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University

AIDS workshop stresses safe sex High school theater group presents skits

By Jolie Andrade
Emerald Reporter

University graduate Carol Queen said sex can still be fun, despite AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, at a safe sex workshop Saturday in the EMU International Lounge.

The workshop was part of "Taking AIM," a month-long University and Lane County program addressing the AIDS crisis.

"Sexuality can be fun and safe," Queen said. "I believe sexuality is a gift and I honor everybody who doesn't use it without the consent of other people."

"We don't get very much help in this culture about ac-

cepting sexuality and getting information," Queen said.

"I'm concerned about the impact of AIDS on the community. It's a sexually transmitted disease and if we can't get information out there it will spread."

Queen emphasized the need for reaching student helpers or peer advisers in the health department because they have access to many people.

"They are in natural positions for giving information to people who don't have any," she said, adding that everyone at the workshop will become a natural helper.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide information on AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV testing and safe sex issues, said Queen.

Queen referred to HIV and AIDS as the "disease of behaviors," emphasizing that, al-

though there are people who are more at risk than others, anyone can participate in high-risk activities.

"The key is prevention," Queen said. She said people can cut the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases by following a few simple precautions.

Proper condom use, low risk activities and guidelines for oral sex are important components of safe sex, Queen said.

Queen listed several safe and unsafe activities. Having intercourse and oral sex using condoms is harmless. Deep-throat kissing is relatively safe if both parties are orally healthy — no bleeding gums or lacerations in the mouth. Any type of transfer of bodily fluids is dangerous.

A healthy body and good state of emotional well-being will also help cut the risk of opportunistic diseases for HIV-infected people, she said.

AIDS Prevention Among Youth, a local high school theater group, provided a unique way of communicating relationships and safe sex issues through real life situations during the workshop.

"We want to create AIDS awareness among youth," said Rebecca Dravich, theater member. Dravich said she hopes the

50-member group will be able to perform at local Eugene high schools.

"Most of our skits bring in humor so people can look with an open mind, so people won't be turned off," Liv Oslund, South Eugene High School student.

The first skit dealt with the embarrassment of buying condoms and deciding how and why it was important.

Another skit, in the form of a sportscast, highlighted the proper application of a condom, emphasizing specific procedures, such as checking for air bubbles and rips.

The final skit was about relationships and common discussions couples, heterosexual and homosexual, have in regards to sex. "Don't you love me?" and "Don't you trust me?" were some of the common questions

asked when one partner wanted to have sex with the other.

The final message of the theater group came in the form of a "condom song" with lyrics such as, "Wear a condom or you won't have sex with me, putting it on just as natural as can be."

Queen said one of the biggest problems of college relationships is that students believe they're not at risk because they are in a monogamous relationship.

The fact that most college students have more than one sexual partner in five years, although they may have been monogamous with each, is not safe, she said.

The only way to be 100 percent safe is to abstain from sex, Queen said. However, she admitted that abstinence is not a realistic alternative for the majority of the population.

If college students are going to have sexual relationships, Queen suggested they talk about AIDS and other STD's with their partners so there are no misunderstandings when it comes to safe sex.

Queen has conducted more than a dozen safe sex workshops in Oregon and San Francisco for more than three years.

— Carol Queen

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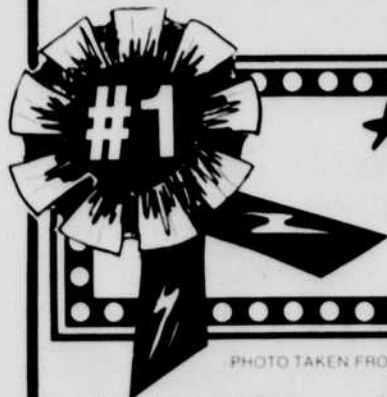


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