

Give the People Light and they will find their own way.



The Wisconsin Light

Pedro Zamora Speaks on Gay Teens and AIDS Prevention

Editor's Note: In the August 18-31 issue of Light, we carried an interview with MTV's heartthrob, Pedro Zamora, 22, an openly Gay man who was diagnosed with HIV at the age of 17. Since then he has, among other things, been serving on the board of the AIDS Action Council. He recently spent time in the hospital and, we have been informed, did not do well. As of press time, he is at home in Miami with his family.

The following is the text of a speech he gave on July 12, 1994, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Health and Environment.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to appear before you once again to talk about my work in HIV prevention.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the AIDS Action Council and have been involved in a number of local AIDS organizations at home in Miami, Florida. For the past six months, I've been living in San Francisco, filming MTV's *The Real World* (you can catch me on Thursdays at 10:00 p.m. to learn of my adventures of living with six other young adults under the constant glare of TV cameras).

MTV invited me to be on their show because I am a young Gay man, living with HIV. I was infected with HIV when I was a freshman in high school. And MTV, in a rare example of entertainment industry leadership on the issue of AIDS, thought that my story, a young person living with AIDS, could send a powerful message to teenagers in this country that AIDS is real and can happen to everybody including young people just like us.

As a young Gay man, growing up in the Miami, Florida school system, education about HIV/AIDS was almost non-existent. Unfortunately, I'm not talking about way back in 1980 in the earliest years of the epidemic. I graduated from High School in 1990. The little information I got was not information I could make part of my life or translate to make it part of my life.

I was dealing with my mother's death from cancer and the fact that I was Gay. It should be no surprise that my mother's death had a tremendous impact on me. My mother treated me as the most wonderful and special person in the world. As a 14-year-old, the way I dealt with her death was to become a straight A student and a track star. But the only way I thought I could replace her love and support was through sex, with men who would pick me up in bars and rarely practiced safer sex.

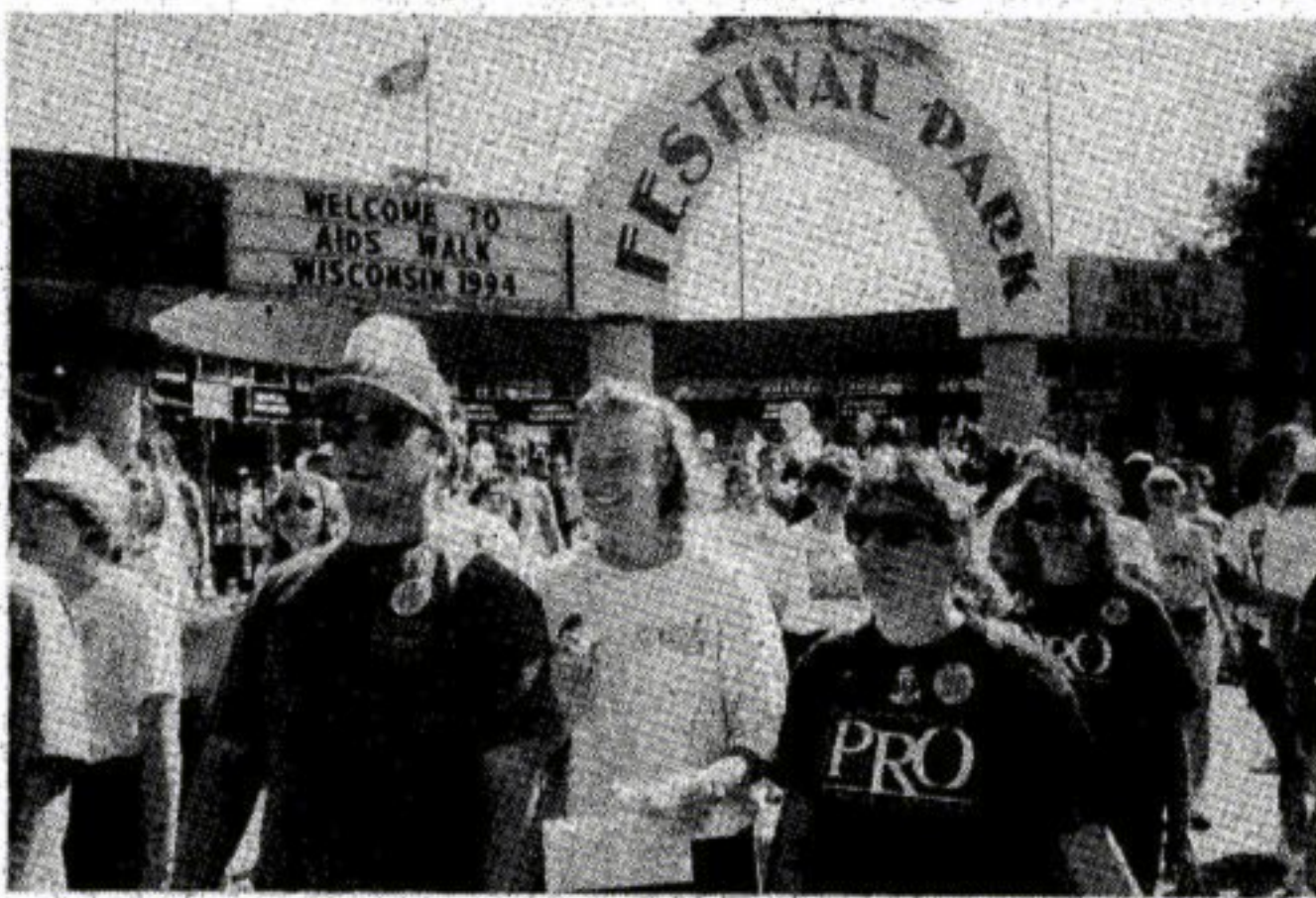
Sure, I could have used a condom and protected myself from HIV. But I ask you to think about the reality of an adolescent, who has never learned about condoms from a health teacher or other trained professional, and who has heard nothing but shameful messages about being attracted to men. I just didn't have the strength and self-esteem to challenge a partner ten years older to wear a condom.

I needed positive messages about my sexuality. I needed to know about condoms, how to use them correctly and where to buy

TURN TO PEDRO ZAMORA, PAGE 12

New Ryan White AIDS Bill Pushed for Passage Before Congress Adjourns

Wisconsin Would Receive 66% Increase in Funding



Records Broken--The Miller Stage area, normally filled to capacity during Summerfest, hosted an overflow crowd at the Maier Festival Park for AIDS Walk Wisconsin on Sept. 18, 1994. A portion of the crowd is shown listening to speakers prior to the Walk.

New \$2 Million MCW Grant To Evaluate AIDS Prevention Among the Homeless

(Milwaukee)—The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) has been awarded over \$2 million by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to develop and evaluate AIDS/HIV prevention approaches for homeless men and women. The study will be conducted in partnership with Hope House and Guest House, two inner-city homeless shelters in Milwaukee.

In an effort to look at this problem, Jeffrey A. Kelly, Ph.D., nationally recognized Medical College psychologist, and director of the Medical College's Center for AIDS Intervention Research (CAIR), conducted a preliminary study with the homeless teaching them risk-reduction skills tailored to their culture and lifestyle issues such as social stress, support and service needs. Promising results of the initial work led to more fully evaluate AIDS/HIV among the homeless.

"The incidence of HIV infection is increasing within American inner cities and imminently threatens the most disenfranchised populations of our communities, including the homeless," Dr. Kelly said. "There has been a significant rise in AIDS/HIV among the homeless. We hope this four-year study will help us to identify practical intervention programs for HIV prevention that can be adopted by public health and community organizations that serve the homeless."

Commenting on the grant, Sherrie Kay, director of the Hope House said, "At the Hope House, we really look forward to initiating a

strong partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin. Homelessness and HIV are two very troubling social issues our community must face. We are prepared to work in collaboration to discover the best techniques for teaching prevention of the transmission of HIV within very poor populations of people, improving the quality of life for the people of Milwaukee."

"The approach we use in all our studies with disenfranchised populations vulnerable to HIV infection combines education about AIDS with teaching methods that help persons accurately understand their own level of risk," Kelly said.

He went on to say that, "We then help people develop problem-solving and judgment skills to handle drug and sexual risk pressures, and refine and use behavioral skills avoiding risk. We also focus attention on helping the homeless develop improved self-esteem, optimism for the future and handle other life problems because these are critical pre-cursors for making change."

The first six months of the research will expand on preliminary studies of circumstances leading to HIV risk among homeless men and women and will fine-tune cultural interventions required to change behavior.

The intervention trial in the two shelters will evaluate the impact of an eight session

TURN TO MEDICAL COLLEGE, PAGE 12

(Milwaukee)—As Wisconsin Light goes to press, national AIDS activists have launched a major campaign in the final days of the current session of Congress to secure Congressional approval of a re-authorized Ryan White Care Act.

Following many months of intense negotiations within the national AIDS community which the Light has previously chronicled, a unified position by the community has been presented to Congress by AIDS leaders. Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) has agreed to be the chief sponsor of the re-authorization bill and other Congressional leaders from both sides of the political aisle are signing on as sponsors.

Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) notified Wisconsin Light that he would join Kennedy and be a co-sponsor of the bill.

Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) has also notified the paper that he too will be a co-sponsor of the bill.

On Thursday, September 22, AIDS Resources Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) Executive Director Doug Nelson and ARCW Public Policy Coordinator, Mike Gifford were summoned to Washington, D.C. by Senator Kennedy's staff to join with key AIDS leaders to map out strategy for quick Congressional approval of the bill.

Nelson led the national Campaign for Fairness effort which resulted in the negotiations that changed the Care Act's formulas to assure more equitable AIDS funding throughout the country.

"It was a meeting with a great sense of urgency because we know that time is running out with this Congress and that the partisan battles within the Congress have never been more intense," Nelson reported.

"The Care Act is truly a lifeline for AIDS service delivery throughout the country and the risks of not re-authorizing the act in this session of Congress are enormously high," Nelson said.

In Wisconsin, the Care Act funds transportation services, case management, respite care, mental health services, home health care, and emergency medical care for people with HIV and AIDS.

Nelson and lobbyists for the national CAERE Coalition representing high incidence cities met with the chief policy staff for Sen. Kennedy and for Senator Nancy Kassenbaum (R-KS) who is the ranking Republican member of the Senate Health Committee.

Nelson reported that every effort is being made to make the Care Act a bipartisan bill and to remove all barriers to quick approval by both Houses of Congress. He said that it was clear from the meeting that partisanship has never been more acute and that the Republican Right is committed to blocking passage of any bill that would be a political or public advance-

TURN TO AIDS BILL, PAGE 12

Conference Committee Eliminates Helms Amendments in Education Bill

(Washington, D.C.)—A House-Senate conference committee concluded work on September 28, on the final version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the multi-billion dollar Federal education bill. The committee, which included Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-WI), rejected provisions targeting Lesbian and Gay youth for discrimination and depriving local school districts of control over their curricula and programs. Instead, the conference adopted policies endorsed by the House and Senate that ensure local control and avoid targeting Gay youth.

"The federal government has no business saying how local schools will address specific issues in the classroom. The anti-Gay provisions targeted Lesbian and Gay youth for discrimination and deprived local schools of control over education," said Daniel Zingale, public policy director for the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF). "These discrimina-

tory provisions would have put Gay young people at greater risk for suicide and AIDS."

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) has threatened to filibuster the education bill, which would tie up \$10 billion intended for the nation's public schools and could kill the entire bill.

House Republicans could also try to kill the bill when it comes up for a final vote.

Helms sponsored the anti-Gay provisions in the Senate. Voting with the majority to approve them was Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI). Kohl recently called his vote "a mistake." He has indicated that he will vote for the revised bill.

Language similar to the Helms amendment was sponsored in the House by Rep. Mel Hancock (D-WA).

The conference committee adopted amendments offered by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Jolene Unsoeld (D-WA).



Walking Time—On Sept. 18, 1994, over 8,000 people exited the main gate of the Henry W. Maier Festival Park to begin the AIDS Walk Wisconsin fundraiser. \$588,000 was raised for Wisconsin AIDS organizations.