

Metropolitan Jacksonville Area HIV Health Services Planning Council

Council News and Updates

December 2021

www.coj.net/rwpc



IN THIS ISSUE:

[**New Faces: Get to Know a Member**](#)

[**Save the Date: Monthly Calendar**](#)

[**How to Attend Council Meetings**](#)

[**Meeting Minutes**](#)

[**Partner Announcements**](#)

NEW FACES: GET TO KNOW A MEMBER

By Deweyne Robinson, Membership Chair

When I was 10 years old, I moved with my Mom and two sisters to Jacksonville from a small town called Eustis, Florida. It was my best move ever! At age 14, I was accepted into the Douglas-Anderson School of the Performing Arts, Vocal Music Program. I joined our church's traveling Acapella Vocal Music Ensemble and we traveled extensively across the USA. We recorded albums that feature lyrics I wrote and some of those songs have been recorded by Gospel Artists.

I married my wife (now ex-wife) in 1989 at age 18. God gave our union three beautiful children: two girls and one boy. Before the birth of my babies, everything revolved around music. When my babies were born, I was utterly smitten and gob smacked – my heart melted for them. I only always wanted to be everything for them. I eventually got a job as a Church Music Director. I thought it might be the perfect marriage of both worlds, but I forgot about the demands of music arts, even in the church setting. My family life became strained because I didn't know how to balance my life as a husband, dad, minister, artist... and human.

This is where it's important to note that since the age of 14, I have known that I was equally attracted to males as I was to females. When I met my ex-wife, we talked and joked about it, but I had a plan to be the faithful husband that my mother didn't have, the engaged dad that I didn't have, and my wife and I were going to beat all the odds together forever. When I turned 28 years old, we had been married a little over 10 years and my kids were 10, eight, and five years old. I was working at the church Wednesday through Sunday and at Burger King overnight as a porter. Imagine the emotional toll that schedule had on my marriage. In the end, my marriage did not survive, but I became a better person.

I was hired by River Regions Human Services, Inc. in 1999 at 28 years old. It was my second best move ever. The staff of professionals and the therapeutic principles at River Region provided me with the positive encouragement and foundation I needed to discover the real me. I had/have always gravitated to doing what I believed was expected of me. I tend(ed) to do this until I became/become frustrated that the audience I was performing for no longer reacts expectedly. Then I became angry and passive-aggressive. I had done that in every area of my life, including my sexuality. In the exploration of my sexuality and my work at River Region, I began to learn about HIV/AIDS. I met and worked with a host of awesome people: Geno Hampton, Lolita Hill, James Kelly Holmes, Ella Simmons, Esmine Shakespeare Masters, Richmond Wynn, and of course the incomparable Mrs. Derya Williams. By the way, this was my first exposure to the name Johnetta Moore, who we now know affectionately by one name "Chief."

In 2001, I met and began dating my husband, Alex. The attraction was instant. He is at once my fiercest defender and my most faithful critic. In 2002, things became serious between the two of us and we moved in together. I was working at the church, divorce ink not even dry, and moving in with a man. I was just that happy! Everyone loved him, but there was one problem – I had not told anyone at my church. I had not faced the realities of what the relationship would mean for the part of my being that was so heavily invested in religion. I had found peace spiritually with my sexuality in large part thanks to Dr. Wynn and Ms. Hill. However, I had not considered that the social construct to which my religious group belonged would not allow me to continue in a position of leadership. So, one fateful Sunday morning, I was excoriated from the pulpit during the sermonic dissertation. I was crushed. Alex was there. He had witnessed this most shameful event at the hands of my most trusted council, a person to whom I had hoped Alex would find favor – my pastor. Selah.

Shortly afterward, Alex wisely suggested that we begin a quest to find a spiritual community that would at least tolerate our presence. I was given a new assignment at River Region as the Education Specialist in the Outreach & Prevention Department, specifically offering HIV testing and education to 13 to 18-year-olds. In 2006, Alex and I committed to volunteer work with the youth of the Minority AIDS Coalitions' Youth Drop-In Center. This became the impetus for one of my proudest collaborative community efforts: Called Out Believers In Christ (COBIC) Fellowship. We would coach them through the difficulties of life with the teachings of Christ and examples from Scripture. I especially loved paraphrasing and teaching using metaphors from their culture. Alex and I met Regina Jackson and Shilanda Peterson (Jackson) at an LGBT Chorus Concert at Riverside Baptist Church and together the four of us founded COBIC Fellowship. Since 2009, COBIC Fellowship has consistently served its primary purpose as an affirming faith Christian Community, having connected well over 300 people from the LGBTQIA+ community to reconcile their sexuality and spirituality.

In 2015, Alex and I were blessed to have adopted our son Alex Jr. into our family. In 2017, I became the Housing Manager at River Region Andy's Place. Andy's Place offers supportive housing for those who have been homeless due to substance abuse, mental illness, or HIV/AIDS. Residents at Andy's Place receive life skills training to help them become productive, have income, and be contributing members of the community.

In 2017, I learned about the Ryan White Cares Act as a result of several very jarring personal encounters with the impact of HIV/AIDS. While I was grateful that this work existed, I was confused about why so few people seemed to know about it, and why even fewer were actively involved. I attended Planning Council meetings for over a year and was eventually assigned by River Region to attend the Part A Provider Meetings. In 2020, I became a member of the Metropolitan Jacksonville Area HIV Health Services Planning Council by a mayoral appointment. In that same year, I accepted an assignment to Chair the Membership Committee. I hope that from this vantage point, I can contribute to processes and perspectives that encourage people who have been impacted by HIV/AIDS in the ways that I

have. I want people to get engaged and stay engaged until we have met the goals of having significantly reduced the rate of new HIV infections, increased access to care and optimized health outcomes, reduced health disparities and health inequities, and have maximized response to the epidemic nationally.

Presently, I am continuing my evolution. I attend Liberty University in pursuit of my academic goals: MBA. I am the Operations Director of the Derya Williams Campus at River Region in my 21st year as their happy employee. I am beginning my 12th year as the pastor of the COBIC Fellowship. And for my proudest achievements, I am 20 years the life partner, husband, and friend to Alex, and proud "Pops" to my four adult Children: DeQuita, Marde`, Deweyne Jr., Alex Jr., and six grandchildren. I am proud to serve this community along with each of you and I look forward to decades more. I am, in a word: Grateful!

SAVE THE DATE: MONTHLY CALENDAR – DECEMBER 2021

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		1 World AIDS Day	2 Bylaws 1809 Art Museum Dr 2 - 4 pm	3 Community Awards Banquet Hyatt Regency Riverfront 11:30 am - 1 pm
6	7	8 Membership Committee 1809 Art Museum Dr 2 - 4 pm	9 Community Connections 515 W 6th St 12 - 1 pm CCC Committee* 1809 Art Museum Dr 2 - 4 pm	10
13	14	15	16 Planning Council UF Towers 580 8 th St W 3 - 5 pm	17
20	21 Executive Committee 1809 Art Museum Dr 2 - 4 pm	22	23	24 Holiday COJ Closed
27 Holiday COJ Closed	28	29	30	31 Holiday COJ Closed

*CCC = Continuum of Care Coordination

HOW TO ATTEND PLANNING COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public are welcome to attend all Council and Committee meetings. The current options for attending include:

- Physically Present: Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings in person. Due to COVID 19 distancing guidelines, meetings are taking place in several locations and masks are strongly encouraged.
 - Electronically: At this time, the option for guests to attend electronically via Zoom is only available for Planning Council meetings and not Committee meetings.
 - For more information, contact PlanningCouncil@coj.net or 904-255-3346.
-

MEETING MINUTES

See what we've been up to! Read our meeting minutes here:

<https://www.coj.net/departments/parks-and-recreation/social-services/ryan-white-c-a-r-e-act,-part-a/planning-council/about-us#MEETING%20MINUTES>

PARTNER ANNOUNCEMENTS

The City of Jacksonville does not endorse any of the following events.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

US Conference on HIV/AIDS (Virtual)

December 2-3, 2021

Registration is \$295

Register: uscha.life

Northeast Florida World AIDS Day Community Awards Banquet

December 3, 2021 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Hyatt Regency Riverfront

Cost is \$40 per person

To register, call 904-356-1612 ext. 116 or email jkloke@nfanjax.org.

For more information, visit neflworldaidsday.com.

Telehealth in HIV: Lessons Learned and Future Directions (Virtual)

December 7, 2021 1 – 2 p.m.

Register:

<https://event.on24.com/wcc/r/3517927/971875264908C2EA6B3A2608A1D53BD9?eType>

Live with Leadership: People, Place, Policy, & Science Matter (Virtual)

December 8, 2021 3:30 – 4 p.m.

Register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0axqmURQRByPJTua-MBnQg

December HAB You Heard Webinar

December 9, 2021 2 – 3 p.m.

Register: <https://hrsa->

[gov.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_pYGpuidiStyON4uXLJvE_Q](https://hrsa-gov.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_pYGpuidiStyON4uXLJvE_Q)

Sign up for email updates here: [RWHAP Listserv](#)

The Updated National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS): What's New and What's Next? A Webinar on How to Use the Strategy

December 9, 2021 3 – 4 p.m.

Register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EUM0AaYZSqKaXg8CV42QeQ

HIV and Substance Use Disorder Webinar

December 10, 2021 12 – 1 p.m.

Register: <https://nahewd->

[org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1ouMZ3QLTauppAU9MUDLtw](https://nahewd-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1ouMZ3QLTauppAU9MUDLtw)

Women and PrEP Symposium (Virtual)

December 15, 2021 8:25 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Free

Register: <https://www.maaetc.org/events/view/19211>

ONGOING EVENTS:

COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing Locations in Jacksonville

Click here: <http://duval.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/COVID-19/index.html>

Beacons of Hope HIV Support Group at Lutheran Social Services

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month 3 – 5 pm
4615 Philips Highway Jacksonville, FL 32207
Refreshments will be provided. For More Information Please Contact
James Perrigan at 904-739-7015.

UF CARES Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Every 3rd Tuesday of each month 11:30 am – 1 pm via Zoom
Email michael.kyger@jax.ufl.edu or call 904-244-5466 for more
information.

HIVCareNow Testing and Events Calendar

<http://hivcarenow.com/calendar/testing-calendar.html>

New FDOH HIV 101 Video

<https://vimeo.com/651650169/db56daaa5a>

The Planning Council is a legislatively mandated group of diverse community members who work to improve the availability, accessibility, and quality of HIV/AIDS health services. The Planning Council members participate in processes including identifying community needs, assessing the capacity to meet those needs, and allocating Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) resources.

We are always looking for new members! Members go through a rigorous interview process and are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Jacksonville to represent a particular demographic.

For more information, please contact the Planning Council Support Staff at PlanningCouncil@coj.net or 904-255-3346.

For more information about the RWHAP, please visit <https://hab.hrsa.gov>.

You are receiving this email because you indicated you were interested in learning more about the Planning Council.

To unsubscribe from this newsletter, please reply with the word 'unsubscribe' in the body or subject line.

