

Posted Online: Posted online: October 25, 2007 6:04 PM

Print publication date: 10/26/2007

Q-C AIDS group finds new, larger home

[Comment on this story](#)

By Reggie Jarrell, rjarrell@qconline.com

MOLINE - Unlike its former downtown Rock Island location, there's plenty of room to grow at AIDS Project Quad Cities' new Moline home.

The new site, where they moved Aug. 1, is more than 6,000 square feet and a lot easier for people to find, executive director Polly Meagher said, adding that it has more "walk-in" traffic than the former site.

"It's right in the middle. It's easy coming from Iowa, Rock Island, Moline, East Moline, Silvis."

She said officials searched for a site for nearly a year. "This property seemed to meet our needs both now, and for the future."

The organization is buying the building with assistance from the Illinois Facility Fund. They've already put most of the rooms to use.

There's a room for HIV testing, staff offices, a playroom for children, rooms designed for various projects or programs, conference rooms and office space for a part time accountant.

There are meeting rooms for support groups, and officials envision some day offering vocational training programs. Five staff members work in the Moline office, and two are in Davenport.

AIDS Project Quad Cities, a non-profit AIDS Service Organization, was established in 1986 and provides support to people with HIV/AIDS, and their families.

Agency goals include providing case management services to people with HIV/AIDS and preventive and educational programs to reduce spread of the virus.

Some services include HIV testing, free to Illinois residents and done anonymously, one-on-one and group counseling, and safe sex and disease risk reduction materials.



[More photos from this shoot](#)

Photo: Gary Krambeck

Polly Meagher, executive director at AIDS Project Quad Cities, stands in front of one of two quilts with panels from the We Care events from previous years.

Staff, who are certified counselors, also are involved in outreach with speaking engagements throughout the community. More than 2,500 people at risk have been provided information and services over the past year.

Officials said there has been an increase of HIV cases in the area, and the AIDS Project has about 100 active cases in Scott County, and 141 in Rock Island County.

Officials say knowledge is power, and is the key to staying healthy. "Get tested, know your status and stay safe," said Wendy Kelly, program director.

Yet, there still are misconceptions about the disease, sometimes accompanied by feelings of fear, rejection and shame, topped by society's refusal to discuss the HIV/AIDS issue.

But Ms. Meagher said the core problem is that "People don't like to talk about sex. It is a disease that affects anybody, anybody can have it, a mom, dad, sister, brother, someone at work. They are all good people, people we love. It is easy to dismiss it as a disease for those folks, those folks are us."

There's still a cultural or societal stigma still attached to HIV/AIDS, officials said. People forget that the disease not only affects the victim, but family, friends, and anyone who knows or loves that person.

"It devastates not only the person who has the disease," Ms. Meagher said, "but the person who loves that person."

More information

AIDS Project Quad Cities

2316 5th Ave., Moline

(309) 762-5433 www.aidsprojectqc.org

Offers free HIV testing for Illinois residents

Counseling, support services, information