

# QNotes

Noted . Notable . Noteworthy . LGBT News & Views

Volume 23 . Number 08 August 23 . 2008 Printed on Recycled Paper FREE



q-notes.com

## fighting AIDS with sex

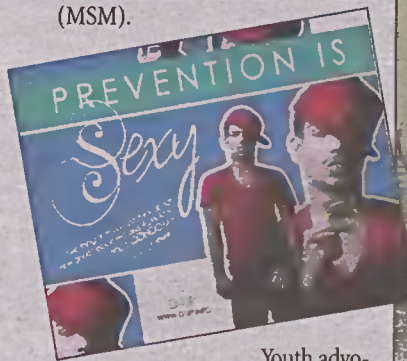
by Matt Comer  
Q-Notes staff

In early August, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released revised figures on the number of new U.S. HIV infections each year. The updated statistics revealed an increase of more than 16,000 cases over the agency's previous estimate of 40,000 new infections annually — even though rates declined for injection drug users and heterosexuals.

The stunning news was met with a flurry of media coverage.

LGBT activists and AIDS service organizations (ASOs) immediately took notice of the fact that the CDC said the burden of new HIV infections is "greatest among gay and bisexual men of all races." Of the total 56,300 new HIV

infections each year, a full 53 percent of them occur in gay/bisexual men and men who have sex with men (MSM).



Youth advocacy groups also received a wake-up call. According to the report, people age 29 and under represented 34 percent of new HIV infections, the highest of any age group. The LGBT-focused National Youth Advocacy Coalition said the numbers indicate that "existing public education efforts surrounding HIV prevention must be updated to be more relevant and effective at reaching youth."

In 2005, Metrolina AIDS Project (MAP) was one of three ASOs chosen to operate a CDC pilot program testing the waters for a "gay opinion leader" prevention program. With \$1 million in hand, ASOs in Charlotte,

Raleigh and Greensboro targeted well-liked and influential young men in gay nightclubs.



They provided them with training and education on HIV and risk reduction. The men were then charged with encouraging their peers to take HIV tests, use condoms and play safe.

MAP later created their own proposal for a similar project and D-UP! was born. Begun in 2006, the four-year program seeks to "recruit and train influential African-American men and men of color ages 13-24 and take them through a risk reduction program," D-UP! Program Coordinator Darren Johnson told Q-Notes.

After they've completed the program, participants become "popular opinion

leaders" and use their status as influential men in young communities of color to encourage safe-sex practices, HIV testing and risk reduction to their peers. Johnson said



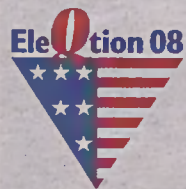
many of their program participants are affiliated with the "ballroom" scene — a sub-culture within the larger LGBT community.

Some, like Dan Savage, a syndicated gay columnist who writes about sex, have criticized the CDC pilot program for their use of gift cards, which were given to the "gay opinion leaders" after completing their training.

Savage called the program "completely retarded" and questioned results from CDC surveys collected from 300 men, which claimed a 32 percent reduction in unprotected anal intercourse and a 40 percent reduction in

## Youth and gay/bi men are bearing the burden of the epidemic

## LGBTs will make their mark at Dem convention



N.C. will send six LGBT delegates, S.C. will send none

by Collier Rutledge  
Contributing Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — When state delegations head to Denver, Colo., for the Democratic National Convention Aug. 25-28, they'll be bringing with them more representation from the LGBT community than ever before.

According to the National Stonewall Democrats, overall LGBT participation in the quadrennial Democratic convention will increase 27 percent from the 2004 convention.

Stonewall said more than 350 LGBT people will attend the convention and 277 of them will officially represent their state and local parties as elected delegates. In 2004, the group estimated only 282 LGBTs attended the convention. The LGBT presence will represent approximately six percent of total convention attendance.

North Carolina's Ian Palmquist, executive director of the

statewide advocacy group Equality North Carolina, and Betsy Albright, a graduate student at Duke University, will be among the six LGBT delegates representing Tar Heel Democrats in Denver. South Carolina will send no LGBT delegates this year.

"I strongly believe that we are at a turning point in our country and that Obama and McCain represent two distinct visions for our nation and for the role our nation plays in the world," Albright told Q-Notes.

"I became an Obama supporter after living two years abroad (Budapest, Hungary) where I was working on my dissertation [and] realized how far our image, our image as a nation, our image as citizens, has fallen in the eyes of many other countries. I think Obama has the ability to start to turn this around, first by his desire to listen to others and to build relationships with other nations."

Palmquist, who is also a pledged Obama delegate, described this election season as "the most exciting and important election in a generation."

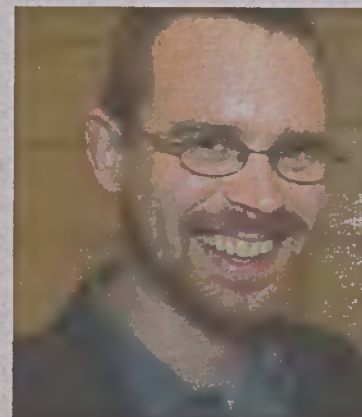
"I wanted to be a part of it," he said of his participation as

a delegate. "I also wanted to help ensure that the LGBT community is well-represented in the party."

Both Albright and Palmquist intend to use their time at the convention working to bring awareness to LGBT equality issues.

"I will be a voice for full equality at every opportunity at the convention, and will work with the LGBT caucus to ensure our issues are a part of the convention," Palmquist said.

Albright added that

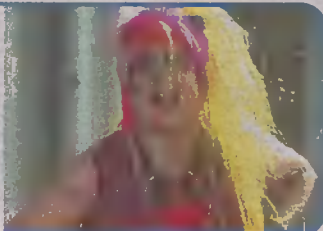


EqualityNC's Ian Palmquist is a pledged Obama delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

see *Gay Dems* on 11

### Record-breaking

Pride Charlotte  
boasts 10k  
page 20



### Anticipation

SC Pride gears up  
for largest yet  
page 21



### WWJD?

WNC parents push  
for support  
page 12

