

Dear _____,

Atlas, a prevention program of Boulder County AIDS Project (BCAP), has been promoting HIV awareness and building community among men who have sex with men (MSM) with the motto “Stronger Together” since 2007. As we reflect on this past year, it is easy to see how true this motto remains today. Our members continue to steer the program’s mission through education, community building, volunteering, and stewardship. Alex Sierra shares, *“I am so passionate about Atlas. As a member since 2013, the vital work we accomplish through the program keeps me coming back year after year and instills a sense of loyalty to BCAP and HIV Prevention.”*



Atlas members joined BCAP at AIDS Walk Colorado

You are someone who has supported BCAP’s programs in the past, and who cares about reducing HIV locally. Will you make a donation and help us meet our fundraising goal of \$5,000 to keep local HIV awareness and prevention possible?

MSM are at the highest risk for acquiring HIV in the United States, and in Colorado. Whereas MSM are an estimated 4% of Colorado’s population, they are approximately 75% of people living with HIV in our state. While HIV diagnoses among MSM have remained stable in recent years, Atlas aims to further decrease transmission locally. Atlas provides an invaluable roadmap to guide our members and supporters towards awareness, wellbeing, and community. An Atlas member since January 2012, Blaine Wajdowicz says, *“When it came to my sexuality, I had a lot to learn about my life, my health, and my happiness. Atlas has been there for me, not just to give me information, but to give me community.”* Members value education and personal growth through service, and they value the opportunity to educate and help others.



Atlas members selected activities for the year

Atlas’ welcoming and educational events present engaging platforms for members to learn more about HIV, share personal experiences, and cultivate leadership. *“I believe that HIV prevention through community offers ongoing opportunities for education and self-efficacy, and that peer conversations are a driving force in eliminating HIV stigma,”* notes Noah Selzer, who has been an Atlas member since July 2011. Program members meet monthly for educational activities promoting social connection and wellness.

Throughout the year, Atlas conducts educational outreach at community events, such as Longmont Pridefest. We also produce live entertainment for the broader community, like our singing competition *Rococo: An Evening of Competitive Singing and Musical Pizzazz!* Our events foster connectivity and bring power to the many voices and talents of our peer-driven, volunteer-based program. *“I love the cause and purpose that drives Atlas. I’m always being invited to be a part of and come to events – which is awesome!”* mentions Natalie Gonzalez who joined Atlas and took home the Rococo trophy in 2017.



Atlas members performed in Rococo at the Dairy Arts Center

Through support and education, Atlas helps members and extended social networks navigate personal decisions around relationships, sexual health, and medical care. Our staff provides one-on-one risk reduction counseling, HIV testing, and referrals to health services. When asked about his experiences with Atlas since joining the program in 2016, Quyncc Johnson highlights, *"Atlas staff are professional and so warm to talk to. They have helped me refine my knowledge of HIV prevention options and choices. I get tested regularly, and feel confident speaking about HIV."*

Last year Atlas celebrated many successful outcomes, including:

- Supporting 55 Atlas members to provide 3,880 program activity & BCAP service hours
- Hosting 21 group social mixers, wellness activities, & workshops
- Conducting outreach at 21 community events
- Providing HIV testing & risk reduction counseling to 212 MSM
- Providing (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) PrEP referrals to 91 MSM
- Reaching 1,351 MSM with HIV information & safer sex supplies
- Expanding staff by hiring Garrett Rose, Atlas' Program Coordinator



Over 200 Atlas members and supporters walked in the Denver PrideFest Parade



Atlas members at BCAP's Local Legends Gala

The tools that Atlas members attain through the program are life changing and have the potential to help and support others. Since joining Atlas in August 2016, Cacy Britton expresses, *"I am more informed about HIV and more confident to ask questions. I started to have a voice about my sexual health, and I began taking PrEP daily to help stay HIV-negative. I'm so glad that prevention strategies like PrEP exist because if current U.S. HIV diagnoses rates continue, one in six MSM will acquire HIV in their lifetime."*

To help reduce HIV locally, Atlas depends on the financial generosity of our members and supporters. Your early 2018 gift of \$25 or more will allow Atlas to continue providing free one-on-one behavioral counseling, educational workshops, HIV testing, and safer sex supplies to anyone in need.

Together, we can maintain our commitment to building a future where HIV transmission is rare.

With gratitude,

Frank O'Caña *Garrett Rose*

Frank O'Caña, Prevention Director
Garrett Rose, Atlas Program Coordinator

P.S. To further promote HIV awareness and prevention, Atlas will be recruiting 200 supporters to walk with us in the Denver PrideFest Parade on Sunday, June 17, 2018. We'll only be able to reach this goal with the support and participation of BCAP and Atlas supporters like you. So mark your calendar, get out your sneakers, and rally your friends! Email Garrett Rose, Atlas Program Coordinator, at garrett@bcap.org to sign up and march with pride.

