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NOVEMBER 29, 2010

Shocking message to promote HIV testing

RICHMOND—The statistic is shocking. A t-shirt bearing the stat is intended to be too. This Wednesday, December 1, from noon to 1 p.m., 240 student volunteers will don a white t-shirt with a disturbing message and go about their daily activities on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. The front of the shirt will bear a large red ribbon. The back will state:

I REPRESENT ONE OF THE 240 YOUTH, AGES 15-24,
WHO BECAME INFECTED WITH HIV TODAY
BETWEEN NOON AND 1 P.M.

FREE HIV TESTING TODAY
BY FAN FREE CLINIC ON CAMPUS
ASK ME WHERE!

Wednesday marks the 22nd observance of WORLD AIDS DAY. The t-shirt “brigade” hopes to reignite a conversation long gone silent by prompting fellow VCU students, faculty and staff to visit the VCU Wellness Resource Center (The Well) at 815 S. Cathedral Place to get tested. FAN FREE CLINIC staff will provide FREE HIV oral swab tests from 1 p.m.–5 p.m. Test results are typically available in 20 minutes and will be provided confidentially to participants on-site.

According to YouthAIDS, an education and prevention program of Population Services International, every fifteen seconds, another person age 15-24 becomes infected with HIV/AIDS around the world. Or, every hour of every day, there are 240 new cases of youth HIV/AIDS infection.

This WORLD AIDS DAY observance is an effort to increase awareness and promote testing via a partnership between FAN FREE CLINIC and the VCU Wellness Resource Center. At 6 p.m., a Vigil of Remembrance will be held in the outdoor courtyard of the VCU Commons Building. Some 500 red flash lights will be distributed and lit during the vigil to honor persons who have died of AIDS. The vigil is open to the public.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: T-shirts will be distributed to the 240 students in the FORUM ROOM of the VCU Student Commons from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. at 907 Floyd Avenue.

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