



## Abounding Prosperity receives \$1.7 million grant

Apr 14, 2017

The funds will allow agency to continue HIV testing in Texas' hardest hit community

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer



PJ Moton

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer

Abounding Prosperity has received a \$1.7 million grant to serve the health needs of black gay and bisexual men and transwomen through its testing and screening clinic and prevention services. The grant targets people ages 14 to 29.

Special Projects and Programs Manager P.J. Moton said the grant would help them link people who test positive to care within 30 days of their diagnoses. Abounding Prosperity tests both at its facility on MLK Jr. Boulevard and through its mobile testing van.

"The mobil van goes into the community six times a week," Moton said, "going where gay black men socialize or gather."

In addition, the grant has allowed AP, Inc. to bring on staff a nurse practitioner, and it lays the groundwork for the organization to build HOPE — Helping Our People Excel — its own health facility that will test for HIV, STDs and Hep C, as well as offer PrEP treatment, Moton said.

The grant targets young people, ages 14 to 29, who make up a large portion of newly-diagnosed HIV cases. They're also screened for other sexually transmitted diseases.

It also gives the organization the ability to continue other programs, such as behavior change interventions, including 3MV — Many Men, Many Voices — a two-day educational program with curriculum designed specifically for black men.

Abounding Prosperity's referral program works with AHF, Prism Health and for those clients with insurance who prefer seeing a private doctor, Dr. Chrisette Dharma.

AP, Inc. is the only organization in Dallas awarded a portion of this grant from the Centers for Disease Control, Moton said. Organizations in Houston and San Antonio are among the 30 HIV agencies nationally to receive these funds.

Dallas County ranks second after Harris County for number of new HIV infections and first in rate of infection. The rate of new diagnosed cases of HIV are 10 times higher among black gay and bisexual men and transwomen than among any other racial or ethnic group.

Abounding Prosperity is one of the few HIV organizations in Texas founded in the black community and run by members of the community.

Founder and CEO Kirk Myers said, "These resources are going to directly impact the reach, longevity, and infrastructure of the organization which means we are going to be able to provide even more services across the board. It's our aim to touch even more lives thereby promising prosperity for the community as a whole."

*This article appeared in the Dallas Voice print edition April 14, 2017.*

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### HRC DFW hosts a talk on healthcare access

May 25, 2018



Krista De La Rosa, left, and PJK Moton will speak at the HRC Mondays at Chino Chinatown on May 28.

Adam S. Johnson | HRC DFW Volunteer

It can be hard to keep up with the many issues facing LGBTQ people across North Texas. How do you find reliable perspectives on the problems that certain sub-demographics face within our community? And how do you figure out how to help them in ways that are truly impactful?

To help our community and its allies answer these questions, the HRC DFW Federal Club (one of the oldest and largest LGBTQ organizations in North Texas) has created HRC Mondays — a quarterly speaker and community engagement series that features speakers who discuss issues that the LGBTQ community faces.

The next HRC Monday is Monday, May 28, at Chinos Chinatown in Trinity Groves. It will address the unique issues that transgender people and people of color face while seeking healthcare.

Activists Krista De La Rosa and PJ Moton will be speaking and conducting a Q&A at the event.

Krista De La Rosa, a wellness counselor with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, is a proud trans woman who has spent the last two years working at AIDS Healthcare Foundation, conducting HIV tests and helping patients manage their care. She is passionate about giving back to the community and is an active volunteer with Impulse Group Dallas, LGBTQsaves and many other community non-profits.

De La Rosa is also the founder and host of the Krista De La Rosa Show, a live monthly showcase filmed in Dallas and streamed online. On her show, she and her guests talk all things gossip in DFW, celebrities and issues that the LGBTQ+ community faces.

Originally from Dallas, Krista grew up in a religious family and was heavily involved with Teen Mania Ministries, a national ministries organization that held faith-based youth rallies and retreats in the 2000s. Through her volunteer work with them, she developed a passion for managing volunteers and event planning, as well as organizing and encouraging people. She discovered that she had a love and understanding of stories from youth struggling with life's challenges.

Despite her passion for Teen Mania Ministries, De La Rosa grew to feel that many of the organization's participants were controlled by fear, which encouraged her to set out to combat the kind of fear that keeps people from being true to who they are. Since then, she has dedicated herself to organizing and uplifting the LGBTQ community, working to address the unique social challenges we face.

At HRC Monday, De La Rosa will discuss the many barriers that transgender people face when seeking out healthcare, like biases from providers and the lack of resources. She strives to bring more attention and understanding to the transgender community and hopes to shed light on the stigma that transgender people face.

P.J. Moton is the special projects manager for Abounding Prosperity Inc., an LGBTQ+ community center and healthcare clinic located in South Dallas. Born and raised in Alabama, Moton grew up feeling the oppression and poverty that most people of color in the South face.

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His intelligence and hard work took him to Fisk University, where he graduated with a dual degree in psychology and sociology. From there he went on to earn his masters in social work at Washington University in St. Louis, which is one of the top MSW programs in the country. While in undergrad in Nashville, he got his start volunteering at Nashville Cares, an HIV/AIDS education and support organization.

After grad school, Moton made his way to Dallas and spent almost three years leading United Black Ellument (U-BE), a Resource Center organization that works to support young, black same-gender-loving men. He led that program for three years and was instrumental in growing and shaping it into a highly-regarded community outreach and support program. He eventually took the wisdom he developed there to Abounding Prosperity, where he's worked for almost three years.

Moton will be talking about the inequality LGBTQ people of color face when accessing healthcare. His goal is to educate members of our community and allies alike on building a new network of people who can bring light to the experiences of black people when they are accessing healthcare.

Join us next week as De La Rosa and Moton share their unique perspectives to help us build understanding and strengthen our community at large. HRC Mondays: Access to Healthcare will be held at Chino Chinatown in Trinity Groves from 6:30-9 p.m. A special thank you to Equality Vodka for their continuous support of HRC DFW Federal Club.

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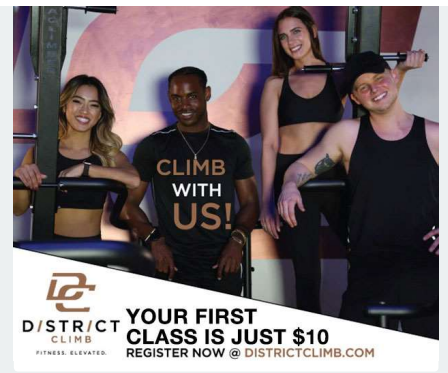
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## Seeking racial healing

May 4, 2018



From left: PJ Moton, Jalenzski Brown, Cece Cox and Kirk Myers.

**After a three-workshop series, planners have scheduled social events to carry on the work begun in discussions addressing race and the LGBT community**

**DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer**  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

A three-session workshop on racial healing in the LGBT community wrapped up this week with a three-hour conversation at Dallas City Hall.

PJ Moton of Abounding Prosperity and Jalenzski Brown of Resource Center moderated the discussion. Resource Center CEO Cece Cox and Abounding Prosperity CEO Kirk Myers joined the panel for this week's final session.

Although the series is concluded, everyone attending agreed the discussions should continue, and a variety of events are already planned or being discussed.

The first session was "unpacking and addressing" the issues. Brown said it was alright for the discussion to be uncomfortable in what he labeled a brave space rather than a safe space.

Among the issues participants brought up were barriers to getting into the bars, tokenism and attraction.

Getting into the bars has been an issue in the community for decades. At one time, people of color were required to show three forms of ID just to get in the door. Women were turned away from men's bars if they were wearing open-toed shoes. That problem cropped up recently when singer and reality TV star Tamar Braxton was refused entry to JR.'s Bar & Grill because of what she was wearing.

Attraction, or what Brown called sexual fetish, manifests itself in many different ways. Some people described experiences where someone of a different race would have sex with them, but wouldn't be seen in public with them. Other talked about dating profiles that excluded all people of another race or their own race.

Brown described tokenism as "including people of color when you need to check off a box, but not empower them."

"Hope: Creating Solutions" was the theme to the second workshop.

Brown said attendees broke up into groups to discuss topics such as civic engagement and power structures. He said they were looking for ways to get people involved in the election process that included everything from getting out the vote to running for office.

"Creating social spaces and getting to know one another," was a way Brown said they hoped to begin addressing segregation in the LGBT community. He said that LGBT youth of color are overwhelmingly bullied and even more likely than other LGBT youth to be homeless.

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"Name and gender marker changes for transgender people of color is harder," Brown said, because of legal and financial barriers.

Brown said he'd like to bring back a Dallas LGBT community institution that trained leaders and brought people together in the 1990s and early 2000s — Leadership Lambda. That group brought together talent from around the community to train people to write grants and learn how to fundraise for their organizations. It taught about the challenges different groups overcame and presented ways various groups could work together.

In the third session, Cox suggested one way to bring people together was to unite on issues overlapping different groups. Cox said she is always looking to answer the question, "What do we have in common?" She suggested groups work together on issues like access to healthcare or gun violence and seek solutions together.

Moton said when people of color are brought into a group, he's looking for meaningful involvement that includes taking leadership roles.

Former Dallas Mayor pro tem John Loza was glad the conversation was going on, but asked the group at the third workshop, "How do we reach people who aren't here, but should be?"

"The discussion needs to continue," Brown said after the conclusion of the series.

He said they've planned several social events and are scheduling more to keep the discussion going. DFW Pride Happy Hour on May 11 and a town hall meeting with Dallas police on May 24 both take place at Resource Center. Brown also suggested a potluck might be a good summer activity.

"We need to grow this to see if people want to continue having this conversation," he said.

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### Free at last

Jun 8, 2018



Tank, a straight hip-hop star, is a proud ally to the gay community

**Juneteenth commemorates the symbolic end of slavery, but for black LGBT Texans, it also touches on Pride of a different kind**

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor  
jones@dallasvoice.com

If you're African-American, especially from the South — and especially especially from Texas — then June 19 probably means something to you. In a way, it's a shameful date: The day in 1865, more than two months after the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, when slaves in Texas first learned that they had been freed. For more than a century and a half, it's been celebrated by black Americans as the "real day" slavery ended on this continent.

And for gay black Texans, it has its own resonance.

"I had heard of Juneteenth while growing up in Alabama, but it was just a mention," says P.J. Moton, development director for Dallas Southern Pride and point-man on the Juneteenth event. "But when I moved to Texas, I began to know a lot more about it and the whole idea of it representing freedom and liberation."

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Performing for queer people of color appeals to out musician Bobby Lytes.

When Moton moved to Dallas, the local black gay community noted Juneteenth, but had not staged a large-scale event. Moton came up with the idea to revamp and expand it. The first time it took on the elements of a bigger party was 2014; by 2015 it had become a full-sized festival weekend and has continued to grow.

This year, Juneteenth takes place over three days (June 15–17) and four venues and welcomes six headliners performing at the main event, the Unity Festival on Saturday night.

“After each year’s event, we ask [attendees], ‘Who would you like to see?’ We do market research and reach out to our own network,” Moton says.

One of this year’s headliners is R&B artist Tank, who is a straight black male. Moton sees Tank’s willingness to appear at a gay-specific Pride event as evidence of the evolution not just of the culture at large, but the black community as well.

“We already face a number of stigmas in reference to other communities, and stigmas within our own [black] community,” Moton says. “We deal with issues of promoting hyper-masculinity. We have men who can’t authentically be themselves and be on the DL because of the boxes people put them in as ‘less than a man.’ To have Tank, a black heterosexual male, performing for black gay Pride events has been a major step forward for how [performers] see [the gay community].”

“It is my pleasure to share my talent with the LGBTQ community and the Juneteenth Unity Festival,” Tank says. “[That] community has supported my career over the years and I will support them with no hesitation. I’ve been transparent and vocal with my support of [the gay community].”

For his part, rapper and reality TV star Bobby Lytes — another performer attending the festival who is openly gay — relishes the chance to be out among family.

“I feel extremely proud to be able to perform for my people,” Lytes says of the chance to appear at Juneteenth. “I love being able to live in my truth and share moments with other people that are living in their truth. I hope that my actions, and me being so open, will inspire others to do the same. I really want to continue bringing our community together.”

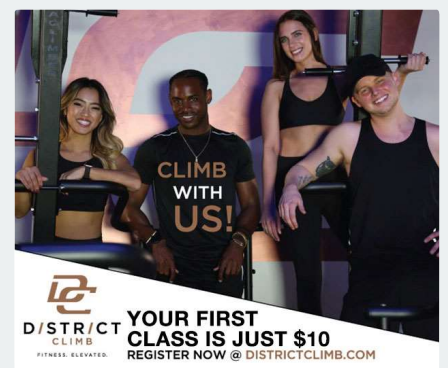
Nevertheless, Dallas Southern Pride has also had to fend off criticism of the celebration.

“I have seen people who have commented on our posts for Juneteenth like, ‘Why are you celebrating this?’ But I perceive it as an opportunity to grow and embrace liberation — turning things meant to demean and belittle into something empowering. Like how we changed the word ‘queer’ from a negative connotation to a positive one,” Moton says.

The whole idea of Juneteenth Pride is to enjoy the full spectrum of the black gay experience.

“We are redefining the whole idea of freedom and liberation — not just as black people, not just as gay people, but as all we are.”

The celebration starts at the host hotel, the A-Loft Downtown, on June 15 from 8–11:30 p.m., and continues with an after-party at Marty’s Live. The Unity Festival, including a 50-foot water slide, vendors, food trucks and concert, is on the grounds of the Longhorn Ballroom at Riverfront and Corinth June 16 from 5–10 p.m. The weekend concludes with a free-admission barbecue picnic at Bachman Lake Park on June 17 from 2–7 p.m. For more information, visit [DallasSouthernPride.com](http://DallasSouthernPride.com).





## Infections on the rise

Dec 1, 2017



**The rate of new HIV infections and diagnoses is going down overall. But not among gay and bi men**

Mathew Shaw | Contributing Writer  
editor@dallasvoice.com



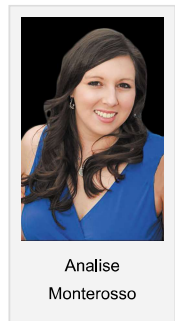
New HIV infections and diagnoses are declining overall each year in the United States, probably due in large part to targeted prevention efforts, according to officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But, they are quick to add, progress has been uneven, and infections and diagnoses each year have actually increased among some groups — including gay and bisexual men.

Gay and bisexual men were the only group to not experience a decline in HIV infections from 2008 to 2014, according to data from the CDC. In addition, the Texas Department of State Health Services has recently identified 16 clusters of HIV infections in the state, largely concentrated in Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio.

This information gives a clearer idea of what the state is up against in its battle against HIV.

These HIV “clusters” are different genetic strains of HIV that are occurring among groups of people, according to Analise Monterosso, molecular HIV surveillance coordinator for State Health Services.



These infections are all HIV subtype B, the most common strain in the country — but with slight changes in its genetic sequence, something that happens whenever genetic material is copied, Monterosso explained.

“It happens with every strand of DNA or RNA that’s repeated,” Monterosso said. “And because we know how often it’s expected those mistakes will happen, we can estimate the relatedness of two people based on that genetic sequence.”

This information is necessary not to “punish” those who are infected. Instead, it helps surveillance professionals understand what’s happening with the epidemic in the state, she said.

“Our public health departments are very taxed resource-wise and [too] understaffed to perform the disease intervention activities and prevention activities,” Monterosso explained. “So we make the most of what information we have.”

Right now, the surveillance professionals know that transmissions in these clusters are occurring more rapidly than in other places because of the low genetic distance between two sequences, she said.

But, she stressed, “just because two people have viral sequences that are closely related, that does not mean that one person definitely gave it to the other person. It could mean that they’re directly related. Or it could mean that there’s a person or two people in the transmission network that actually link them, but we don’t have the missing link.”

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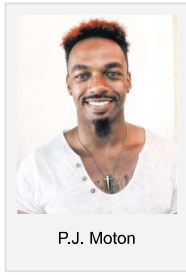
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P.J. Moton

In clusters that are tightly related genetically, the virus is being transmitted from person to person in a short amount of time, Monterosso said. "In the course of the investigation, we found that many of the people that were linked to the cluster were missed opportunities," she said.

By "missed opportunities," she means that they could have been diagnosed up to a year before their actual diagnosis if they had taken the right test. That's why the state department's prevention branch has been coordinating with local community partners to advocate for routine HIV screening in emergency centers and for the recommended HIV testing algorithm to be

completed.

The recommended testing algorithm is an antigen and antibody screening test. Antigens are markers that are on the virus, and antibodies are immune system markers against the virus, Monterosso explained.

The three tests under this recommended algorithm make up the fourth-generation test and can diagnose HIV as soon as 11 to 14 days post-infection. Unfortunately many physicians don't think they need to administer all these tests, she added, which means patients think they are negative and don't find out until up to a year later that they were positive all along.

On top of that, Monterosso continued, doctors are not ordering the HIV drug resistance test, which the CDC recommends for everybody entering medical care so they can know which medications will be effective in fighting the virus.

**New HIV Infections in the U.S.**

There were an estimated 37,600 new HIV infections in the United States in 2014, down 10 percent from 2010's estimated total of 41,900. Of those new infections in 2014:

- 2,800 — 7 percent — were among people who inject drugs, including infections attributed to male-to-male sexual AND injection drug use.
- 8,600 — 23 percent — were among heterosexuals.
- 26,200 — 70 percent — were among gay and bisexual men.

**New HIV Diagnoses in the U.S. in 2016**

- 26,570 — 67 percent — of new HIV diagnoses were among gay and bisexual men.
- 83 percent of the males newly-diagnosed with HIV were gay or bisexual.
- Black/African-American gay and bisexual men accounted for 10,233 new HIV diagnoses, up 4 percent.
- Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men accounted for 7,425 new diagnoses, up 14 percent.
- White gay and bisexual men accounted for 7,390 new diagnoses, down 10 percent.

See DallasVoice.com for testing locations.

"There's a misconception that it's expensive," she said. "It's a little more expensive than other tests, but it's typically run once, and it's covered by health insurance."

Neither are doctors routinely recommending pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, Monterosso said. Some aren't prescribing the PrEP regimen because they don't know about it, but there have also been some reports of doctors that, even when asked, refuse to discuss the treatment regimen, much less prescribe it, because they claim to have some moral objection.

PrEP includes a pill called Truvada that people who are at high risk of contracting HIV can take to help prevent infection. It is often covered by health insurance or by medication assistance programs through Gilead, the pharmaceutical company that manufactures Truvada, if a patient doesn't have insurance, Monterosso said.

PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of infection by 92 percent if taken consistently, according to the CDC. Still, some health professionals and AIDS activists oppose the regimen, suggesting that it gives some people a false sense of security and that too many people do not take the medications consistently.

The CDC stated last September that when antiretroviral therapy suppresses a person's viral loads to undetectable levels, they cannot transmit HIV. But, as Abounding Prosperity's Special Events and Projects Manager P.J. Moton points out, when the patients fail to take their medication consistently, the virus can develop a resistance to the medication, sometimes resulting in dangerous, drug-resistant clusters of the virus.

Abounding Prosperity, which primarily focuses on serving the health needs of black gay, bisexual and same-gender-loving men and transgender women of color, offers free testing services, including HIV and syphilis rapid testing, an oral and rectal swab for gonorrhea and chlamydia and a urine test.

Ultimately, it is people who do not know their HIV status who drive up infections, Moton said.

He said, "Unbeknownst to the general public, we have a higher number than ever before of individuals who come in who are in a committed relationship, or are in a monogamous relationship, who don't know that their partner has stepped out, and then their partner has become infected and unintentionally infected them."

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AboundingProsperity.org

#### AIDS Healthcare Foundation

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## AP opens Hope Health Center

Jun 16, 2017



### South Dallas agency plans a capital campaign to open health center to serve South Dallas



Abounding Prosperity CEO Kirk Myers, left, and HOPE Health's Dr. Chrisette Dharma. (Courtesy AP Inc.)

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer

Abounding Prosperity, the South Dallas AIDS agency, is expanding its services by opening HOPE Health Center. The clinic, for now, is located on Harry Hines Boulevard in North Dallas, but Abounding Prosperity officials hope to be able to move it into the South Dallas area soon.

AP has purchased land near its home office on MLK Boulevard, according to Special Projects and Programs Manager PJ Moton, and the agency will soon begin a capital campaign to build a new full-service clinic. The current clinic is in the office of Dr. Chrisette Dharma, whom AP has hired to administer its new program.

To start, Hope Health Center offers HIV testing, STD testing and treatment and PrEP for uninsured clients. PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, uses the HIV drug Truvada to prevent transmission of the virus. Without insurance, the cost of preventive treatment is out of reach of most people. Some insurance won't cover it or have high co-pays that keep it out of reach and some doctors refuse to prescribe it.

AP has received grants to kickstart the clinic and get more people in the African-American community, which has the highest rate of new HIV infections, on PrEP. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, blacks make up only 11 percent of the population locally but they represent 38 percent of those with HIV. That is four times the rate for whites and Hispanics.

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HOPE clinic will distinguish itself with its non-traditional hours, including evening hours on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, hoping to attract clients who work during the day and are unable to take off and get to a doctor.

Although AIDS Interfaith Network provides transportation to doctors appointments, Moton said that service is provided in unmarked vans. "Having HIV is still a huge thing in marginalized communities," he explained.



Special Projects and Programs Manager PJ Moton

Moton had been a Human Rights Campaign HIV360 fellow. During his fellowship, he wrote a grant and received money from the Elton John AIDS Foundation to fund the project and a grant from Toyota to get a vehicle to provide unmarked transportation.

An open house for the HOPE Health Center, 8877 Harry Hines Blvd takes place on June 23.

#### TIP

Moton said AP has also initiated its TIP — the Transgender ID Program. A transgender person on staff will walk trans clients through the process of changing their gender markers. That includes accompanying that person to court.

Without ID that matches gender presentation, most trans people have trouble getting a job or accessing services. In Dallas County, correcting IDs isn't difficult, but going to court for any reason can be daunting, especially for someone who's never been to a courthouse before. Many delay changing their gender markers or avoid going altogether.

Having someone who knows how to navigate the system makes the process much easier.

*This article appeared in the Dallas Voice print edition June 16, 2017.*

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# Abounding Prosperity's PJ Moton named one of 10 HIV 360 Fellows

May 5, 2016



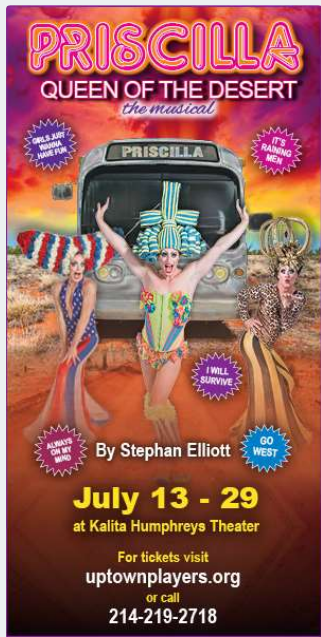
PJ Moton, the interim clinical programs manager for Dallas' Abounding Prosperity, has been named an HIV 360 Fellow, one of 10 young nonprofit leaders recognized by the Human Rights Campaign and supported by the Elton John AIDS Foundation.



The nine-month program will help these advocates "elevate their work ending HIV in hard-hit U.S. communities," according to a release. But as PJ told me, "It's a much bigger deal than I anticipated. We have met all types of big-wigs." How big are the wigs? I asked. "Traci Turnblad big," PJ said.

Wow, that's big.

Contrats to PJ and all the others! You can learn more about the program here.



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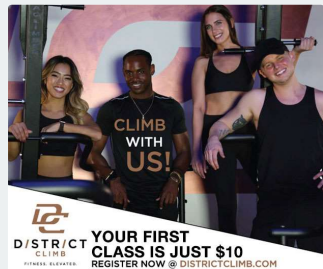
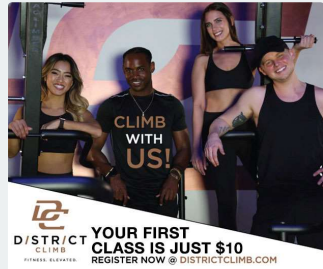
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### PHOTOS: Arson suspected in Abounding Prosperity fire

Jul 7, 2017



**UPDATE:**

A GoFundMe page has been created to help Abounding Prosperity with the costs. PJ Moton said the building is insured, but extra costs involved include obtaining space for groups scheduled to meet at the community center and deductibles.

**ORIGINAL POST:**

The Dallas Fire Marshal suspects arson in a fire at the Abounding Prosperity community center on Peabody Street this morning.

PJ Moton said quite a bit of damage was done to the building, which houses support groups and interventions.

Because of the fire, Prism Health North Texas' Peabody Clinic was closed this morning, but has reopened. The clinic is across the street from Abounding Prosperity.

Anyone who is scheduled to volunteer or attend a program at the community center, should call AP's main number to find out whether or where the group will meet at 214-421-4800.

Photos taken this afternoon. Parts of the building were already boarded up. AP Associate Director Tamara Stepney described the building as a total loss.



In a file photo, AP CEO Kirk Myers on the porch of the community center building that burned on July 7.



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