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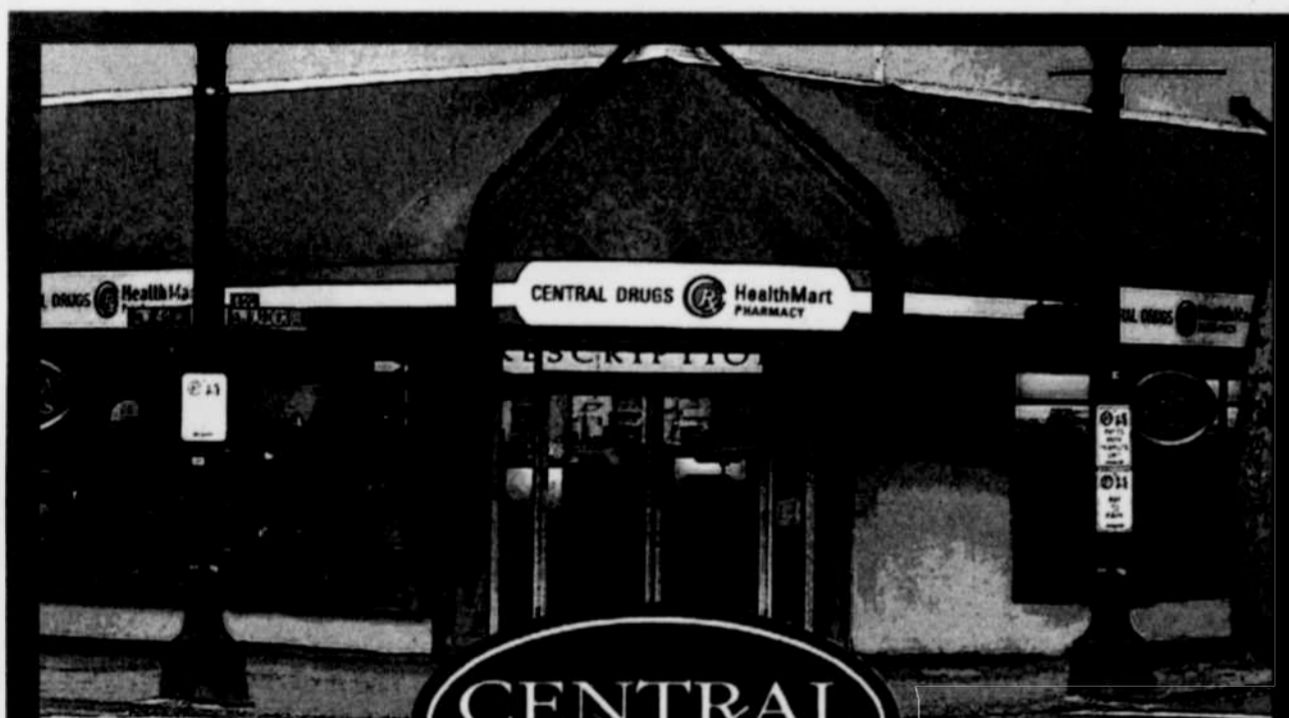
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# Thirty Years Later

Portland looks back, forward for  
World AIDS Day 2011

BY ALEX BRYCE

On December 1, communities throughout the world will come together for the 23rd Annual World AIDS Day—an opportunity not only to remember those lost to HIV/AIDS and the 33 million people living with it today, but also to raise awareness about how to prevent and curtail the spread of the infection. World AIDS Day 2011 holds added significance—earlier this year marked the 30th anniversary of the first diagnosed case of HIV.

Three decades and countless medical advances later, perhaps the most sobering truth is that in the last 10 years the incidence of new HIV infections has not gone down. It is estimated that 56,000 new HIV infections occur annually—that's one every nine and a half minutes—and 20 percent of those living with the virus in the United States are not aware of their status.

Cause for hope came in May of this year, when a study published by the National Institutes of Health found that early treatment can reduce transmission to sexual partners by 96 percent. The data led to dramatic predictions by commentators and experts such as Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who in the *Washington Post* wrote, "An end to AIDS is within our reach."

It makes sense, then, that the theme for World AIDS Day 2011 is "Getting to Zero"—and wiping out AIDS-related stigma, discrimination, deaths and new infections.

"It's huge," says Cascade AIDS Project executive director Michael Kaplan of the findings, and their "potential to change the way we think about HIV/AIDS and alter what the future looks like."

"In the U.S. you could take infections down to less than a few thousand from 40,000 sexually transmitted each year in the [country] today," he says. "Through simply ensuring that everyone knew their HIV status and those that are positive got early treatment, we could really break the back of the epidemic. It gives us a clear path and a clear light at the end of the tunnel."

Despite high levels of human trafficking, prostitution and drug use, Kaplan explains that HIV/AIDS in the Portland metro area is "a very concentrated epidemic, highly focused on gay and bisexual men. In fact, 70 percent of all infections continue to be among gay and bisexual men."

It's been CAP's mission since 1983 to fight the spread of the disease, support those living with it and educate the greater population. The nonprofit provides 3,000 tests a year in its downtown Portland offices, and CAP program Pivot, a community space for "men into men," offers a variety of social and



MARITY DAVIS

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—WAYNE MIYA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
OUR HOUSE

educational programming for gay, bisexual and trans men.

Among CAP's World AIDS Day efforts this year, the organization will host a public symposium assessing "What's New in HIV" with guest speaker Paul Kawata, executive director of the National Minority AIDS Council, focusing on the key strategies of education, prevention and treatment.

CAP is joined in its educational efforts by Our House of Portland, which in 2011 is reaching out to students at Beaumont Middle School. Established in 1988, Our House provides a diverse range of services—from 24-hour residential care to free clothing and even pet food for owners in need—through programs like Esther's Pantry and Tod's Corner.

CAP and Our House are just two facets of the Portland contingent of World AIDS Day—a community that, since 2009, has been united under an umbrella of engagement and collaboration at [worldaidsdaynw.org](http://worldaidsdaynw.org). As Our House executive director Wayne Miya explains, "We want to encourage churches, synagogues, schools, colleges, universities, government bodies and so on to each try to do their own event. This supports the idea that HIV/AIDS affects all communities."

It's a notion that numerous local organizations have embraced. Take Portland State University, whose Association of African Students, a longtime World AIDS Day par-