Wellness Expo**

Theme: "Respect and Protect: Together We Can Stop the Spread of HIV and end HIV Prejudice"

Organizations from Sarasota and Manatee counties are uniting to continue the 20 year World AIDS Day tradition in a Health/Wellness Expo and AIDS Walk on Saturday, Nov. 22 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at New College of Florida's Sudakoff Center in the vicinity of N. Tamiami Trail just north of University Parkway in Sarasota. The AIDS Walk has historically attracted about 500 people from diverse backgrounds with a common goal of showing support for increasing understanding about HIV/AIDS and related issues. Those who plan to walk should arrive between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m. to register.

The Health and Wellness Expo, which begins at 11 a.m., includes free chair massages, health screenings, HIV testing, volunteer blood drive donations, information about community services, AIDS quilt and youth poster contest display, speakers, a DJ and live entertainment, children's activities, door prize drawings and refreshments. The event is free, with the exception of the food venues. Those who wish to donate blood that day are advised to eat well and drink plenty of fluids the day before.

"Everyone has a role to play in reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS in our community. Since HIV/AIDS is on the rise among young people, we are committed to empowering parents to help their teenage children make informed decisions about their health," said John Acevedo of Community AIDS Network and chair of the HIV/AIDS Network of Sarasota.

Parents and youth are encouraged to participate in "Let's Get Talking" discussions designed to increase the understanding on a variety of topics including date rape prevention, HIV Prevention, STD Prevention, teen sexuality, substance abuse prevention and tobacco and kids." The information and discussions will be factual and allow for questions designed to stimulate interest and get parents and youth to ask questions and share information on these topics.

The day's activities incorporate the theme **"Respect and Protect: Together We Can Stop the Spread of HIV and end HIV Prejudice."** Event planners hope that people who participate are inspired to respect and protect their health and well-being as well as those around them through knowledge, action and consideration.

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This event is sponsored by the HIV/AIDS Network of Sarasota (HANS) in conjunction with the World AIDS Day 2008 Planning Committee, a collaboration chaired by nationally syndicated Health Beat of America radio host Rochelle Herman, that includes New College of Florida, Community AIDS Network, the Sarasota and Manatee County Health Departments, Manatee County Rural Health Services, Trinity Charities and Southwest Florida Community AIDS Quilts.

### **Schedule of World AIDS Day Activities on Saturday, Nov. 22 at New College of Florida:**

- 8 a.m.: Registration for AIDS Walk
- 9 a.m.: AIDS Walk
- 10:30 a.m.: Opening Ceremony
- 11 a.m.: Health and Wellness Expo
- 11 a.m.: “Let’s Get Talking” Sessions
- 3 p.m.: Closing Ceremony

For more information, visit [www.manasotaworldaidsday.org](http://www.manasotaworldaidsday.org) or call 941-366-0461, extension 1042. For specific information about the AIDS Walk, call Hope Wulliman at 941-224-4999. For information about New College of Florida, call Aimee Chouinard at 941-487-4152 or visit [www.ncf.edu](http://www.ncf.edu).

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