

Alternative Spring Break 2010
Welcome Packet

HIV/AIDS in New Orleans: Dynamics and Disproportionate Effects



Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Welcome Information	---2
Welcome Letter	---4
Expectations and Code Conduct	---5
Background on HIV/AIDS and New Orleans	---6
Tentative Itinerary	---7
Service Site Descriptions	---9
Pre-departure Meeting Schedule	---11
Safety	---13
Payment Plan	---14
Fundraising Ideas	---15
Weather	---16
Packing List	---17
Resources for more background information	---18
Trip Leaders' Information	---19
Alcohol Policy	---20



WELCOME TO ALTERNATIVE BREAKS!!!!

Congratulations on being selected to participate in an Alternative Break trip! You are about to embark on a journey of transformation, reflection, activism, and community involvement. As you know, the Alternative Break program is student-run, with the Community Service Center (CSC) and the Alternative Break Coordinator serving as resources for the student leaders of each trip.

Please read this letter carefully for important information about

FORMS YOU MUST TURN IN TO CSC: ON WEBSITE: www.american.edu/altbreak under "Participant Applications & Forms"

- **Medical/Emergency Contact form**
- **Copy of health insurance card**
- **Consent & Release Waiver Form**
- **Copy of passport** (for international trips)
- **Code of Conduct Signature form**

PAYMENT DEADLINES:

Monthly payment installments are due according to your payment schedule.

Dates: **12/5, 1/15, 2/5.** Talk to your trip leaders for amounts.

ONLINE PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Log-on to my.american.edu, click on the Finances or Life@AU tab.
2. Under your personalized links, click on "Alternative Break E-payment."
3. Choose your trip.
4. Enter your credit card information and click submit!
5. Payments are non-refundable.

PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS VIA CASH OR CHECK:

1. Obtain deposit slip from Community Service Center with the trip Account # to ensure that the payment is placed in the correct account.
2. Bring payment and Deposit Record to the payment windows in **Student Accounts (before 4:30 PM in Asbury 300).**
3. Bring the original payment receipt **back** to the Community Service Center (MGC 273). You must keep a copy of the receipt for yourself. ***If you do not bring back the receipt we have no way of knowing if you paid!!!***
4. Put the receipt in your trip box in the CSC.
5. Payments are non-refundable.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- The pre-departure meetings are **MANDATORY**. You must attend in order to get to know other students on your trip, learn about your destination and talk about health/safety issues.

- You are responsible for making an appointment with your doctor** to find out which immunizations you need.

- You are covered under AU's international travel insurance (information from Alt Break website: <http://www.american.edu/finance/rmehs/inttravel.cfm>)

- Safety, US State Department, CDC immunizations, and other links are on the Alternative Break website. www.american.edu/altbreak

- Your leader is responsible for providing the trip itinerary and destination information. Please ask them any questions you have.

- Academic credits:** You can either do an **independent study** with a professor of your choice or take **SIS 386: Selected Topics in Global Social Justice**. (Register through Alternative Break office.)

- Fundraising for your trip:** If you solicit checks from individuals or businesses, they should be made out to "American University" and mailed to the AU Development Office. See the Alternative Break website for more information.

AU EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:**202-885-3636 Public Safety****1st Shoshanna Sumka**, Alternative Break Coordinator; Work: 202-885-2684 cell: 240-328-9231, home: 301-589-4274**2nd Marcy Campos**, Community Service Center Director; work: 202-885-7378, cell: 301-996-6343, home: 301-270-6343**3rd Fanta Aw**, Assistant Vice President, Campus Life; work: 202-885-3357 home: 301-562 1499, cell: 240-413-2277

Dear Participant,

Congratulations! We're excited that you'll be going on the HIV/AIDS New Orleans 2010 Spring Alternative Break trip. The trip will focus on the effect of HIV/AIDS among minority populations in New Orleans. We'll meet with organizations that serve a diverse range of social groups. Our service sites will be: (i) Project Lazarus (ii) The Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies and (iii) Camp Ace. In addition to having a rich history and culture, the city of New Orleans also has a significant HIV/AIDS prevalence, ranking in 2nd in the nation after the District of Columbia in number of AIDS cases. The goal of this trip will be to serve the local community in its quest to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and for participants to gain an understanding of the dynamic roles that politics, economics and culture play in HIV/AIDS in New Orleans.

This Welcome Packet will provide you with all the fundamental introductory materials that will be essential in your steps towards going on this Alternative Break trip. It contains helpful information such as background on the city of New Orleans and its HIV/AIDS prevalence, an itinerary, pre-departure meeting schedule, a breakdown of the service sites and cultural activities, payment schedule, packing lists, safety information, code of conduct, alcohol policy and much more. As time goes on, more information will be provided to you to prepare you for your experience on this trip.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact either us, Shoshanna Sumka, Coordinator for Global and Community Based Learning, or Professor Bette Dickerson, faculty advisor going on trip.

Once again, welcome!! We look forward to the time that we'll spend with you.

All the best,

Amber and Mobola ☺



EXPECTATIONS & CODE OF CONDUCT:

The following is a list of minimum expectations; your individual trip groups will discuss and formulate additional participant expectations as necessary.

Code of Conduct:

1. Participate in all mandatory weekly pre-departure meetings.
2. Make payments and turn in all necessary forms on time.
3. Travel with the group at all times.
4. Abide by the alcohol and other drug free policy of Alternative Breaks.
5. Prepare individually for your trip by completing required readings.
6. Behave in a safe and responsible manner.
7. Respect the customs and local community.
8. Respect your trip leader, fellow participants & faculty/staff advisor.
9. Process the AB experience individually and with your group through reflection, conversation and other group activities.
10. Follow-up after trip with activism on social justice issues learned.

Program Reminders:

1. Turn in all necessary forms on time.
2. Participants who wish to receive course credit for participation will be required to complete additional criteria. SIS 386 or independent study credit is optional. See individual trip advisor for details.
3. Participants must become aware of relevant health and safety risks relevant to your destination. **You are responsible for making an appointment with your doctor** to find out which immunizations you need.
4. Make payments on time.
5. All payments made to Alternative Break are non-refundable.

I understand that **failure to comply** with any of these expectations may result in my inability to participate in the trip, **dismissal from trip at my own expense**, or may affect future Alternative Break participation.

Print Name: _____ AU ID: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Background on HIV/AIDS and New Orleans



- Population (2006 est.): 223,388
- Population Pre-Katrina (2000 est.): 484,674
- Persons below poverty (2007 est.): 21.8%
- Per capita income (2008 est.): \$44,136ⁱ

Racial Distribution:

- Black, percent, 2000 (a) 67.3%
- White, percent, 2000 (a) 28.1%
- Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2000 (b) 3.1%
- Asian persons, percent, 2000 (a) 2.3%
- American Indian and Alaska Native, percent, 2000 (a) 0.2%ⁱⁱ



HIV/AIDS:

- New Orleans ranked 2nd for AIDS case rates among the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. in 2007; Baton Rouge ranked 3rd.
- HIV continues to disproportionately affect African Americans in Louisiana. In 2007, 72% of newly diagnosed HIV cases and 75% of newly diagnosed AIDS cases were among African Americans.ⁱⁱⁱ
- As of March 31, 2008, 5,675 persons are living with HIV/AIDS in Region 1; 2,940 (52%) have an AIDS diagnosis.
- Of the persons who have a reported mode of transmission, 56% are men who have sex with men (MSM), 14% are injection drug users (IDU), 19% are persons with heterosexual contact, and 8% are MSM/IDUs.
- In the New Orleans HIV/AIDS region designated by the Louisiana Office of Public Health,
 - 75% of new HIV diagnoses are male; 64% are African American, 24% are white and 10% are Hispanic/Latino.

Why HIV/AIDS in New Orleans?

Despite its renowned rich culture and history, attention needs to be brought to the significant HIV/AIDS epidemic of New Orleans. There are various contributors to HIV/AIDS prevalence, therefore this Alternative Break will incorporate perspectives from professors, community activists, and people involved in policy and funding.

Participants will learn from people living with HIV/AIDS, distribute HIV/AIDS prevention and education materials, and coordinate with high school students involved in [Media Advocates for Prevention](#) who produce sexual health publications and videos.

After examining the HIV/AIDS epidemic of New Orleans, participants should be well equipped to take action against Washington's HIV/AIDS prevalence, which is the highest in the nation.

Tentative Itinerary

Date	Activity
Sat. March 6	Leave DC Check-in at St. Charles Guest House Ghost tour in French Quarters St. Charles Guest House
Sun. March 7	Breakfast at Café Du Monde Visit French Market Natchez Steamboat Cruise Speaker: Susan Bergson/Jack Carrel from the Louisiana Public Health Institute and Louisiana Office of Public Health HIV/AIDS Program Meet with Louisiana LGBT Community Center Dinner in Audubon Park/“The Fly” (Crawfish Boil)
Mon. March 8	St. Charles Guest House Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies Paper Bag Lunch Camp Ace Speaker: Louisiana Latino Health Coalition for HIV/AIDS Awareness Dinner Karaoke night at the French Quarter
Tues. March 9	St. Charles Guest House Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies Paper Bag lunch Camp Ace Speakers: Prof. Gilkey from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Prof. Tortu from LSU School of Public Health Dinner Free time/ Fun Event
Wed. March 10	St. Charles Guest House Project Lazarus Paper Bag Lunch Project Lazarus Speaker: Family Advocacy, Care and Education Services program (FACES) of Children’s Hospital Dinner with Tulane Students Free time/Fun Event

Thu. St. Charles Guest House
March 11 Project Lazarus
Lunch
Project Lazarus
Speaker: **Gail Audrict** of the New Orleans Public School Board
Final Dinner and Jazz night - Snug Harbor
Other Event Considerations:

- o Presbytere (Mardi Gras Museum)

Fri.
March 12
Visit Madam John's Legacy
Visit Backstreet Cultural (Mardi Gras Indian) Museum
Packing
*Final Reflection Meeting

Sat. Depart NOLA
March 13

*Reflections will be held every night on the trip.

Service Site Descriptions

Camp Ace - St. John's #5 Faith Church

<http://www.myspace.com/campacehiv>
<http://www.faithlikejesus.org/>



- **What They Do** - Camp Ace is a community outreach program of St. John's #5 Faith Church. They are located in New Orleans' 7th Ward and provide a number of services, including GED prep classes, computer literacy classes, truancy prevention, after-school tutoring, and of course, HIV/AIDS outreach. Their HIV/AIDS outreach began in 1996 with family counseling and financial assistance for funerals of people who died of AIDS. To date, they provide free HIV testing, distribute condoms and sexual health information, hold small group meetings, and have sexual health educational sessions. They target specific groups, including black women, MSM, sex workers, inner city youths, Latinos, homeless individuals, people with STDs, IDUs, and pre and post release prisoners.
- **What We'll Do** - Distribute condoms and sexual health/HIV/AIDS information. They may also need assistance with facility improvement, as they suffered severe damage from Hurricane Katrina. They do mention that they would appreciate donations, which we will try to collect for them. They have worked with volunteers in the past, and express a need for them on their website.
 - Camp Ace Donation Request:
 - 1) Mold removal/remediation volunteers.
 - 2) Volunteers for reconstruction.
 - 3) Building materials and supplies for reconstruction.
 - 4) Roofing materials and volunteers.
 - 5) Cleaning supplies.
 - 6) Furniture and bedding.
 - 7) Computers, Printers, training materials, and software.
 - 8) Kitchen appliances and utensils.
 - 9) Nonperishable food items.
 - 10) Obviously, money to continue our work.
- **How This Pertains to Trip Purpose** - We'll get perspective on the effectiveness and of a central authority figure in the African-American community, the Church. This would provide experience with direct community activism and provide an example of community organization structure.

Project Lazarus

<http://www.projectlazarus.net/>

- **What They Do** – Project Lazarus provides housing and care to people living with AIDS who can no longer live independently and cannot depend on family to support them. They rely on volunteers to help them much of the time.
- **What We'll Do** – We will be assisting with facility improvement and socialize with/ provide company to the tenants. Participants will perform duties such as painting and repairs in the building to relieve some of the financial costs that would otherwise have to be borne by the Lazarus House. We will help with upcoming events such as the annual resident talent show.
- **How This Pertains to Trip Purpose** – We will learn of the individual's experience with living with HIV/AIDS.



Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies/ Media Advocates Prevention Program

http://iwesnola.org/?page_id=10

- **What They Do** – The Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies is the premier public health organization for women of color in the New Orleans area. They focus on developing holistic, multidisciplinary, and culturally appropriate programs.
- **What We'll Do** – We'll work with high-risk high school students who are part of the *Media Advocates for Prevention* (MAP) Program. Through MAP, New Orleans youth are proactive in their community by encouraging HIV prevention, testing and sexual health with self-created media, i.e video and print productions.
- **How This Pertains to Trip Purpose** – We will learn of how uninfected, high-risk youth are addressing problems within their community. We are especially excited about working with MAP because we will be able to relate to them based on our group's age range.



Pre-departure Meeting Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to HIV/AIDS in NOLA Spring 2010 (Trip logistics, background of organizations, fund-raising)

- Introduce Leaders and trip participants to one another.
- Brief the participants on trip itinerary and trip logistics
- Introduce organizations and speakers to participants
- Set up planning committees and assign duties.
- Brainstorm fund raising ideas and set up subsequent meetings and fundraising dates



Week 2: Basics of HIV/AIDS: origins, biology, psychology, misconceptions, and current prevalence

- Presentation on HIV/AIDS: its origins, etiology, prevalence in the US and specificity to New Orleans.
- Psychology of the disease and how it affects individuals, families and communities.

Week 3: Location Information: Introduction to New Orleans and its Culture

- Background of New Orleans' demographics, recent history and culture.
- Specifics of New Orleans epidemic in the wake of Hurricane Katrina

Week 4: Examining the disproportionate effects of HIV/AIDS on minority populations and the role of sexuality in the spread of the virus

- Women and black community, new cases
- MSM, and MSM of color.
- IDUs and users of infected paraphernalia in prison
- Latino community
- LGBT community (aside from MSM)
- Homophobia in black community and "Down Low" culture
- Denial
- "Sugar Daddy" relationships

Week 5

Role of Socioeconomic Status and Education in HIV/AIDS

- Reasons for High-risk behavior: Inequality, poverty and social injustice and marginalization.
- Level of Sex Education in the Public School System and in other institutions such as the church, other social institutions e.t.c
- Amount of provisions available for testing in schools.

Week 6

Role of Government in promulgating and enacting HIV/AIDS Policy

- Review of role of the HIV Prevention Community Planning body of the CDC as well as the Ryan White bill.
- Ethical Questions such as who should allocations go to? - People with advanced AIDS VS or Increased prevention in at risk populations.

Week 7: Safety and Health Concerns

- Act out possible safety scenarios to prepare participants for any security situations requiring emergency preparedness.
- Pair safety buddies up to increase familiarity with one another.
- Reviewing of code of conduct and setting boundaries for all activities carried out on the trip.
- Review alcohol policy

Week8: Final Pre-departure meeting and gearing up for the trip

- Hand out any information needed for trip
- Distribute final itinerary and schedule of events
- Final updates on trip explained

Safety

The safety concerns of the trip are the same for any travel group in a metropolitan city. We may at least be at risk of pick pocketing and swindling. We will make sure to know where all participants are at all times no one is allowed to venture out alone. No one will be permitted to leave the group with someone that is not a member of our travel group. Carrying of large quantities of money is discouraged and participants will constantly be reminded to stay aware of their surroundings. Enforcement of the no-alcohol policy and a bedtime curfew will facilitate maintenance of alertness. Also, all participants are paired up into buddy groups so that each person is accountable to someone else at all times. Carrying of identification is required at all times. In case of emergency, the group must keep calm move to a safe area.



Here are our on-ground emergency contacts:

- **City Hall Operator: (504) 658-4000**
- **New Orleans Police Department: 911**
- **Ann Cavalier, Amber's Mother, city government employee: 504-810-1495**
- **Dudley Jolla Jr., Amber's Father: 504-919-7650**
- **Gary Lambert, Amber's Brother: 504-628-3340**

Payment Plan

Payment can be done at once or in three installments.

Online Payment Instructions:

6. Log-on to my.american.edu, click on the Finances or Life@AU tab.
7. Under your personalized links, click on “Alternative Break E-payment.”
8. Choose your trip.
9. Enter your credit card information and click submit!
10. Payments are non-refundable.



Payment instructions via cash or check:

1. Obtain deposit slip from Community Service Center with the trip Account # to ensure that the payment is placed in the correct account.
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4. Put the receipt in your trip box in the CSC.
5. Payments are non-refundable.

One-time payment instructions:

Payment can be done by credit card online following the instructions above

Installment payment instructions:

These can also be done online three times on the following dates.

First payment due **December 5, 2009: \$300**

Second payment due **January 15, 2010: \$300**

Third payment due **February 5, 2010: \$300**

Fundraising Ideas Include:

- Solicitation letters to family, businesses, former teachers—
Letter writing party
- Pizza/candy/ Taco sales in residence halls
- On campus fundraising party; DJ-ed event in Tavern
- Other fundraising activities will be decided upon at the initial pre-departure meeting.



New Orleans Weather

For most of the year, New Orleans is hot and muggy. In the summer, the temperature is often well into the 90s and it can be difficult to escape the humidity outside of retreating to your hotel's swimming pool, if it's got one. If you don't mind the heat and humidity, summer is a good time to grab some hotel bargains.



There is a short winter in New Orleans, although it doesn't get particularly cold. Some days in February you may find yourself walking around in shirt sleeves. On the other hand, one of the city's best known ghost stories involves a woman who froze to death outside one January night. So don't show up in winter time dressed for the tropics.

The weather is very nice in the spring in New Orleans, although Mardi Gras is something to factor into your travel plans. Another factor to consider is the hurricane season that runs through late summer and early fall. This is one of those parts of the country where more often than not, there is warm or hot sunshine. But when it rains, it can rain hard. Before the levees failed in 2005, even a heavy pounding day-long rainstorm would be enough to fill some parts of the city with knee-deep water.

Monthly Averages for March:

Hi: 69°F

Lo: 55°F

Precip: 4 in

Source: <http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g60864-s208/NewOrleans:Louisiana:Weather.And.When.To.Go.html>

Packing List

Travel items

- Money belt or other means of carrying valuable items.
- Secure backpack (preferably shoulder strap)
- ID (state issued & student ID)

Clothing Items

- Long-sleeved sweater or light jacket for chilly evenings
- 4 capris or pants (no shorts or short skirts).
- 4-6 comfortable T-shirts
- At least 2-3 business casual shirts, dresses, or slacks (for meetings with government organizations)
- Pajamas
- Walking Shoes or sneakers
- Flip Flops or shower shoes
- Hat

Toiletries and Personal Items

- Prescription Medication
- Hand sanitizer
- Personal hygiene products (toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)
- Hair Products
- Feminine Products
- Towel (optional)
- iPod/ MP3 Player
- Notebook or journal
- Pens/Pencils
- Camera
- Umbrella



Resources for More Background Information

News:

- The Time-Picayune online (daily newspaper), <http://www.nola.com/t-p/>
- Gambit Weekly online (weekly newspaper), <http://bestofneworleans.com/gyrobase/>

Books:

- Blacks and Aids: Causes and Origins by Samuel V. Duh, SAGE Publications, 1991.

Articles:

- "Focusing "Down Low": Bisexual Black Men, HIV Risk and Heterosexual Transmission", Millet, Gregorio. 2005.
- Kaplan, Mark. "Individualizing a social problem." *Society*. 1990.
- Clark, Rebecca A., et al. "Six months later: The effect of Hurricane Katrina on health care for persons living with HIV/AIDS in New Orleans." *AIDS Care* 18, (August 2, 2006): 59-61. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 15, 2009).
- Benotsch, Eric G., et al. "SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOR IN MEN ATTENDING MARDI GRAS CELEBRATIONS IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA." *Journal of Community Health* 32, no. 5 (October 2007): 343-356. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 15, 2009).
- Cowley, Geoffrey, et al. "The New Face of AIDS." *Newsweek* 144, no. 23 (December 6, 2004): 76-79. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 15, 2009).

Movies/Videos.

- "The Age of AIDS," <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/video/flv/generic.html?s=fr0l02p6b&continuous=1>, 2006.

ⁱhttp://74.125.95.132/search?q=cache:po0JpEeo3EYJ:austin.bizjournals.com/edit_special/91.html+new+orleans+per+capita&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a

ⁱⁱ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/2255000.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.lphi.org/home2/section/generic-160/>

Trip Leaders



Amber Jolla is a New Orleans native. She is in her junior year at American University, where she is majoring in International Development with a minor in Global Health Policy and Business Administration. She is passionate about social justice, particularly in regard to HIV/AIDS. She has interned at The AIDS Institute and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Office on Women's Health. She was a participant of the 2009 Summer Alternative Break to South Africa: Empowerment and the Legacy of Apartheid.

E-mail: aj7604a@student.american.edu

Mobola Oyefule, originally from Nigeria, is a biology major and global health minor, currently in her junior year here at AU. She intends to pursue a career in medicine and international health. She is a member of the African Students' Organization and the American Medical Students Association. She enjoys reading and traveling.

E-mail: oo8981a@student.american.edu

Alternative Breaks are Alcohol and Drug- Free!

Consumption of intoxicates (other than good ol' New Orleans cuisine) will absolutely not be tolerated. In the unfortunate case that someone is found to have broken this policy, they will be immediately sent back to Washington at their own expense.

As service-learners, our time in New Orleans will demand 100% presence and energy. Please do not jeopardize neither the well-being of the group and yourself, nor our optimal contribution at the service sites.



New Orleans Snowballs are pre-approved for ingestion!