



NEWS RELEASE

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WORKING WONDERS LAUNCHES HIV/AIDS PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Targeted Messages Hit Local SunLine Buses

CATHEDRAL CITY — October 12, 2009: Working Wonders, now commemorating 10 years of service to women, children, youth and families living with HIV/AIDS in the Coachella Valley, has launched a new HIV/AIDS awareness campaign geared toward local youth. The campaign, funded by a \$6,500 grant from the Desert Regional Medical Center Auxiliary, will include bus signs on more than 40 SunLine buses for the next three months.

"With the recent cuts to local programs for HIV/AIDS, we're stepping it up as the only agency in the valley focused on awareness and prevention of this fully-preventable disease," said Evelyn Valentino, Executive Director of Working Wonders. "After working with a focus group of local teenagers, we realized the severe lack of information about HIV/AIDS in their demographic, so we designed this campaign to reach local young people while they ride the buses."

The signs, which will be placed inside local SunLine buses beginning October 15 include healthy-looking people with the message "you can't tell if someone has AIDS just by looking at them." The focus study conducted by Working Wonders found that most teenagers believe that you can see visible signs of HIV/AIDS, while many of those affected show no outward signs of the disease. Additional funding to continue the campaign for another 3-month period is currently being sought.

Valentino added "We are hopeful that this campaign will not only inspire teens to think before having unprotected sex, but also visit our website (workingwonders4u.org) to learn more about HIV/AIDS in our new 'HIV 101' area."

According to the Riverside County Department of Public Health, as of December 31, 2008, there are 5,597 people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) in Riverside County.

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Of this number, 3,067 (55%) PLWHA live in the Desert Healthcare District service area zip codes. Approximately 85 of these PLWHA living in the Coachella Valley were diagnosed as youth (<25 years old). In 2007, among the 96 individuals testing HIV positive in Riverside County, 49 (51%) individuals live in the Coachella Valley; six are youth up to 18 years old and young adults less than 25 years old.

Working Wonders is a non-profit community service organization that is dedicated to empowering women and families at risk or living with HIV/AIDS in the Coachella Valley. Through education, counseling, and other support, Working Wonders helps to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and to improve the quality of life for those who are affected by the disease. For more information about Working Wonders, please visit www.ww4u.org or call 760-324-7586.

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