



**MEDIA ALERT/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
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**A BICYCLE, A HELMET AND A RED DRESS
Priming and Posing to Help Raise Funds to End AIDS in 2020 in New
York State**

August 6, 2019 (New York, NY) – On Thursday, August 15, 2019, from 6:30-8:30pm, rows and rows of red dresses will line racks at Housing Works’ beautiful Bookstore Café, 126 Crosby St, New York, NY, ready to be tried on, fitted and purchased by cyclists of all genders. This annual event builds momentum and camaraderie for the 300-mile **BRAKING AIDS® Ride**, brakingaidsride.org, a spectacular route from Cooperstown to New York City to raise funds for Housing Works www.housingworks.org. **Red Dress Day** is one of the highlights of this physically and mentally challenging effort when all of the 150+ riders and volunteers make a stop in front of the State House in Albany, wearing dozens of the dresses they’ve chosen this day, and observe one minute of silence in memory of those who died from AIDS-related causes. This year, the moment of silence will anticipate that by 2020, the HIV epidemic will be successfully ended in New York State, with the level of new transmissions per year reduced to fewer than 750 statewide – a major focus of Housing Works’ relentless advocacy.

Tom Hennes, who has lived with HIV for the past 33 years and has been one of **BRAKING AIDS® Ride**’s most successful fund raisers said, “Many people would prefer that those of us with HIV disappear. Wearing a red dress makes us visible and reminds the world that we and our wonderful community are still here.” He continued, “For one day, we have the privilege of exulting in our presence and our joy at persisting beyond the bounds of a mainstream society that has far too often turned its back on us. It lightens the load and draws us together.”

Each year, Housing Works Thrift Stores sift through their stock, setting aside some of the most fabulous selections – from full-length designer gowns, to sexy red bustiers, to slinky spandex action-length sheaths. Original price tags on some of these dresses is in the hundreds, yet here, they sell for \$10-\$40, which is donated right back to Housing Works. It is definitely a spectacle of people in helmets and gear dressed to the nines (some folks also have a great time creating their own “runway” during the event) but its main goal is to highlight the commitment these riders have to supporting Housing Works.

Housing Works has housed and provided supportive services to thousands of New Yorkers living with HIV or at risk of infection since 1990 and has attracted national recognition for developing innovative, client-centered models of housing and services for hard-to-reach populations. The organization and all of its members engage in ongoing grassroots advocacy in pursuit of its mission to end the dual crises of AIDS and homelessness.

Riders in **BRAKING AIDS® Ride** often train for months before the ride. Nearly every weekend, many riders put on their gear – rain or shine – and pedal for miles, solo or in **BRAKING AIDS® Ride** organized events, to get in shape for the ride weekend, September 13-16, 2019.

Now in its ninth year, **BRAKING AIDS® Ride** has raised over two million dollars in support of Housing Works. Riders must raise at least \$3,500 to participate. Some have raised in excess of \$30,000 in one year.

" **BRAKING AIDS® Ride** reflects our commitment to fight every day to end HIV as an epidemic and to achieve health equity and social justice for the most disenfranchised New Yorkers," said Housing Works President and CEO Charles King. "2016 data indicates we are on track for achieving most of our ending-the-epidemic targets, but we are lagging behind on several fronts outside New York City. We have not seen sufficient declines in new infections among women, especially transgender women, and we have also seen a frightening rise in new infections among foreign-born Latino gay and bisexual men. Donations to the ride are helping us defeat ongoing efforts to destroy our nation's health care system and also support our advocacy campaigns to expand rental assistance for low-income people with HIV outside New York City, to ensure that all service providers are supporting viral suppression, and to ensure that everyone at risk of HIV has access to pre-exposure prophylaxis. Together, we can end AIDS."

About BRAKING AIDS® Ride

Benefits Housing Works

Three days, 300 miles

Spectacular route from Cooperstown to New York City

Friday, September 13th to Sunday, September 15th, 2019

About Housing Works

Housing Works is a healing community of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Our mission is to end the dual crises of homelessness and AIDS through relentless advocacy, the provision of lifesaving services and entrepreneurial businesses that sustain our efforts.

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Each year, most riders take to their wheels in “Red Dress,” which they may select from an array of donated dresses in Housing Works’ own Soho Bookstore Cafe. It’s a joyful part of each year’s event – not to be missed. Photo Credit: Alan Barnett



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