



Compassion Coalition

Ways to Connect with People with HIV/AIDS

“One of my visions would be for the church to approach people who have HIV/AIDS from the standpoint of the Good Samaritan. We need to serve this community without regard to how they became infected. ... People living with AIDS need the church and Christian friends to love them and to teach them about a loving God.”

~ Wayne Smith, Director of Samaritan Ministry

Make a Difference Through Prayer

- Pray for the physical, mental, emotional, financial and spiritual well-being of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, and for their families.
- Pray for HIV-infected mothers, who face a higher risk for mental health problems due to a multitude of stressors, and who must make decisions for their children's future.
- Pray for children with an HIV-infected parent, who are at risk for depression, poor school and social functioning, and a range of other developmental and behavioral problems.
- Pray that churches will become more open to working with those affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Thank God for the ministries and volunteers serving people affected by HIV/AIDS, and pray for sustained resources and resolve to continue their work.
- Pray that more people would make choices about sexuality and drugs that lead to a decline in HIV infections.
- Pray for advances in more effective, affordable treatments for AIDS.

Make a Difference Through Your Life

- Educate yourself about HIV/AIDS – what it is, how it is transmitted, how it affects people physically and psychologically, and how it can be treated.
- Ask God to help you develop a genuine and unconditional loving attitude towards those who have been affected by HIV/AIDS. Be prepared to listen with an open mind and heart to their stories.
- Counter mistruths about HIV/AIDS and harsh attitudes toward people with the disease when you hear these expressed.
- Seek to befriend a family affected by HIV/AIDS and develop a supportive relationship through shared family times of recreation and community service, as well as providing practical assistance and prayer support.
- Seek out ways to interact with the HIV-positive community by participating in trainings, conferences, and awareness events as an ambassador of Christ's compassion.
- If someone you know discovers or suspects they are infected with HIV, direct them to the Tennessee AIDS Hotline, 800-525-AIDS (2437), or to the Samaritan Ministry (450-1000 x 827).



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Make a Difference Through Your Church

Promote an informed, caring response to HIV/AIDS:

- Hold a community awareness event about HIV/AIDS (consider National HIV Testing Day in June, or December 1, World AIDS Day).
- Participate in the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, a weeklong education and awareness campaign highlighting the role of the African American church in addressing the AIDS crisis. Activities include prayer services, testing at local colleges and night clubs, education/awareness workshops presented at churches and schools, and distribution of resource toolkits to churches. Churches can join a citywide Continuous Prayer Calendar to pray for people with HIV/AIDS.
- Pastors: Preach sermons on Jesus' compassionate response to the outcasts of his day. Affirm the value of people with HIV/AIDS by praying for their needs. Make it clear that people with the disease are welcome in your congregation.
- Provide educational opportunities for church members to discuss HIV/AIDS, and to learn how to minister to families affected by it. Confront the stigma attached to the disease. Help members develop a biblical framework for expressing unconditional love and support for individuals with HIV/AIDS while addressing the behaviors that place persons at risk for infection.
- Communicate a clear, bold and factual prevention message to youth in the church and community. Create opportunities for frank, biblically-grounded discussions of sexuality and drug abuse as they relate to HIV/AIDS. Don't let fear of controversy stand in the way of forming character and saving lives.

Reach out to people affected by HIV/AIDS:

- Partner with community nonprofits, medical agencies and hospices that serve this group. Make church resources available to the needs of the people they serve, such as food pantries or clothing closets. Offer to connect church members with people served by the organization for personal visitation, prayer and emotional support. Make church space available for support groups or community outreach activities.
- Create a fund for helping to meet basic needs and to purchase medications.
- Collect over-the-counter healthcare items and toiletries to be donated to people affected by AIDS. Contact Samaritan Ministries (450-1000 x 827) for a list of the most needed items.
- Offer spiritual support to people with HIV/AIDS and their families, such as Christian counseling, Bible studies or a prayer hotline.
- Open the church for funeral services for HIV/AIDS victims who do not have a home church, and provide grief counseling to family and friends.

Make a Difference as a Volunteer

Ways to Connect: An excerpt from Compassion Coalition's 3rd edition of the Salt & Light Guidebook



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Connect with the following organizations that serve people with HIV/AIDS:

Hope Center at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center: 541-3767 (private 24-hour voice mail), <http://www.hopecenterknox.org>

Offers caring support, information and hope, at no charge to patients and families affected by HIV or other serious illnesses. Provides assistance with the needs of the newly diagnosed, care in last stages of life, and spiritual issues. Consultations available by phone or private e-mail (jgillian@covhlth.com).

- Apply to join the Oliver & Company Care Team that provides trained volunteer assistance as needed, such as caring for pets while their owner is in treatment, helping people adjust after being released from the hospital, and visiting people in the nursing home.
- Participate in the Hope for the Holidays Celebration, including a Free Holiday Store where people can "shop" for gifts and needed items. Donate items on the Hope Center Wish List (posted on the website), or gently used items for the Hope for the Holidays store.
- Help with fundraising events, community displays, and mailings.

Parkridge Harbor (Positively Living): 525-1540, <http://www.parkridgeharbor.org>

Provides housing and case management to men suffering from a combination of mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and other catastrophic illnesses. Financial assistance for rent, utilities, housing repairs, etc. is available for persons with AIDS who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

- Donate food or basic care items such as deodorant, shampoo, soap, and laundry detergent.
- Help with weekend meals for the residents.
- Organize on-site activities such as cookouts, family days, and softball games.

Project Care (Child & Family Tennessee): 524-7483, <http://www.child-family.org>

Provides case management to help persons with HIV/AIDS attain housing, resources, and personal goals. Limited financial assistance is available for medications, medical supplies, groceries, and transportation.

- Donate personal care and household items.
- Visit homebound individuals and meet transportation needs.
- Provide holiday food baskets or help with special events throughout the year.

Samaritan Ministry (Central Baptist Church of Bearden): 450-1000 x 827, <http://www.samaritancentral.org>

Serves people living with HIV/AIDS through direct support as well as a network of service providers. Provides education, awareness programming and volunteer training in churches, public schools, and colleges.

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- Provide transportation and emotional support for medical appointments.
- Deliver groceries or help prepare weekend meals.
- Families: Help with the annual Thanksgiving Banquet, or collect items for Christmas "Hope Buckets" (package of toiletries and personal items).
- Contact Samaritan Ministry to refer someone to HIV testing, counseling or other services.

Additional Organizations that Serve People with HIV/AIDS in the Knoxville Area

ACTS 12 (hosted by Calvary Baptist Church): 224-1212, <http://www.acts12.com>
A ministry for men and women with unwanted feelings of same-sex attraction who desire to follow Christ and share the conviction that acting out sexually with members of the same gender is contrary to Scripture.

The F.A.I.T.H Coalition (Faith-based African American Initiative To reduce HIV/AIDS): 215-5535

Promotes HIV/AIDS education and advocacy in the African American community through a coalition comprised of public health agencies, nonprofits, and churches. Helps sponsor the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS.

HIV/AIDS Prevention and Outreach Program (Helen Ross McNabb): 637-9711, <http://www.mcnabbcenter.org>

Provides HIV prevention information and materials to about 50,000 people annually through street teams of Prevention Counselors, targeting high-risk groups such as intravenous drug users. Counselors also offer educational sessions for churches and other community groups.

Knox County Health Department: 215-5000, <http://www.knoxcounty.org>

Provides free, confidential HIV counseling and testing, with follow-up services from disease intervention specialists for persons who test positive for HIV. Centers of Excellence case managers help connect HIV-positive individuals with community resources such as healthcare and housing. Partners with the community in HIV/AIDS awareness and education.

Mercy Health Partners - Behavioral Health Services: 545-7863, <http://www.mercy.com>
Provides adult diagnostic evaluation, crisis stabilization, and treatment services.

Tennessee AIDS Hotline (Department of Health): 1-800-525-AIDS (2437)

Provides information about the symptoms of HIV, how the virus is transmitted, where to get tested, and how to contact support groups. Staffed by trained counselors.



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How to Learn More

- For basic information about HIV/AIDS, visit the Hope Center's website, <http://www.hopecenterknox.org/youknow.html>.
- The Hope Center (541-3767) sponsors "HIV: The Human Perspective Workshop," a free, day-long interactive workshop to enhance awareness, empathy, knowledge and hope for healthcare professionals, families, volunteers, or anyone wanting training in HIV/AIDS caregiving.
- Samaritan Ministry (450-1000 x 827, <http://www.samaritancentral.org>) offers volunteer training to churches and ministries that serve people with HIV/AIDS. See the website for a downloadable devotional guide as well as an HIV ministry resource kit for churches.
- The HIV/AIDS Prevention and Outreach Program of Helen Ross McNabb (637-9711, <http://www.mcnabbcenter.org>) offers educational sessions at churches, schools, halfway houses, Boys and Girls Clubs, alcohol and drug treatment centers, and to incarcerated individuals.
- During the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, churches can receive a resource toolkit containing HIV/AIDS sermons, litanies, Bible study outlines, devotions and prayers.