

## Press Release

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THE GRAND RAPIDS RED PROJECT

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### NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY IS FEBRUARY 7, 2018

Mark your calendars and set the date! **February 7, 2018**, is **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD)**, a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative designed to encourage Blacks across the United States and Diaspora to ***get educated, get tested, get involved, and get treated***, as HIV/AIDS continues to devastate Black communities.

While Blacks represent approximately **12%** of the U.S. population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that Blacks account for **47%** of the nation's new HIV infections. In 2012, an estimated **14,102** Blacks were diagnosed with AIDS in the US, a number that has slowly decreased since 2008. By the end of 2011, an estimated **265,812** Blacks with an AIDS diagnosis had died in the US. In 2012, HIV was the **5<sup>th</sup>** leading cause of death for all Blacks and the **5<sup>th</sup>** leading cause of death for both Black men and Black women ages 35–44. HIV disproportionately impacts the local Black community as well; while Blacks represent **10%** of the local population, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reports that they account for **36%** of current HIV/AIDS cases in Kent County. In Kent County, Black women are especially impacted, with the rate of HIV infection being **27** times higher than among White women. Unfortunately, many of those who are infected with HIV are unaware of their status and may unknowingly transmit the virus to others. It's time to mobilize and talk about this devastating disease so we can make a difference... and there's no better time than February 7th.

In honor of Black History Month and National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, The Grand Rapids Red Project will be hosting daytime and evening events around the 2018 national theme "Stay the course, the fight is not over". Join us during the day, during the evening, or for both events!

On Wednesday, February 7, from 2-4pm at The Pop UpShop GR located at 315 S Division Ave, we will listen and discuss race, the course and the fight in relation to health disparities. We will be hearing from Dr Abdul El-Sayed, Health Director of the Detroit Health Department, and refreshments will be provided. Bring your voice! Seats are limited, so reserve your FREE tickets! <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/national-black-hiv-aids-awareness-day-daytime-event-tickets-42239855545>

In the evening, from 6-9pm we will be screening the film "Life Support" produced by Jamie Foxx and starring Queen Latifah, followed by a panel discussion featuring Wesley Watson, Dea Hollowell, Titus Hankins and Samara Woolfolk at The Salvation Army Kroc Center located at 2500 S Division Ave. FREE rapid HIV testing will be available, public health and community organizations will be present and the panel will be dynamic! No ticket necessary. Come and let's be empowered to stop the spread of HIV in our community!



The Grand Rapids Red Project is a local 501c3 not-for-profit organization providing services related to HIV, hepatitis C, overdose and substance use, since 1998. Red Project maintains a focus on providing access to the knowledge, tools, and support, people need to stay healthy. Find out more at [www.redproject.org](http://www.redproject.org)