



**T.D. Jakes Offers Free HIV Testing
at the Potter's House for World AIDS Day**



The Potter's House translated the message of AIDS awareness into action Sunday by providing free HIV testing to nearly 300 people.

"With it being not only a national, but an international epidemic, we wanted to show our solidarity," said Bonné Moon, an associate pastor at the mega-church near Mountain Creek Lake. "The statistics are growing at alarming rates."

Dallas County has the highest rate of new HIV infections in the state and one of the highest in the United States, according to World AIDS Day Dallas organizers.

The Potter's House was one of numerous organizations citywide that hosted events Sunday to remember the people lost to AIDS, celebrate those who are living with HIV and provide testing for those who might be newly infected.

Moon said the Potter's House offered HIV testing in 2006, but the church wanted to provide it again because the congregation has expanded and a new generation of teenagers has grown up in its youth program.

She said the church's leadership has always been forthright about the importance of HIV testing.

"It's easy, it's simple and it's so important," Moon said. "This is something you do as a

man or a woman of God - you become accountable.”

The test requires a pinprick on a finger and the results are available within about 60 seconds, testing coordinator Kenny Skinner said.

Church member Troy Kelly, 35, said he was tested Sunday to follow Bishop T.D. Jakes’ leadership on AIDS awareness.

“A lot of people are scared to get tested, and he’s just challenging their faith,” he said. “I believe it’s a good thing, especially on AIDS Day.”

He said bringing free HIV testing into the church helps reach people who might otherwise not get tested.

“When you have a huge congregation like this, you can get the masses,” Kelly said. “People from all over the U.S. come to the church.”

One of them was Chelsee Harrison, a 21-year-old student at Wilmington University in Middletown, Del., who was visiting her father for Thanksgiving.

They both attended the Potter’s House for the first time Sunday, and Harrison stood in line to get tested for HIV after the service.

She said she was grateful to be able to commemorate World AIDS Day with people who embrace HIV awareness.

“It falls into support - we’re all under God,” she said. “There’s nothing wrong with getting tested or with getting treated if you have it.”

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