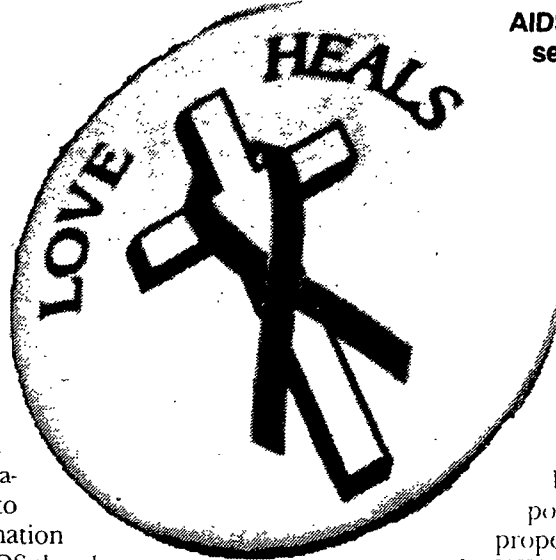


d vulnerable



AIDS Rochester representatives hand out buttons such as these at health fairs.



disease that will potentially kill you."

Hudson said he hopes to turn his crisis into something positive by giving seminars. Through these talks, the Syracuse native strives to share better information about HIV and AIDS than he felt he received as a high-schooler in the late 1980s.

"I didn't have a lot of the education that students are getting today," which is excellent," Hudson remarked.

Diocesan teens, also, are helping to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. For example, Alisha Cramer became an HIV/AIDS peer educator through the American Red Cross last summer.

"I'm hoping people can become aware of the risk factor when we do certain things. We can prevent HIV so easily, but people don't want to change their behavior," said Alisha, 16, from St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua.

Alisha gave an Oct. 28 seminar on HIV and AIDS to her health class at Marcus Whitman High School in Rushville. The session included a rendition of the TV game show "Jeopardy," in which "contestants" were given answers to which they must ask the correct question. For example:

A One reason you engage in sexual behavior even when you feel you're not supposed to.

Q What is peer pressure?

A HIV is passed on to another person by these four fluids.

Q What are blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk?

Meanwhile, Meghan Scherer said she used an encyclopedia, and also went online, to research a high-school essay she wrote last month on AIDS.

"There's a lot of information about it on the Internet," said Meghan, 15, from St. Michael's Church in Penn Yan.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark is working to raise AIDS awareness as well. He led an interfaith service at St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester on Dec. 1 — the date

when World AIDS Day is annually observed.

Even with all these efforts, Meghan said she's still concerned that a large segment of the population is not properly informed about the HIV virus.

"They still think it's the homosexual disease, and that's definitely not true," Meghan commented.

A case in point was Nushawn Williams, 21, who was connected to several confirmed cases of HIV around New York state after having unprotected sex with dozens of young women — even after he was told in September 1996 that he was HIV-infected. These facts came to light after Williams was arrested in Chautauque County in September on a drug possession charge.

Alisha remarked that Williams' careless activity is not unique.

"I wasn't really too surprised, I guess. That kind of thing is happening all over, this was just publicized," Alisha said.

Hudson stated that he would never knowingly spread the disease in the manner that Williams apparently did.

"It seems like that person was knowingly out to harm people. I think that's pretty sad," Hudson commented. "Everybody has a moral obligation to do the right thing."

Currently, the right thing for Hudson is to continue his HIV/AIDS awareness efforts. He also attends the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, at Rochester Institute of Technology, where he is studying to become a sign-language interpreter.

Hudson also hopes that a cure for the HIV virus lies in his future. Although no such discovery has been made, Hudson feels that medical research has made enough strides that his wish may someday be fulfilled.

"Instead of wondering when I'm going to die, it's if I'm going to die," Hudson remarked. "There's hope that I can live a long, healthy, happy life."

Coming Next Week: Bible reading

akes one time"

"I won't lie, I had several different (sexual) partners. But it only takes one time (to contract the HIV virus)," Hudson said. "It was kind of denial. I didn't think anything could touch me. You're drinking and smoking in bars, and your inhibitions get let down. Pleasure was more

important than my intellect." After he tested HIV-positive last spring, Hudson said he was devastated. "That was, of course, rough. At the time, I cried. I was feeling loneliness and a lack of a future," Hudson recalled. "It's a hard thing to tell your mom you have a

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