



**RED RIBBON
FOUNDATION**

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Press Release

Greenwich-based Red Ribbon Foundation shines a spotlight on AIDS in America

Greenwich, CT, November 12, 2009: The Red Ribbon Foundation (RRF), a Greenwich-based non-profit organization committed to winning the war against AIDS, shared the accomplishments of two of its grantees, Bailey House and Children's Village, at a fundraising dinner yesterday hosted by Kelly and Gerry Pasciucco at their Greenwich home, with special guest designer and AIDS activist Michael Kors. The AIDS Awareness at Home Fund Dinner underscored the looming presence of HIV in the United States, and the documented increase of the disease among some groups, particularly heterosexual women of color, and youth.

Founded in 1851, Children's Village, located in Dobb's Ferry, New York, works with society's most vulnerable children to help them become educationally proficient, economically productive, and socially responsible members of their communities. Red Ribbon has supported Streetwise, the street outreach program at Children's Village, since 2002, awarding them over \$80,000.

Describing the spread of AIDS among youth in urban areas, Dr. Jeremy Kohomban, CEO of Children's Village, said there are many kids living on the streets who will do whatever they need to survive, putting them at critical risk for contracting and spreading HIV. Dinner guests were treated to a tour of the Streetwise van, an RV style vehicle that goes into urban centers in the evening to provide youth with a safe place to get education on STDS, get rapid HIV tests, and receive other services they may need to stabilize their lives. Streetwise reaches approximately 3000-5000 youth per year.

Regina Quattrochi, CEO of Bailey House, a supportive housing provider for people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City, used the dinner to correct some common misperceptions about HIV today. "This is not just a disease that exists in Africa...It's here and it's growing." Ms. Quattrochi also weighed in on the notion that HIV is a manageable disease: "People are living longer, but not without serious complications. HIV is not "manageable." A bunion is manageable." "Not if your name happens to be Manolo Blahnik," Michael Kors later opined, prompting laughter in the room. With its core principle as "The future starts with a place to live," for over 25 years Bailey House has been a leader in providing homes and services for children and adults with HIV/AIDS. Red Ribbon has awarded the agency \$85,000 since 2002.

The evening's highlight was indeed fashion icon and Project Runway judge Michael Kors, who shared his experience with the disease as a young designer in New York at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, through his impressions of risky behavior still present today in all corners of life. "This disease is far from over. It's something to be taken seriously, and not just in the South Bronx. We still need to keep making noise about this disease, particularly with young people."

The Red Ribbon Foundation raises money to fight AIDS through several fundraising events held each year. The proceeds of these events are then awarded as grants to organizations that demonstrate results as well as promising ideas for preventing the spread of AIDS. Red Ribbon's grantmaking priorities are prevention education programs for high-risk individuals, cutting-edge research to eradicate the disease, and assistance programs for those living with HIV/AIDS. Red Ribbon, founded in 1994, has given over \$2 million to HIV/AIDS organizations over the past 15 years.



For more information about the Red Ribbon Foundation, visit www.redribbonfoundation.org.

Above: Red Ribbon Board Member Karen Baldwin and special guest Michael Kors

Below (L to R): Lance Lepere, Children's Village CEO Dr. Jeremy Kohomban, Bailey House CEO Gina Quattrochi, and Michael Kors

