

**POZ: Support Network for HIV-Positive Individuals**  
by Marquex Faulkner



World AIDS Day, December 1, 2010, has become known around the world as a day to recognize the development in HIV/AIDS treatment, while serving as a reminder for the need of continual education and testing. In spite of these efforts, HIV/AIDS remains a disease covered in the shadows. Many people do not know very much about what it really is, and numerous prejudices remain about how it is spread and about the people infected. National organizations, such as the National Association for People with AIDS (NAPWA), have used a traditional model of national conferences and similar events tailored toward a wide audience to reach constituents and address issues. These national organizations have grown in their reach based on the strength of their local branches. Such organizations include POZ, which has a Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago chapter.

In the past decade, even national organizations have realized that the needs of its constituents have changed. Resources previously handled on a national level, such as healthcare issues, political objectives, and other public policy issues, though still important, have taken a back seat to the personal and community issues of people living with HIV/AIDS. According to NAPWA (napwa.org), "Advances in treatment and networking technology have profoundly affected our constituent needs. While treatment, care services, and health are still vital concerns, social networking opportunities can be more localized." With this in mind, the leadership at NAPWA has determined, "Regional meetings have two goals in mind: (1) to increase knowledge about health, including treatment and care services; and (2) to increase social networking opportunities." The regional model has allowed large organizations to reach people on a local level and be able to bring their concerns to the larger organization in a more effective and timely manner.

Social networks like facebook.com and dailystrength.org are putting people together even though they may be miles apart. Websites like thebody.com allow individuals to research and access information about the history of HIV/AIDS, while also being able to read and post on message boards to convey issues, discuss medication and treatment, and find a person to talk to. Even the magazine, *POZ*, provides information on everything

including news, policy, research updates, and personals (www.poz.com). Nevertheless, the needs of the individual, particularly in terms of social support networks, are most widely occurring at the local level. In the American capital, Washington, D.C., HIV/AIDS is affecting people in record numbers. According to the Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/geographic.htm#1>), the city ranks in the top five metro areas for people infected with HIV/AIDS. According to the Department of Health for the District of Columbia ([http://doh.dc.gov/doh/frames.asp?doc=/doh/lib/doh/pdf/dc\\_hiv\\_heterosexualstudy.pdf](http://doh.dc.gov/doh/frames.asp?doc=/doh/lib/doh/pdf/dc_hiv_heterosexualstudy.pdf)), "the District is in the midst of a modern epidemic with higher HIV/AIDS cases larger than in any other city or state in the nation." Although the Washington, D.C. Department of Health provides social and mental health resources for people living with HIV/AIDS, it is the everyday people who are developing a strong social network. Organizations such as Young Poz Socials (www.dcyngpozsocials.com) provide activities and social events. Although its target audience is HIV-positive males from 20-30, other people are also invited to participate in events.

*(Continued on page 2)*



A young Indian boy carries a sign as he marches with others during a rally calling for funding for programs for workers with HIV/AIDS in New Delhi on May 4, 2010. Asia, home to 60 percent of the world's population, is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of people living with HIV, and India, with roughly 2.5 million HIV-positive people, accounts for roughly half of Asia's HIV prevalence, according to UNAIDS. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

**The American Center**

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Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday through Friday)

**H O L I D A Y S**  
December 24: Christmas Day  
(in lieu of December 25)  
December 31: New Year's Day  
(in lieu of January 1)

## A WORD FROM THE CENTER

Hello everyone!

It's been two years since my last stint with the American Consulate General in Mumbai. I'm now back as the Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer at the American Center. I'm extremely excited about this new opportunity, to work with and meet all of you, and to be back in the bustling city of Mumbai!

When people ask me what it's like to be back, my answer is something like this: I know what to expect in some respects, but in some ways it's totally new to me because unlike before, I live and work in different locations and positions. I'm now getting accustomed to my long commute from Santacruz to Churchgate; although I seriously miss my 10-minute walking commute from last time! The job is very exciting, especially because I get to interact with more of you and am only limited by the extent of my own creativity and of course a budget! And I'm still trying to figure out my surroundings "up north."

As luck would have it, I arrived in early September during the Ganesh festival. Hopefully, that marks a blessed beginning! Just like here during Diwali festivities, this month in the U.S., we celebrate the holiday season. It comes with merriment, gifts, friends and family get-togethers, lights and decorations, holiday food, and more!

I look forward to working with you for the next few years. Together, we can make our U.S.-India relationship even stronger and more vibrant.

Sincerely,



Swati Patel  
Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer

*(Continued from page 1)*

Another social group, HOPE DC (hopedc.org), aims "to assist the growing numbers of HIV-positive gay men in the Washington, D.C. area, and those living with or affected by HIV."

Women are a growing population amongst people living with AIDS, with a large percentage of cases coming from heterosexual women. Groups such as Sister Circle, are support groups for HIV-positive women. The Whitman-Walker Clinic hosts a Positive Women Support Group, which also provides support group sessions for women who are HIV-positive. Since women support groups are still new, websites such as The Well Project ([www.thewellproject.org](http://www.thewellproject.org)), provide information specifically for women on issues ranging from treatment and counseling, to dating and pregnancy. As treatment for HIV/AIDS improves, and even as stigmas associated with being HIV-positive dwindle, the need to support people with HIV/AIDS will always remain as an issue

of high importance. Newly diagnosed individuals will still need the support and guidance of people who have been living successful lives with HIV/AIDS. As a result, social networks and support groups continue to allow individuals the opportunity to remain active in their community, while providing both a source of information and a voice.

*Marquex Faulkner works at the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai*



**Holiday  
Songs**



**Screening of  
"The Peace Tree"**



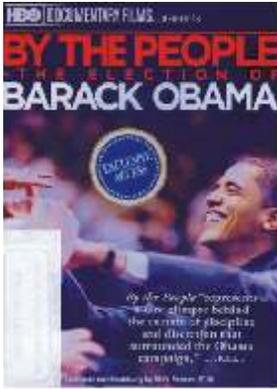
**Arts  
and Crafts**



HIV-affected children in a festive mood at a function organized by the the Telugu Network of People living with HIV/AIDS and the Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society in Hyderabad on December 7, 2006. The AP State AIDS Control Society, had launched a week-long campaign from December 1, 2006, on World AIDS Day, aimed at creating awareness among people about the prevention of HIV/AIDS. (AP Photo/Mahesh Kumar A.)

## NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

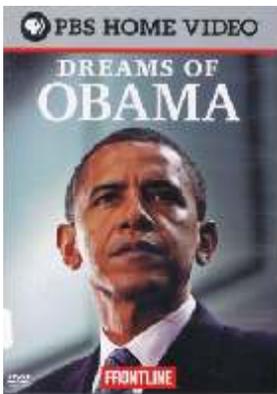
### DVDs on President Barack Obama



#### ***A Moment in History: The Inauguration of Barack Obama***

MPI Home Video  
(2009, 149 mins)

This DVD presents highlights of Barack Obama's Inauguration as the 44th President of the United States on January 20, 2009, and includes the inaugural speech, the invocation by Rev. Rick Warren, the departure of former President George W. Bush, the Obamas attending an inaugural ball, and President Obama's first interview by Robin Robert.



#### ***Obama: All Access – Barack Obama's Road to the White House***

CBS Broadcasting Inc.  
(2009, 240 mins)

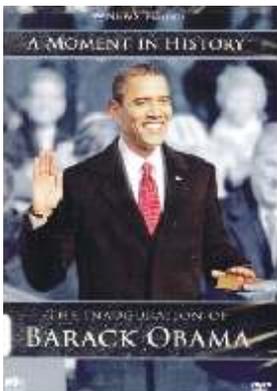
This film offers a complete account of the historic rise of Barack Obama from Illinois senator to first African-American president. The most powerful public appearances of the Obama campaign are also included as special features.



#### ***Dreams of Obama***

PBS Home Video  
(2009, 56 mins)

President Obama's closest friends and advisors provide insight into how the President might lead the country. This DVD tells the story of how a little known state senator rose from obscurity to the White House in just over four years.



#### ***By the People – The Election of Barack Obama***

by Amy Rice and Alicia Sams  
(2009, 116 mins)

*By the People* tracks Obama's 2008 presidential campaign to the White House. Exclusive footage of Obama, his family and his staff, reveal the struggles of a long and grueling campaign leading to his historic inauguration as the first African-American President of the United States.

**Note: Please contact the Circulation Desk at the American Library to view/borrow DVDs.**

Ask a Librarian: Please write to the American Library at [libref@state.gov](mailto:libref@state.gov) for research queries related to information on U.S. international relations, education, law and legislation, English language, and literature.

**Lollipops, Chicken Manchurian, and American Chop Suey: You Call This Chinese Food?!**  
 Discussion led by Li Ping Lo

**Monday, December 13** **6:00 p.m.**  
**American Center Auditorium**

What is “Chinese food?” Are Lollipops, Chicken Manchurian, Chop Suey, Sweet and Sour, and Egg Foo Young authentic Chinese dishes? How is “American Chinese” or “Indian Chinese” different from the Chinese food found in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan? In this presentation, we’ll learn about the history of this delicious cuisine, the different types of regional Chinese cooking, and how Chinese food has been adapted to suit local taste buds.

**Li Ping Lo** was born in Taiwan and grew up in the U.S. Her parents owned a Chinese restaurant in the Washington, D.C. area for nearly 30 years before their retirement in 2010. Prior to joining the U.S. Foreign Service, Li Ping lived and worked in Hong Kong and Beijing. Her interests include traveling, cooking, eating, reading, hiking, and cinema. She earned a B.A. in East Asian Studies from the College of William and Mary.

**Facebook Clean and Green Photography Contest Winner**



**Winner: Vishal Kurani**



**Kanika Nagpal**



**Rushabh Gandhi**



**Ashwin Tahiliani**



**Priya Shah**

**American Center Auditorium**  
**3:30 and 6:30 p.m.**

**Friday, December 10**

**Longtime Companion**  
 (1990, 100 mins)

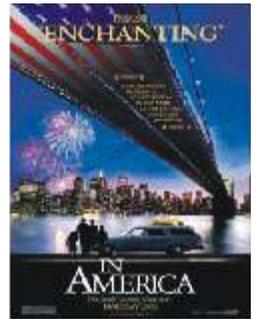
A heartfelt drama following the interconnected lives of several gay men in New York, from the sybaritic lifestyle of the early 1980s through eight years of the AIDS epidemic. The film offers an unflinching and moving look at the grim realities of the disease’s toll. Cast includes Stephen Caffrey and Bruce Davison.



**Friday, December 17**

**In America**  
 (2003, 105 mins)

Moving drama from director Jim Sheridan and his screenwriting daughters Naomi and Kirsten, centering on a family of Irish immigrants struggling to survive in a dilapidated New York City apartment building.



**social media**

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The American Center will be starting a **Facebook Favorites** section in the new year, so become a fan and get a chance to have your entries displayed in the American Center bulletin.

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Admission to American Center programs, restricted to persons over 14, unless otherwise specified, is on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.