



# Brother to Brother

## Affirmation

Had I lived the life that the state planned for me from the beginning, I would have lived and died in somebody else's kitchen, or somebody else's land, and never written a word. That knowledge is bone deep, and it informs everything I do.

-Toni Morrison

## SAM CBA Presentations

Skills-Building Conference  
Atlanta, GA.....April 1-5, 2001

Houston Splash  
Houston, TX.....May 4-6, 2001

GMAD's Northeast Regional Conference  
Providence, RI.....June 14-17, 2001

CDC HIV Prevention Conference  
Atlanta, GA.....August 12-15, 2001

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## SOUTHERN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN'S CBA PROJECT

### Community mobilization means of addressing AIDS

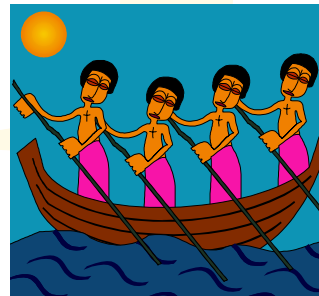
In a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Ga., the new trend for HIV infections is African-American young gay men. This astonishing trend gives us the backdrop for this quarter's edition of the *Brother to Brother* newsletter — iCommunity Mobilization.

Community mobilization is a process of communities preparing and organizing to take action, specifically toward its own development, meeting its own needs, and

caring for its own people by accepting full responsibility of its duties.

The African-American gay community must begin to mobilize itself. Too many are being lost to this dreaded disease, especially the young adults.

This edition will address a unique model of community mobilization that is shown to be successful in not only bringing attention to the disease, but also will begin to reduce the alarming rate of infection in young gay African-American men.



### Survey validates need for community mobilization

The Southern African-American Men's Project at Jackson State University's Mississippi Urban Research Center recently completed a needs assessment survey of the African-American Men who have Sex with other Men (MSM) community for the southern region. The southern region is geographically defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as those states that settle along the Eastern coast and those states being

below the Mason Dixon line. The purpose for conducting this survey was to examine the knowledge base of African-

American Men who have Sex with other Men (AAMSM) concerning the community planning process and any community mobilization efforts within the southern region and their respective community. This survey was given to the target population in their respective states, in places of leisure and various other areas that were conducive to conducting this survey.

Approximately 1,900 surveys were distributed to advisory board members for dissemination with a return rate of 38%. A total of 729 surveys were analyzed for this report. A total of 13 states reported out of 16, and the District of Columbia. The information that was reported is evidenced within this account for those states reporting. Following are some of the findings from this survey.

Though only 39 questions, survey results contain an enormous amount of information about what AAMSM understand about the



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**A community mobilization model that works for AAMSM**

**Something Bigger Than Ourselves**

by Dwayne Jenkins

*SAM CBA Advisory Board Member*  
*Brothers United Coordinator & Network Founder*

The 4th Annual Brothers United Winter Retreat was held this past December in Wildersville, Tenn. at Natchez Trace State Park. The site was the perfect place for brothers to gather and celebrate the great works and achievements done in the year 2000. This event is a collection of volunteers and friends from Brothers United chapters in Nashville, Chattanooga, Memphis, Knoxville, and West Tennessee.



**Brothers United Winter Retreat Participants**

The purpose of the retreat was to collectively rejuvenate and empower our brothers to maintain and encourage our African-American Same Gender Loving (SGL) men, friends and loved ones to live healthy and productive lifestyles. Although HIV/AIDS prevention outreach and education is our main goal, each chapter also incorporates other community issues specific to their area. Our theme, "Something Bigger Than Ourselves," summarizes the fact that what we do now

will impact both our youth and community for years to come.

"It is truly amazing to watch the growth of the BU Retreat," says one of the four-year veterans. "We've gone from 15 participants in 1997 to 65 in 2000. This year, we also had a lot of participants from out-of-state. Men from Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, Pittsburgh, Ohio, and from Atlanta, Chicago, and Detroit joined us for a weekend of workshops and fun. The workshop topics ranged from Community Mobilization, done by Jackson State University's Capacity-Building staff to others dealing with Spirituality, Safer Sex & Male-to-Male Bonding, as well as two separate presentations by well-known artists on photography and sculpturing. We were also honored to have two private screenings of the movies "Ritual" and "PUNKS." Both movies left the audiences speechless. "Ritual," written and produced by Stanley Bennett Clay, owner of *SBC Magazine*, produced a deeply emotional impromptu workshop on black families and relationships for almost an hour and a half after the viewing. The much-anticipated "PUNKS" movie, produced by Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds and his wife, Tracey, will officially be released in theaters some time in 2001.

For information on how the 5th Annual Brothers United Winter Retreat, "POWER," Dec. 7 - 9, 2001, contact, Dwayne Jenkins at Nashville CARES, 1-800-845-4266, extension # 269 or e-mail him at BrosUnited@aol.com. You can also get info from our website [www.brothersunited.com](http://www.brothersunited.com).

**A Personal Retreat Testimony**

By Keith Chandler, MPH  
*University of Tennessee at Knoxville*

Getting a group of positive thinking black gay men together in Tennessee is like finding a needle in a haystack. In addition to the dearth of social outlets, conservative attitudes and class issues often spoil any attempts at coming together for something other than sex or partying. And I can't forget that people sometimes don't want to talk or think about HIV/AIDS, although it continues to take its disproportionate toll on African-American gay men.

Having the opportunity to attend the seminar on Community Mobilization sponsored by the Jackson State University



**JSU MURC Community Mobilization Workshop**

Mississippi Urban Research Center staff at the Brothers United Winter Retreat 2000 was a godsend.

What was particularly useful for me was the time spent looking at how we, as African-American gay men perceive

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## SAM CBA Survey results validate needs continued...

community planning process and any community mobilization efforts addressing HIV prevention needs within the southern region and their respective communities.

Among the most striking conclusions of this survey, which was designed for AAMSM, is that 14% of the respondents denoted that they were heterosexual.

Other survey results include:

### ? Community provision of culturally sensitive services to AAMSM

- ◆ 71% of the respondents have only 0 - 3 community-based organizations providing culturally sensitive services.
- ◆ 46% of the respondents have only 0 - 3 community-based organizations strictly providing services to the targeted population.
- ◆ 82% of the respondents have no knowledge of any laws/mandates that protect the rights of AAMSM.
- ◆ 55% of the respondents are not sure or have no community support for HIV prevention services for AAMSM.
- ◆ 26% of the respondents were not registered voters.
- ◆ 38% of the respondents did not know how to access their political representatives.

Although 70% of the targeted population has knowledge of HIV prevention services that are available and how to access these services, due to the relatively high percentages regarding provision of services indicates that many communities do not provision for culturally sensitive services for AAMSM and there is a great need for more innovative and community-wide interventions to address these demands. This is important to the AAMSM community because they are the hardest hit with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. CDC reports that over 50% of the new



cases are African-American men. With this ever increasing number, organizations within those communities must be developed to provide needed services.

Also, one can denote that advocacy and intervention, to address AAMSM's knowledge and involvement in the political process is greatly needed.

### ? AAMSM's community understanding and knowledge of the community planning process

- ◆ 55% of the respondents are not aware of the HIV prevention community planning groups.
- ◆ 68% of the respondents are not sure or have no understanding of the community planning process.
- ◆ 91% of the respondents have never been a member of a community planning group.

The major barriers for participation in the community planning process denoted from the respondents are:

- ◆ Knowledge of the existence of a community planning group or community planning process - 33% .
- ◆ Lack of available information on how to become a member and other ways to become involved in the process - 28% .

It can be concluded through analysis of this assessment, that AAMSM do not have a real knowledge and/or understanding of the community planning group or process. This indicates that there is truly a strong need to build capacity and understanding in the AAMSM community around the community planning process.

### ? AAMSM community needs pointed out by the survey:

- A. Understanding of community planning process - 66%
- B. Community resources - 61%
- C. Community leadership development - 58%
- D. Developing networks, partnerships and coalition-building - 57%
- E. Community mobilization - 56%

## Community mobilization model continued...

ourselves and how that perception colors whether we are interested in mobilization for change regardless of the issue. Another strength of this workshop was that the facilitators appeared to understand the unique challenges of the southern, rural environment and were able to offer skills and suggestions that were more compatible with my greater community. I've been to community and capacity-building

workshops before and can recall many instances in which I've left them thinking, "That's great for a big, progressive city, but wouldn't get off the ground where I am." I would highly recommend the Jackson State Community Mobilization course to professionals and lay people who are sincerely interested in creating healthier, more positive lives for African-American gay men.

### Southern African-American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance (SAM CBA) Project

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### Focus

The Southern African-American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance Project seeks to motivate, mobilize, increase participation and involvement of African-American men who have sex with other men (MSM) in the delivery of HIV prevention services and the community planning process. This project also seeks to foster collaborations and linkages of HIV prevention programs targeting African-American (MSM) with these stakeholders and community leaders.

The Southern African-American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance Project's geographical area of coverage is as follows: AL, AR, FL, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX.

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# Skills-Building Course Calendar

**Community Planning.....January 25 & 26**  
Orlando, Florida

**Community Planning.....February 8 & 9**  
Little Rock, Arkansas

**Community Mobilization.....February 22 & 23**  
Louisville, Kentucky

**Community Mobilization.....March 8 & 9**  
Miami, Florida

**Community Mobilization.....March 22 & 23**  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

**Community Planning.....April 19 & 20**  
Louisville, Kentucky

**Community Mobilization.....May 16 & 17**  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**Community Mobilization.....July 6 - 8**  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Community Planning.....August 6 & 7**  
Nashville, Tennessee

For information about these courses, please call the Southern African American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance Project, toll-free, at 1-866-JSU-MURC (578-6872).

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