

# THE ADAMS REPORT<sup>®</sup>

Fashion, Beauty . . . . . & Stuff

By Audrey Adams



Audrey Adams

## Harlem's Iris House: Inspiring women worldwide

percent of people with AIDS were women, up from less than 5 percent two decades before, and African-American women were 23 times more likely to become infected.

AIDS is the fourth-leading cause of death for black women older than 45 and Hispanic women aged 35 to 44, according to the C.D.C.; blacks and Hispanics make up 24 percent of the nation's female population, but 82 percent of new AIDS diagnosis among women." Sara continues, "In Harlem, 116 of every 100,000 people are H.I.V positive." Hopefully you are already aware of these statistics, but if not and you don't find those statistics sobering then at least admit to yourself that they are pretty scary! I have to point out though that every woman, everywhere should be concerned.

Floyd's mission is to educate the community, to increase awareness and keep the issue front and center. Back to what it has to do with you . . . For Ingrid Floyd and many of the presenters at the summit, the underlying issue is one that we *can* take charge of: Protect yourself by insisting on using a condom whenever you have sex. It sounds simple enough, but the truth is that women have to feel empowered and love themselves enough to demand safe sex. The reality is that most women don't. We are far too trusting of our partner.

Ingrid Floyd is on track. She was contacted by PeaceXPeace.org, a grassroots community of women who connect for friendship, mutual support and dialogue, across cultural and geographic divides, to tell the story of Iris House to women around the world. I contacted PeaceXPeace to ask why it was important to feature a woman from a Harlem-based organization on their website, "I cannot emphasize enough how powerful it is to enable women who live under duress across the globe to see that even in the United States women often deal with the same issues of violence and intimidation.

Something magical happens when these women connect across cultures to share practical tactics that have helped get them through the day or a difficult challenge," said Linda Higdon, Chief Strategy Officer for Peace X Peace. "Whether they live in Africa, London, the West Bank or the Ukraine, there is an instant understanding and a sharing that gives these women the strength they need to get through a crisis." In the grander scheme of things, I have to agree with PeaceXPeace . . . is it not also true that no matter where you live; that what happens to one happens to all.

Yes, I met and spoke with women living with HIV/AIDS and they look just like you and me. They are leading productive lives, have husbands and children, they are grandparents,



Ingrid Floyd

aunts, sisters and daughters. They are also speaking out. As for me, I too believe that we can each make a difference by talking openly to our husbands, lovers, parents and children about protecting themselves. It isn't just a women's issue, it's one that we should all be educated and concerned about. Love yourself enough and encourage everyone around you to do the same by demanding respect and yes, safe sex. Think about it. See you next week. For more information about PeaceXPeace.org and IrisHouse.org and how you can connect with other women across the globe who are taking action against HIV/AIDS and other critical issues impacting women and to read Ingrid Floyd's profile listen to her interview on *Talk! With AUDREY* visit TheAdamsReport.com.

*Audrey Adams, former director of corporate public relations and fashion merchandising for ESSENCE continues to motivate and inspire women through her syndicated columns and motivational speaking engagements. E-mail your fashion, beauty and lifestyle questions or comments to her at Audrey@THEADAMSREPORT.com THE ADAMS REPORT<sup>®</sup>*

## Ask Deanna!

(Real People, Real Advice)



*Ask Deanna! Is an advice column known for it's fearless approach to reality-based subjects.*

**Dear Deanna!**

I was in a marriage for 3 years that didn't last. I am now legally divorced with no strings attached and I want to live my life. I'm very responsible but my family accuses me of being an unfit parent. My children are old enough to be left home alone and I don't bring my relationships in front of them. I don't want to enter another serious relationship and wish everyone would leave me alone. Does it matter what I do as long as my family is taken care of?

Marissa

Omaha, NE

**Dear Marissa:**

As a parent, you have moral obligations you must adhere to whether you want to or not. There's nothing wrong with having fun, recreational dating and enjoying the rush of single life. Double check your actions in regards to your parenting skills and the care arrangements for your children while you're out and about. You may not want a relationship, but you want to be careful and not fall into the category of a garden tool.

**Dear Deanna!**

I'm a Christian and there are things that I do that people don't agree with. I feel as if I can drink wine, enjoy music and wear what I want to wear. Don't get me wrong, I love the Lord and do what I'm supposed to do. My life is fine but other people don't think so. I don't like being judged when other people at church do the same thing but pretend to be super holy. Do I need to go ahead and change churches because these people aren't going to change?

Honest Christian

Charleston, SC

**Dear Honest:**

If you were as rooted and tooted in your faith as you pretend to be, you wouldn't worry about what other people think. You need to put your stones away and come out of the same glass house that everyone else is in. You're just as guilty because you just so happen to know their business they way they know yours. Do yourself a favor and mind your business, live according to God's word and seek to receive growth and understanding in your worship instead of human acceptance.

**Dear Deanna!**

My wife keeps breaking the rules. It's at the point where our bills are late, my credit rating has become poor and we don't have money to do simple things. I don't mind her spending here and there, but she makes major purchases without my consent, goes on trips and gives money to her family. How do I let her know, this is killing our marriage?

Dan

Long Island City, NY

**Dear Dan:**

You should bear the responsibility of eliminating her access to cash, bank accounts and credit cards and pay all the bills yourself. Your immediate goal is to stabilize the finances and your credit rating. The next step is to physically give her a budget and if she messes up, leave her to fend for herself. Once this is done, encourage your wife to get some counseling and stick to the budget you give her or you'll both be looking at each other in the poor house.

Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna!

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## Dawson Promotions, Brooklyn District Leader honored at P.S. 399 celebration

Public School 399 celebrated 27 years of academic excellence and cultural development by hosting their 22nd International Rainbow Festival Celebration on Thursday, June 19. Under the leadership of Principal Marion J. Brown, Assistant Principal Terri B. Williams and performing arts instructor Deborah Kennedy Baker, the 475 members of the student body performed cultural dances to the sounds of African drummers and music from numerous nations such as Trinidad, Ghana, Mexico, India, Nigeria, Spain and Australia.

The school used the occasion to present awards of appreciation to Brooklyn district leader Mary Hobson (42nd AD) and Keith Dawson, president of Dawson Promotions, whose annual holiday toy drive resulted in hundreds of Christmas gifts for underprivileged youth in central Brooklyn, including students at P.S. 399. This philanthropic duo also received citations from Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke.

"I'm deeply humbled by the children and staff of P.S. 399 in accepting this award," stated Keith Dawson. "I'm honored to

be working with Mary Hobson in our effort to help local youth. As an underprivileged youth who grew up in East New York, Brooklyn, I clearly remember the kindness of strangers in helping my family celebrate the holidays. It is why I am committed to giving back to the community through my organization. Each holiday season we utilize our marketing distribution services to help local groups gather toy donations."

Added Mary Hobson, "The staff, parents and students of P.S.

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