

Dear Friends of the UFT Pride Committee,

For the last three decades, communities around the world have joined together to commemorate World AIDS Day on Dec. 1. Although it is a solemn day, I also see it as a day of hope and commitment. Two years ago, our Congressional leaders vowed to put an end to the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Local leaders like governors, mayors, doctors and religious leaders have joined together to make this a reality.

We as educators must join that fight. We have a vantage point that most of the others don't. We have the dynamic opportunity to eradicate this disease from its root. Education is the most effective and cost-efficient method of decreasing the viral transmission rate here in New York City, which was once considered the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic.

When I wrote to you about World AIDS Day last year, we were in the thick of the COVID pandemic. It is no coincidence that New York City was the epicenter for two of the world's modern health crises. The UFT's commitment to keeping COVID out of schools spurred the mayor to put protocols in place to diminish COVID's presence in our communities. If we are doing it now for COVID, we can do the same for HIV/AIDS. By educating our students from elementary through high school, we equip our students with the necessary information to allow them to make the right decisions in their more vulnerable years.

Yes, I grieve with those who mourn the loss of a loved one to HIV/AIDS or who are currently fighting the stigma as people living with HIV. At the same time, we are positioned on the brink of a dynamic opportunity. Edwin Hubbell Chapin, an American preacher and writer, once said, "Every action of your life touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity." We must fight the next few years of this historic movement as if our students' lives depend on it – because they do.

The UFT has created a World AIDS Day page on our website where our caring and concerned members can find a variety of lesson resources for every grade level to be taught on World AIDS Day. I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the UFT Communications Department and the Pride and Women's Rights Committees for working so hard to pull those resources together for you in time for World AIDS Day.

Additionally, tomorrow, December 1, we are also hosting our first World AIDS Day commemorative event, where Dr. David Rosenthal of Northwell Health will join us to educate us on the current state of HIV/AIDS in the world of health. [Click here for more information or to register for the event.](#) Share the registration link with your friends,

family and colleagues. With the approval of your administration, we are also encouraging high school teachers to share with their students.

Finally, we are researching ways that the UFT can become involved in the AIDS Walk NY. We will be sending information about the 2022 event once we have finalized our involvement. In the meantime, for more information about World AIDS Day, please visit the [UFT's World AIDS Day webpage](#). If you have any questions about the Pride Committee, please do not hesitate to email me at rbrown1@uft.org.

With Solidarity in the Fight,

Rashad J. Brown
Pride Committee Chairperson
UFT