

Low AIDS testing blamed on ignorance

BY JOSH FUNK

Fifteen years ago, when AIDS was just becoming known, the commonly held misconception was that it only affected a certain part of the population.

Science and the growing number of dead and infected people from across the societal spectrum disproved that notion quickly.

But that attitude still seems prevalent on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus.

Among the booths at this year's Big Red Welcome was one promoting a new free and anonymous HIV testing center on campus.

Some students responded by throwing the flyers on the ground and stating "I don't need that. I'm not gay."

But nationally, women and teen-agers are the fastest growing HIV-positive groups, said Pat Tetreault, the University Health Center's Sexuality Education Program Coordinator.

"People don't see this affecting their lives, so they ignore it," Tetreault said.

National and local advertising cam-

paigns have raised awareness of AIDS and the virus that causes it, but it seems like people don't know much beyond the acronyms, said Brian Franz, who manages the testing site.

HIV testing is important for people who are doing things that put them at risk.

"All the people who think they are not at risk and are still out there having sex should get tested," Franz said.

About one out of every 300 people in Nebraska is HIV positive, Franz said. On UNL's 22,000-student campus that would equate to about 70 people.

Sex is one of the primary ways the disease is transmitted. Casual sex, sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and unprepared sex are among the most dangerous activities.

Intravenous drug use and sharing needles is another dangerous activity.

The free-testing center, which operates on a grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, is located in Cornerstone Church, 640 N 16th St. Testing is

available on the second and fourth Fridays of the month.

Franz, who completed his UNL bachelor's degree in May, has been operating the center since June and said he has only tested about a dozen people.

In addition to the testing, which is done orally, Franz also offers some counseling. Any questions he cannot answer, Franz refers to other sources. And Cornerstone offers pastoral counseling.

But thus far, students seem to prefer ignorance, and they may not even realize how unknowing they are.

"In general, most people don't realize how much they don't know until they go to something (program or presentation) more comprehensive," Tetreault said.

That attitude extends beyond AIDS to other sexually transmitted infections, and it may be compounded by Nebraska's relatively low population.

"I do think because we are a smaller population state and don't have the same awareness as cities, that affects us," Tetreault said.

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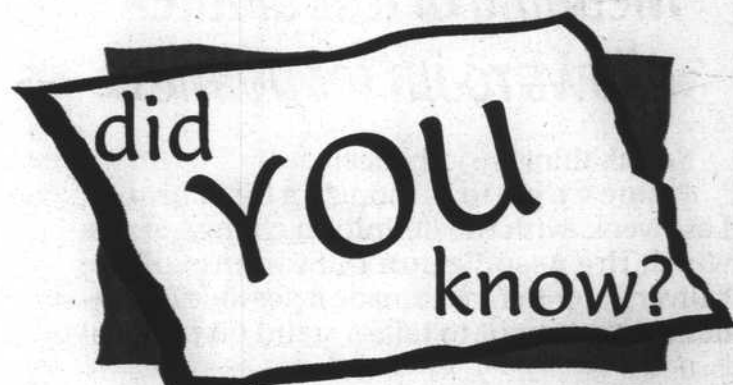
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Student's apartment hit by car

BUILDING from page 1

Inside, the Kongs' felt the bed pop up as the car pushed the wall into their bedroom.

The Kongs, who moved into the building in August, quickly exited their apartment to investigate. Outside other neighbors were tending to the Deshpandes, who were both wearing seatbelts, Benes said.

No major injuries were reported in the crash, though the Deshpandes were taken to BryanLGH Medical Center West for examination.

Another neighbor, Devinder Sandhu, was turning left into the apartment complex at the same time Asha Deshpande was turning in and saw the accident

happen.

Sandhu said that Asha Deshpande was dazed after the accident, but seemed all right.

Sandhu said that he had gone with Murlidhar Deshpande to buy the car two months ago.

Benes said the ground-level hole in the three-story building should not cause any structural problems because the building has a steel structure.

The biggest concern was when heat and water could be restored because the car broke several pipes on impact. The

building's boiler-heated water pipes were just filled Sunday morning.

Building managers planned to move the Kongs into a vacant apartment within the same building Sunday until repairs could be made.

Damage estimates were unavailable Sunday.

The University Park Apartments provide housing for married university students. Currently, many of the residents are international students, Sandhu said.

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