

Needle Exchange Marks Ninth Year

In December Tapestry Health's needle exchange program, based in Northampton, celebrated its ninth year of operation. The program, which distributed more than 6,000 syringes and had 900 client contacts in its first year, exchanged more than 53,000 syringes with 2,500 client contacts during 2003, the most recent year for which data is available.

The program serves injection drug users over the age of 18, replacing used syringes, which may be infected with HIV or hepatitis C, with sterile ones, and providing anonymous HIV testing, vaccinations for hepatitis A and B, substance abuse counseling, and assistance in accessing substance abuse treatment.

Since its inception the program has enjoyed strong support from the city of Northampton. Mayor Clare Higgins notes that the Tapestry staff "really did their homework in planning and organizing this program. The result is a program that is helping to protect public health and is actually helping some people find the resources they need to break the cycle of addiction."

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health HIV/AIDS Bureau, which is the sole source of funding for the program, provides \$197,000 of the \$220,000 a year that is needed to keep it running. Since 1988 the federal government has had a ban on using federal funds to pay for needle exchange programs, so private support continues to be critical. "For about the cost of treating only one person with



Leslie Tarr Laurie presents a check to Tim Cohen-Mitchell and Eric Boughton of YES.

BizVenture Says YES to Tapestry

As the first step in a joint effort to help reestablish Tapestry's presence in the Athol/Orange area and to better serve North Quabbin teens, Tapestry has teamed up with the Young Entrepreneurs Society (YES) BizVenture programs at Athol High School and in Orange.

As part of a yearlong project, members of YES, under the direction of Executive Director Tim Cohen-Mitchell, conducted market research and used their findings to promote Tapestry services to teens. The marketing campaign included flyers, letters to the editor, a press release, and an on-line survey linked to the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Of the more than 350 teens who were surveyed, 67 percent said they had heard of Tapestry. Of those, 71 percent said they would use Tapestry for birth control products, and 66 percent said their parents would not object to them using Tapestry's services.

Using funds provided by the Community Coalition for Teens, YES members also produced a two-minute public service announcement aimed at parents