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**Southern AIDS Living Quilt**  
E-mail: [media@livingquilt.org](mailto:media@livingquilt.org)  
Phone: 1-800-461-6946

## **Southern AIDS Living Quilt Raises Awareness at National HIV Summit**

*Women empower others by sharing personal stories of living with HIV/AIDS*

WASHINGTON, DC – Friday, November 21, 2008 – AIDS is the leading cause of death for African American women ages 25-34 today. HIV infections could be reduced by 30 percent per year if all HIV infected persons knew of their infection and adopted behavioral changes to limit the spread of the disease.

The Southern AIDS Living Quilt ([www.livingquilt.org](http://www.livingquilt.org)) was featured this week at the 2008 National Summit on HIV Diagnosis, Prevention and Access to Care in Washington, DC. The Quilt itself illustrates the growing impact of HIV/AIDS on women in the southern U.S., particularly women of color. Complementing the summit's goals of increased awareness, prevention and treatment, the Living Quilt collects and shares video and audio stories from women on the front lines of the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS. The Living Quilt highlights the need for routine testing, early diagnosis, and increased access to care for those living with HIV/AIDS in the South.

These powerful videos have been viewed more than 6,300 times view visitors from across the U.S. since the Southern AIDS Living Quilt's October launch, while more than one dozen new video "patches" have been recorded to add to the initial thirty three.

"Like this summit, the Living Quilt works to increase awareness and make an impact on those infected and those at risk," said Dr. Bambi Gaddist, Executive Director of the South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council. "While we have a long way to go, it's a sign that the status quo can change."

"This Quilt serves to empower, encourage and educate those most directly impacted by HIV and AIDS," said Evelyn Foust, Co-Chair of the Southern AIDS Coalition and AIDS and STD Director at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. "I urge women across the region to visit the Living Quilt and consider sharing their stories. Together, we can break the chain of the 56,000 new HIV infections in 2006 alone."

Visitors can upload stories of their own, becoming part of the Quilt through their own unique narrative. The Living Quilt site also provides valuable information and resources on HIV and AIDS, including where to find testing resources across the United States.

**About the Southern AIDS Coalition**

The Southern AIDS Coalition was formed in 2001 as a membership organization of government representatives, corporations, and community advocates to provide southern citizens an opportunity for adequate HIV/AIDS prevention information, treatment, and health care. SAC is a federally recognized 501(c)3.