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Independent Writer



### *Portfolio Sample*

*Client:* National HIV/AIDS Partnership (NHAP),  
for HMA Associates

*Project:* Press Release/Article calling for  
nominations for Red Ribbon Leadership Awards

*The National HIV/AIDS Partnership has ongoing crisis and other communications developed by HMA Associates. They needed a method to announce the call for nominations for their annual awards, the Red Ribbon Leadership Awards. By focusing on a past winner, one who has been involved in the struggle to eradicate HIV/AIDS from the beginning, the article became an engaging read rather than a dry routine.*

### Pioneer in AIDS Treatment and Prevention an Example of Award-Winning Leadership

Over 25 years ago, Dr. Joseph Sonnabend was one of the first doctors to see unusual infection in people being treated for sexually transmitted diseases. As a microbiologist, he was fascinated, and began working to characterize and prevent what later became known as AIDS.

As a person, he was also deeply concerned. “I was worried about the potential for discrimination against people with this disease, and became involved in activities to counter this,” he said. “I wanted to help the community take steps to respond to disaster. All my activities were based on a ‘don’t wait for help – do it yourself’ point of view.”

For over 25 years of Dr. Sonnabend worked under this philosophy. For his efforts, and for his exemplification of a leader who responds to a need because it exists, he was awarded a Red Ribbon Leadership Award in 2005 from the National HIV/AIDS Partnership (NHAP). It is his example that the NHAP looks to as it invites nominations for the 2006 Red Ribbon Leadership Awards, to be held on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2006.

The NHAP created the Red Ribbon Leadership Awards to recognize those leaders who step forward to support the millions who are affected by HIV and AIDs, to educate those who may be affected tomorrow, and to bring us together as a community to stop the deadly spread of HIV.

HIV/AIDS is still an epidemic in the United States. In the 25 years since the first case of AIDS was diagnosed, the face of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States has changed dramatically. More than one million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S, and an estimated one-fourth of Americans living with HIV don’t know they are infected. People of color, women, and youth are now the fastest growing groups impacted by the disease.

Dr. Sonnabend has seen the epidemic change over the years, and characterizes the change as enormous. “In the beginning it was a disease occurring in large cities, affecting mostly white gay men. The epidemic today is vastly different in geographical, ethnic and gender distribution. Today many of the affected communities are less fortunate in the sense that within their ranks the resources needed for effective advocacy are less available.

(cont’d)

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“In other words,” he added, “encouragement and help from without is needed to a greater extent than was the case at the start of the epidemic.”

Dr. Sonnabend has retired now. At the age of 72 he was still providing medical care to HIV infected patients in clinic settings in New York City. Now, a year later, he is still involved in advocacy as he makes plans for several writing projects.

And he still has lots to say. Motivated by the satisfaction of helping individuals and society, as well as a professional challenge, Dr. Sonnabend worked tirelessly throughout his career to spread the message that AIDS was preventable, that there are simple behaviors that can protect individuals, such as condom use, and that specific populations needed to take special care. There is still much to be done, as statistics on infection show.

“I am sad to say that in controlling the epidemic we have not been too successful,” he said. “AIDS is a preventable disease, and the means to reduce sexual transmission need to be explained with carefully crafted and targeted messages. These messages must be constantly repeated, and in language that is easily understood by different communities. Also, thought needs to be given to intelligently respond in a non-confrontational way to the different opponents of condom use.”

He views the NHAP and the Red Ribbon Leadership Awards as essential in spreading these messages, and is proud to be recognized for his work. “I’m gratified to be awarded a Red Ribbon Leadership award for my work, and I hope that the recognition also constitutes a recognition of the importance of the issues I have been involved with, like prevention education, preparation of safer sex materials, protection of patients from discrimination, and more.”

Nominations for the 2006 Leadership Awards should honor individuals and organizations working to end HIV/AIDS in the U.S. Nominees from the business, labor, civic, social, faith-based, philanthropic, media/entertainment and health care communities can be nominated in one of four categories: promoting respect, communication, capacity building, and policy.

Nominations can be made online at [www.redribbonawards.org](http://www.redribbonawards.org). Printed nomination forms can be requested by calling 1-888-232-NHAP (6427).

The NHAP is a collaboration comprised of more than one hundred leaders and organizations that shape communities throughout the United States. The partnership mobilizes American’s foremost leaders to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic through communicating key messages: AIDS is not over, and HIV testing is a crucial step in self-knowledge and safety.