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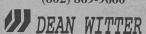
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Health

ALANA Looks at Alternative HIV/AIDS Approaches

BRATTLEBORO -- In order to address recent increases in the rates of HIV and AIDS infection in youth, women, and communities of color, the ALANA (African American, Latino, Asian, and Native American) Community Organization of Brattleboro has developed a program called Tribal Remedies. The group has also made efforts to empower women within those communities as rates of infection continue to rise.

"Tribal Remedies seeks to promote culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS prevention education and to have visibility as an HIV prevention community service project in communities of color in southern Vermont," reads the group's mission statement. As such, the program intends to educate the ALANA community about HIV prevention and the resources available for those who are or become infected. Tribal Remedies also seeks to launch outreach efforts to ensure that all citizens in all communities have equal access to appropriate information and health care services.

Tribal Remedies is funded in part by grants from the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Epidemiology, and the American Red Cross.

ALANA has also developed an AIDS/HIV program focused on women's issues, and held its first training session on Friday, November 22. The program, called "Sister to Sister/Hermana y Hermana," was held at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Brattleboro

and was facilitated by Regina S. Dyton, an HIV/AIDS Educator/Trainer for Nation Works Associates in Windsor, Connecticut. The presentation was sponsored in part by Body and Soul Women's Health, Education, and Economic development program.

Dyton reviewed both known and unknown facts about the AIDS pandemic and HIV prevention basics, particularly as they related to women in communities of color. She helped the group to develop its own strategies for dealing with the disease here in rural Vermont and for addressing cultural challenges such as language and "machismo" traditions, which often put women at risk in order to preserve a man's self-image. Many of the women (and also some construction workers who happened to be working nearby) learned a great deal.

ALANA Executive Director Naima Wade was immensely pleased with the turnout, and plans to schedule follow-up trainings with Dyton early next year. "What was wonderful was that more women signed up for the Body and Soul project and will train to become project leaders," said Wade.

ALANA seeks to advocate on behalf of its communities with various local, state, and regional agencies regarding health care, education, business, the arts, government, and human services. For more information about these and other upcoming ALANA programs, contact Marisol at (802) 254-2972 or write to ALANA at 8 Williston Street, Brattleboro VT 05301.

