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Sorority to host AIDS awareness seminar

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Contributing Writer

HIV/AIDS awareness month may have been in December, but many are still active in spreading knowledge about the disease. The ladies of the Lambda chapter of Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority will host a seminar on Thursday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. on HIV/AIDS.

The seminar will discuss the facts vs. fiction about HIV/AIDS and will be located in the Florida Ballrooms.

This is the first time the seminar will be held, and although it would have been ideal to hold it in December, it could not take place due to finals.

Education Chair of Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority Briana Toole, however, said she would be interested in holding this event every year.

The seminar was inspired by a volunteer experience Toole had with Alternative Break Corps this past summer in Spain, where she worked with an organization called Basida.

The organization hosted a seminar addressing most of the misconceptions that people had about HIV/AIDS, and the seminar explored where these stereotypes are derived from and promoted awareness about the disease and how to prevent its spread.

The seminar at FSU will feature Toole, along with members of Progressive Black Men and three volunteers from the trip Toole went on, speaking about their experiences and dispelling some of the myths surrounding HIV/AIDS.

"It is not your typical educational seminar — we don't lecture, so it'll really be an interactive seminar where you can sort of come and say what you have to say and what you think without being afraid of being criticized," said Toole.

Speakers at the seminar will pose questions to the audience about certain misconceptions, and then answer whether they are fact or fiction. There will be a short quiz at the end, as well as giveaway prizes.

The event takes place at the same time as an event Poetic Lyricism is having to benefit Haiti, called One World, One Cause: A Night of the Arts Benefit for Haiti.

The benefit will take place at 7 p.m. in the State Ballrooms and will feature performances and prizes. All proceeds will be donated to the Salvation Army, Yele Haiti and Doctors Without Borders.

"We are competing with a very good, important cause, but I think HIV/AIDS awareness is equally as important," said Toole.

Toole is in charge of organizing seminars both internally and externally for the sorority, and this is not the first she has hosted. In the past, she has helped organize events with D.I.V.A.S., Sistuh's and Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc., including seminars on a variety of topics, such as women's empowerment, Masonic societies, sex in college and stereotypes.

"I strongly encourage people to be there," said Toole. "College is about learning new things and about opening your eyes. Florida, you know, is ranked I believe second in the nation for HIV/AIDS cases, and third for all cases in adolescents, and that's to say, we're going to school, so it is important.

"Especially with 40,000 students, the incident of HIV infection has to be high, so I think it is important to get out there and we shouldn't be ashamed to talk about it."
