



# AIDS SERVICES OF AUSTIN

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## P R E S S R E L E A S E

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### **AIDS Services of Austin Honored With Casey S. Blass Award for Excellence and Achievement in HIV/STD Prevention and Care**

AUSTIN, Texas — In late October, AIDS Services of Austin's (ASA) Prevention Team accepted the Casey S. Blass Award at the 2012 Texas HIV/STD Conference for their collaborative testing and outreach initiative during National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS (NWPHA).

The award is presented to a person or agency for making significant contributions to promoting and implementing HIV or STD prevention interventions and/or care or treatment in Texas. The Department of State Health Services presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> biennial *Casey S. Blass Award for Excellence and Achievement in HIV/STD Prevention and Care* to ASA, during ASA's landmark 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, for its work during NWPHA.

In March, ASA collaborated with the Black Faith-Based Health Initiative during ***National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS*** to bring attention to the AIDS epidemic in Austin and the role faith communities are playing in AIDS prevention, education, service, and advocacy. ASA's Prevention Team took part in a visionary, community-wide HIV testing initiative involving 16

***(more)***



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churches – testing 345 people for HIV in one day. “We are thrilled to receive this honor, and we take pride in expanding awareness, addressing stigma, and helping many people to know their HIV status,” said ASA’s Executive Director, Paul Scott. “ASA continues to build bridges in the faith community to expand testing and better serve people affected by HIV and AIDS.” In the past three years, ASA has nearly tripled its testing initiatives to reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

This year marks ASA’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of positive change for people affected by HIV and AIDS; it is only fitting that ASA staff members would present two sessions at the 2012 Texas HIV/STD Conference and that ASA would receive the Casey S. Blass Award. Susan Campion, ASA’s Chief Programs Officer, accepted the award for ASA

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### **About AIDS Services of Austin**

The mission of AIDS Services of Austin (ASA) is to enhance the health and well-being of the community and people affected by HIV and AIDS. For more information about AIDS Services of Austin, visit [www.asaustin.org](http://www.asaustin.org).

### **About the Casey S. Blass Award for Excellence and Achievement in HIV/STD Prevention and Care**

The Casey S. Blass Award is a biennial award for excellence and achievement in HIV/STD prevention and/or care. The intent of the award is to recognize effective approaches to:

- Preventing the transmission of HIV and other STD’s
- Improving the health and well-being of people living with HIV/STD’s
- Developing successful programs for specific at-risk populations

Casey S. Blass, a 26-year-veteran of the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) was the inaugural recipient of the award in 2008. In 2010, he retired from his post as Director of the Infectious Disease Prevention Section at DSHS. Mr. Blass was an active volunteer in the early years of AIDS Services of Austin, staffing the HIV and AIDS Information Hotline and taking a primary role in penning the HIV and AIDS Information Hotline Volunteer Manual. In 2010, the Casey S. Blass Award was presented to the Community Prevention and Intervention Unit at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. The honor consists of, not only recognition for service excellence, but also \$2,000 towards staff training in HIV prevention and/or care.