

impact+

I am Far, and I'm positive.

One day I didn't have any food, money, nothing. A social worker told me to come to The Aliveness Project. Now I come here almost every day. The food is great, and I don't have to worry where the next meal will be.



Our nonprofit organization began in the early 1980s with a small group of people with HIV/AIDS. They got together for regular potlucks and fellowship, and their conversation often revolved around a question: What does it mean to be alive with HIV/AIDS? In response, they created The Aliveness Project in 1985.

The Aliveness Project brings new meaning to the term "HIV positive." For starters, the individuals we serve—people who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and their families—aren't clients. They're members.

At The Aliveness Project, our members find a place of acceptance, peace and even joy. A nutritious meal shared with friends. Provisions from the food shelf. Help with finding work or a place to live. A therapeutic massage or acupuncture. Quality time with people who get it.

"Keeping the secret can depress you. The Aliveness Project is a place to get away from society and talk about all the things going on. Just because I caught this doesn't mean it's gonna take me." —Dawayne

HIV doesn't discriminate, and neither does The Aliveness Project. A quarter of our members are women. Nearly a third are straight. Almost half are people of color. And we're all in this together.

"When I was diagnosed I went through a major depression. At The Aliveness Project you're not alone—you're in a community. You see other people who have what you have. I would have isolated myself...who knows what would have happened? This place kept me alive." —Andy

We're positive, but we're not kidding ourselves. AIDS is a terrible disease, and the epidemic in this country isn't over. Hundreds of Minnesotans continue to be diagnosed each year. It's true that more people with HIV/AIDS are living longer, but the new medications are not a cure. Sometimes the side effects take a toll almost as harsh as the disease itself.

The Aliveness Project has grown. Usually that's a good thing. But it gives us no satisfaction to report that in 2009, we served more than twice the number of people we served in 2000. The upward trend continues.

The Aliveness Project needs to be ready.





I am Hazel, and I'm positive.

I love coming to The Aliveness Project. I can always come here and find people to visit with, talk to and be here for me. I love being a volunteer. They've given me so much—I just want to give back.

Food is a big part of what we do. Between the on-site Meal Program and the food shelf, The Aliveness Project provides nearly 95,000 meals in a given year. But there's much more to us than that.

"The food helps. I like to eat." Maria is a member of The Aliveness Project. Like anyone, she appreciates the opportunity to share meals—nutritious, tasty and prepared with love—in a warm and caring community.

"At The Aliveness Project the food is not only the food—it's the connection with people. You know the people sitting across from you are HIV positive. You can talk freely. I feel completely comfortable here just sharing what I am." —Antonio

We take our supporting role very seriously. Our social work staff helps members navigate "the system." Massage therapists, acupuncturists and other integrative practitioners provide thousands of sessions each year. Members and their families receive holiday baskets filled with gifts that have been carefully chosen, like the hand-knitted hats and scarves made by Hazel and her sister. Even the pets of our members benefit from quarterly veterinary clinics, provided—like all services of The Aliveness Project—at no charge.

"When you don't have anyone to touch you, integrative therapies at The Aliveness Project enrich you spiritually and emotionally. It feels like some weight is lifted from your back, from your body. They rejuvenate you." —Maria

We are here for our members at every step of their lives. And the results? They're good. They're gratifying. But they're not enough.



People living with HIV/AIDS are individuals: human beings with remarkable, sometimes painful stories. By virtue of their humanity, they deserve dignity and care. They deserve a facility that is designed with their health and well-being in mind.

Here's what members of The Aliveness Project have come to expect within our walls:

Good food. Therapies that mitigate symptoms or side effects. Help to access housing, employment, insurance benefits, financial assistance, treatment for chemical dependency or mental health issues, and other essentials. Information. Stability. Improved health.

Reasons to live.

More than two thirds of The Aliveness Project's members tell us they feel less isolated, and have more contact with other HIV+ people, as a result of our services. More than two thirds report a decrease in feelings of sadness or depression. And nine out of ten members count on the meals and food shelf to stay healthy and live independently. They say it better than we ever could:

"The Aliveness Project is the start point. The kind of obstacle we find outside isn't present here. We don't have that stress here because everybody knows—everyone has HIV." —Antonio

"To me, The Aliveness Project is like a family. They make you feel welcome. People care about you. It's hard for people who live with HIV—hard to find people willing to help. I was homeless for quite a few years. I wouldn't have been able to find my apartment without help from The Aliveness Project." —LeRoy

"The Aliveness Project has been with me in good times and bad times both. It's a place I can go when I'm alone or don't feel well—when my life feels overwhelming." —Maria

34,000+

meals served on site each year

700+

holiday gift baskets assembled for members

88,000+

pounds of nonperishable food and hygiene items distributed by The Aliveness Project food shelf

31,000+

hours contributed by more than 1,000 volunteers—the equivalent of 14 full-time staff members

2,700+

case management visits helping members find employment, housing, medical care, educational opportunities and more

3,000+

integrative therapy sessions—acupuncture, massage, chiropractic, shiatsu and other treatments—experienced by members

1,000,000+

meals provided by The Aliveness Project's Meal Program and food shelf since 1985



“Humans are adaptable, but there comes a point when we can’t adjust anymore. The organization’s ability to adapt to its space reached its limit. We had to open a different door.”

—Charles Levin, architect

Hundreds of Minnesotans are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS each year. In 2009, the number of new cases in the state was the highest since 1995. And behind every diagnosis is a person with a story, a family, and a life that will never be the same.

We don’t foresee an end to the need for what we do at The Aliveness Project. In 2009, we served 1,500 members in a building designed to serve 400.

The Aliveness Project long since outgrew the 7,000 square foot building at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. The building wasn’t accessible. To get to the dining room, people who couldn’t take the stairs had to enter through the back alley, via a door by the dumpsters. As their disease progressed, some members became too ill to enter the building at all.

Privacy was next to nonexistent. Members who used case management services met with their social worker in one of two tiny offices with limited soundproofing.

Members who received acupuncture, a massage or other integrative therapies could hear anything going on outside the room. They also heard the dishwasher running. Enough was enough.

In 2009, The Aliveness Project found and purchased a new space only 10 blocks west of the old one, at 3808 Nicollet Avenue South. With approximately 12,000 finished square feet, the new building is allowing our organization to improve and expand our services and to increase the number of people we serve.

Now all we have to do is pay for it.

Building purchase	\$ 626,500
Renovation and build out, including new elevator	1,383,850
Commercial kitchen, furnishings, and equipment	65,000
Professional fees, campaign costs, and moving fees	359,650
Short-term financing	65,000
Total	\$ 2,500,000



I am Tim, and I'm positive.

I was 18 when I was diagnosed, and it was the end of my life as I knew it. I felt like a leper, and that was pretty awful. At The Aliveness Project everyone is so positive that it helped me to say, OK, HIV is something I have to deal with, and I want what's best for myself.

The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Minnesota is up 62% since 2000; the number of members served by The Aliveness Project has doubled in the same period.

Our new building means The Aliveness Project can increase the number of members it serves, keeping pace with the rising need.

Here are a few of the ways our new building is helping us help:

+Better access. The new space is fully accessible and conforms with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

+More room for food. With more storage space, we can take fuller advantage of food donation opportunities from Second Harvest and other resources.

+Better nutrition. We can double the number of people who receive food disbursements. Members have greater flexibility to plan their meals, which in turn makes a greater positive impact on their health.

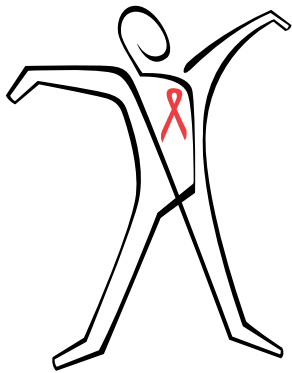
+More dining room. Expanding our dining room seating from 46 to 80 will accommodate larger groups and make for more relaxed meals and extra time to connect with others.

+Better therapy spaces. The number of integrative therapy rooms has doubled, and they are protected from outside noise and commotion. No more dishwasher noise.

+More room for volunteers. With sufficient and pleasant space in which to work, more people are volunteering. This leverages contributed support.

+Better connections. With more space, we can welcome support groups, 12-step meetings and other gatherings in our conference rooms.

+More privacy. Adequate soundproofing protects those who use case management services to access employment, education, housing and other needs. It facilitates meetings between members and other agencies that reach out to people living with HIV/AIDS in The Aliveness Project's space.



The Aliveness Project is raising \$2.5 million through its Positive Impact campaign. Want something named after you or a loved one? Let’s talk. Have something smaller in mind? Let’s talk.

For questions regarding how to donate, please contact Joe Larson, Executive Director, at 612-824-5433, ext. 201 or email him at executive@aliveness.org. **Today.**

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The Aliveness Project

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