



Springfield
Urban League, Inc.

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

“WHAT IF IT WERE YOU?”
THE SPRINGFIELDURBAN LEAGUE CHALLENGES YOUTH
TO CONFRONT MISCONCEPTIONS AND APATHY REGARDING HIV/AIDS
BY SPONSORING YOUTH PSA POSTER CONTEST

PRESS STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Springfield, IL (January 29, 2009) –**The Springfield Urban League, Inc.** is sponsoring its 2nd Annual Youth PSA Contest. High School students from all central Illinois communities will articulate information they wish to share with their peers, parents and the larger community in relation to HIV/AIDS by way of their words and artwork. ***What if it Were You?*** provides young people the chance to step outside of their beliefs about not being at risk and consider what they would do if HIV happened to them.

On Saturday, January 31st at 3:30 p.m., the Urban League will kick off the contest at the BASUAH Summit (Brothers and Sisters United Against HIV/AIDS) sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health Center for Minority Health Services, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., in Springfield, IL. Nationally recognized HIV advocate and educator, Bob Bowers, is the special guest speaker.

The Urban League has partnered with **HIVictorious** and its founder Bob Bowers to challenge students to use their creativity to develop posters that confront youth misconceptions and apathy about HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Bowers, a survivor of HIV/AIDS for over 20 years founded HIVictorious, in Madison, Wisconsin, out of his passion to educate youth about making healthy choices and being victorious in all of life’s challenges. The ***“What if it were you?”*** project is his brain child and he has invited others who share in his optimism to help communicate a more truthful, and inclusive perception of HIV/AIDS.

Peer education has always shown to be effective. The ***What if it were you?*** contest is an imaginative and innovative form of peer education and prevention with a goal of finding an HIV prevention message that works for teens. The end result will be a message teenagers can relate to and a message that can save the lives of young people while educating our communities.

“This very exciting endeavor will engage students in a creative process whose outcome will advance the effort to encourage healthy lifestyle choices and increase awareness of HIV/AIDS”, says Nina Harris, President & CEO of the Springfield Urban League.

The winning posters will receive prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Selected submissions will be displayed throughout Central and Downstate Illinois. Prizes will also include electronics from Product (RED), benefitting AIDS in Africa, local restaurant gift certificates, and an all expense paid trip on the League's 2009 Historical Black College Tour.

Contest submissions must be received by March 27, 2009. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony (TBA) in mid April 2009, to commemorate National Minority Health Month. The League is greatly anticipating submissions from all central Illinois students. For entry forms, contest rules and further information, visit www.springfieldul.org.

Funding for this project is provided by the Illinois Department Public Health Center for Minority Health Services.

The Springfield Urban League (Urban League), Inc. is a civil rights and direct services organization that serves 6,000 people each year in urban communities (Springfield, Chicago, Jacksonville, Riverton, and Meredosia) through job training, home ownership, economic development, educational and after school programs. We reach another 1500 through advocacy and research. The Urban League's target population is African-American, other emerging ethnic groups and those who struggle. The Springfield Urban League is the sixth largest affiliate in the Nation.

HIVictorious strives to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Wisconsin and throughout the United States through education, advocacy, and community mobilization.

For more information on "What if it Were You?" please visit: www.whatifitwereyou.org