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Illinois Raises Money for ASOs With 'Red Ribbon Cash' Lottery Tickets

by Winnie McCroy
EDGE Editor
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In response to rising rates of HIV infection, in 2008, the Illinois Lottery launched the Red Ribbon Cash scratch-off ticket. Purchasing a \$3 ticket gives you the chance to win \$50,000, with 100 percent of the profits going to support HIV prevention and care.

"In 2007, legislation was signed into law creating the Red Ribbon Cash specialty cause instant game in Illinois. The game itself was introduced to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and generate financial support for Illinois Department of Public Health grants that directly benefit HIV/AIDS education, treatment, and prevention programs," said Stephen Rossi, Communications Director for the IL Lottery.

The Red Ribbon cash ticket helps fund community-based organizations that serve at-risk populations for HIV/AIDS that may not otherwise receive this funding.

One hundred percent of profits from Red Ribbon Cash are deposited into an endowment fund, held by the State of Illinois and is separate from the state's general revenues. The Quality of Life Board, composed of appointees by the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Illinois Department of Public Health, reviews applicants and awards grant money to qualified, non-profit organizations based on criteria set by the board.

It is important to note that half of the profits raised from the sales of the Red Ribbon Cash instant game must go to groups with annual budgets of less than \$300,000. Grant recipients must be engaged in education, treatment, or prevention of HIV/AIDS, and must serve a population at a heightened risk of contracting HIV or developing AIDS.

"Illinois Lottery players enjoy a chance to try new game, and this specialty cause ticket joins four other games the Lottery offers, to support special causes including: Multiple Sclerosis (MS), breast cancer research, veteran's programs, and the Special Olympics," said Rossi. "With the purchase of a \$3 Red Ribbon Cash ticket, any adult can help fight HIV and AIDS in Illinois."



(Source:youtube.com)

There are currently 43,500 people living with HIV/AIDS in Illinois. Almost 80 percent of those are men. A thousand new cases of HIV are reported in Chicago every year; even more alarming, however, is that one in six people are unaware that they have HIV. Illinois ranks 8th among the 50 states in the number of HIV diagnoses.

Getting people living with HIV into treatment is vital to preventing new HIV infections. Evidence shows that people receiving treatment for HIV reduce transmission to others by 96 percent.

But this will only happen with continued support and funding for HIV prevention and care programs. In past

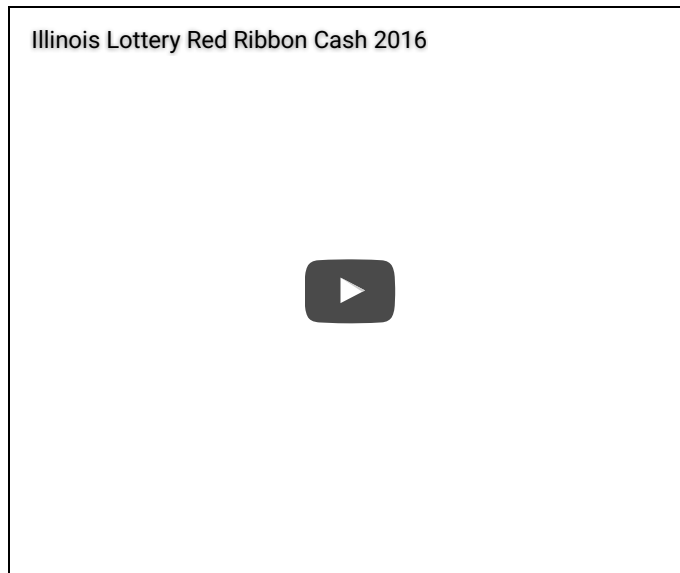
years, the Red Ribbon Cash ticket has generated more than a million dollars for AIDS Service Organizations. You can help surpass that amount by spreading the word about this in your community. Tickets are available at all participating retailers.

Each time you play, you raise money for HIV research and help raise awareness about this important cause.

Advocates have also released a call to action for everyone to get tested, so they know their status for HIV -- especially the African-American community, which is disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. Major advances in screening technology can detect HIV earlier and identify people who may be in the acute phase of HIV infection where they are highly infectious and likely to spread the disease.

Health officials note that knowing one's HIV status, prevention education, avoiding or delaying sexual activity, decreasing the number of sexual partners, safer-sex practices and getting into treatment if infected remain the most effective means of efforts to eradicate HIV/AIDS.

For more information, visit www.illinoislottery.com



Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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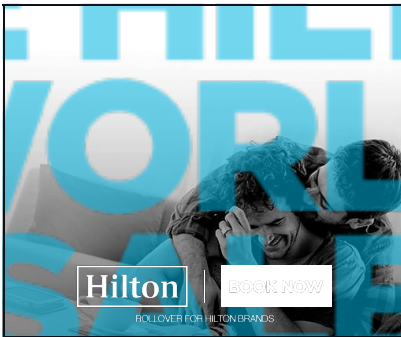
Broward House, South Florida's oldest and largest HIV/AIDS community service organization announced the list of recipients who will be honored Wednesday, October 31 during a luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 as part of the annual

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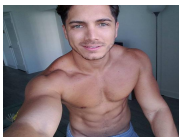
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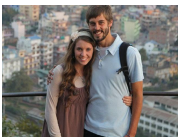
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