National Faith HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2019

#NFHAAD takes place the last Sunday in August. This year's theme focuses on faith communities globally.

August 23, 2019 By Trent Straube

Sunday, August 25, marks National Faith HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (#NFHAAD) 2019. HIV affects people of all faiths, and as NFHAAD says, "This year, we are focusing on faith communities globally! It's not a national issue, it's a global issue and it takes a village. It takes us working together to end HIV stigma in our faith communities."

The event was launched three years ago by HIV-negative ally Khadijah Abdullah and her nonprofit organization, RAHMA (Reaching All HIV+ Muslims in America). You can read more about her in the POZ profile "Fighting With Mercy." Abdullah also penned a HuffPost blog titled "Are You Woke Yet?" about RAHMA.

Ambassadors involved in NFHAAD span the Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Jewish faiths. More information about NFHAAD events is posted on the group's Facebook page. You can also visit the website FaithAIDSDay.com. The site includes a Faith Letter you can print and address to religious leaders. The letter includes supportive scripture from different faith traditions and reads, in part:

> "We must accept, support and care for our faith community members, regardless of their histories and their current struggles.
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> "Many faith communities have been and are at the forefront of the response to HIV/AIDS in a variety of ways. Faith communities and faith-based organizations have been and are a vital part of providing HIV/AIDS services, especially in hard-to-reach areas, and especially when government and community-based organizations were slow to act in the early days of the epidemic.
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> "Unfortunately, some faith communities can also be environments for perpetuating misinformation and reinforcing stigma and discrimination against people living with or at risk for HIV. It is our responsibility as faith leaders to educate first ourselves and then our communities to counter these damaging tendencies; let us strive, instead, to be havens for

> those in need, providing accurate, scientific information about HIV prevention and treatment, grounded in the language and teachings of our respective faiths.…
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> "We call on faith leaders, faith communities and other organizations to join the observance of National Faith HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, and [we] hope that you and your community will find a way to contribute to this year's observance and incorporate HIV education and advocacy throughout the year. We pray that each of our faith communities can be a welcoming and safe place for any person with HIV/AIDS and an uplifting environment that will support people's use of effective HIV prevention."

For a related article in POZ, read AIDS United's interview with an ordained Baptist reverend: "From Alabama to Africa, Faith Fuels Aquarius Gilmer's Advocacy."

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