



## 10th Anniversary STI/HIV/AIDS Education Folder Project

276,000 Folders Distributed to Minnesota School Students 1997-2007

### A Timeline

**October 1995**—AMAA Leadership Conference, Chicago: Diane Gayes first learned about the Florida Medical Alliance HIV/AIDS Education book cover for school students. That same fall, she read the following comment by a 25-year-old man: "If adults had just given me the facts when I was a teenager instead of arguing about what to tell young people, I might not have been infected with HIV which has now become AIDS." The HMSA felt the need to reach out to teenagers with an HIV/AIDS health education project. Diane Gayes and Dianne Fenyk became the project co-chairs.

### Project goals:

- To help young people make educated choices so they can develop and maintain active, healthy lives.
- To prevent chronic health problems associated with STDs.
- To prevent catastrophic effects of HIV/AIDS.
- To prevent teenage pregnancy.
- To expand the project to a larger geographic area.

**1995-1996:** Minnesota Department of Education Peer Review Panel, physicians, nurses, other infectious disease experts, schoolteachers, students and parents reviewed the messages on the book cover.

**1996-1997:** (25,000 folders were distributed to 42 West Metro Schools)

Revisions were made to include facts about STIs, alcohol/chemical use and pregnancy. The book cover format was changed to a paper pocket folder. A high school student won our graphic design contest, capturing the essence of the health education messages in a non-threatening, visually-pleasing presentation that reflects the ethnic diversity of the student population.

**1997-1998:** (80,000 folders distributed)

A curriculum guide was developed to encourage and enhance the teachers' use of the folder. The Minnesota Medical Association Alliance (MMAA) joined our efforts to expand the project to greater Minnesota.

**1998-1999:** (80,000 folders distributed)

The AMAA *Alliance Today* magazine recognized the STI/HIV/AIDS folder as an outstanding Alliance health promotions project.

**1999-2000:** (15,000 folders distributed)

A Web site was created for a more cost effective way of relaying information to the school health educators.

**2000-2001:** (40,000 folders distributed)

The HIV/STI Regional Training Site, Hopkins, MN, used the folders in their training sessions with staff from the metro area suburban school districts. "The folder is a wonderful example of the implementation of two Graduation Standards in one product. The use of graphic design intertwined with the understanding of health concepts has provided a unique product for others to see and emulate," Coordinator, Hopkins HIV/STI Training Site.

HMSA/MMAA members saw firsthand the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on children. Nine Alliance members traveled 9,000 miles to Chang Mai, Thailand, to deliver supplies to Agape Home, an orphanage for orphaned/abandoned children infected with HIV/AIDS. The journey was life changing and reaffirmed that the HMSA STI/HIV/AIDS Education Project was important. An article authored by Diane Gayes, *Journey of the Heart*, a chronicle of the trip, was published in the AMAA *Alliance Today* and *Minnesota Medicine*.

**2002-2006:** No funding. (Remaining 4,500 folders were distributed)

**2007-2008:** We reached our funding goal, updated the folder and printed 50,000 folders. The Minnesota Department of Education sent information about the project to 4,500 school health educators.

To date, 26,500 folders have been distributed and \$8,000 of the \$14,000 needed has been raised for future printing.

*"While we have no actual proof that we have saved a life with this folder, we know in our hearts that because of our efforts at least one child has made a healthy choice!"*

Dianne Fenyk, AMAA President, 2007-2008

### Student Quotes:

**1998:** "Stunned. It made me feel good. It makes you think twice before doing it. Feels nice to know that someone cares this much."

**2007:** "It makes me think twice about sex. It made me sad and thankful I don't have AIDS. Proud, that I am not using drugs. I love the folder."

### Teacher Quotes:

**1998:** "Folders were excellent, informative. Brings forth some interesting comments and discussions! Very frank, honest and eye opening for some students. Thank you for a wonderful teaching tool."

"More and more students are exposed to risky behaviors and many of them are engaging in these behaviors. For these youth at risk—and in today's society, that can include nearly every junior high student—the behaviors that will cause them problems are clearly identified. Another important part of the folder was the listing of many other choices students have, rather than engaging in behaviors that would put them at risk. This folder has been a really valuable teaching and learning tool and it is wonderful to see them in use every day at our school."

**2008:** "They emphasize that there are many myths and incorrect information about AIDS. I would like to extend my thanks to you for allowing us the opportunity to get the HIV/AIDS folders for our high school students' health education."

### Thank you to:

Florida Medical Alliance and AMA Alliance for project idea; Rebecca (Bourne)Wygonik for folder design; HMS Alliance/MMA Alliance volunteers; individual physicians and clinics; infectious disease experts; teachers/parents/students; Minnesota Department of Education/HMSA/Hennepin Medical Foundation/MMAA/MMA and other Minnesota Medical Societies/local organizations/individuals who have donated funds (\$74,000).

The collective support in the way of finances, volunteer time, creative talents, and passion to help young people remain healthy, has been responsible for the success of this project. ♦