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SPEAKERS

Jack Valinski, Joan Devlin



00:02

Houston is 90.1 KPFT, the sound of Texas at Pacifica network station KPFT Houston.



Jack Valinski 00:15

Welcome to another edition of lesbian and gay voices. This is Jack Valinski.



Joan Devlin 00:19

And I'm Joan Devlin.



Jack Valinski 00:20

And we're Glen Lois again.



Joan Devlin 00:22

Yes. It seems like we're Glenluce every week these days. Well, he



Jack Valinski 00:25

called in sick. And luckily, I was there to answer. So, you know, we have all these wonderful, great communication devices. And sometimes you just miss everybody. A cell phone or home phone or whatever. But Glenn was out of town last week, and this week, he's probably making

up for it. Probably recall what he said he will be back. He's probably listening right now. So we wish him the best. And, and I have been sick a couple of weeks last month, too. So I know. It's been tough. So anyway, tonight, we have a pretty full show.

J Joan Devlin 00:55

Yes, we do. Of course, JD Doyle will be doing the second hour, he's recorded something very special for us, as he does every month. And he will be taking over the whole nine to 10 o'clock slot. But from eight to nine, we'll be talking to Ingrid Rivera with the ngl F. And she's going to be talking to us about what's brought what's brought her to Houston and some things that are going on with the gay and lesbian Taskforce. And also Fred Walters will be here from the virus club. And there's a bunch of new things going on there. So who keep us up to date on that? And you know, all we do not have this way out this week.

J Jack Valinski 01:11

Yes. Unfortunately, there was a problem with the satellite feed. So we did not get it. Yes, it was. I guess we were not pointing at the right satellite. And so I guess I have time to talk about the new flower power colored iMac. Yeah, wrong show. That's Wednesday.

J Joan Devlin 01:41

Check up well, I want to talk about something actually something very cool. There's a new chocolate shop. And I love chocolate. And I was very excited today. It's called the chocolate bar. And you could be bought as Yes. It's called the chocolate bar. And it's right across from where TVs used to be. And they have something called chocolate popcorn among about a million other things

J Jack Valinski 02:00

they use. You're just in heaven.

J Joan Devlin 02:01

Are you kidding? I wanted to ask them to lock me in the shop and just let me have my 15 minutes because I'm telling you, it was just wonderful. So anyway, if you haven't been in the area of West Alabama between Shepherd and Woodhead turn to your right, and there is the chocolate bar. And as they told me, they're the only bar without a cover in town, so

J Jack Valinski 02:22

Well, okay. All right. Well, normally we be going to news wrap from this way out, but it's not available this week. And actually, we've had a really good track record of getting it every week.

J

Joan Devlin 02:32

Yeah, but we do have some music queued up so some JD previews for you if you want. Okay, well,

J

Jack Valinski 02:37

let's listen to that.

J

Joan Devlin 02:47

And that was lesbian artist, Yvonne Perea and she was singing a song called heart. And that is from one of our many collections that JD Doyle provides for us. You'll be hearing more of JD's work, as I said in the second hour of the show. I'm in the studio right now with Ingrid Rivera, who's here to talk about the Houston, Texas Latino. I'm trying to read off your consultation consultation meeting. And you are with the NGL TF. Is that correct? That's the

♂

03:12

Policy Institute in New York National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce.

J

Joan Devlin 03:17

And you are here in town for this meeting. What is what is this exactly? Had to say like that? What is this? explained it was exactly what the Texas Latino Council consultation meeting is, please?

♂

03:33

Well, basically, I'm here to meet with community activists and leaders who are Latino identified who I can sit and talk with basically, and start a dialogue about what is going on in their community and what they feel the issues are that are going on in their community and as queer people, issues that have not been, have not been tackled by the mainstream GLBT organizations or the main mainstream GLBT activists, so talking to them and trying to find out and figure out to develop a research agenda to figure out how we could partner with them or collaborate with them and get some ideas. So it's basically having a dialogue with them. Community leaders,

J

Joan Devlin 04:16

do you think the issues here will be similar or different to those in New York?



04:21

Well, right, that's why I'm going to be traveling across the country and having meetings like this with other people of color groups and discussing this having this meeting so that we can figure that out. So we can see if there are different issues here in Houston than in New York and so forth. So wanting to talk to Latino, Latina people, African American individuals, Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and through all these conversations, then develop that research agenda. And what is the response been so far? Well, this is one of My first trips right now. And we had a good response, we have a good group of people who are going to be at the meeting. And one of the one of the reasons we want to talk to community activists and leaders, is because we feel that they've been doing the work for so long, and they've been in a community so they know what's going on. And they have first hand experience. So we want to talk to people who have been doing work, and know what's going on, so that they can convey that to us. And then we can see how either we can assist them or how we can work together and sort of trying to figure out a national agenda.



Joan Devlin 05:39

Do you feel that people of color have been overlooked in the past when it comes to issues, so many times you see a white face on everything.



05:47

And most definitely, I think that that is a definite, um, the racial and economic justice initiative is the program I direct. And this is why I'm here was created because of the invisibility of people of color in the queer movement. Right now, this is another reason why we're having this these meetings, these consultation meetings is because there are a lot of issues at the forefront right now at the mainstream GLBT movement, and we want to fight we want to see we want to figure out if these are the same issues, which I can probably assume that they are not, if these are the same issues that are affecting queer people of color. We want to, for instance, we're also we also work with queer people of color and poor people. And



Joan Devlin 06:40

why there's no poor people,



06:42

poor people. So we were working on some welfare issues. And a lot of people that we've talked to basically as and even with them working with people of color is why are you working on this, you know, this, this is not our issue. And by people saying that, and actually believing that allows me to believe that we have been overlooked as people of color and poor people working on the welfare issue has been a difficult one. Because people have a face to what queerness is, and that usually is white man who has a lot of money, which is not true. We come from all

walks of life and have have all types of income, ranging from very poor, to quite well off. So we have to acknowledge that there are different segments to our community. And we have to start working on those issues.

J Joan Devlin 07:45

And the other thing, too, is, you know, and it's been said before, it's very hard to focus on things like winning election, shall we say, or passing referendums or defeating referendums. When you don't know where your next meal is coming from, where you don't have a place to live, where you can't put food in your kids stomachs in your stomach, you know, where you have no work and no way to get work, because you don't have a car. I mean, it's real hard to get worked up about who's going to win the next election.

Ω 08:16

Exactly. And when you think about, we can talk about two different things, we think about people of color, and what you just said, you know, there there are different issues for people of color, when they are coming out, or when they're expressing their sexual orientation. People of color have to also deal with their identity, and trying to figure out where they're gonna, what they're trying to balance. Usually, when people of color come out of the closet and go into queer movement, if you want to say, most of the time, they're surrounded by white queer people, and basically, it's almost like leaving their identity, their cultural identity behind. So they have to almost juggle these two identities and try to figure out in my, you know, in the queer, you know, group or my, in my, you know, people if my African American or my queer first, you know, as almost as a juggler of identities. And when we talk about poor people, there's a stigmatization around poor people, people on welfare, people don't even like to say they're on welfare right now, because it's so stigmatized. So you're talking about being poor first coming out as being poor than actually trying to come out as being gay on top of that, and the welfare system is a very heterosexism you know, system. So, there are a lot of reasons why. There are a lot of situations and stigmatization and discrimination that keeps us very invisible. So, the work that I'm doing I'm very excited about because it's trying to uncover that invisibility and start saying we need to work on these issues.

J Joan Devlin 09:59

And in the game, community to because a person definitely who comes out and goes into the all white gay group might find themselves facing the same kind of discrimination and invisibility that they face when they're in their quote unquote, other life.

Ω 10:14

Right. And this is what the Reggie program is trying to do, which is trying to we seek to add economic and racial justice priorities into mainstream organizations, but also, organizations working on economic justice, racial justice, that are not GLBT centered, so that they can understand that they are people of color in the organizations that they might help that happen to be queer. So they have to understand that aspect of them, and know that they have queer

constituencies and you know, the people that they help every day. So it's almost trying to connect, trying to connect, you know, saying that racial and economic issues are very core issues and needs to be addressed within the queer movement and out, and then we can see start seeing some connection.

J Joan Devlin 11:05

And when did you first get involved in this project?

11:07

I've been working with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, it's going to be a year pretty soon.

J Joan Devlin 11:14

And this is an ng I TF Initiative, or is this something that had started separately that the NG LTF picked up?

11:20

It's an NGO, TF project, yes. And they, they started thinking about it, because they really wanted to make a shift from the narrowly defined version of what a queer issue is, and from a middle class perspective, a white perspective. So they were having a lot of discussions about it. And that's how Reggie was born. And then I found out about it. And I thought this was great, because this is the type of work that I've always tried to do, tried to connect racial, and economic issues and all the isms pretty much connect sexism, homophobia, racism, all of those things. And we need to understand that

J Joan Devlin 11:59

this this also addressed some immigration issues, because I know we've had the National Gay and Lesbian immigration task, immigration rights Task Force on, and they also face very unique issues, that many in the gay community, their attitude is just like, Well, why did you get involved with someone who wasn't a citizen? Right? Why does that, you know, what does that affect us?

12:17

Well, right now, that is going to be something we're going to be tackling. Um, but right now, since the program, the program is fairly new, we've done some projects. And I could tell you a little bit about those if you'd like, on one of the first projects that I started working on was the black pride survey, 2000, which was a survey that was developed with five African American researchers, the Policy Institute, and the Policy Institute. And it was disseminated in nine cities

across the country and black Pride celebrations. And it's an original research project that we have created. And it was basically to excuse me, to identify what those issues are that I was talking about. And we chose, we chose black Pride celebrations, as a first step, not something we want to continue on. But as a first step, because this is where a large amount of queer African American people gather. And we wanted to get all this information. And right now, the data is being analyzed, and we're going to be putting a report out about this. So that was the biggest project and we got about 2261 surveys completed, which was great. And this is that's and that is, I think, the only survey ever done to that targets queer African American people. And like I said, we're working on some welfare, welfare issues I'm going to be we're trying to decide whether we're going to develop a survey or create a publication so that we can put it out to people so that they can understand how welfare is a queer issue. And it's so complex and so huge. It's it goes from discrimination within the welfare system to the heterosexism which lesbian mothers have to go through a naming the father of the child and this family reunification. It's there's a lot of issues and Baba welfare, so we want to develop a publication to put that out to people. Another project we're working on his Latino health paper to resort to Latino researchers are writing a publication and it is. It is from a survey, a research project that they completed about gay and bisexual, Latino men who are more susceptible to HIV and AIDS. And they talk about the interconnections between racism and homophobia and how services are not provided for them. And their We're in the final stages right now of writing the paper. And that's going to be out hopefully in the spring. So those are just a few of the projects that we're working on. But it's growing very quickly right now. And as a matter of fact, I just might put in a plug that we're looking for a ratio of economic justice policy analyst at the the task force in New York, because the project is growing very quickly, and I need another body to help me.

J

Joan Devlin 15:28

And the other thing I wanted to mention, he talked about AIDS, being the fastest growing are growing quickly in the in the Hispanic community. One of the issues we had here, when we had all this on, and what was mentioned that a lot of the clinics and things do not have Spanish speaking personnel. So people go in there, and they cannot make themselves understood. And so it creates even more frustration for someone who's already in a very frustrating situation to begin with. They're scared, you know, because you're not going to tell me anybody who's been diagnosed with HIV is not scared, even even in this day and age. And they're, they're frightened, and they're afraid, and nobody speaks their language. And that is something you know, here in Houston, I mean, there's no excuse for that 1/3 of our population is Spanish speaking. So, you know, there's, there's just no excuse to not have adequate, you know, facilities and people who can talk to the patients,

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16:25

right. And those are, those are obstacles that are put in the face of people. And whether it's intentional or non intentional, that is institutional discrimination. I mean, there needs to be a Spanish speaking, you know, counselor or person, that someone can be able to talk to you that, that will, that'll only ensure that people walk out the door and not get the services that they need.

J

Joan Devlin 16:48

Or be faced with twice as much stress exactly, you know, in a time when you're supposed to be lessening person stress, not increasing it. So what are some of the other things you have upcoming? Do you have any timeline for some of your projects that you're working on? Or is this just kind of you still in the information gathering stage? Yes,

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17:05

we have like three phases to this project. And the first phase is basically consultation meetings and coalition building, just talking to people to figure out what exactly we want to do, because we feel we need to get the information from people who are out there doing the work and have been doing it for years. So we want to talk to these key people, and ask them, you know, what do you think we should be doing? Where do you think we should be doing it? What do you think are the issues facing your community? Questions like that, and then we could take that back and figure out what we want to do if we want to do specific projects in specific cities, or a national agenda, which we, you know, take all that information and compile it. And we might have to take, we might have a plenty of priorities and ask these key people to help us to sort these priorities all and say, which one do you feel we need to work on now? Which one is dire? Which one, you know, so we want to consult with people and really make this a collaborative effort with individuals. Because for so long, people of color voices have not been heard. So we want their voices heard. And we want to do this in the manner that they feel need, it needs to be done.

J

Joan Devlin 18:18

And they definitely the people who are receiving the services are the people who can tell you the most about some things are lacking.

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18:25

Exactly. We we cannot sit at a table and decide, okay, this is the priority for Asian Pacific Islanders. And, you know, we can't do that. We have to talk to Asian Pacific Islander, you know, community activist leaders, people have been doing the work. And then we can, you know, across the country, and then decide slowly, but surely, what needs to be done. So it's it's it's a lot of information gathering meetings, for the first phase. The second phase is we're trying to develop the public policy agenda for GLBT people, POCs and poor people. So we want to develop that strategy so that mainstream GLBT organizations can incorporate that, and also, a non GLBT organizations working on economic justice can incorporate that as well. So that's the plan on developing that. And then the third phase is obviously disseminating that information broadly.

J

Joan Devlin 19:23

That yeah, that's an important thing. Because, you know, if you keep it, internal, whatever, you're still gonna have the stereotypes. And the community at large. We don't need to focus on welfare. We don't need to focus on the needs of poor people or people of color. You know,

everybody's happy with our program. We know and when you put out your information, you can say, no, here's a list of people who are not happy with your program and why they are not happy with your program and things that you might need to work on. If you really want to be as inclusive as you say you do.



19:56

And hopefully this information that we get like, for instance, the The research projects, because there's nothing else out there like it. Hopefully it will, it would help organizations doing that work and that have been muffled basically, because they've been doing the work with his note, no statistical analysis, no statistical data to back it up. So hopefully, with a black pride survey, if, you know, once the data has been analyzed, we can say here, this is what African American GLBT people have said in this community. And now you have to listen to what they're saying. And with that information, people could actually try to get a funding, try to get grants, because there's something to back it up their numbers to back this up. It's not? Well, you know, I've seen that this is happening. And a lot of people say, well, I need some concrete information. And in the past, I mean, as queer people, we rarely get put on any kind of survey. So you know, now we're doing queer people of color, and hopefully something for poor people as well, so that we can start documenting this,



J Joan Devlin 21:06

and helps with the bureaucrats too. Because you can put something in front of their face and say, No, look, this is why your programs not working. You know, you can make 1000 press conferences, talking about how you've, you know, welfare reform has helped people on welfare, but the truth of the matter is, you know, all you've done is thrown more people out on the street. So, well, good luck. I noticed you have a date of February 27, which is tomorrow. Yes. So tell us a little bit about what you're going to be doing tomorrow?



21:37

Well, again, it's going to be the meeting with the Latino organizers, and just telling them a little bit about my program, what's been going on, and hopefully, starting a dialogue that hopefully will continue with them, and with other Latino and people of color activists and community leaders to talk about this agenda that we want to identify. And where will the meeting be held? It's going to be at the resurrection MCC, and it's closed meeting. So we have a bunch of great people getting their together tomorrow, and I'm very excited about that. And hopefully, something great will come out of it.



J Joan Devlin 22:19

Yeah, well, good luck. I think it's a great plan. I think it's wonderful that somebody's finally thought of it. Or maybe people have thought of it. But somebody's actually put the thought into action. And we look forward to hearing more about it. We do talk to David Elliot every month. And of course, I'm sure will still continue to be in touch with you so you can let us know how things are progressing. Yes, I love yous and I'll be back. Great. Well, yeah, do get in touch with

us when you come back, because we really want to know how things are going, and what the results of the study have shown. Okay. Great. Well, thank you so much. We've been talking to Ingrid Rivera, who's with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. And we'll be back in a moment

J

Jack Valinski 23:02

you're listening to KPFT and lesbian and gay voices. And we're back here with we're gonna talk about the Buyers Club. Fred Walters is with us. First off, and what is the Buyers Club.

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23:16

The Buyers Club is a nonprofit organization that was founded to provide nutritional supplements at a low cost, basically, at no profit. And over the years, it's kind of evolved into an organization that not doesn't just sell supplements, we also provide treatment options for side effects. You know, people are living longer now with the advent of new HIV drugs that are working, they're living longer, but there's a trade off side effects. facial fat loss, people are losing, you know that they're, they're getting that and they're losing their cheeks. They're losing their butt. They're getting a belly, what they call protease belly, all the fats disappearing from their body, diarrhea, I mean, horrible side effects. So we are also providing effective treatment options that involve therapies that are non toxic and cheap.

J

Jack Valinski 24:13

Okay, so somebody starts, somebody goes there, they find out they're positive, they start taking the drugs, and how do they know about you or, you know, doctor tell them or do they find out from some other organization?

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24:29

We're getting a lot of Dr. Referrals right now. Dr. Shannon Schrader, Dr. Arlette. Pharaoh, they know about us. They've been with us from the beginning. And they have seen the benefits of some of the nutritional therapies that are working. And if if a doctor doesn't tell people about us than usually, places like the Center for AIDS will tell people about us, or others or places like that.

J

Jack Valinski 24:56

Is this a unique organization to Houston

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25:00

We're the only not only the only one in Houston, but we're also the only one in Texas. Really? Yeah, we're one of eight in the US.

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Jack Valinski 25:06

And how do you? How do you know about these things? I mean, how do you research to talk? Well introduce yourself first.

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25:17

Okay. My name is Carlos Navarro. I've recently joined the Buyers Club as the treasurer. And I want to step back and make a comment on the previous question on how people find out about okay, one of the things we have just done is competed for them were awarded a Ryan White title to grant part of that process, we formed a collaboration with both the Dunbar Watkins foundation and with Orvis. So these are two other cases where those major clinics will be prescribing nutritional supplements for their patients and sending them to us to get the nutritional supplements.

J

Jack Valinski 25:55

Okay. And are these things that are these things that they need prescriptions for? Are they something over the counter? And how do you know how to prescribe?

Ω

26:07

Okay, basically, generally, nutritional supplements do not require prescriptions. However, the terms of the grant are that you come with a prescription from a doctor or nutritionist. Okay, now in this case, the grant is providing funds to reimburse us for supplements for those people who can't otherwise afford them.

J

Jack Valinski 26:30

Okay. And the particular type of supplements is is something that's been researched?

Ω

26:36

Well, we have been working with treatment advocates for the last six years. And these treatment advocates are people like Charlie Swan, kowski, from Tufts University, Dr. Larkin lands. Well, Nelson virtual Michael moody. And these folks have been in the research field for a long time, they are networking with some of the best known Doc's in the US. They go to all the retrovirus conferences, all the nutritional conferences. So what we are doing is we're taking taking all of their writings, and we're compiling them into understandable, readable formats. So you know, we can say to people, this is what you take for neuropathy. This is what we see works. Okay. And so you don't have to read a book to figure out what works for neuropathy. You know, we list them in bullet form, usually on less than a page. This is what you take, and this is how much you take. And these are the cautions.

J

Jack Valinski 27:41

Okay? And how long has the virus club been around? informally?

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27:45

About five or six years? Okay, and formally about four.

J

Jack Valinski 27:50

So as you said, you're the only one in Texas Do you have people from all over Texas? Trying to get information and or some of the supplements? Oh, yeah,

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27:59

we are going to print not just enough guides for Houston and Texas, but also for people all over the world. We get emails and letters from all over Europe, all over the US from city health clinics, health departments. And because of that, we're going to be printing almost a half a million copies this year.

J

Jack Valinski 28:24

Wow. And they're going to be distributed all over all

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28:28

over. There'll be distributed nationwide in both English and Spanish. Fabulous. We've also talked with, I'm a member of the Veterans Administration Committee advisory board for the National aid services. And they have expressed interest in having the guide so that they could distribute nationwide to veterans.

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28:48

In Texas, what they're one of the main reasons why we have so many requests for this as well. One reason is the 1999. Ryan White needs assessment indicated that 49% of people who start HIV medications, skip or stop them due to side effects. And that's that's a big reason, right? Why we're getting all these requests from everywhere.

J

Jack Valinski 29:15

49% That's an incredible number. Yeah. Wow.



29:19

And then Carlos, you told me about a study that was done at Thomas Street Clinic.



29:23

Yeah, we had a study at Thomas Street Clinic here that was spoken about on the International Conference of AIDS and its summary of findings, they stated that over 75% of people nationwide on HIV combination therapies, discontinue them due to their side effects from medication regimens. So basically, what's happening is we've had some vast improvements with the protease inhibitors and other medications that we've had that help extend your life. But now all of a sudden the side effects are so bad, that eight out of 10 people are deciding Well, I have to make a choice between an extended life or not quality of life. And so what the nutritional supplements do is allow you to have both continued taking your medications and improve your quality of life.



J Jack Valinski 30:09

Now, some of this, I guess, as people become positive now versus what became positive five years ago, or 10 years ago, and some people who are still alive 15 years ago, whatever does that differ to? I mean, when they started taking the drugs, drugs weren't quite as good or as researched. And their immune system couldn't handle it at the time when side effects are even worse, are the side effects less now,



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what we're finding is actually I just got this yesterday. It's, I'm on this list called the protease inhibitor list where I get all these updates on studies. And I don't know who did the study, it might have been Dr. Jules Levin, but he's the one who sent the email. And he said that they did a study on of people who were on D, four T, and AC T. And the people that have been on D 40. And AC T for a long period of time. Are they're starting to see a severe facial fat loss, those who are just finding out that they're positive and who are starting it, there's they're seeing a much slower progression of that. And they don't know why there's some theories, but yeah, I mean, nowadays, I mean, well, they used to say hit hard and hit early, right? Yes, yes. And now they're saying, wait until your accounts drop before you start them? And I mean, I don't know if it's the evolution of the viruses, or, or people or what, but it's like,



J Jack Valinski 31:52

or the knowledge base to, right. I mean, you know, there is no absolute answers.



31:58

Please... But we're starting to see some really strange things in this disease side effects

I know. But we're starting to see some some really strange things in this disease side effects wise, and, you know, used to be AZT. But you know, when you took AZT, you lost your but now it's in the face, you can see it all over your your cheeks,

J Jack Valinski 32:16

and the makeup of your clientele. I mean, there's all different walks of life.

32:22

Most I'd say 90 to 95% of our people are people living with HIV, or they are their words, their partners or their caregivers. What we're getting is a lot of people that are being referred by the docs that are sending their HIV patients to us, they're also sending their cancer patients to us or their hepatitis patients to us, because side effects have a lot of crossover appeal. Yeah, you know, you're seeing the same side effect in cancer and hepatitis, and an HIV. And we're able to serve those, that we're not experts in diabetes, or hepatitis, or I should say, cancer, or other things. But some things are really that that come up over and over again, like high liver enzymes, and hepatitis. And when you have high liver enzymes from taking too many proteins, inhibitors or for too long, or for whatever reason, you may have high liver enzymes, we can help that. And what's the other one wasting in muscle loss? You see that in cancer and you said HIV? Maybe some others that a lot of parallel side effects and different diseases, and how

J Jack Valinski 33:32

regimented are these supplements as compared to you know, the drugs? The combination? Drugs are supposed to be very regimented? You got to take the pills certain time, so many you you're not supposed to skip it. What about the supplements? Are they quite as regimented?

33:46

No most supplements? You can take in the middle of meals unless it says on the bottle, like NAC, you really should take that on an empty stomach. They used to think that you should take glutamine on an empty stomach and glutamine would help stop diarrhea. And it would also build muscle but now they're the new studies show that you can take it on a full stomach. But most vitamins you can take in the middle of meals or right after a meal. And very few things you have to take on an empty stomach. So it's a lot less relaxed than then pharmaceutical drugs.

J Jack Valinski 34:22

What about general nutrition? You talk about that?

34:25

Well we we have some people that come in that say well you know I'm I'm positive And I

Well, we we have some people that come in that say, well, you know, I'm positive. And I don't really have any side effects, but I just want to combat the nutritional deficiencies that might be going on in my body. And so what we do is we provide multivitamins that are easily digestible. They don't have lots of dyes or coatings on them so that they'll break down. And so yeah, we're able to do that. We hope one day we'll be able to have a full time nutritionist in our, in our offices so that we can, you know, have someone with credentials there answering this question where

J

Jack Valinski 35:07

you get your general funding.

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35:09

Carlos, you could answer that when you're the treasurer.

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35:13

Well, we've had a few, a few local groups here that have put on events for so over the years. But we've grown quite a bit and we need to increase the funding. So we're looking at, we just were awarded the white Ryan White grant,

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which let me add doesn't mean it covers any operating at all. It just pays for supplements to give away

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35:38

right to Ryan White is just a reimbursement for our actual cost without any, any margin for the supplements. Okay. But it's important for folks out there to understand that effective April 1, if you need and can't afford the supplements, we can help you with them. Okay, okay. We are going to write some grants to some private foundations ask him to match the Ryan White grant. And we'll probably get some grant funds from some pharmaceuticals. We had a big fundraiser last week where we've gotten groups of interested people together, and they are going to go to their friends and help put together a pledge program so that we can have a budgeted income of monthly pledges coming in. So we're trying to expand things on all fronts.

J

Jack Valinski 36:23

Right, okay. Yeah,

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36:24

we just found out that jungle lost is going to make us a beneficiary. We just found out today that DuPont is giving us a couple 1000. And Brian White, we've I think we've written 12 grants this year already. We applied to the Ford Foundation. I mean, it's been nonstop.

J

Jack Valinski 36:48

Yeah, I guess a lot of people don't realize how much effort it takes to write grants. And that grants are for specific things only. They're not like a cash cow. But but you know, I don't think enough can be said about some of the fundraising groups and parties and stuff that goes on in the community that raise money for community events. And, you know, certainly in the early days of this epidemic, Houston was lagging way behind in organizations, and, you know, people who specialized in and it looks like Houston is really sort of jumped in the past couple years with some great organizations.

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37:23

Yeah, I mean, I heard her Bunnies. Bunnies on the buyer this year, it's going to be 25 bucks to get in, which is going to increase the amount of money that is given to the agencies. And what's what's the other big one that they have, that we applied for, oh, jungle lust. They're not only going to have that party at the party that night, but they're also going to have activities the next day to bring even more money for the agencies that they're sponsoring.

J

Jack Valinski 37:54

And it's interesting, a lot of these did groups originally started out as party groups only, right, you know, and then they became what, when they start seeing their friends die, you know, and realized what what a, you know, problem this was that the a lot of them became, you know, 501 C, three nonprofits, and a lot of them will raise money to put on the parties and then all the money that comes in from the parties go to, you know, I mean, it is Houston really has a lot of really great organizations that do this,

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and when they have the support of those organizations, but we were real impressed with the fundraiser that we had last week, where it was just really a group of individuals. And we saw an extreme amount of enthusiasm, and a lot of ideas beyond besides the pledges of the things that they volunteered to do to try to help us raise the funding. And we

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even had people came forth and said, if you're if you want to use my picture, and tell the community that I'm positive, and then it was because of me, I mean, that it was because of the buyers club that I went back to work, you know, you can use my face and my name, and I will let the virus club do that. And that was

J

Jack Valinski 38:59

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah, there's a whole there's a whole nother closet there. I mean, you know, the closet for gay people. And now, the closet for whether you're HIV, especially if you're trying to get back into the employment. Picture.

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39:13

We we went after some folks that had been poster folks, for other organizations, when channel eight came out into the story on us, and they said no, because we're going back into the corporate world, and we don't want to out ourselves. And I thought for you, but

J

Jack Valinski 39:31

and I think the real reason is insurance purposes. I mean, that's the scary thing. Who, you know, when a company hires somebody, they know they're HIV positive, even if they can do the job better than anybody else. Yeah. So there's, you know, there's still a long way to go in this despite isn't there

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39:48

there is. We're also trying to figure out what our every agency in this town has a fundraising gala. And we're still trying to figure out what ours is going to be someone. Your friend mentioned some kind of party. And I can't remember why don't say, we don't want anyone to steal it.

J

Jack Valinski 40:15

Well, and people also don't realize it, the effort is to put together something like this, the planning of it and, you know, putting everything together. You know, sometimes you go to these things, and it's just looks like it's magic. It all just happen, but they don't realize you've worked all year on it to put it together.

Ω

40:31

Well, I'll tell you, I'm, I've considered returning to the workforce later this year. I've been involved with the virus clubs since late November. And I have volunteered 40 to 60 hours per week. So I'm not sure that I have time to go back to work.

J

Jack Valinski 40:49

Okay, if somebody wants to get in touch with the virus club, how do they do that?



40:54

A couple of ways they can get on our website if they have internet access, and it's Houston buyers. club.com we use.com Because most people don't know, dot o RG or they can look us up in the business pages or directory assistance under Houston Buyers Club. And we're on Montrose right across from Starbucks. And if you if you go during the daytime, we usually are looking out the window at the people going into Starbucks just because a lot of our friends go there. We always scream at them or hold up our telephone numbers on the windows and



J Jack Valinski 41:31

yes, they need that \$4 cup of coffee. Your phone number



41:36

713-520-5288.



J Jack Valinski 41:40

Great. Well, Carlos and Fred, thank you for coming by to tell us all about the Buyers Club.



41:44

Thank you, Jack very much.



41:45

Thank you very much.



J Jack Valinski 41:46

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42:02

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42:15

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