

## PWAC Holds Events and Fundraisers



Gay men's Chorus makes another community appearance

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Samantha Kuryla, President, PWA Coalition of Broward County

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### By Michael James

The Persons with AIDS Coalition (PWAC) has been serving the Broward County community since 1988 providing services, education and outreach programs to those infected and impacted by HIV/AIDS. Their services include referrals, secondary prevention, and a help hotline.

The Broward Educational AIDS Conference on Health 2001 (BEACH) was held on Friday, March 30 as part of their John Benedetto series.

"It was the first year the event was held on a weekday and there were some initial concerns about attendance," said PWAC president Samantha Kuryla. Those concerns were due to the fact that most who attend the event are in the health care profession and usually work most weekdays.

To the delight of Ms. Kuryla and Lynn Selzer, Chair of BEACH 2001, there were over 350 in attendance. There was a wide variety of informative and educational forums that .

While Kuryla was making sure the BEACH 2001 event was running smoothly,

Crystal Ockerman, a community volunteer was putting the final touches on a fundraiser for the following evening.

Ms. Ockerman organized a fundraiser for PWAC that was held on March 31 at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center. While planning she described her effort as "taking responsibility for myself and making a positive contribution." She spent three months organizing the event. The Flamingo Freedom Band also played.

During the Italian buffet dinner, supplied by the *Floridian Restaurant*, the Gay Men's Chorus sang to the group of over 50 people. The centerpieces were supplied by *Oh, What a Basket*.

The benefit was a compilation of entertainment and dinner that raised nearly \$6,000 for the organization.

Ms. Ockerman said, "The business community is very supportive of the cause." However, she and Ms. Kuryla both stated that it is difficult to get much support from private individuals.

The International Bicycle Shop donated 2 bikes as prizes for the talent show. Some

of the other businesses that donated towards the evening were Clothes Encounters, Kicks, Archives Bookstore, Las Olas Barber Shop, Best Rentals, Fred Haddad & Julia Hester, Woodruff Foundation and many others.

PWAC has found it difficult to find volunteers in the past and they now are receiving little financial support from the community.

Ockerman concluded, "The personal effort and action Samantha puts into this organization is phenomenal."

The next event being organized by PWAC is a Bunny Hop scheduled for Saturday, April 14 from 11am-3pm. There will be music, games, food and a special visit from "the Bunny family."

The event is sponsored by CDTC, GLOW, Broward County Health Department, Foundations of Broward, the Names Project, Broward House and others. It will be held at Snyder Park, just south of SR84 on SW 4<sup>th</sup>.

PWAC can be reached by calling 565-9119 or by visiting their website at [www.pwac.org](http://www.pwac.org).



Crystal Ockerman receives award for obtaining grant funds in Broward County

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