



Visit to HOPE Cape Town USA

New York – June 8-12, 2017

Dallas – June 13-22, 2017



REPORT

By

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BACKGROUND

In a rapidly globalizing world a life-threatening health pandemic such as HIV/AIDS has no borders and can easily spread from one continent to another. The root causes of vulnerability and marginalisation are similar throughout the world and connect people in both USA and South Africa.

Established in 2016 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation, HOPE Cape Town USA (HCT USA) is based in Dallas, Texas, and is a proud partner of HOPE Cape Town, a longstanding non-profit and public benefit organisation in Cape Town, South Africa.

There is great value in linking with HOPE Cape Town in South Africa as well as other national and international civil society organisations to learn and exchange best practice, expertise and create synergies in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment among marginalised segments of populations.

HCT USA recognises that behaviour change reducing risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS is in great part a result of change in social norms in which education plays a large role. Focusing on changing social norms and education will reduce the effects of misinformation and stigma and help create a more accepting environment, and result in an increased demand and supply for as well as access to and use of available treatment among the most vulnerable and marginalised.

PURPOSE OF VISIT

The purpose of the visit to New York and Dallas, USA (June, 8th to 22nd 2017) was to:

1. secure a venue for, attend and participate in the 2nd Board Meeting of HOPE Cape Town USA (HCT USA) held on Saturday, June 10th 2017 from 11h00 until 15h00.
2. meet and engage the HCT USA Board: Mr Joe Kunzmann – Chairperson (New Jersey); Mrs Shirley Kunzmann – Board Member (New Jersey); Mr Auntjuan Wiley – Board Member (Dallas); Mrs Stacie McNulty – Board Member (Dallas).
3. meet and engage HCT USA Consultant: Mr Dimitri Pappathanassiou – Strategy Advisor (New York).

4. contribute to the complete and definitive version of the Vision, Mission Statement, and Objectives for HCT USA (for adoption at the 2nd Board Meeting).
5. assist with the development of team cohesion between HCT and HCT USA and integration in terms of governance, administration, and program/project planning, design and implementation.
6. introduce HCT USA to former collaborators, individuals who have wide networks and significant influence in the global health sectors.
7. meet with government, non-profits, donor agencies, networks to promote awareness of the work of HCT and HCT USA, to distinguish synergies, and identify gaps in service delivery.
8. meet with other organisations with shared goals to establish potential partnerships or alliances.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes below are linked and numbered accordingly in line with the purpose above:

1. Thanks to the Reverend Canon Alan Dennis, former colleague in Cape Town now in service with the Episcopal Church in New York, a private meeting room was secured at St. John's in the Village Church, 224 Waverly Place in Greenwich Village, New York. We were warmly hosted by Mr Luiz Hernandez, Parish Administrator. At the end of the Board Meeting the group broke into pairs for discussion and contemplation in the very quaint garden between the church and the administration block, a peaceful, yet delightful time and experience for all. Thereafter we shared a meal at a nearby Mexican restaurant.
2. While long distance communication has become the daily norm of many organisations, face to face meetings are how the hard work usually gets done even if there is more time, cost or inconvenience involved. Face to face clarifies meaning, ensures engagement and drives participation – all of which we had hoped to achieve from the onset of the Board Meeting. The opportunity to meet face to face provided a safe, positive and inspiring working environment.

3. Supportive stakeholder engagement is important as it impacts and influences the long term resilience of organisations. As someone who has substantial experience working with global programs in a variety of sectors, Dimitri provided strategic direction that kept the group informed and focused.
4. The following final versions were adopted by the Board:

Vision

HOPE Cape Town USA strives to improve the quality of life of vulnerable and marginalised children, youth and families affected by HIV/AIDS and related illnesses, and help them to reach their own full potential.

Mission

HOPE Cape Town USA's mission is to assist people living with HIV, AIDS and related illnesses in the USA and South Africa.

HOPE Cape Town USA's aim is to support the ongoing work of HOPE Cape Town in South Africa, reduce the spread of HIV among vulnerable and marginalised children and youth in USA and support those living with HIV.

Objectives

- Advocate, fundraise and support HOPE Cape Town programs in South Africa;
- Build a body of data to understand needs, challenges and interconnections of children, youth and families living with HIV, AIDS or related illnesses in South Africa and USA;
- Support vulnerable and marginalised children, youth and families in the USA, beginning in the Dallas/Fort Worth (Tx) area;
- Collaborate with other NGOs in the fields to create synergies and expertise and interconnect globally with the aim to learn, share and optimise programs;
- Disseminate correct information, reduce misconceptions about the pandemic and so eliminate discrimination and create access to appropriate information on the syndrome, prevention and treatment options;
- Change behaviour to reduce risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS by focusing on changing social norms and education, and reduce the effects of misinformation and stigma and help create a more accepting environment;
- Increase demand and supply for, as well as access to and use of available treatment among the most vulnerable and marginalised.

5. The aim was for Marlene to work closely with the Dallas Team for a week starting on Tuesday, June 13th however some of the meetings did not take place due to circumstances beyond our control. Meetings that took place: Wednesday, June 14th – Stacie and Marlene (networking, possible stakeholders, project implementation); Thursday, June 15th – Auntjuan and Marlene (fundraising, sponsorships, partnerships).

6. The following meetings were set up and attended:

The Ryan White Planning Council of the Dallas Area (RWPC) monthly meeting attended with Stacie on Wednesday, June 14th 2017 at Dallas County Health and Human Services Building, 2377 N.Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, Texas.

The RWPC envisions a seamless, flexible, and efficient healthcare system dedicated to the wellness and empowerment of Persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in North Texas.

The RWPC of the Dallas Area is a collaborative partnership of consumers, volunteers and providers entrusted with the planning and coordination of healthcare services on behalf of PLWHA in North Texas.

Committee reports were presented by: Executive/Nominations Committees; Planning and Priorities Committee; Allocations Committee; Evaluation Committee and Consumer Council Committee.

Additional reports were received from: Administrative Agency Report and HIV Service Providers Council (SPC) Report.

Upcoming events included:

- HIV/AIDS and Mental Health workshop on Thursday, June 29th at Meadows Conference Center, 2900 Live Oak Street in Dallas (2pm to 4pm).
- HIV & Faith Based Public Forum on Thursday, July 20th at Cosmopolitan Congregation of Dallas, 1812 North Haskell Avenue, Dallas (2pm to 4pm).

Comments: An effective network with two of HCT USA Board Members on Planning Council – Stacie McNulty is Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee and Auntjuan Wiley is Chair of the Consumer Council Committee.

Marlene met with Gary Benecke, Eligibility Supervisor of Resource Center on 2701 Reagon Street in Dallas.

Resource Center was born out of the Dallas Gay Political Caucus and the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance. In 1985 the AIDS Resource Center was established as a source for community awareness and prevention education, legal services, a food pantry, clothing, household goods and emergency funding. Three years later it set up a health clinic for treatment, clinical drug trials and HIV testing. Today it also offers HIV dental, STD prevention and testing, medical case management, prevention and transgender health services.

With more than 1,200 volunteers, the Resource Center is one of the largest of its kind in the USA. More than 60,000 people each year use the programs and services which provide compassionate, cost-effective and high quality health care for all people.

Comments: Gary is due to take a sabbatical this year, he expressed a sincere desire to volunteer for HOPE Cape Town for a month.

On Thursday, June 15th Auntjuan Wiley (“Mr Community”) facilitated a workshop at Meadows Conference Center, 2900 Live Oak Street, Dallas for the June Wellness Roundtable. This is a monthly meeting where PLWHA come together for discussions and a meal. Auntjuan orchestrated the event in such a skilled way that the 30+ participants were voluntarily contributing so richly and honestly to the discussion around what information we reveal about ourselves and our lives at three different stages of engaging people – talking, dating and in a relationship. The workshop was sponsored by Merck Pharmaceuticals. Marlene had a conversation with Auntjuan and Merck’s Derwin Hall who said: "Our community engagement programs reflect the priorities that our company shares with the local community and our program is designed to help build strong and vibrant communities by promoting a healthier society."

Educational First Steps is an ECD centre located in 2815 Gaston Avenue, Dallas that was set up 25 years ago to transform daycare centres in low income neighbourhoods into nationally accredited early learning centres. Here caregivers are educated and become professional early learning teachers who create high quality early learning environments that repair and prevent learning gaps typically found in children living in poverty. Studies have shown that these children are set on a path to lifelong success, paving the way for improved school readiness, sustained academic performance and higher graduation rates. Marlene visited Linda Bardales, Director of Outreach and Enrichment who launched an annual conference that facilitates skills development and professionalism in teachers. Linda demonstrated the importance of parental involvement through a wide range of program enrichment opportunities such as *Wild about Reading* that encourages regular family time with books.

7. The following meetings were set up and attended:

Cathedral of Hope

The first interaction with the Cathedral of Hope took place with introductions to HCT USA in May 2016. Marlene attended the 9am service on Sunday, June 18th and found the worship service welcoming and inclusive. Reverend Dr. Irie Session delivered the sermon "The Sound of Freedom". Reverend Irie is one of the founders of the New Friends New Life organisation. New Friends New Life restores and empowers formerly trafficked girls and sexually exploited women and children and helps them overcome backgrounds of abuse, addiction, poverty and limited opportunities. This organisation could be of interest and support to Shirley as she establishes her women's project in New Jersey.

Stefan and Marlene met with the Reverend Dr. Neil Cazares-Thomas, Senior Pastor at 5901 Cedar Springs Road Dallas, TX 75235, on Wednesday, June 21st where they identified that HCT USA and Cathedral of Hope programs such as *Outlast Youth* and *Back to school Drive* had similar objectives and, *Finding your spiritual location*, was an excellent personal exercise that did not

have copyright therefore would be replicable within a South African context. Revd Neil expressed interest in placing social worker electives in programs at the Cathedral of Hope when the partnership between Rutgers University and HOPE Cape Town is realised in the near future.

Neil recommended that contact be made with Dr John Carlo, CEO of Prism Health (formerly AIDS ARMS). Dr Carlo was recently elected for the American Medical Association National Council. Prism Health combats HIV/AIDS in the community by improving the lives and health of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and preventing its spread. Interventions include: Monthly activities for empowerment groups; medical care at two clinic locations; Free testing for HIV and STDs; a research facility that enables clients to obtain specialized testing, care and new medications.

AIDS Interfaith Network (AIN)

Meeting held with Steven Pace (Executive Director) and Skylar Lange at AIN 2707 N. Stemmons Freeway, Suite 120-140 Dallas, TX75207 on Tuesday, June 20th at 10h00.

AIN has worked in Dallas for 30 years to prevent the spread of HIV and serves persons living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable populations. AIN serves 2,000 people who have HIV/AIDS and 12,000 who are at risk. Services: Transport for clients to reach medical treatment/support services; Daire Center is a non-medical support program for clients and respite for caregivers; Nutrition assistance; Case Management; Spanish language interpretation for clients, service providers and caregivers; outreach and HIV/AIDS education in faith communities.

AIN cooperates with other service providers and care systems that give support and care to clients and communities. Through collaborations AIN fosters the trust that is essential to building relationships. AIN endeavours to model leadership, teamwork and organisational competency while building working relationships and coalitions with other organisations to best serve clients and communities.

Following a tour of the AIN projects and discussions with the staff it was agreed that there were clearly definite synergies in the focus areas of both

HCT and AIN, and therefore much scope for AIN, HCT USA and HCT to collaborate in innovative programs and interventions.

Bryan's House

Meeting with Abigail Erickson, Executive Director and Shannon Hendricks, Director of Children's Care and Programs on Thursday, June 22nd at 3610 Pipestone Road in Dallas.

Bryan's House started off as a hospice for children living with HIV/AIDS when little Bryan, his brother Matthew, and mother all died of AIDS following a blood transfusion. The Center currently serves families who are impacted by HIV/AIDS from 68 areas and eight counties across their community.

Following a revised strategy, two programs are running concurrently:

1. Direct on-site child care serves medically at risk children as well as special needs children ages 0 to 13 years and provides relief for parents and caregivers as well as learning, developmental and recreational activities according to ability; and a therapeutic bridge between classroom and home.
2. Off-site medically integrated family support services provides individualized strategic intervention and planning designed to promote increased knowledge, skills and behaviours that will enable families with special needs children to manage emergencies, sustain basic needs, achieve their goals and expand their opportunities for long-term success.

Shannon demonstrated the *High Scope* curriculum used at Bryan's House for in Early Childhood Development (ECD) (similar to the Montessori methodology) as well as the *CORE Persistent Query Agent (PQA)* tools used for real-time performance monitoring.

Abigail expressed an interest in collaboration with HOPE Cape Town in research which would expand on recent findings that most children impacted by HIV/AIDS are found to have undiagnosed developmental delays.

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) opened its doors in Dallas in 2012, the second AHF clinic in Texas, there are 23 country-wide. AHF's goal is to find a cure for AIDS and provides cutting edge medicine and advocacy regardless of the patient's ability to pay.

We met with Bret Camp, Regional Director who shared that by translating scientific research into human clinical trials, AHF is involved in finding new ways for the immune system to contain the virus, new forms of gene therapy and vaccine development.

HOPE Cape Town encouraged to put in a request for a research collaboration and/or to apply for a clinical research grant.

Kirk Myers, CEO of Abounding Prosperity claims that their mission is to provide services that address health, social and economic disparities among black men with emphasis on gay, bisexual and male to female transgender individuals. Abounding Prosperity opened the HOPE Health Center, a clinic on Harry Hines Boulevard in North Dallas. One of the distinguishing features of the HOPE clinic is that it has non-traditional operating hours so that those who work during the day and are unable to take time off work can attend the clinic in the evenings for services such as HIV testing and treatment, STD testing and treatment, and PrEP for uninsured clients.

