

HIV/AIDS STRATEGY GROUP 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

The primary function of our committee is to support the work of our many volunteers who make the Strength for the Journey retreats possible. We see the need for those living with HIV/AIDS to have a safe, enriching, spiritual retreat to where they can find community and support. This past year we had a number of changes in the San Diego, Hawaii and Los Angeles staff. Some of our deans have retired and we are still working on recruiting new deans to head up the staff for those camps.

We mourned the loss of Dee Baraw who was on the leadership team of the San Diego camp, her compassion and caring will be missed.

We also acknowledged the loss of Camp Colby, the site of many Strength for the Journey retreats through the years.

With all the changes and because the Covid pandemic caused us a disruption in offering camps, we have struggled to find the resources to start these retreats restarted. The exception is the Long Beach/Orange County camp which did meet and opened their registration to any camper from the other areas. We served 75 campers and had 20 volunteer staff who made this retreat possible.

As the new year begins we will be assessing our resources and goals for the coming year. We expect to offer at least one retreat and hope to network with the former staff of the other camps to see what is needed to restart and to assess the need for the retreat in those places.

We are grateful to the Cal-Pac conference who supports our work, for the conference treasurer's office that helps us with our accounting and to the United Methodist Foundation that holds the "Bert All Fund" which helps fund the camps each year. Lastly we are grateful to all the volunteers who staff and support our retreat program.

Blessings,

Chair Steve Poteete-Marshall