



Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network  
*Helping People with HIV to Live Well*



**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

Tucson, Arizona

May 2024

Vol. 29, No. 2

**Treasures for TIHAN 2024**  
*To benefit people living with HIV*  
 a party and  
 fundraising event  
 to celebrate  
 30 years of impact

**30 Years of LOVE**  
 Commemorating *the past*  
 Celebrating *the present*  
 Creating *the future*

**SATURDAY  
 JUNE 8, 3-6 PM**

**at Desert Diamond Hotel & Casino**  
 7350 S Nogales Hwy (next to Tucson airport)

**Emcee Lupita Murillo**

*Live performance by Reverb, an ensemble of Reveille*  
*Hors d'oeuvres · Silent Auction · Live Auction*  
*Photo Booth · Paddle Raise*

**Free online auction: May 29-June 8**

  
 tihan.org  
 520-299-6647




Join us with our event emcee Lupita Murillo, a Tucson treasure who we will celebrate as she retires from KVOA News 4 in June after 50 years in television news!

**SPECIAL TICKET OFFER!**

Act now and buy two tickets for \$150, saving \$50. Offer good for a limited time.

Use the QR code, or visit [www.tihan.org](http://www.tihan.org) and click on Treasures for TIHAN

**Some of the items you can bid on:**

**A 7-night stay in Hawaii** at The Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas—2 bedroom villa for up to four adults from 11/30-12/7/24

**A 5-course gourmet meal** created by you and renowned chefs Devon Sanner and Mat Cable, to be prepared/served in your home

**And much more!** Themed gift baskets, jewelry, museum and event tickets, gift cards to local restaurants, personal services, and 150+ more!!



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### Commemorating 30 Years of Service

*Amazing people, fun events, life-affirming programs!*

To make a contribution in support of our programs and people living with HIV, please send a check to the address on the left, or visit our website [\*\*www.tihan.org\*\*](http://www.tihan.org) and click on the “DONATE TO TIHAN NOW” button. Only with your support can we continue. Thank you!

TIHAN was founded in 1994 when a group of caring faith communities decided to gather and expand the hospice-like care program that was being carried out by St. Francis in the Foothills United Methodist Church. As there were no effective medications, and HIV stigma and judgment were rampant, TIHAN set about caring for people with HIV/AIDS during their final times.

TIHAN brought faith communities and others into the fight during this time of great fear and death. CareTeams, groups of volunteers joining together to provide support to people with HIV/AIDS, met a deeply-felt community need.

A few years later, anti-retroviral medications to treat HIV were developed, and TIHAN evolved to add new forms of support. “If my doctor tells me I may not die right away like they thought I might, maybe I should think about what it means to live again.” Thus Poz Café was born, a way to provide additional social support and provide a safe and welcoming place to meet peers and feel the love of caring volunteers and groups.

As the HIV crisis changed, so too did TIHAN adapt and add more programs and services to address changing needs.

Since that first June 1994 gathering, TIHAN has provided leadership in engaging faith communities to confront and counter HIV stigma, homophobia, and discrimination and to become active proponents of love and advocacy for people living with HIV.

TIHAN’s efforts engaged businesses, both for-profit and nonprofit, to contribute their resources to build a stronger support network for people living with HIV.

TIHAN catalyzed volunteers to give of their time, talents, and treasures to provide direct support—from end-of-life care in the early years of the HIV crisis to helping people with HIV to live well today.

TIHAN has thrived on building partnerships and collaborations, and encouraging unprecedented numbers of volunteers over the past three decades to become involved in direct services for people living with HIV right here in our community.

In addition to the increased support and opportunities to meet peers, one of the most common comments from people living with HIV: TIHAN provided opportunities for people living with HIV to find our voices, and share our stories of empowerment.

Thank you for being part of our journey of love and support!

commemorating

30  
YEARS

serving the community

## Paul's Story: Phases of TIHAN's Care, Phases of Life with HIV

We sat down to talk with Paul on his thoughts about living with HIV in 2024. We were surprised where he wanted to take the conversation.

"I see TIHAN as having gone through four distinct phases," he shared. "Phase 1: TIHAN was there for us as our friends were passing away. You were truly there for us during those scary times." During Phase 2, he said, "Those of us who had survived didn't know what to do. TIHAN was there to help us find new ways of living, with Poz Cafe, CarePackages, and other support, including education on how to manage our budget."



Paul shared that Phase 3 was during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We all lost contact with each other, and lots of us lost our jobs. People had to move back home. I myself became very reclusive and introverted. I didn't want to go out or talk to anyone. It was a time of isolation, and—yes—depression, too." He shared he would find himself sitting at home doing nothing. Towards the end of the pandemic, he started re-engaging with TIHAN, playing bingo by Zoom, and going to the drive-through meal pickup that Poz Cafe had morphed into by necessity. "Believe it or not, that [TIHAN volunteer] Janice and TIHAN's Zoom bingo really helped. She encouraged me with her words of welcome through that little screen on my phone. 'Oh my goodness, it's so good to see you,' she would say."

Now, Paul says, he believes we are in Phase 4: "TIHAN is taking me out of the seclusion and bringing me back into the community." How did he break out that? "TIHAN called me and asked me to go to the luncheon when it started back in person, and I said NO. Then I had to ask myself why am I not going? Anxiety. And I might not know anyone. So I realized I needed to change my thinking, and I started going to the in-person lunches. I am finding new environments and new friends there. If we didn't have the lunches, I don't know if I'd be where I am now. We are now having to reinvent ourselves," he reflected.

Paul went to culinary school. "Now, I am cooking at my apartment, with the door open. My neighbors come by and want to know what I'm cooking that smells so good. So I invite them in and show them and talk about how to cook even when you're on food assistance." Paul wants to write a cookbook for people who have to get by on the food box they get from the food bank.

"I learned during the pandemic people are not eating well and it is affecting their mental health and physical health, and I want to change that. I understand buying inexpensive junk food, but just because we can't afford to eat at a fancy restaurant doesn't

mean we can't afford to cook something for ourselves. Poz Cafe has helped me see that. Food can be fun and simple but exciting and bring people together.

"So I can show people how to take the basic things from their food box—chicken thighs, hamburger meat, lunch meat, hot dogs, pasta, rice and beans, potatoes—plain and simple items—and get creative. Add just one or two ingredients, you can transform it. Sometimes, people feel limited because they don't have pots and pans or a food processor, and maybe no cooking experience. Lots of folks have just one skillet or pan to cook with. If you have no measuring cups or spoons, use coffee cups or other leftover containers.

"I want to start some simple classes to encourage cooking, and I want to call it Cooking Outside the Box. Even if you have only limited resources and limited cooking experience, I can help you find places to help you supplement your food box. Food co-ops and other places that provide vegetables and other options. It's time for us to get creative and get together and help each other again."

Paul asks you: "Realistically answer this question: What phase are YOU in? Are you still stuck like I was? If so, let's try to connect and find ways that we can help each other cope, and move forward."

### TIHAN Presents Our Two Highest Honors at Annual Meeting



Dan Uroff

TIHAN's Annual Meeting and Appreciation Event took place at St Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church. We gathered to celebrate TIHAN's volunteers, donors, CarePartners, faith communities and businesses, and community partners and the impact you make! Our theme was **LOVE LIVES ON**, recognizing and honoring people impacted by HIV, and the love that we have for them and for a better future without HIV stigma and—someday—without HIV.



Scott and Tom

Our highest honor, the Myron Morris Excellence in Caring Award, given to a person or group that exemplifies the best of the best, someone who has made exceptional contributions over many years in several areas of the organization, was presented to Dan Uroff. Dan became involved with TIHAN in 2011, through serving on our finance committee, then our board of directors, then became board president. Dan became our longest-serving board president, seeing us through the COVID-19 pandemic and major changes. He also co-chaired our Treasures for TIHAN benefit for several years, and he's gone above and beyond in support of our CarePartners and TIHAN.

We also presented our Empowerment Award, given to a person living with HIV/AIDS who has demonstrated exceptional courage and achievement over the past year, and who is peer leader in the HIV community. Tom Hernandez was the recipient, honored for overcoming some major challenges, standing up and sharing his story—despite the stigma, and being a role model for others who are able to come forward as well.

A packed room at St. Philip's in the Hills for TIHAN's Annual Meeting and Appreciation Event!



Celebrating the one-year work anniversary of Gina Snyder, our Lead Program Coordinator!

An evening of music, food, dancing, and generosity at the Red Concert benefit to support TIHAN and the Center for Health and Hope.



A team of TIHAN folks accepted a proclamation from Tucson Mayor Regina Romero in commemoration of TIHAN's 30 years of service.

Every month, volunteers from sponsoring groups help prepare and serve a delicious meal in a safe and welcoming setting at Poz Café.



Some of the team of volunteers who put on a Positively Beautiful pampering event for women living with HIV as part of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

## Survey of People Living with HIV

Scientific data from multiples studies have shown that if someone's HIV in their body and blood system is at a low "undetectable" level, they cannot transmit HIV to their partner. In a recent survey, 92% of people living with HIV said they were aware of this U=U concept (Undetectable Equals Untransmittable), but only 63% of them believe strongly in the concept.

**HIV stigma can be hard to overcome. Believe the science!**

13% of people with HIV have shared their HIV status with most people in their lives, but 10% have not told anyone other than healthcare staff.

**If you are able to find safe people you can trust, your mental health will benefit. TIHAN's staff and volunteers can be trusted.**

Sadly, 45% of people living with HIV felt ashamed of their HIV status, and 32% reported low self-esteem due to their HIV status.

**We've known for 40 years that HIV is a virus and that it does not discriminate. When people feel that HIV is a judgment or a reflection upon them or their worth, mental health can be drastically impacted. There is no shame in HIV. It may be a virus that you have in your body, but it is not a reflection of who you are or your worth. Everyone deserves love, including self-love! If you need to be reminded of this, please reach out to TIHAN!**

## Treasures for TIHAN 2024 Sponsors

Barbie Adler and John Nemo



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The Morris A Hazan Family Foundation



Scott Blades and Jess Losoya



Dr. Seth Dubry and Mr. Todd Colwell



Five Sisters of TIHAN!

Joe Heller and Frank Ptak

Stuart J. Meinke

Jill and Jim Rich



Carol Bogg

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Roger Funk

Linda Girard

Cheryl and Tom Muller

Jeff Ramos and Arlan Colton



The Talerico Family



**Thanks to our Treasures for TIHAN sponsors and supporters, people will live better, and receive more support. We appreciate our event sponsors. And there's still time for you/your business to join!**