

REVITALIZE YOUR NEW YEAR

Happy NEW YEAR 2024

A Journey to Sexual Wellness and Empowerment

Dear Open Door community,

Happy New Year! As we dive into the first month of 2024, our theme, "Revitalize Your New Year: A Journey to Sexual Wellness and Empowerment," resonates strongly. January marks not only the beginning of a new calendar year but also an opportunity to embark on a transformative journey toward a healthier, more empowered version of ourselves.

The dawn of a new year brings with it a canvas of possibilities and a chance to set the tone for the months ahead. It is an ideal time for reflection, renewal, and the pursuit of personal growth. This January, as we celebrate new beginnings, let's also focus on the importance of setting SMART goals—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Setting SMART goals is like creating a roadmap for success. Whether it's enhancing communication in relationships, prioritizing self-care, or exploring new facets of your intimate life, a thoughtful and strategic approach can pave the way for a fulfilling journey. This year, we encourage you to consider what sexual wellness and empowerment mean to you personally and set goals that align with your aspirations.

As we navigate the uncharted waters of the new year, let's do so with intention and purpose. Open Door is here to support you every step of the way. May January be the beginning of a year filled with self-discovery, empowerment, and a celebration of your journey to sexual wellness.

Cheers to the possibilities that lie ahead!

Upcoming Events

Free Rapid HIV Testing

Feb. 6th from 10:00 AM-3:30 PM
Walgreens 1221 N Lake St, Aurora, IL
Walgreens 100 W Lincoln Hwy, Dekalb IL
Walgreens 30 W Church St, Sandwich

Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Celebration

Feb. 10th from 12:00 PM-3:00 PM
Casa Michioacan 900 E Roosevelt Rd, West Chicago, IL

Valentine's Day Health Check

Feb. 14th from 4:00 PM-7:00 PM
Warp corps, 114 N. Benton St, Woodstock, IL

Free Rapid HIV Testing

Mar. 4th from 8:30 AM-5:00 PM
Open Door, 157 S Lincoln Ave, Aurora, IL

Free Rapid HIV Testing

Mar. 5th from 8:30 AM-5:00 PM
Open Door, 1665 Larkin Ave, Elgin IL

Empower HER Day

Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Celebration

Mar. 9th from 12:00 PM-3:00 PM
Open Door, 1665 Larkin Ave, Elgin IL

Free Rapid HIV Testing

Mar. 19th from 10:00 AM-3:30 PM
Walgreens 1221 N Lake St, Aurora, IL
Walgreens 100 W Lincoln Hwy, Dekalb IL
Walgreens 30 W Church St, Sandwich IL

For the events in bold, there is no fee for these events. However, registration is recommended. To register, [please click HERE](#).

From the Executive Director



*Perry Maier
Executive Director*

I looked up from my desk and here we are in 2024 and January is almost over. A new year brings new opportunities, and, as some might call them, resolutions. The front-page of this Newsletter talks about a journey to sexual wellness and empowerment. You might ask yourself how that fits into making changes in your

life. About a decade ago, I was talking with David, the Executive Director at that time, and he indicated we should focus on sexual health and wellness. He believed in it so much that he had a hat made with sexual health and wellness on the back of the hat. I have no idea where mine went, and I wonder if any of you who are reading this might have been lucky to get one. If you have one, please call me because I would be happy to take it off your hands or head.

To me sexual health and empowerment means having access to factual, helpful, and comprehensive information and resources about sexuality that leads to healthy behaviors along with empowering ourselves

to embrace our lives and sexual behaviors and, of course, easy access to sexual health care. Open Door has been there to provide the needed education and access to care. A New Year's gift to yourself could include testing to know your status and PrEP to reduce your risk of acquiring HIV.

Let's talk about our goals & resolutions for a minute. 1. We need to be realistic about goals and resolutions, and not beat ourselves up if we do not achieve them. 2. Baby steps are the best way to increase success. 3. Reach out for additional support while making changes in behavior.

We have some wonderful community events as well as testing opportunities on the horizon. We will be at Casa Michoacan in West Chicago on 2/10/24 12-3:00 PM for National

Black/African American HIV Awareness Day. We will have entertainment, sharing of stories, testing, and food and drinks. Also in February, specifically the 14th, we will be in Woodstock (WARP CORP) for a testing event from 4:00-7:00 PM. On March 9th Noon to 3 PM Open Door will offer "Empower Her" in recognition of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, which is on March 10. This event will be more spiritual/holistic in nature. More information on these activities can be found in this newsletter and on our website odhcil.org. Here's to a healthy new year!

Take care.
Perry
PerryM@opendoorclinic.org

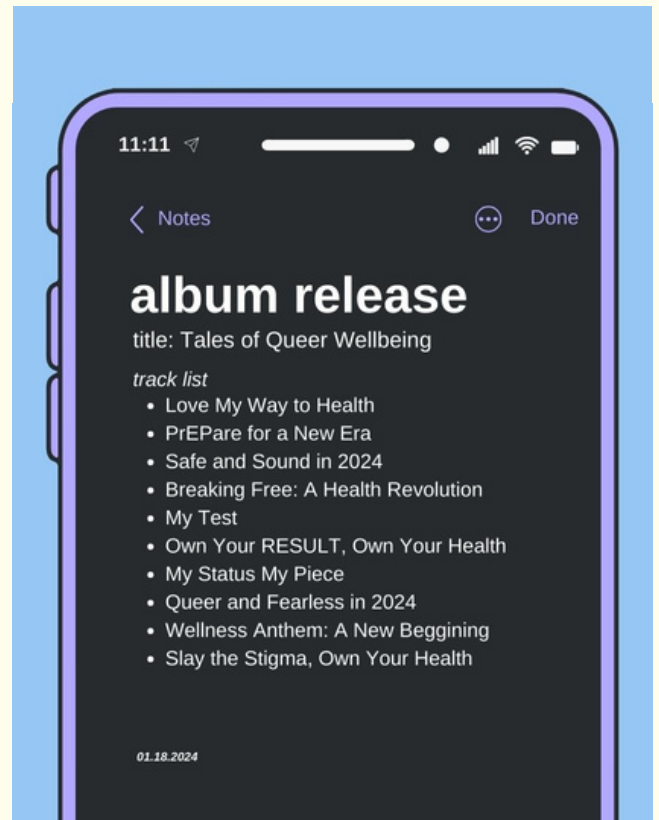
Employee Spotlight



*Anna Avila
Practice Manager*

Anna started working with Open Door in 2020. Anna manages the day-to-day operations of the medical department and works alongside the medical team to ensure things operate efficiently and effectively. The best part of Anna's position is her work with the medical team and assisting patients with their needs. She takes pride in seeing how Open Door's work makes a difference in the community. Anna describes herself as empathetic, determined and efficient. On a personal note, her hobbies include journaling, reading and yoga.

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Board Talk

James G. Allen, Jr. is a dedicated and compassionate board member of the Open Door Health Center of Illinois (ODHCIL). He brings a wealth of experience from his diverse career and community involvement, contributing to our mission of providing comprehensive healthcare services to the communities we serve.

James lives in Elgin, Illinois, with his partner, Peter, and their nephew, William, whom they've helped raise since he was seven. He is an active member of his community, serving on various boards and participating in local initiatives.

He is a seasoned Flight Attendant for United Airlines, where he has been flying for 18 years. His career in the skies has honed his skills in communication, problem-solving, and customer service, which he applies to his duties at ODHCIL.

In addition to his role with United Airlines, James has been working as a Paralegal for the Law Offices of Andrew J. Sosnowski since June 2022. He dedicates most of his time with the firm to provide Pro Bono legal services alongside Volunteers of America Illinois, supporting their Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program. This experience has given him a deep understanding of the legal and social challenges many veterans face.

James graduated from Elgin Community College in December 2022 with an Associate in Arts and an Associate in Applied Science in Paralegal Studies. He graduated with high honors, boasting a 3.9 GPA, and was a member of the Phi

Theta Kappa Honors Society. His time at Elgin Community College was marked by significant leadership roles, including serving as the 2021-2022 Student Trustee, 2020-2021 Vice President of Student Government, and 2021-2022 President of the Students Who Are Not Silent (SWANS), the LGBTQIA+ Student organization on campus.

His commitment to public service is further demonstrated by his internships, including a term at Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi's Schaumburg District Office in Fall 2021, where he assisted with constituent needs and put a special focus on housing insecurities. Following this, he interned at the Kane County State's Attorney's Office in the fall of 2022. There, he worked within the Drug and Domestic Violence units, supporting Assistant State's Attorneys in handling multiple cases and trials.

Beyond his role at ODHCIL, James serves as a Board Member and the Vice President of the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestras, and he is a member of the Bright Futures Campaign Cabinet of the Elgin Community College Foundation.

James is deeply committed to enhancing the lives of those in his community, and his broad experience and dedication make him a valuable asset to our team at ODHCIL. We are proud to have him as part of our board, helping us make a difference in the lives of our patients.

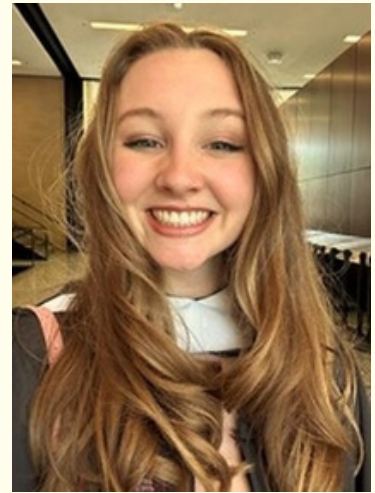


*James Allen
Board Member*



The Return of Behavioral Health Services at Open Door Health Center

Meet Elyse Morris, a dedicated and compassionate behavioral health therapist who has joined forces with Open Door Health Center. Through our valued partnership with Volunteers of America, we are thrilled to offer in-house behavioral health therapy at our Elgin location. Elyse will be available in the office a couple of days a week, extending her expertise to provide top-notch counseling services to our valued clients. With a commitment to mental well-being, Elyse brings a wealth of experience and a warm, understanding approach to support individuals on their journey to better mental health at Open Door Health Center.



Volunteer with us!

"Join the Open Door Health Center of Illinois in making a difference! We invite you to be a vital part of our mission by exploring volunteering opportunities that extend both within our facilities and at various events. Whether you have a passion for providing in-house assistance or contributing to the success of events, your support is crucial in helping us carry out our mission of promoting community well-being.

Volunteers play a key role in enhancing the services we offer, fostering a welcoming environment, and making a positive impact on the lives of our clients. Whether you choose to lend a hand within our facilities or participate in community events, your commitment will contribute to the overall success of our programs.

Embrace the opportunity to be part

of a dedicated team working toward a healthier community. Your support is invaluable, and together, we can create a positive and lasting impact on the well-being of those we serve. Join us at Open Door Health Center of Illinois and help us carry forward our mission with passion, purpose, and a commitment to community wellness."

For more information or to apply for these rewarding volunteering opportunities, please reach out to our Human Resource Manager, Karina Maksimova, at KarinaM@opendoorclinic.org.



2023

AT A GLANCE



Upcoming Events

Valentine's Day Health Check

VALENTINE'S DAY HEALTH CHECK

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL RAPID HIV AND STI TESTING.

RESULT TIMING
 RAPID HIV TESTS - 20 MINUTES
 STD PANEL - 5 TO 7 BUSINESS DAYS (INCLUDES SYPHILIS, GONORRHEA AND CHLAMYDIA TESTING)

14th FEB. 2024 4-7PM | **WARP CORPS 114 N. BENTON ST. WOODSTOCK, IL 60098**

WARP CORPS Prevention Through Engagement | opendoor Health Center of Illinois | MCDH | CIRCLES OF PEOPLE

♡ NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED | WALK-INS WELCOME ♡

Join us for a special Valentine's Day Health Check event at Warp Corps! Show your love for yourself and your partner by taking charge of your health. This free and confidential event offers rapid HIV and STI testing to ensure your well-being in a safe and supportive environment.

Date: February 14th

Time: 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Warp Corps, 114 N. Benton St., Woodstock, IL 60098

Our dedicated team will provide rapid HIV tests with results available within just 20 minutes. Additionally, we offer a Free STD panel that includes testing for Gonorrhea, Syphilis, and Chlamydia, with results delivered within 5-7 business days.

No registration is required, and walk-ins are more than welcome. Take a proactive step toward a healthier you this Valentine's Day! Your well-being is our priority, and we're here to support you on your journey to a happy and healthy life. Spread the love, not the worry. See you there!

If you have questions or need more information please contact our Director of Outreach and Resource Development, Marcos Bostho. Email: Marcosb@odhcil.org Cell: (847) 508-9358



Free HIV and STI Testing for those who are uninsured!

Mondays in Aurora
Ph: (630) 264 1819

Tuesdays in Elgin
Ph: (847) 695 1093

Call us to schedule your appointment!

Upcoming Events



Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Celebration

Join us for a powerful and inspiring event, the "Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Celebration," where we come together to engage, educate, and empower, uniting to end HIV/AIDS in black communities.

Date: Saturday, February 10th

Time: 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: Casa Michiocan, 900 E Roosevelt RD, West Chicago, IL 60185

Event Highlights:

- Presentation: Gain insights into the facts and challenges of HIV/AIDS in black communities through an informative presentation.
- Personal Stories: Two brave patients will share their personal journeys and experiences, shedding light on the impact of HIV/AIDS.
- Invocation: Reverend Margaret Blitch will lead a heartfelt invocation, setting a tone of unity and strength.
- Musical Performance: Enjoy soulful melodies from the Chorus of Grace Deliverance Outreach Ministries.
- Special Performance: Be captivated by the powerful spoken word artistry of Trinity Sapphire.

There is no fee for this events. However, registration is recommended. To register, [please click HERE](#).



🌸 March Women's HIV/AIDS Awareness Events 🌸

Join us throughout the month of March as we passionately advocate for Women's HIV/AIDS Awareness. Open Door Clinic is hosting a series of impactful events aimed at fostering knowledge, empowerment, and support for women in our communities.

Testing Events:

- Open Door Aurora - March 4th
- Open Door Elgin - March 5th

Our commitment to your well-being begins with free, rapid HIV testing, providing results in just 20 minutes. In addition, we extend our care by offering a complimentary STD panel, including tests for Gonorrhea, Syphilis, and Chlamydia, with results delivered within 5-7 business days. Early detection is key, and we are here to support you on your health journey.

🌈 Empower Her Day - March 9th:

Save the date for our exclusive event, "Empower Her Day," specially curated for women living with HIV/AIDS. This free event aims to create a supportive and empowering space where women can connect, share experiences, and gain valuable insights. To reserve your spot, please contact Michelle Espino at michelle@opendoorclinic.org.

For all Events, incentives will be provided to all women who participate as a token of our appreciation for your commitment to your health.

CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD

The Client Advisory Board cordially invites clients & staff, friends & family to:

Social Events:

Bowling Party
 Sunday, Mar. 17th, 1:00-3:00 PM
 St. Charles Bowl, 2520 W. Main St., St. Charles IL
 Free Bowling, shoes and food provided by Open Door. Participants are highly encouraged to wear Green. [Click Here to Register.](#)

Advocacy Events:

AIDS Watch
 Washington D.C. March 17-19th, 2024
 Theme: We're in this Together
 Additional information to be announced

Springfield Advocacy Day
 Wednesday, April 10th 2024
 Location: Virtual
 Speak with IL elected Representatives & Senators

Advocacy Empowerment Training prior to event. Free Training, Transportation & Breakfast Provided by AIDS Foundation of Chicago



My Journey as an HIV Advocate

by Louis Hobson
 Chair-Client Advisory Board
 Open Door Health Center of IL

It's not always a bad thing to put yourself out there ! That's actually how I got started becoming an HIV Advocate. I asked to get involved, and as a solution I volunteered at Open Door Clinic. Let me explain. In 2006 I left Cook County and moved to Kane County. I had recently retired due to health issues. I didn't know anyone other than family. When I went to Open Door to switch my services I met Mary Hodges. She had me doing some of everything around the clinic ! I eventually ended up going with Mary speaking to people about living with HIV. I was good at speaking to people in an entertaining way.

Eventually I met Perry Maier, our current Executive Director. I guess that he saw something in me. He started sending me to the Advocacy and Policy meetings at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. That was followed by Board of Directors meetings, Client Advisory Board meetings, Collar Counties Consortia meetings, and other Advocacy related events. I also started attending workshops on Client Advocacy, HIV testing, and wellness care !

Whatever came along that sparked my interest I signed up for ! I met many superstars in the Illinois HIV community. The more people I met the less I felt alone with this disease. There were so many creative, caring, and dedicated people working for our benefit ! I met many of those people at Illinois Advocacy Days for multiple years. I was also blessed enough to be able to do this on the national level at AIDS Watch in Washington DC several times ! Those people in Washington DC were really amazing !

There are many ways for you to get involved, and take an active part in your health and the health of others. You can start by finding out what programs the clinic offers that appeal to you. If you don't see what interests you, ask around. If they don't have an answer, they might know where to find it. If you can't find it, try starting your own group. There are many people waiting to help you advocate for your success.

Please complete a Client Participation Form after receiving service. Forms may be obtained at the front desk or through your case manager. Completed forms are placed in a monthly lottery. Winners will receive a \$25 gift card. Thank you!