E.D. Message: Worth the climb

It has been an uphill climb this year. But well worth the effort.

Our health services contractual obligations have been met or exceeded, resulting in independent monitoring reports that rate Rafiki Coalition as an excellent service provider.

Individual donations from community members have increased, culminating in the second largest one-time individual gift in the agency’s history.

Health outcomes among program participants have improved, as measured by lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels among individuals at-risk for strokes and heart attacks. And thanks to the merger between Rafiki Coalition (formerly Black Coalition on AIDS) and the Bayview Hunters Point Health and Environmental Resource Center (HERC), our service reach and program delivery into the community have expanded exponentially.

There is much to be proud of, including the fact that we have assembled one of the best teams of professional employees, consultants and volunteers who are committed to the work and care deeply about the communities we serve.

We are not without our challenges. The scope of the health problems in the community is daunting, additional foundation and corporate funding is slow and it is hard to get people focused on health when they have substandard housing or no homes, low paying wages or no jobs at all or addictions and mental health needs that go unattended.

Nevertheless, we remain encouraged. And with your support, we will continue to stand and affirm better health in the community and fight to remove the barriers that get in the way of optimal health and better living for all.

Healthy regards,
Perry Lang
Executive Director

We’ve Come a long way

In her book, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, J.K. Rowling wrote: “We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.”

These words are very powerful and hold true to how our community has come together in support of Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness.

As we shift into the new phase of our life cycle, we will continue to rely on you—our community, family, friends and supporters—to help us better help you.

We want you to know that Rafiki Coalition is your home, a safe place where you can feel like family and receive the many health and wellness services provided. We would not be here if it were not for you and your participation in providing feedback on the needs of our community. We thank you for that.

It’s hard to believe how far our agency has come from its inception in 1986 as a grassroots endeavor, to becoming a beautiful sanctuary for the community in 2013, to evolving into Rafiki Coalition earlier this year. It has been a long journey, but we have persevered.

A new name brings new and exciting opportunities, not only for the agency but also for our community. We are so happy that we can share our success with you. However, we are not stopping—just taking a moment to breathe and reflect on what we have accomplished thus far and focus on what still needs to be done to better serve our community.

Let us rejoice and continue to support one another!

Warmly,
Luis Martinez
Co-Chair, Board of Directors

Stepping in the Right Direction

As the famous quote goes, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.” The Rafiki Wellness Passport Program has been that first step for many in our community. This 90-day program offers Passport participants a chance to improve their health and enhance their lives. The program is offered twice a year, has more than 50 free classes to choose from and is open to everyone.

At the beginning and end of the 90-day period, participants receive free health screenings that monitor blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, and other biomarkers. Passport takes a creative approach to health and healing and is presented in ways that give encouragement, inspiration and support. During the 90-day period, workout and movement classes are offered three times a week. Our movement classes include: Soul Chi, Hip Hop Aerobics, Cardio Fit, Zumba, and Soul Line Dancing. It’s more like attending a community party than workout classes. Health information sessions, nutrition classes, hands-on how-to gardening and art classes are also offered.

By the end of the program, many participants show improved and stable numbers for the biomarkers tested at the beginning of their 90 days. The Rafiki Wellness Passport Program is just one of the vehicles used to embark on the destination of the Rafiki Coalition - “to promote health equity and reduce health disparities.”

By Sandi Cupit
MISSION, VISION AND TREMENDOUS IMPACT

MISSION - The Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness’ mission is to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and eliminate health disparities in San Francisco’s Black and marginalized communities. Rafiki Coalition strives to achieve its mission by providing health and wellness services including, but not limited to, housing, education, advocacy, health case management and other health-promoting activities.

VISION - At Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness, we dare dream of a vibrant, healthy san Francisco, where health disparities among Black and marginalized communities have been eliminated and HIV/AIDS is a disease of the distant past. We affirm an informed, educated, healed, resilient, happy, united, productive, committed, respectful, empowered, mobilized and engaged community, where life is valued and the diversity of the African Diaspora is celebrated.

IMPACT

- More than 4,000 community contacts through our wellness programs and services.
- More than 100 exercise/movement classes conducted.
- More than 50 disease education classes conducted.
- More than 25 nutrition education classes.
- More than 250 health screenings performed and coaching and referrals given as needed.
- Twelve program participants admitted to our transitional housing facility for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- More than 90 community asthma sessions attended by more than 1,245 individuals.
- At least 60 school asthma education sessions reaching more than 990 individuals.
- More than 3,500 Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) sessions delivered.
- Our eighth annual Black Health and Healing Summit held, drawing more than 300 participants.
- Two cycles of our 90-day Rafiki Wellness Passport Program completed, producing 63 graduates. Among the 63 graduates of the two Rafiki Wellness Passport cycles this year, 41 participants had lower blood pressure, 28 participants had lower cholesterol, 20 participants had lower blood sugar, and 20 participants had lower body weight.
**Programs and Services by Departments**

### Black Coalition on AIDS
- Brandy Moore House
- Rafiki Case Management
- Real Talk (HIV Support Group)

### Health Advocacy
African American Community Health Equity Council
- Environmental Health Committee
- Mental Health Committee
- Physical Health Committee

### Rafiki Wellness
- Disease Education
- Nutrition Classes
- Movement/Exercise
- Health Screenings (Blood Pressure, Glucose & Cholesterol)
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine

### Health and Environmental Resource Center
- Asthma Education for Students
- Asthma Education for Parents
- Asthma Home Assessments
- Asthma Camp for Kids

**Staff**

- **Perry L. Lang,** Executive Director
- **Adrian Tyler,** Director of Development, Communications, & HR
- **David Brown,** Director of Finance and Administration
- **Monique LeSarre,** Director of Programs
- **Adama Bryant,** Development & Communications Programs Associate
- **April Crawford,** Asthma Program Manager
- **Ayanna Davis,** Wellness Program Manager
- **Brandy Medina,** Community Outreach Worker / Program Assistant
- **Danielle Russworm,** Program Assistant
- **Elizabeth Smith,** Community Health Worker / Program Assistant
- **Francis Broome,** HIV Prevention & Client Care Program Manager
- **Hugo Calderon,** Resident Coordinator
- **Julie Harris,** Office Manager / Program Assistant
- **Louis Cullen,** Resident Coordinator
- **Marcus Penn,** Wellness Program Manager
- **Mark Harden,** Resident Coordinator
- **Mark Matthews,** Wellness Program Assistant
- **Maxine Tatmon-Gilkerson,** Advocacy Program Manager
- **Michael Lewis,** Peer Advocacy & Outreach Program Associate
- **Phillip Watson,** Case Manager
- **Romisha Dunn,** Community Outreach Worker / Program Assistant
- **RoShon Murray,** Community Health Worker / Program Assistant
- **Sandi Cupit,** Health Coach and Program Associate
- **Ty Blair,** Advocacy Program Assistant
- **Victor Kwok,** Finance and Administration Program Associate

**Board of Directors**

- **Luis Martinez,** Co-Chair
- **John Chiang,** Co-Chair
- **Karen Kennedy,** Vice-President
- **Dr. Brenda Wade,** Secretary
- **Cynthia Prince**
- **Dee Epps-Miller**
- **Diana Oertel**
- **Kevin Frankel**
- **Lisa L. Williams**
- **Perry L. Lang,** Executive Director
- **Robert Washington**
- **Shay Strachan**

*Rafiki means friend in Swahili.*
*Rafiki Coalition aims to be  
“your friend in health and well-being.”*