



AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta

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Working Together for a Cure

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bidding, Dining and Tasting on Tap at *Uncork A Cure*

Dinner with Chris "Ludacris" Bridges Is Top Item at Silent Auction

Atlanta, Georgia (April 19, 2009) -- In an economy where companies are struggling to stay open, there is one organization hoping to someday close its doors for good.

AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta (ARCA) Principal Investigator Dr. Melanie Thompson says, "We want to go out of business for the right reason, because HIV is cured and there is no need for us." Until then, ARCA, the Southeast's leading community-based AIDS research organization, is asking for help more than ever before.

Thompson says Atlanta residents can help fight HIV while enjoying a fabulous gourmet evening at ARCA's 20th *Uncork A Cure* on Thursday April 29, 6:00pm-9:00pm at The Foundry at Puritan Mill. Year after year the event offers an exciting evening for attendees, allowing them to sample some of Atlanta's best restaurants and sip from dozens of varieties of wines while networking and bidding on silent auction items.

The premier item at this year's silent auction will be "Dinner with Ludacris!" donated by Atlanta music star Chris "Ludacris" Bridges. Ludacris' own Atlanta restaurant STRAITS is this year's Host Committee Sponsor. Uncork attendees will also have the opportunity to sample the actor and Grammy winner's special brand of "Conjure" cognac during the event.

The silent auction also includes party packages donated by DJ Vicki Powell, the local band Roxie Watson, Gordon Biersch, and Morton's Steakhouse. Other items include autographed movie posters from "Precious" and "Meet the Browns," vacations, premier wines, restaurant and theater packages, art, jewelry, Atlanta Braves tickets, and even doggie daycare. Thompson says "*Uncork A Cure* patrons who love to shop will be thrilled by the carefully chosen items offered this year." She says, "It's like shopping at an upscale mall where you know the proceeds go to a great cause. There will be a wonderful array of health and fitness packages as well as items to delight the senses! There is a sneak preview of the silent auction online."

Thompson adds, "Each year, people consistently give rave reviews that they have had a great time and their money has been well spent, not only for a great cause, but also for the items they received." Thompson indicated that the value of the event keeps attendees coming back "year after year after year to enjoy a great night on the town."

Thompson and other event organizers commented that they face a daunting task this year with non-profit fundraising declining nationwide due to the unstable economy. Regardless of the economy, Thompson said that efficient non-profits like ARCA are used to lean times. “Eighty-two cents of every dollar raised supports ARCA’s mission which includes developing new treatments for HIV and working in prevention research.” *Uncork a Cure* proceeds are critical for conducting the nearly 20 HIV clinical trials ARCA juggles at any given time. “Yet there is so much more that *Uncork A Cure* does,” said Thompson. By attending, she indicated that patrons are helping to raise money for:

- Free, anonymous HIV testing at local colleges such as Georgia State University, Morehouse College and Spelman College (To date ARCA has performed more than 6000 HIV tests throughout Atlanta!)
- Education and risk reduction counseling, and facilitating health care for persons newly diagnosed with HIV
- Operational costs, including staffing and rent not covered by research studies
- HIV testing kits and medical supplies
- Safer sex kits and educational materials

Uncork A Cure tickets are just \$75 in advance and \$100 at the door. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.uncorkacure.org or by calling 404-876-2317.

Media Sponsors

The Sunday Paper is the Official Media Sponsor for *Uncork A Cure*. This is **Jezebel** Magazine’s second year as an Uncork Media Sponsor and a **Jezebel** photographer will be at Uncork to cover the event.

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Story Ideas

- **Where are researchers in the search for an HIV cure, how you can sign up to take part in research studies and what does it involve?**
- **What are the exciting developments in HIV treatment currently in the research pipeline?**
- **Why is it so important to know your HIV status?**
- **How are non-profits dealing with the current economy?**



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ARCA FACT SHEET

In addition to funds raised through *Uncork A Cure*, ARCA is supported by foundations, corporations, individuals and government agencies to cover its \$1.5 million dollar annual budget.

ARCA is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit clinical research, testing, outreach and educational organization founded in 1988. ARCA works through a network of more than 50 physicians and 5 public health clinics to conduct clinical drug trials and prevention research studies. ARCA also provides patient and care-provider educational programs as well as free HIV and STD testing throughout Atlanta.

ARCA has become one of the most respected and successful HIV/AIDS research facilities in the county over the past two decades by enrolling more than 2,000 metro Atlanta residents in more than 300 clinical drug trials and providing them with the latest investigational HIV/AIDS medications at no cost to them. ARCA has contributed key scientific information leading to the FDA approval of more than 27 individual and combination drugs now available for people with HIV/AIDS worldwide. Currently, ARCA is one of only three centers in the US that participated in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study to test the safety of an existing HIV medicine as a possible tool to prevent HIV infections. Over a 14 year period, ARCA enrolled more than 10,000 Atlantans with HIV infection in a CDC study to better understand HIV and AIDS. In all, more than 20,000 Atlantans have participated in ARCA studies and services.

ARCA is currently working with GeoVax, an Atlanta biotechnology firm, to design a study to test a vaccine to strengthen the immune systems of people who already have HIV. The vaccine was invented by Harriet Robinson, PhD of GeoVax. ARCA is the only site in the nation to participate in this early-phase treatment vaccine study. This study will be enrolling in Spring, 2010.

Outside of research studies about HIV testing, ARCA has no ongoing government or corporate funding for its free, anonymous, rapid HIV testing program. More than 6000 Atlantans have learned their HIV status through this program. Regular testing opportunities are offered at local colleges, including Georgia State, Morehouse, and Spelman.