

BABES TALKING

NETWORK

empowered by the ywca

A Sisterhood of Women Facing HIV Together

BABES Talking is a quarterly publication of BABES Network-YWCA. The goals of our publication are to share information, publicize events, and create a forum for the voices of women living with HIV/AIDS to be heard. We encourage you to make **BABES Talking** *your* newsletter by writing a story, submitting artwork, or setting up an interview with a staff member.

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Retreat Reflections

Volume 27 Issue 3

Fall 2018

Hi BABES-

Happy Fall! This quarters **BABES Talking** Newsletter, we asked **BABES** and staff to share their reflections on attending our annual Retreat. This was my 15th retreat and each year it gets better and better. We had some great workshops, lots of great self care, and bonding time with each other. We also got to celebrate our Queen Bee, Pat Migliore's Birthday, and unveiled our fun new **BABES** posse vests!

We just had our Annual Stella Steps Out fundraiser which was a huge success. We raised over \$63,000 that will go directly to support the **BABES** program. Thank you to Teresia, for sharing her story at Stella, and to this years honoree: Dr. Dhanireddy, for all of her hard work and dedication to the HIV community here in Seattle.

Lastly, we are really excited that our office remodel begins, which was gifted to us last year at Stella from Julie Lewis and the 30/30 project. The \$25,000 will cover the cost to repaint, lay new carpet, install new lighting and lay new tile! We cannot wait to have an open house, to invite you all to come see the completed remodel. Stay tuned!

Sincerely-

Nicole Puce

BABES Network-YWCA, Program Manager



SISTERHOOD

"I did not realize how connected to each other we really are"

"I learned how to speak to others, without hurting their feelings"

“I no longer stand alone after attending the BABES retreat on Vashon Island”

“I no longer stand alone after attending the BABES retreat on Vashon Island”, says a 53-year-old BABE from Zambia who came into the country four months ago to visit the only person she knew in Washington – her boyfriend John.

John introduced me to the BABES website for people with HIV in Seattle, where he is a member – way back in 2014, and since I also have been HIV positive since 2002, I quickly signed up. I connected with BABES staff who I knew only out of my imagination...Nicole, Tranisha, and Julia.

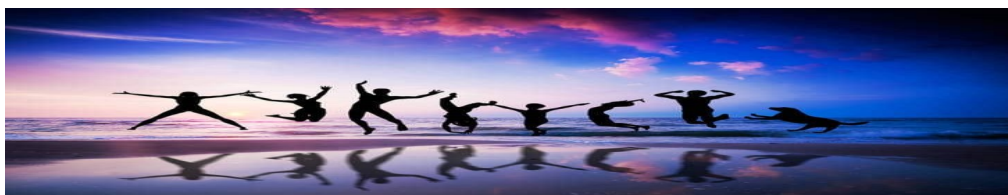
In 2017, I got my visa and came to America for the first time. I was able to visit the BABES office, and met in person with the staff who I knew from imagination. I attended a support group meeting where I also met Pat. Then, I went back to Africa after two weeks.

What I am trying to say is I came back to America and was given an opportunity to attend the 2018 BABES annual retreat at Vashon Island – Camp Burton Lodge. The weekend was well spent, it was awesome – I learned a lot of things. One of them was to spend quality time on myself, which I surely never did. I had reflexology done on my feet for the first time in my life. The karaoke was great, the food was wonderful. I made a lot of new friends and met many new people. I bonded very well with my roommates. Back home, I worked as an HIV research nurse/counselor so the retreat was like a bonus to me.

Thanks to BABES staff and my new friends whom I communicate with from time to time. I have so far been linked to institutions for other services such as insurance and medical services. Now my family in Washington is getting bigger and I am happier, healthier, and not standing alone after the retreat.

GL





Amazing Grace

I am so grateful and extremely overjoyed, that I am fortunate enough to be a BABE. I have never felt such powerful connections to others in my life, and I grew up with 3 older Sisters.

The love, joy, support, empowerment and accountability – it is immeasurable, infinite and unconditional. I forgot. Never again.

Life threw me off balance and completely out of whack. It was so traumatic, that; it felt impossible that I would ever recover. I am still trying to understand what took place, after working so hard to finally accept that it really happened. There was no direction, no light. I was dazed, confused and completely lost in an unfathomable depth of darkness. Then, I got in touch with the same amazing group that pulled me up to my feet, so many years before. BABES Network YWCA, the staff, the members, the fellowship, the stability, accountability and direction. I do not know how I managed to survive without BABES.

I almost didn't go. BABES Retreat 2018, brought me back to myself. I was convinced I was forever gone, until day one. I had a physical, emotional, spiritual and mental breakthrough. An Awakening. I was reminded that I am not and have never been alone. I was reminded that I am an empowered woman that can survive anything. I am resilient and I am strong, because; I am supported. I found the missing pieces, my sisters and brothers. My feeling of insanity was relieved. I reconnected with the most wonderful and powerful group of empowered humans that I have ever known. I strive to express my infinite gratitude and unconditional love, to each and every one of you. Thank you for, once again, showing me that I am okay.

Brenda J Higgins

"Now my family is getting bigger and I am happier, healthier, and not standing alone after the retreat."



Before

Before BABES, I had this idea in my head that I was alone in all of this HIV stuff. I didn't know anyone else who was positive, so I felt pretty alone. Then I started researching resources in the area and I found BABES. It took me a minute to gather up the courage to get myself to a meeting, but I eventually did. And then I finally got the opportunity this year to go to the retreat. It was like a breath of fresh air to be in a room full of women who completely understand what it's like to live with HIV. We can talk and laugh and ask questions and be honest. It's a fabulously amazing feeling to be perfectly accepted, appreciated, and known by 30 plus women in one room. The staff does a fantastic job at putting together workshops and activities to help us learn and connect with each other as well as be able to get to know each other and laugh with each other. I will definitely be going back!

B-PM

Believe that you can be
All that you are
Because you really are
Everything we need to fight
Stigma and assumptions
Never believe the lie that
Everyone is against you
There are people
Who care about your existence
On this earth and in this
Reality. You are loved.
Know that in your heart and mind



Satiation

Finding Babes has been like filling in a little hole that's been in my heart as long as I can remember. I have been HIV positive my whole life, 32 years. In those years I have found community in many places but never a group of women. My mama was also positive and I often wonder what it would have been like, having another HIV positive women so close to me as I navigated medical care, school, friendships, dating, sex, jobs and having my own children. My mother passed away in November of 1995, a month before my 10th birthday. Between her death and today I sought out other women who were experiencing HIV, who may be able to impart bits of wisdom upon me. I found a few here and there, and for them I am deeply grateful. I really found that comradery and community I was craving in Babes. This summer as I sat back at my second retreat, I caught myself marveling at what I am so lucky to have found. Women supporting each other, finding similarities in their lives they have never been able to share with others and celebrating friendships that have spanned decades. Women choosing to invest time in themselves, realizing that they are worth the energy and overcoming hurdles to get their booties to Vashon. I am so grateful to have you all in my life. I suspect my mom is grateful I have you, as well.

Alora Gale-Shreck



BABES Network-YWCA is a **sisterhood of women facing HIV together**. BABES reduces isolation, promotes self-empowerment, enhances quality of life and serves the needs of women facing HIV and their families through peer support, advocacy, education and outreach.

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BABES Office Hours

T-F: 10am-4pm

BABES Network-YWCA Services

- **Peer counseling**
*One-on-one support from another HIV+ woman.
- **Support groups**
*Weekly support groups for HIV+ women and monthly Co-Ed groups for HIV+ women and men, meals provided.
- **Events and Retreats**
*Fun social gatherings that provide an opportunity for HIV+ women and their families to network with each other.
- **Educational Forums**
*Informative educational groups focusing on HIV treatment adherence and other important health issues.
- **Non-Medical Case Management**
*Providing support to the whole person, attending Dr's appointments, home visits, emotional support
- **BABES Talking newsletter**
*Quarterly newsletter available worldwide.
*Monthly calendars available on our website and monthly e-newsletter.
- **Advocacy**
*HIV+ women teaching each other how to successfully negotiate government and healthcare systems, while also training community agencies to better serve the complex needs of women.

What she said...a collection of thoughts

"The strength of the women at the BABES Retreat is always uplifting and inspirational. I carry some of everyone home with me every year. I LOVE BABES POSSE!"

"We all have a lot of (similar) issues that are more easily dealt with when we work together and for each other."

"I will take home with me, the knowledge of our 'sameness', and that I belong to an exclusive Sisterhood."

"Self Care is vital"

"My years of stress, relieved of pain"

"Be patient with self"


"I gained courage and confidence"

"I can change things that I cannot accept"



"I will know myself, understand myself, love myself and know that I am beautiful"

October 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed	2 defeatHIV CAB meeting 5:30 @ Cal Anderson House	3	4 Support Group/Lunch 12-1:30pm @ BABES	4	5
7	8 Office Closed	9	10	11 Support Group/Lunch 12-1:30pm @ BABES	12	13
14	15 Office Closed	16	17	18 Support Group/Lunch 12-1:30pm @ BABES	19	20
21	22 Office Closed	23	24 Co-Ed Support Group 6:30pm-8pm @Cal Anderson House	25 Support Group/Lunch 12-1:30pm @ BABES	26	27
28	29 <div>BABES Office Hours Tuesday-Friday 10am-4pm</div>	30 Everett Support Group 6-7:30pm @ YWCA	31 Halloween BOO			

Coming Soon...

BABES Network Staff

Nicole Price
Program Manager
Julia Rosenfeld
Lead Case Manager
Alora Gale-Schreck
Peer Advocate
Brenda Higgins
Peer Office Support

Peer Volunteers

Tina J
Pat M
Kate E
Tranisha A

BABES Support Group/Lunch

For HIV positive women

Every Thursday

12-1:30 pm

@ BABES Network

Snohomish Support Group

Tuesday, October 30th

6-7:30pm

@ YWCA Everett

Co-Ed Heterosexual Support Group

For HIV positive men and women

Wednesday October 24th

6:30-8pm

@Cal Anderson House

BABES Annual Harvest Dinner

November date: TBD

Funding for this Program has been made available as a result of grant awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Public Health- Seattle & King County.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following foundations and donor groups:

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
Seattle | King | Snohomish

ywca

AIDS FUND

THE SISTERS OF
PERPETUAL
INDULGENCE



THE ARCHIVE OF
ST JOAN



Pride
Foundation