



BEHIV kicks off 60-day fund-raising drive

CHICAGO – Better Existence with HIV (BEHIV) will kick off a 60-day fund-raising drive to support its programs and help to bridge the gap in decreased, and delayed, funding.

BEHIV's 60-Day Drive is being organized by the organization's staff, board of directors and volunteers to obtain much-needed funding for BEHIV's programs and services. The drive officially begins in early June and runs into early August. Multiple events and projects are being planned, including kick-off event at Salut  Wine Bar, major donor requests, bingo at Hamburger Mary's, house parties, fund-raising activities at BEHIV's IML, Midsommarfest, Pride Fest and Market Days booths, BEHIV's annual Garden Party, and a staff/board drag show grand finale event.

“Government funding for HIV services has decreased and some foundations are shifting their attention to other areas of concern. Even when government funding exists, it is often delayed. The State of Illinois has not made a single payment toward a grant that began last October – that's seven months of BEHIV carrying expenses without reimbursement,” said executive director Eric Nelson. “These delays and cuts mean that organizations like BEHIV have to do more with less, and we are. We are consolidating our offices to reduce administrative costs and some of our staff members are occupying more than one position to save on salary expense.

“In tough economic times, people sometimes decrease their charitable giving, just when it is needed more,” continued Nelson. “Imagine the uncertainty facing our clients, who can't obtain rental assistance or who have to travel longer distances to access health care. BEHIV has been there for our clients for 20 years and we hope our supporters and members of the community will be there for them too.”

“This drive truly is a grassroots effort and I'm very excited by the cooperation between our board, staff and volunteers,” Nelson said. “Everyone is pitching in, understanding that everything we do, and all the money that is raised, during those 60 days will help us better provide for our clients.”

To make a donation to the drive, volunteer with an event or obtain additional information, send e-mail to Eric Nelson at ericnelson@behiv.org or Rita Lewis at ritalewis@behiv.org or visit www.behiv.org.