



Dear Friend:

Welcome to the launch of the Southern AIDS Living Quilt, a website that illustrates the growing impact of HIV/AIDS on women in the southern United States, particularly women of color. The goals of the Living Quilt are to empower, encourage and educate policymakers, healthcare providers, the media and the communities most directly impacted by HIV/AIDS to recognize that, in order to turn the tide on the 56,000 new infections in 2006 alone, the status quo must change.

This virtual quilt of videos featuring real-life stories from women on the frontlines of the epidemic – as well as the stories of their families, their community and their healthcare providers – brings to life the impact of HIV/AIDS in the South.

What is that impact? The South has the highest number of adults and adolescents living with AIDS in the United States: HIV/AIDS is currently the leading cause of death for African American women between the ages of 25 and 34.

The Southern AIDS Living Quilt is a joint project of the Southern AIDS Coalition and Test for Life, designed to raise awareness of the importance of routine HIV screening in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The Living Quilt provides communities across the region with access to critical information to address today's HIV/AIDS challenges. In addition to compelling stories, the Living Quilt website provides links to valuable resources and fact sheets about the epidemic to empower those directly impacted and encourage them to make more informed healthcare decisions and to educate others on the importance of HIV testing.

I urge you to visit [www.livingquilt.org](http://www.livingquilt.org), share the Living Quilt website with others and consider adding your own story to this project. Your participation, together with that of others across the South, can make a difference in reducing the stigma of the disease and empowering women to get tested and know their status so we can prevent the spread of HIV. With each story, the Quilt's message becomes more powerful. Our collective voice is a testament to the critical need for a change in the status quo.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Foust  
Co-Chair, Southern AIDS Coalition

Kathie Hiers  
Co-Chair, Southern AIDS Coalition