



Life Foundation
FIGHTING AIDS IN HAWAII AND THE PACIFIC

For Immediate Release:

Island Roots Educates Oahu's Teens about HIV/AIDS

Free event at Bishop Museum on Tuesday, May 19th features slam poetry, prizes, and a play for teens in honor of National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Honolulu, HI- May 13, 2009- Island Roots is a free event for high-school students to recognize National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Tuesday, May 19th, 2009 from 9:30 am—1:00 pm at Bishop Museum. Island Roots will feature Island 98.5 DJ Mento Mele, a Slam Poetry workshop by Kealoha, the “It Could Happen to You” play by Kalihi Palama Health Center, lunch, prizes, and the “HIV in Hawaii” video presentation.

The event is organized by Life Foundation, and hopes to engage Hawaii's youth in the fight against AIDS and educate them on how to protect themselves from HIV and other STDs.

Life Foundation has been planning events to commemorate National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day for 5 years. Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, more than 7,000 Asians and Pacific Islanders have been diagnosed with AIDS. Statistics show that Asian and Pacific Islanders are less likely than others to get tested for HIV. Stigma and negative attitudes toward Asians and Pacific Islanders affected by HIV/AIDS deter their ability to access services. Although Asian and Pacific Islanders comprise a relatively low percentage of HIV infections nation-wide, they represent a growing percentage of AIDS cases here in Hawaii. Currently, approximately 30 percent of the HIV-positive clients Life Foundation serves are Asian or Pacific Islander.

In an effort to reach out to these communities, Life Foundation became a partner in the Banyan Tree Project, a national social marketing campaign designed to stop HIV/AIDS related stigma in Asian and Pacific Islander communities. The goals of the Banyan Tree Project are to educate, create a culture of acceptance, and to increase access to HIV testing and care services in Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

In addition to the Island Roots event on Oahu, Life Foundation has provided grants to support events on the neighboring Hawaiian islands, as well as the Pacific Island jurisdictions of Guam, Saipan, and the Marshall Islands.

To register for Island Roots, call Melanie Moore at 808-383-0163 or email mmoore@lifefoundation.org. For more information, visit www.lifefoundation.org/islandroots.

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