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# World AIDS Day strives for people to 'live and let live'

The University is observing World AIDS Day by hosting a series of events all day

By Ali Shaughnessy  
Senior News Reporter

Fifteen years ago, an international summit of health ministers gathered in a new spirit of social tolerance and a greater exchange of information on HIV/AIDS.

Today, hundreds of people are gathering worldwide to celebrate one of the products of that summit: World AIDS Day.

At the University, observance will begin at 11 a.m. today and continue through 8 tonight. Events include an art exhibit at the Aperture Gallery on the EMU Concourse, the film "Pandemic" showing at 6 p.m. in the Taylor Lounge and various guest speakers and a musical performance in the EMU Amphitheater. "Live and let live" is the slogan for this year's observance day.

World AIDS Campaign Coordinator Andrew Seale said the goal for World AIDS Day is to eliminate stigma and discrimination against those infected with HIV/AIDS.

"HIV stigma and fear of discrimination prevents people living with HIV from acknowledging their HIV status publicly," he said. "The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS may extend into the next generation, placing an emotional burden on children who may also be trying to cope with death of their parents from AIDS."

In 1996, UNAIDS — the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS — formed in recognition of the growing complexities of the

HIV/AIDS global epidemic.

"Freedom from discrimination is a fundamental human right founded on principles of natural justice that are universal and perpetual," an UN-AIDS spokesman said. "The basic characteristics of human rights are that they are inherent in individuals because they are human, and that they apply to people everywhere."

In a report released Nov. 18, UN-AIDS reported 42 million people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS, and 5 million people were infected in 2002. There were also 3.1 million deaths from AIDS complications in 2002.

In North America, 980,000 adults and children are living with HIV/AIDS, and 45,000 of those were infected in 2002. The main modes of transmission for adults living with HIV/AIDS in North America are sexual transmission among heterosexuals, transmission through intravenous drug use and sexual transmission among gay men.

UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot said in a statement that based on current trends, AIDS may kill tens of millions of people during the next 20 years if preventative measures are not taken.

"The global AIDS response is poised to enter a new era: where leadership and commitment are at long last matched with the resources needed to get on with the job," Piot said in a statement. "Investment in AIDS will be repaid a thousand fold in lives saved and communities held together."

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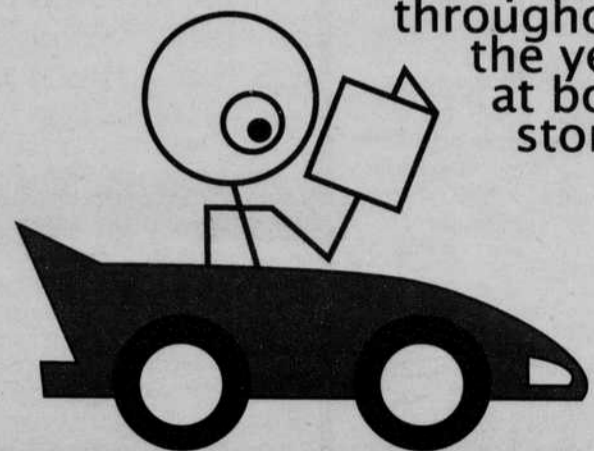
## CAMPUS BUZZ

**Tuesday**  
EMU Craft Center winter open house (art sale), 10 a.m.-5 p.m., EMU Craft Center. Featured are creations by students and center staff.  
Art exhibit, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., LaVerne Krause Gallery. Master of Fine Arts visual design by Lynne-Hui Huang and MFA printmaking by Josephine Gibbs.

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