

# S.O.S. Newsletter



The official  
newsletter of the  
Families in Action  
Peer Helping  
Programme

## SCHOLAR SAYS:



Scholar Gangoolie, our student reporter has found out that:

\* Approximately half of all of the people living with HIV worldwide became infected between the ages of 15-24 years.

\* One out of five people with HIV/AIDS became infected as a teenager.

## Atten-Hut!

There are those who may disagree with me, but I'm of the view that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a master of tactical warfare. Think about it! It's been nearly three decades since this general of death has begun its global rampage and we seem no closer to eliminating it than we were at the start of this battle. Why do you think that is? It's because HIV has used our vulnerabilities in order to further its own agenda. So it targets those of us whose risky lifestyle gives it easy access to our bodies. Then, like a true warrior, it launches an attack on the

body that is phenomenal. For HIV avoids hand-to-hand conflict with the commandos of the immune system - the CD8 cells - by preventing the CD4 cells (the informers) from alerting them of the presence of this foreign invader in the body. Without that chain of communication, the body's warriors are helpless against the attack while more and more CD4 cells are taken hostage and used by HIV to replicate itself. After that, the rest - as they say - is history.



Well I for one am fed-up of hearing about HIV's continuous victories. I

think that it's time for us to suit up, throw ourselves into the trenches and fight dirty. Let's strengthen our weak links in order to prevent infiltration by that cunning commander called HIV.

Troops are you with me? Then let the battles begin.  
**Atten-hut!**

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## CONGRATULATIONS SAGHS

SAGHS shone at this year's Peer Helpers' Symposium and Award ceremony as they walked away with the coveted 'Most Outstanding Peer Helping School' trophy as well as second place in this year's 'Presentations' competition.

Other awardees included Bishop Anstey High, Brazil High, Holy Faith Convent, Mayaro Composite, Naparima Girls' High,



FIA Managing Director, Elizabeth Spence, presenting the trophy for Most Outstanding School to a student of SAGHS

# Information is Ammunition for HIV

## (IIA 4 HIV)

One of the reasons that teenagers are highly susceptible to HIV is because they lack correct information about the disease. As Peer Helpers you have been given the challenge of raising your schoolmates' awareness of HIV/AIDS and some of the issues surrounding the epidemic. In this section we would like to arm you with some common and not so common facts about HIV/AIDS to help you in your quest.

**You know that...** AIDS is caused by HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus) which takes away the ability to fight diseases.



**But did you know that...** HIV is a retro-virus, (i.e. it infects human cells & then uses those cells' nutrients & energy to grow and re-



**You know that...** since HIV takes as long as 10 years to develop into AIDS, many infected persons look & feel healthy.

**But did you know that...** 1/5 of all infected persons do not know that they are carrying the virus?

**You know that...** you can be infected with HIV during unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex.

**But did you know that...** although HIV transmission through deep 'French' kissing is extremely unlikely, it is still possible?



**You know that...** for most HIV tests, a small amount of blood will be drawn from your arm & usually tested for the presence of HIV antibodies (i.e. the special proteins that are used to fight the infection).

**But did you know that...** in some cases urine/saliva is used in place of blood?



**You know that...** HIV can also be transmitted when you share needles/syringes with infected persons.



**But did you know that...** HIV can survive on used needles/syringes for a month or more & that this includes those used for body piercing

**You know that...** blood, semen, vaginal fluids & breast-milk are carriers of the HIV virus.

**But did you know that...** sweat, tears, vomit, faeces & urine actually do contain traces of the disease although they pose little risk for transmission?



**You know that...** sexually active people can reduce their risk of HIV infection by using a latex condom every time they have sex.



**But did you know that...** latex condoms are useless if combined with oil/petroleum based lubricants like Vaseline or hand lotion?

**ANSWERS TO HIV/AIDS TRIVIA CROSSWORD (page 4)**

**Across:** 1. needle 3. bites 6. AIDS 7. immune 8. window 10. semen 12. immunodeficiency 15. vaginal

**Down:** 2. latex 3. blood 4. saliva 5. pregnancy 6. alcohol 9. antibodies 11. tears 13. no 14. casual

# IT'S MUCH BETTER THAT WAY

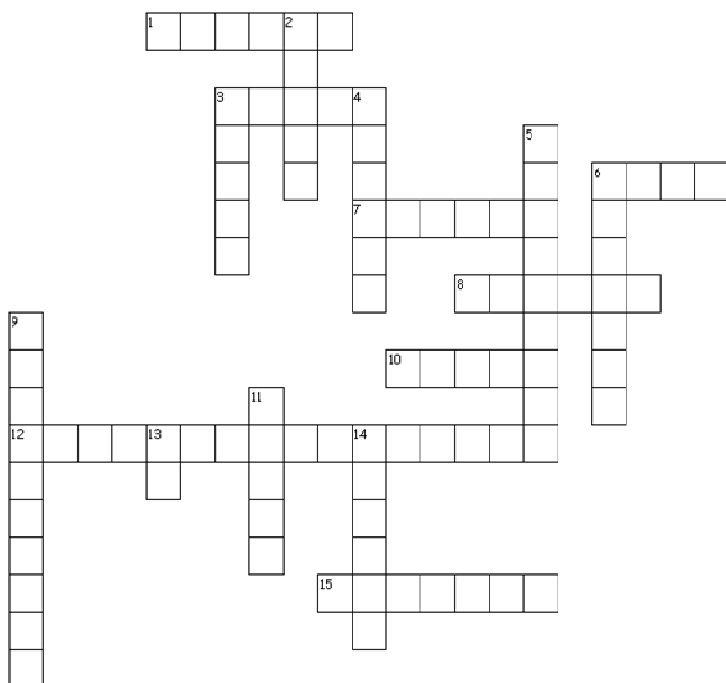
You always wanted to know what it felt like?  
 That's not even good enough to be called an excuse  
 But you go ahead anyway thinking that it would be alright  
 Not considering the blast-radius of this short, lit fuse.  
 Wasted away on a stool in a bar,  
 You and your friend then get in your car,  
 Drive back to his place then get into the bedroom  
 You take off your clothes; at least that's what you assume  
 Walk up to him and tiptoe with your arms around his neck,  
 This is what you've waited for and finally what you'll get  
 Again and again and again. Feels so good is what you think  
 Mesmerized by the stimulation and now on the brink,  
 Of the amazing climax; the time  
 when you can't think  
 You're so tired you fall asleep,  
 Next morning you can't remember  
 because you had too much to drink,  
 But down there feels different which  
 means now you're a woman?  
 But soon it would come to haunt and  
 it makes no difference if you had  
 forgotten.  
 Couple days later you happen to fall  
 sick,  
 Harvest some of your blood just to check it real quick  
 Turns out that pleasure wasn't the only thing you got on that  
 night,  
 Also your purity wasn't the only thing you lost.  
 You hear HIV positive and tears cloud your sight  
 Because you realize that your life was the total cost.  
 You drop to the floor, to the bottom of humanity,  
 You wonder about your choices now,  
 And why you couldn't stop to see  
 The devil in sheep's skin; the liar he came to be.  
 Now you can't find him or reach him to say  
 Why didn't you tell me the truth on that day?  
 But it makes no sense; you've officially become a statistic.  
 A couple weeks later and you realize you miss it  
 Your mind is racing; scared of what could be true,  
 A nightmare you never even dreamt of; take care and eat for  
 two.  
 The news shatters your world and cuts like glass.  
 This beautiful woman; why did you fool around in the past?  
 You look so pitiful; it could make a total stranger cry,  
 Wallowing in pure agony asking, "why, oh why?"  
 One night of pleasure, the first time you tried  
 "You are HIV positive," the first thing that made you cry.  
 He used you cheaply and left you for ruin,  
 It's madness; why did you ever love him?  
 Because his love was never potent,  
 His heart is like a brick,  
 He never wanted a long-term commitment,  
 He just wanted a quick fix  
 So now you ruined your life; only 21, had so much to be.  
 Now with a diseased kid on your arm, none of it would you  
 see.  
 You're an adult; you could handle the pain,



But this kid has his whole life ahead of him,  
 Who's he going to blame?  
 You ruined your future and by extension his.  
 Killed off the rest of your life and dampened his will to live.  
 Being responsible for your actions, it is your entire fault;  
 The way forward for human life; the future, is overshadowed by  
 doubt,  
 The children that were supposed to step forward step back; heads  
 hung in shame.  
 But you're only human, so who's to blame?  
 Wasted away all the opportunities you had,  
 Gave birth to a statistic while popping pills like you're mad.  
 But then you wake up!  
 It was all a dream.  
 You pray and thank God; you smile instead of  
 scream.  
 You walk out your front door thinking this is the  
 way I'll stay  
 HIV negative; it's much better that way.

**Submitted by Steffon Christian Mo-**  
**ammed**  
**Naparima College**

## HIV/AIDS TRIVIA CROSSWORD



### Across

1. HIV may be spread if this is contaminated with blood when injecting drugs
3. Insect \_\_\_ do not spread HIV
6. A result of HIV infection
7. The \_\_\_ system acts as the body's defense against foreign substances
8. The time between infection and development of enough antibody to show on the HIV test is the \_\_\_ period
10. HIV is most often transmitted via blood, \_\_\_ or vaginal secretions
12. Human \_\_\_ Virus
15. Oral, anal or \_\_\_ sex can lead to HIV infection

### Down

2. Condoms made of \_\_\_ are most effective against HIV
3. \_\_\_, semen and vaginal fluids are the most common fluids that cause HIV transmission
4. Fluid from the mouth that does not transmit HIV
5. An HIV infected mother can infect her baby during this
6. Using this or other drugs can lead to HIV risk behaviour
9. Substance produced in the blood in response to disease agents
11. Fluid produced from the eyes that does not transmit HIV
13. Just say \_\_\_!
14. \_\_\_ contact with an HIV infected person does not put you at risk for infection

(see answers on page 2)

## RESPECT & PROTECT

How would you react if you found out that the person you sat next to in the maxi or the taxi is HIV positive? What about if you found out that someone in your class is HIV positive? How would you react then? Let's get a little closer to home now, how about if the HIV positive person is your best friend or a family member? How would you react to that person. Now take one more step into the land of what-ifs, how would you like to be treated if you were HIV positive?

The theme for this year's World AIDS Day - celebrated on December 1st every year - is 'Universal Access & Human Rights' in order to highlight the rights of persons with the disease. I don't know about you, but I think that persons with HIV/AIDS need to be treated with the same amount of respect and dignity as someone who doesn't have the disease.

Peer Helpers, how are you going to commemorate World AIDS Day 2009 at your school? Putting up posters, handing out brochures, lighting candles and taking assemblies are all well and good, but we are challenging you to take a more long term approach to dealing with the issue of HIV/AIDS and discrimination against persons with the disease.

Lead by example. Demonstrate respect for persons with HIV/AIDS by not shunning casual contact with them. Protect those with the disease by providing your schoolmates with information aimed at the de-stigmatization of the disease and correcting those who you see disrespecting those with HIV. The small part that you play in your schools will go a long way toward making a difference.

### POLITICALLY CORRECT

By Jim Huber



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