

THE VOICE

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FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS

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Living with AIDS

By Naadiya Hopkins
Voice Staff Writer

Stephanie Brown is a vibrant, bubbly, happy person who has been living with HIV for five years. She is a senior, mass communications major at Fayetteville State University. She is just another student on campus that is living life.

She contracted HIV from a young man that lived on campus. They began a relationship. While they were having sex he decided to remove the condom and that's how she contracted the virus.

From April of 2006 to June 2006, she couldn't walk, lost a lot of weight, couldn't sleep and could barely use the restroom. In June 2006, she found out that she was HIV positive. She began to feel disappointed, angry, depressed and hopeless.

Ms. Brown eventually told her family the news. Her mother cried for hours. Her parents tried to get her to take some time off from school. She decided to remain in school. It gave her a place to vent and focus her energy. Ms. Brown said that this type of news not only affects you, it affects everyone around you, especially your family and friends.

The cost for her medication is about \$2,600 a month. She does not have insurance. She receives help for her medication through a program named UNC-ADPAT. This program is a non-profit organization that is being funded by government grants. This organization helps with doctor's appointments and prescriptions.

Ms. Brown works for the Cape Fear Bureau for Community Action. This business is a nonprofit organization in Fayetteville. They provide patients with mentors, advice and help with job interviews. They also provide HIV/AIDS testing. As far as dating, a lot of guys have tried to have sex with her. She is honest with them about

her condition. She does have a social life and still enjoys an active dating life.

Last week, Ms. Brown spoke at an event on campus sponsored by the HOSA and Marketing Club. She spoke about a few preventive ways to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS.

- Check the expiration date on the condom
- Make sure there are no holes in the condom
- Turn the lights on if necessary during sex
- No skin should be exposed when the condom is on
- Never put on two condoms at one time

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Sperm can live up to six to eight hours after it leaves the body. There are many places to go get tested for

HIV or AIDS. The closest place to get tested for HIV is at the FSU Health Services Center. They provide free confidential testing.

This event was a great opportunity for students to learn and to make a difference in their community. Ms. Brown stated that all people are "queens and kings."

"Anything worth having is worth working for," said Ms. Brown. In today's society young adults always want things to come quickly and everything to move so fast. Ms. Brown wants everyone to think about the decisions that they make and who the decisions will affect afterwards.

Safe Sex? Are you safe enough?

by Charmell Harris
Voice News Editor

We are dying. We, the givers of life are dying. Our killer does not own a gun and has no motive.

Our killer does not discriminate and has no face, only a name. Our killer is HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Last week, was National Condom Week and various events were held on campus to promote safe sex.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that more than half a million people have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS since the eighties in the United States alone. 18,000 people continue to die from it every year.

Living here in Fayetteville, the odds are not stacked in our favor. It is the South, and is going through hard economic times and has a large population of African Americans. Statistics show that given these factors, we are at a higher risk to contract sexually transmitted diseases and even HIV/AIDS.

The CDC also has reported that the highest age group living with HIV/AIDS is people between the ages of 15-24.

One out of 16 African-American men will get HIV/AIDS in their lifetime. One out of 30 African-American women will get it in theirs. No wonder the African-American community is the highest racial demographic for contracting it. It makes up almost 50 percent of the total amount of cases.

Every nine-and-a-

half minutes, someone is diagnosed with the disease in the United States alone. More than one million (1.1 million) people nationwide are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS as reported in 2010. One out of five do not even know they are infected.

... do students really know all they need to know in order to be safe sexually?

The CDC reports that North Carolina has one of the highest concentrations of HIV/AIDS with 33,321 people living with the disease as of 2008. It is on the list for the top 10 states with the highest concentrations along with

California, Florida and New York.

The CDC just released new information on the status of African-Americans affected by HIV/AIDS, stating that (African-American) gay men have the highest risk of developing the disease, due to a riskier lifestyle. Second on the list are heterosexual, African-American women, who are 15 times more likely to get infected than White women.

There are commercials on BET, and most college students have had at least had one sex education class. Yet, with the rise of abortions, STD's and HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancies, do students really know all they need to know in order to be safe sexually?

"I feel I know enough, the condoms and the birth control and all. But I'm pretty sure there is a lot more out there [that I should know]," said Letika Leggett, an FSU sophomore and sociology major.

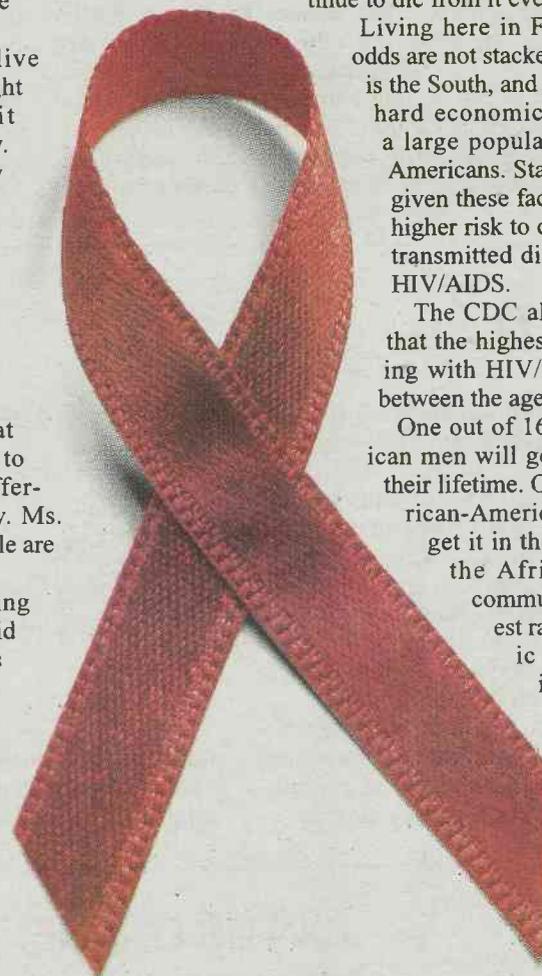
How much do students know about all the preventative measures available to them and do they know where to go for help? And what do students want to know?

"Honestly, I want to know the HIV/AIDS rate at the university," said Bryce Hill, freshmen Sociology major.

"I would like to know more about the precautions I could take. You know everyone is not going to wait until their married to have sex," said Ms. Leggett.

Besides HIV/AIDS, people become infected with sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes and human

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