



Dear AIDS Walk San Francisco Supporter,

Thank you for being such an important part of AIDS Walk San Francisco (AWSF) and congratulations again on a very empowering and gratifying 2017 event, as well as on its success.

We have an important announcement to share with you regarding the future of AWSF, and an invitation. Starting this year, the world's leading research organization on HIV and aging, **ACRIA**, will become the fiscal sponsor of AWSF. ACRIA will also join **Project Open Hand (POH)** and **Positive Resource Center (PRC)** as a lead co-beneficiary of the event.

Since its formation in the summer of 2015, one of the top priorities of the AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation (AWSFF) has been addressing the challenges facing older people living with HIV/AIDS. “Over the past two years, AWSFF is proud to have provided the sole funding to launch the Golden Compass Program at UCSF’s Ward 86, granting it a total of \$175,000,” said **Serafina Palandech, Board Chair of AWSFF**. “In 2017, we were pleased to support the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) with a grant of \$15,000 for its HIV and aging program, The Elizabeth Taylor 50-Plus Network. **In creating this opportunity for ACRIA, we are not only maintaining, but strengthening AWSF’s commitment to care for long-term survivors and older people living with HIV in the Bay Area.**”

“We are proud to usher in ACRIA to the helm of this much beloved and vital community event,” said **Robert Mansfield, AWSFF Treasurer**. “ACRIA’s leadership will bolster the fiscal stability of AWSF, enabling the Walk to focus less on sustaining solvency and more on ending HIV and AIDS. **It will also preserve a central element of the event’s fundraising, the co-beneficiary teams program.** In the past two years, this vital initiative has generated more than \$640,000 for a geographically and programmatically diverse coalition of Bay Area AIDS organizations. ACRIA recognizes that maintaining this program is essential.”

“On behalf of the researchers, educators, and leadership of ACRIA, we are humbled and honored by the opportunity to serve as fiscal steward of this great event,” said **Kelsey Louie, Executive Director of ACRIA and CEO of Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC)**, the world’s first AIDS service organization. “**We are also fully committed to ensuring that every dollar raised by AIDS Walk San Francisco benefits people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS who reside in the Bay Area.**”

Dana Van Gorder, Executive Director of Project Inform, a longtime stakeholder in the event, applauded the new leadership choice. “At a time when the President seems unprepared to provide any leadership to address the epidemic, greater collaboration between leading national HIV/AIDS organizations is necessary in order to assure both the successful delivery of HIV services and national public policy objectives,” Van Gorder said.

“Ensuring the Bay Area’s population of both younger and older people living with HIV stays nourished and healthy has long been the priority of our organization,” said **Mark Ryle, CEO of Project Open Hand**. “We are excited that the AIDS Walk will now enable us to team up with such a top-notch research organization as ACRIA and its distinguished leader, Kelsey Louie. This will allow the Bay Area and Project Open Hand

to continue to lead the nation in addressing the important challenges of promising proper nutrition for all who need it and cutting-edge services for the aging HIV-positive population.”

POH has received grants totaling \$180,000 over the past two years from AIDS Walk San Francisco to support its meal programs for people living with HIV/AIDS who are critically ill and, in many cases, over 50.

Brett Andrews, CEO of Positive Resource Center, congratulated AWSFF on its decision. “With this new arrangement, AWSF once again demonstrates its ability to evolve with the times while doing the greatest good for people living with HIV/AIDS in the Bay Area. From our perspective, that means people with low incomes, communities of color, LGBT people, and others will be able to continue reaping the benefits of PRC’s programs that receive vital funding from AIDS Walk San Francisco,” Andrews said.

PRC received an \$80,000 grant from AIDS Walk San Francisco in 2017 and will continue to be a lead co-beneficiary of the event moving forward.

The transition reflects a change not only in the fiscal leadership of the event, but in the organizational leadership as well. **Craig Miller, who founded the event and served as its Senior Organizer for the past 30 years**, and his organization of activists, MZA Events, will continue to manage the logistical aspects of the event. However, they are passing the torch to ACRIA, Kelsey Louie, and to a new generation of leaders who will drive the message, mission, and fundraising for the event. Bay Area HIV/AIDS organization leaders expressed their appreciation for Miller’s leadership of the Walk.

“Since bringing his vision to the Bay Area in 1987, Craig has provided magnificent stewardship of the event,” Andrews said. “Thanks to his efforts, to this day AIDS Walk San Francisco remains a beloved annual tradition that continues to provide essential funding to dozens of HIV/AIDS organizations each year.”

“Craig has made tough and smart decisions to guide the event—not based on what was easiest for organizers, or most expedient politically, but based on an unwavering focus on addressing the greatest unmet needs of people living with HIV in the Bay Area,” Ryle said.

Van Gorder added, “I know many leaders in the HIV activist community will join me in thanking Craig for his clear vision, strong leadership, and fierce dedication to the Bay Area’s fight against AIDS.”

“I am deeply grateful to the AWSFF Board Members for their leadership of AIDS Walk San Francisco over the past two years,” Miller said. “This group of compassionate, dedicated, and highly effective people has done extraordinary work to ensure the event’s continued success in providing urgently needed funds with which to serve Bay Area residents living with HIV/AIDS: **Board Chair Serafina Palandech** (President and Co-Founder, Hip Chick Farms), **Treasurer Robert Mansfield** (Program Analyst, Global Health Sciences at UCSF), **Richie McAllister** (Community Activist and Philanthropist), **Frank de Rosa** (Chief Commercial Officer, Sun Edison North America), **Bryce Kumagai** (Sponsorship and Marketing Manager, Frameline), **Isaac Rodriguez** (Analyst, Press Ganey), and **Linda Walubengo** (Associate Division Director, Catholic Charities SF).”

Amira, we want to give you and other key stakeholders the first opportunity to hear from Kelsey Louie and learn more about plans for this year’s campaign well in advance of the 2018 event. We invite you to a private lunch meeting at the **San Francisco Marriott Marquis on Tuesday, January 30, at noon** where you will have the chance to pose questions, as well as offer suggestions and comments, both in a group setting and one-on-one (please check your email inbox for a formal invite that will be arriving in the next business day).

Thank you for all you do to support people living with HIV/AIDS in the Bay Area, and to hasten the day when AIDS will be no more.

Sincerely,

Your friends at AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation