

Minister Rob Newells, Imani Community Church, Oakland, California

"...I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 1:2

OBJECTIVE

Healing Faith is the HIV prevention program of the Life Care Ministry at Imani Community Church. Since its establishment on World AIDS Day 2009, the mission has been **"to increase access to HIV treatment, prevention, care, and support services for all Oakland residents by raising awareness, providing culturally relevant HIV education, and eliminating stigma."**

METHODS

Healing Faith works with the congregation at Imani Community Church and with other churches, community members, and collaborative partners using a combination of engagement methods.

- Within Imani Community Church, the Life Care Ministry provides **comprehensive health education, which includes mental and sexual health**, on the fourth Sunday of each month during the morning worship service which has an average weekly attendance of 125 people. A health information table is maintained in the fellowship hall with male and female condoms, community resources, and other educational material. **Exploration of how the church addresses gender and sexual identity** was facilitated through a 5-part bible study series developed by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry's Umoja Project.
- In the community, Healing Faith participates alongside the Life Care Ministry as exhibitors at the annual Laurel District Street Fair, providing **HIV prevention information and general health screenings**.
- In collaboration with other churches, advocates, and community-based



Healing Faith & Life Care Ministry Booths
13th Annual Laurel District Street Fair
Saturday, August 11, 2012

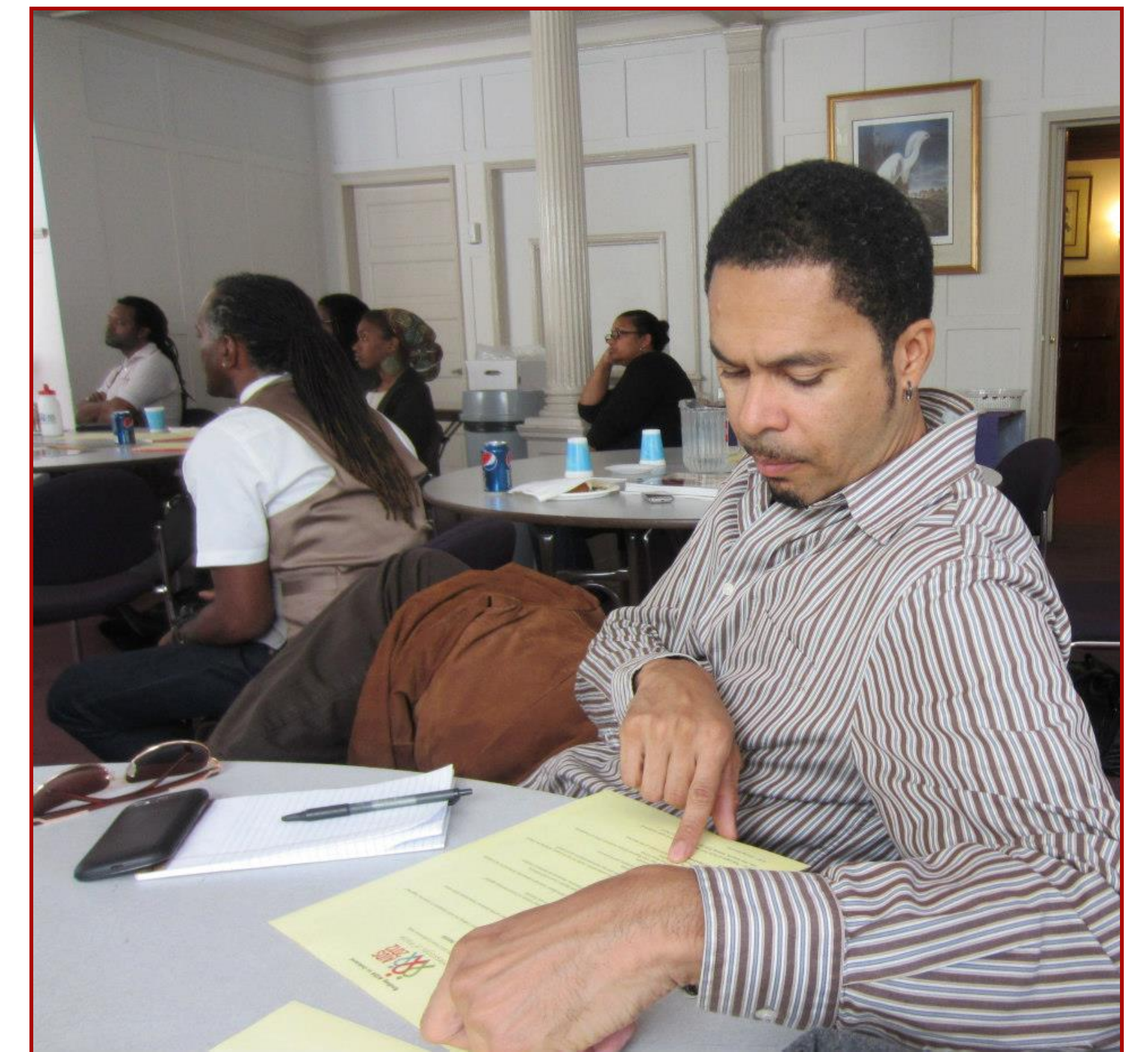
organizations, Healing Faith uses the annual **National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS** to engage the faith community in addressing the local epidemic. Through training and advocacy programs with AVAC, the Black AIDS Institute, and the National Minority AIDS Council, Healing Faith ensures that local community members receive the most current HIV prevention and treatment information.

RESULTS

Year One (2010): The congregation of Imani Community Church demonstrated increases in health literacy, HIV literacy, and knowledge of available community resources.

Year Two (2011): Collaboration between Healing Faith and community partners increased significantly.

Year Three (2012): Healing Faith is a resource used by members of the congregation to locate HIV prevention, treatment, and support services. New volunteers are engaged in HIV prevention activities and have requested training as HIV test counselors. Local churches are requesting capacity-building assistance from Healing Faith to help establish or enhance their health education and AIDS ministries.



Rev. Damon Powell, Ph.D. (AIDS Project of the East Bay)
Healing Faith post-conference hub "Ending AIDS in Oakland"
Thursday, September 27, 2012

CONCLUSIONS

Change takes time.

- More HIV prevention advocates who are also clergy in black churches are needed to engage black faith leaders in open dialogue about the relationship between HIV/AIDS, sexuality, and stigma using a peer-to-peer approach.
- Incorporating HIV prevention education into comprehensive health education programs utilizing existing congregational and community events reduces congregational resistance to addressing HIV/AIDS.
- Normalizing HIV prevention education within worship services and other church activities increases overall health literacy and the engagement of new HIV advocates and activists.

Imani Community Church
3300 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland, California 94602
(510) 531-5411 • www.imanicc.org
Rev. George C.L. Cummings, Ph.D., Senior Pastor