



Ryan Braun

Walkers raise money for AIDS research

by Dustin Alexander, Senior Editor



AIDS Walk Wisconsin 2012 was a huge success this year, thanks in part to 2,255 walkers and Honorary Chair Ryan Braun. Their combined efforts raised \$361,392 for AIDS and HIV prevention, care and research. Walks like this occur in many cities across the nation.

The Milwaukee event was held at the Summerfest grounds and raised 23% more donations than last year, with every dollar staying in Wisconsin, according to an official AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin press release.

Milwaukee Brewers' Ryan Braun was a part of the promotion to raise awareness of the walk and the need to be vigilant in the fight against the chronic but now rarely fatal disease, if detected and treated properly.

"AIDS is impacting too many of our friends, family members and neighbors. I am excited and happy to be here today with you and to raise awareness and generate support to strengthen the fight against AIDS," said Braun. In the past 20 years, the nation has seen a strong increase in professional athletes who support causes like this and others.

"HIV is a brutal disease, but together we are stronger," ARCW President and CEO Mike Gifford said. Great progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The past decade saw a 15% reduction in new infections and a 22% decline in AIDS-related deaths, according to Unicef USA. Many people, in the United States, are completely unaware that they are infected with HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS.

The only downfall to treatment in the U.S. is the high cost of a "cocktail" of medicines. Metro News Network conducted an interview with a young, heterosexual female that the news agency simply identified as "Jane Citizen." In the interview, Jane stated that the four medications she has been prescribed would cost her over \$4,700 monthly if it weren't for grants like the Ryan White ADAP Fund, Title XIX Medicaid and Medicare.

Jane is just nineteen-years-old. At the time of the interview, Jane was homeless because her parents were overly concerned for their health and that of Jane's siblings. A month after the interview, Metro News reported that Jane had found affordable housing, is in counseling and is working a small job to offset her costs. She is also finding emotional strength in sharing her story with other people by giving talks to groups of youth and adults in various churches and civic organizations in her community. Sadly, Jane's parents still won't have anything to do with her, their only daughter.

For more information about participating in an AIDS Walk in your community, see the national directory. For more information about HIV and the incredible, lifesaving research that's being done, visit AIDS.gov. People are living longer, productive lives with the chronic illness, and every month new research offers even more hope in the form of newer, highly sophisticated medications. LR

SOURCES: ARCW, Milwaukee Brewers Press Office, Centers for Disease Control & Metro News Network.