**BWC AGENCY JOURNAL REPORT**

**JULY 2021 – DECEMBER 2021**

**Ministry:** QUALITY OF LIFE RETREATS (QLR)

**Purpose:** An all-volunteer ministry in its 33rd year of providing spiritual and informational Retreats for people living with HIV in the Baltimore-Washington area.

**Progress Toward Goals for the Final Six Months of 2021:**

Our goals for the balance of 2021 included Community Outreach Events, hosting two additional virtual Retreats (including one all-Spanish Retreat), and one hybrid In-Person/Virtual Retreat in December. Progress toward those goals include the following:

* July 2021: Virtual Retreat entitled “*Finding Balance in the Post-COVID World.*” Guest speakers included Alfredo Santiago, MSW, LCSW-C, presenting on mental health and Terry Conroy, Registered Yoga Therapist, guiding a 30-minute Chair Yoga session.
* August 2021: Virtual Retreat with 2021 HIV Medication updates featuring pharmacist, Mark Schwarmer of Walgreens in Hagerstown, MD, plus a Chair Yoga session with Terry Conroy, RYT.
* October 2021: Our first all-Spanish Virtual Retreat entitled “*Orgullo de Vivir con VIH*” (Living with Pride and HIV) in the Latinx Culture of 2021. We welcomed guest speakers Alfredo Santiago, MSW, LCSW-C and the Rev Rosanna C. Panizo-Valladares for this, our 7th in a series of online soul-filled educational ZOOMRetreats2021.
* Plans were well underway for a December In-person Retreat at the Washington Retreat House in Washington, D.C., when factors related to the ongoing pandemic led to a Board decision that an In-person Retreat was not yet safe for the immune-compromised community we serve. The emergence of the Omicron Variant throughout December 2021 affirmed the soundness of this decision.
* Gay Pride Outreach Events in both Frederick and Hagerstown, Maryland, were cancelled this fall. Two Board Members were able to volunteer at the 30th Annual Maryland Swim for Life Event hosted by DC Aquatics Club on September 11, 2021.

**Impact of the Retreat Ministry:**

* Quality of Life Retreats reached a total of 36 participants who engaged with more than 25 volunteers via three virtual Retreats between July and December 2021. Interest in our Retreat Ministry remains strong and important in the lives of people living with HIV in this time of pandemic.
* QLR entered into a new and valued relationship with members of the Hispanic-Latinx VIH community through partnering with both BWC clergy (the Rev Dr Emma Escobar; the Rev Edgardo Rivera; the Rev Eliezer Valentin-Castanon) and laity (Angel Ortiz; Sabrina McCray; Alfredo Santiago).

**Goals for 2022:**

* Continue to monitor the pandemic with a focus on preferencing the safety and health of immune-compromised people served by this Retreat Ministry.
* Develop plans for four Virtual, In-Person, and/or Hybrid Retreats as informed by a risk-assessment of the pandemic throughout 2022.
* Grow our relationship with the Hispanic-Latinx VIH community and expand opportunities for ongoing collaboration on Retreats and community-based programming.
* Continue to explore avenues of funding while increasing outreach to BWC churches, groups, and communities that may support this ministry through volunteers, donations, etc.

**Author of the Report:** Raymond Shattuck, Chair of the Board of Directors, QLR