

# Hope Notes

The Official APRI Newsletter

*David Martins, APRI Director*

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Can you believe it? It's already been a whole year since the last of these celebrations. Time certainly does fly doesn't it?!

Speaking of time flying: in 2025 APRI turns 40 years old! The first cases of AIDS in the United States were reported in 1981. Despite our proximity to Boston and New York, we did not see our first cases in Rhode Island until 1983. With no services in place in the State, Rhode Islanders took it upon themselves to come together and figure out how to support the ever growing number of victims. In 1985 we articulated our mission and identity and were formally incorporated in the State of Rhode Island.

Originally named, "The Rhode Island Project/ AIDS", the vision of our founders was that they would first work on the issue of AIDS. Once that was done, "the Project" (as it came to be known) would tackle another issue. Instead the last 40



*Continued on Page 2...*

**David Martins, APRI Director**  
martinsda@familyserviceri.org

**James Barker, Testing & Prevention**  
barkerja@famliyserviceri.org

**Annie Bianchi, Ryan White Services**  
bianchian@familyserviceri.org

**Courtney Wood, Clinical Director**  
woodco@familyserviceri.org

**General Inquiries/Information**  
info@aidsprojectri.org

**Telephone:**  
(401) 831 -5522

**General Office Hours:**  
Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

**Food Pantry Hours:**  
Fridays, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Community Café:**  
Wednesdays, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
*No Community Café in August*

**Walk-In Testing:**  
Tuesdays, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Wednesdays, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Thursday, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**Address:**  
55 Hope Street, Providence, RI

...Continued from Page 1

years has seen a coalition grow - officially and unofficially - of organizations trying to take this issue on as a State. With the help of State Agencies, and our colleagues in the field, we have come so far since 1985. And yet, thanks to an increasingly unstable economy, a housing crisis that has been in the works for decades, and a skyrocketing cost of living; today we find ourselves still addressing some of the same concerns held by our community back in the 80's and 90's. These realities remind us that our work is as important now as it has ever been before. We have worked to meet these needs for 40 years, and we will continue to do so for as long as our work is needed.

This new year that lies ahead is one of fear and anxiety for many people. The recent election, the upcoming inauguration, and the recent Rhode Island data breach are all in our immediate line of sight and has everyone timidly asking the same question - "what's next"? We will find out what's next together: as an APRI Family, made up of staff, volunteers, participants, donors, and sponsors. And whatever the New Year holds we will face it the same way we have faced every other challenge and fear for the last 40 years: together!!



Thank you for being part of this journey with us!



Saturday, May 3, 2025

Location: Pierce Field

201 Mercer St, East Providence, RI 02914

Scan the QR Code to register!

This year will also mark the 10th Anniversary of the Hope Harris Award, which will be presented to Russ and Beth Milham, of AIDS Quilt RI in recognition of their decades of work in Rhode Island around not only the Quilt, but also in HIV prevention and education. Thank you Russ and Beth for all that you do!





This year World AIDS Day fell on a Sunday, and so here in Rhode Island, we celebrated all week long, starting on Monday, December 2. The day began with the “Graceful Journeys Memorial Breakfast”, at Family Service RI. This event, co-hosted by APRI and AIDS Quilt RI, included a performance by the RI Gay Men's Chorus, a reflection from Tina Crosby (sister of the late Marvin Feldman), an interview with Bill Pellicio (APRI's founder), and the dedication of five new panels of the AIDS Quilt.

APRI joined in the festivities at the ACOS Block Party in the afternoon, where participants had access to testing, clothes, food, and fellowship. World AIDS Day also provided a wonderful opportunity for folks working “in the field” to come together as well to share mutual support, friendship, and to be revitalized.

APRI joined EOHHS at their World AIDS Day event called “the Gathering”, which was held at Rhode Island College. Here we heard the testimony of people living with HIV about the stigma they have faced through the years, and shared in food and fellowship. A special treat was the presence of Aria Mia Loberti, who played Marie-Laure Leblanc in the Netflix miniseries, *All the Light We Cannot See*. In addition to being daughter of Rhode Island EOHHS's very own Paul Loberti, she also serves as an official UNICEF Ambassador.

The RI HIV & STI Prevention Coalition has already begun the conversation around planning for World AIDS Day 2025. You can visit [www.worldaidsweekri.com](http://www.worldaidsweekri.com) to keep up with everything that's happening! We are imagining the 2025 World AIDS Day celebration to be truly inspiring, please consider being a part of this important annual celebration.







If you're trying to develop new relationships and live a healthier, happier life in 2025: Community Café is the place for you! Join us every Wednesday night from 4pm-6pm at 55 Hope Street. DO you have an idea for a great Café topic/theme? Just let us know!

**January 8, 2025**

Resetting in the New Year

- With everything going on in the world, folks are feeling quite unsettled. A tumultuous election...a major cybersecurity hack...on top of the seemingly universal struggle we are all having to stay afloat in a wild economy. Join us tonight to learn skills that will help you reset, so that you can step into this new year with confidence, and you can stop feeling “stuck”.

**January 15, 2025**

The Ryan White Story

- The movie *The Ryan White Story* first aired on January 16, 1989. The film depicts the story of a young hemophiliac from Kokomo, Indiana. He was diagnosed with AIDS in 1984, and died in 1990. During those 6 years this remarkable teenager turned the narrative around AIDS on its ear, and brought attention to the virus from politicians and celebrities alike. Come watch the movie with us, and enjoy snacks and fellowship!

**January 22, 2025**

Happy Birthday, Rent: Part 1

- *Rent, the Musical* opened at the New York Theatre Workshop on January 25, 1996. The famous rock musical tells the story of a group of impoverished young artists living in the East Village in New York under the darkness of the early days in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Join us for a viewing of the first half of the show, with a discussion, snacks, and fellowship!

**January 29, 2025**

Happy Birthday, Rent: Part 2

- *Rent, the Musical* opened at the New York Theatre Workshop on January 25, 1996. The famous rock musical tells the story of a group of impoverished young artists living in the East Village in New York under the darkness of the early days in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Join us for a viewing of the second half of the show, with a discussion, snacks, and fellowship!

