

Red Ma+ters

Volume 3 • Issue 3

THE NEWSLETTER OF AIDS CALGARY AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

Winter 2011

HOLIDAY HAMPERS
'TIS THE SEASON

LOOKING BACK
**30 YEARS
OF HIV**
>LOOKING AHEAD

2011 AIDS WALK
>THANK YOU



INTRODUCING NEW
STAFF TO ACAA

BOW VALLEY &
MEDICINE HAT
UPDATES

ABORIGINAL AIDS
AWARENESS WEEK

***WORLD AIDS
DAY 2011**
(JOIN US ON THIS DAY)



AIDS CALGARY
AWARENESS
ASSOCIATION IS
REBRANDING

*and we want
your input*

30 years of HIV: A Reflection

A look back on the advancements of HIV



June 5 marked the 30th anniversary of the discovery of HIV in North America.

In 1981, we started to hear rumblings from the United States Center for Disease Control and popular media outlets that there was a mysterious illness being found in gay men. The disease did not yet have a name but was more often described with the disease Pneumocystis Cariniipneumonia and Lymphadenopathy. Media started referring to the disease as “GRID” (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency). A short time after, the disease was more appropriately named Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Since 1983, AIDS Calgary Awareness Association has helped people learn about, prevent, and live with HIV/AIDS. As an AIDS Service Organization we have had to constantly change with the advancements of HIV. What started as an organization that dealt with the immediate crises, grief, loss, death and dying has evolved into long term case management programs. We help people deal with a myriad of issues which include supporting long term survivors of HIV, helping people learn how to manage their health, and re-entering the workforce. We have also seen a lot of changes and advancements in HIV treatment options. Programs also changed from primarily serving gay men to the current range of programs that seek to serve a very diverse community. We know that HIV does not discriminate and that there are a number of communities that are disproportionately represented in the HIV epidemic such as gay men, women,

people who inject drugs, and Aboriginal people.

Our prevention work has had to advance as well; we can no longer primarily focus on how HIV is transmitted and how to use a condom. We know that the scope is much larger. Is it about exploring why people do not use condoms? Do they have access to these protective measures? What can we do to address the barriers to safe sex? We also recognize that HIV does not happen in isolation and the need to learn about and share information on STIs (sexually-transmitted infections)

and Hepatitis C. We now provide education based on the social determinants of health and address other related issues like poverty, substance abuse, mental health, discrimination, and isolation.

The last 30 years has been a fight; we’ve experienced some losses and some wins. We have people living longer with HIV and managing their health, yet, we continue to see new infections ever year. We mustn’t forget the struggles of the past, the losses we’ve suffered and the pain experienced by everyone involved in this movement. We celebrate the advancements, the courage, the strength and the passion that continues to move us forward. We owe the last 30 years to the great people who have been involved in sharing their stories, building organizations from the ground up, and those supporting people both recently diagnosed and living with HIV. Thank you to those who are still involved and to the new help we continue to pick up along the way. Our hope for the next 30 years is that people will continue to live healthier lives, that medications will continue to become more effective, that there will be fewer new infections, that more people are knowledgeable about HIV, that we can reduce stigma, and that there is more accessible testing. Maybe, we’ll even be able to celebrate the success of an HIV vaccine.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Core Training

January 18, February 11, March 14

Time: 9:00am – 4:00pm

Location: AIDS Calgary Training Room

Increase your knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS in this free workshop. Topics covered include: safer sex & HIV/AIDS, living with HIV/AIDS and challenging stereotypes. To register, call (403) 508-2500 or e-mail info@aidscalgary.org.

Friday Lunch

December 2 & 16, January 13 & 27

Time: 1:00pm

Location: Calgary Cares Centre

Friday lunches are an opportunity for those living with HIV/AIDS to share in a hot, nutritious meal in a safe non-judgmental environment. *For registered clients of AIDS Calgary.*

Shifting Perspectives

January 17

Time: 9:00am – 12:00pm

Location: Calgary Cares Centre

This is a free training workshop for anyone interested in increasing their knowledge and awareness around sex work. This course includes topics such as perceptions on sex work, sex work 101, challenging stereotypes, and an introduction to the Shift Calgary program.

Women’s Group

December 8, January 12, February 9

Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Location: Calgary Cares Centre

The Positive Women’s Network builds connections among HIV positive women and recognizes their unique experiences of being positive. *For registered clients of AIDS Calgary.*

Christmas Baking

December 14

Time: 2:00pm

Location: Calgary Cares Centre

Join us to make Christmas goodies that you can take home! All baking supplies will be provided; all you need to bring is your holiday cheer! *For registered clients of AIDS Calgary & Shift.* Only 7 spots are available! Registration is required. Register by calling (403) 508-2500 or speak to us in person.

Philharmonic Trip

December 11

Time: 12:30pm

Location: Starbucks (Marriott Hotel)

Join us for the performance “Sing-Along Messiah” at the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. This is an opportunity to celebrate the holiday season in a social group setting. Coffee at Starbucks and performance admission will be provided. *For registered clients of AIDS Calgary & Shift.* Call Aditi for details or to register.

Bow Valley Cares Centre update

Winter brings a new crowd to Bow Valley



The Bow Valley Cares Centre.

Bow Valley Cares Centre (BVCC) is excited to be welcoming the newest and latest arrivals to the area: the ski and snowboard crowd. Recently, BVCC has had the opportunity to sit down with a small sample of these new locals and discuss their thoughts on safe sex.

Approximately 40 young women and men participating in a GAP Year Abroad program arrived at the YWCA to discuss the trends of being a local in the Bow Valley with three community organizations. Having the youth participate in a world café setting, we were able to invite them to focus on what it means to practice safe sex and all the barriers that accompany the subject.

Most participants found it very informative in asking questions about sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and in discussing some of the challenges they encounter on a personal and global

level when it comes to safe sex. Many stated that this type of education was absent in their school systems and that it was beneficial to them to converse on this level about sexual health.

The director of the GAP Year Abroad program was very excited to have the youth engaged in activities that were community-focused and plans to have us use the same format and structure to introduce sexual health to each new cycle of students arriving in the Bow Valley Region.

In October, we were invited to the Banff Health Unit to present to a group of women participating in an on-going pregnancy program. The program runs with a two hour presentation every two weeks, and this was the first time BVCC has been involved.

After sharing all the information and statistics about HIV, blood-borne pathogens (BBP) and STIs the women engaged in a casual conversation about how sex was presented to them in their home countries. The majority of the women were originally from parts of Asia, and they shared how sex was discussed with them and that their perception of using safe-sex protection was negative.

“Things are different here in Canada,” one woman said, as she described how in the Philippines, sex is not addressed like it is here in Canada. Most of the women agreed that they would like to shift their thinking about safe sex, especially in relation to imagining how they will describe sexuality and making safer choices to their children in the future.

Overall, it’s been a great couple of months of building new relationships within the community, and we will continue to engage our community members with conversations in creative and stimulating ways to share our key messages about safe sex.

Medicine Hat Cares Centre update

The Medicine Hat Cares Centre (MHCC) had its first Social Work practicum student in September. Breanna Thompson is a second year student in the Social Work Diploma program at the Medicine Hat College. Breanna has had a positive experience so far with the staff and the clients of the Cares Centre. She has stated that the knowledge she has obtained has opened her eyes to the diversity of the people, here, in Medicine Hat and in Calgary as well.

We participated in a three day Alcohol and Drug Awareness Event, hosted by the Medicine Hat College Student Association, where there were eight other agencies from the Medicine Hat community. The students were educated and given information around Drug and Alcohol Use. This was a great opportunity for the Cares Centre to network with other agencies in the community. We also participated in the Adult Resource Fair, an annual event in Medicine Hat targeted towards seniors in the community and the community services available to them. The Adult Resource Fair provided a great opportunity to discuss HIV/AIDS awareness and aging.

MHCC continues to distribute clean needles to injection drug-users (IDUs) in the community and surrounding areas. The focus this past month was safer needle-use and education. Clients were given the chance to talk about safer needle-use and Hepatitis C, as 90% of our clients are positive for Hepatitis C. In the past two months, we have given out 19,330 clean needles.

The Care Centre has partnered with the Food Bank around sex trade work in Medicine Hat, with the Food Bank being helpful in providing information about sex trade work. The focus for the coming months is to bring awareness to identifying sex trade work in Medicine Hat and the surrounding areas. This will give us an opportunity to provide services to sex trade workers in Medicine Hat. We have also partnered with McMan’s Housing First to train the outreach workers targeting HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. This partnership will also benefit our clients in enabling easier access safer sex supplies. On December 1st, we will be inviting our community to join us in commemorating World AIDS Day. Various activities are planned for the day, so please visit www.aidscalgary.org for more information.

NEWS REEL

The Psychology of Do or Don't I....

Every day we make choices and decisions that involve a certain amount of risk, how we decide in each circumstance depends on both external and internal factors. Add other people to our decision making process and it gets even more complicated, at least it does for most people.

In our prevention efforts at AIDS Calgary I think it would be safe to say that we are all working towards preventing the spread of HIV and other STIs and a big piece of that work is around education and promoting condom use. To read more about this issue visit: <http://aidscalgary.blogspot.com/>

How do HIV/AIDS service organizations reach out to male sex workers?

"By targeting hard-to-reach populations vulnerable to HIV infection such as young gay and bisexual men in unstable living situations, as well as those struggling with addiction," said AIDS Action. "If you're trading sex for shelter, it can be hard to insist on using condoms. If you're looking for a place to sleep, it can be hard to keep track of your meds. If depression or addiction take charge of your life, it can be hard to focus on your health." To read more about this story, please visit: <http://www.edgenewengland.com>, or visit www.shiftcalgary.org to see how our programs are helping.

HIV medication patch shows promise

Preliminary research is suggesting that a patch could deliver HIV/AIDS medication to patients. The findings raise the prospect of a simple way to administer HIV/AIDS drugs. "There's a long way to go between what appears to be promising findings now and a patient's skin", said Rowena Johnston, director of research with the Foundation for Aids Research. For more information visit: www.amfar.org

Study drops oral tenofovir as HIV prevention in a women's study

The Microbicide Trials Network recently stated that after reviewing the available data the DSMB concluded that "it is not possible to show whether oral tenofovir tablets were any better than placebo" in their ability to prevent HIV infection. The DSMB recommended that women in VOICE who were receiving tenofovir tablets stop taking them, but it had no concerns about the safety of tenofovir. The DSMB noted that women in the other four arms of the study should continue taking their assigned intervention(s). To find out more about this study, visit: <http://www.catie.ca>

The holiday season is right around the corner

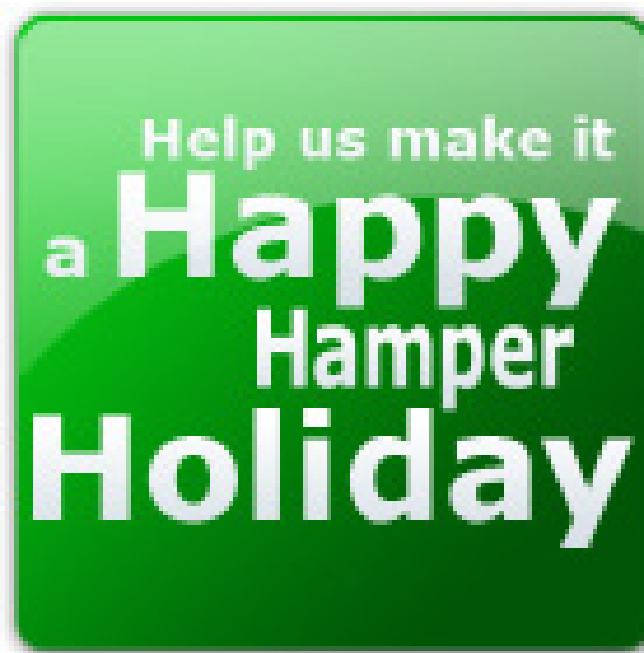
ACAA's Holiday Hamper program

In our HIV/AIDS support and Shift programs, we serve and assist individuals and families by improving their quality of life and helping them reach individualised goals. We provide a continuum of professional and compassionate services to meet the many diverse needs of our clients. These services include counselling, case management, information and referral, financial assistance, housing support, nutrition programs, social events, workshops groups, as well as many other services.

One of our services is the Holiday Hamper program which provides clients in our programs with a grocery card and a gift. The gift card allows clients to choose grocery items that fit their cultural, religious and dietary needs. Around the holidays, there are often extra expenses such as gifts, insulated winter items, higher utility bills, transportation costs, etc. The Holiday Hamper program provides additional support to many of the individuals and families we serve who are living on low incomes.

Many clients remark that this is the only holiday gift they receive. Others share that beyond the actual gift itself, the program reminds them that someone cares. One client told us "Christmas Holiday Hampers help me tremendously! What I get, I use to a great extent and [it] lasts me a long time! Keep up the great work [in] helping a lot of others during the joyous Christmas season."

You can be part of making a difference in the lives of people we serve by donating to this program. To donate online, please go to www.aidscalgary.org or mail your donation to AIDS Calgary Awareness Association, 110 - 1603 10 Ave. SW, Calgary, AB, T3C 0J7. Please indicate which Cares Centre location that you would like your donation to be used in (Medicine Hat, Bow Valley, Calgary).



Strong voices working together in the face of HIV/AIDS

Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week

December 1 to 5 is Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week, a time to lend your voice and help spread knowledge about the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic among Aboriginal people.

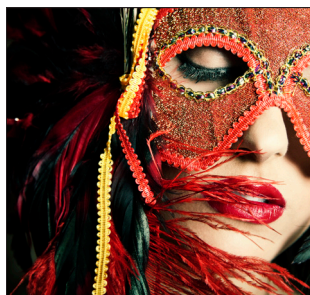
Aboriginal people continue to be over-represented among new HIV diagnoses locally, provincially and nationally. Alberta Health and Wellness reported in 2010 that 17% of all new HIV reports in Alberta were Aboriginal people. Of all women who tested HIV positive in Alberta, 35% were Aboriginal. Higher rates of HIV among Aboriginal people are directly related to unique historical and socio-demographic challenges. However, Aboriginal people and communities also have unique strengths and resiliencies to address HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Calgary is currently seeking funding and community support to develop the Strong Voices Program, a population-specific HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness initiative. Building on the strength and wisdom of traditional Aboriginal cultures, AIDS Calgary hopes to offer a program created, delivered and guided by and for Aboriginal people.

During Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week, we honour all APHAs (Aboriginal People Living with HIV/AIDS) and celebrate the teaching and healing that has taken place. Help support this important work by breaking the silence, fighting against stigma, and showing support and kindness for Aboriginal people at risk and affected by HIV/AIDS.



Masks & beads, kings & queens



Mardi Gras 2012

Lavish costumes, feathery masks, spicy creole food, beads, beads, and more beads are all synonymous with Mardi Gras. But this year, AIDS Calgary Awareness Association (ACAA) is adding condoms to the mix when we bring Mardi Gras to Calgary.

Join us for food, entertainment and carnival fun on Saturday, February 25th, 2011 as we recreate "Bourbon Street" in Calgary at ACAA's inaugural Mardi Gras event – "Le Carnival Rouge". Watch for more details in the coming months.

Finally, a reason to don your masks and beads in public!!

Email Issues

AIDS Calgary Awareness Association (ACAA) is experiencing difficulties sending email communications to Google hosted account (including gmail) and Shaw account. We are working to remedy this issue with those service providers but until such time we would kindly ask that you take one of the following steps to ensure we are able to communicate and respond to your requests.

- Call the office on 403-508-2500 if you do not receive a response to any requests
- Provide your ACAA contact with an alternative email address
- Check your spam/junk folders
- Add the aidscalgary.org email address into your contact list to ensure it is trusted
- Check your firewall and/or with your service provider to ensure they are not blocking the receipt of our email communications

Red Umbrella Day

International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers

December 17th marks Red Umbrella Day, a day that calls attention to the violence that sex workers face all over the globe. The day commemorates the hate crimes, violence and discrimination that sex workers face, and urges the public to respect the basic human rights of sex workers. The story of violence towards sex workers across Canada, for the most part, goes untold. Violent crimes against sex workers often go unreported, unaddressed and unpunished. Many sex workers may be hesitant to discuss violence due to stigma and judgment or to report bad dates to the police for fear of being criminalized, making their identity known to police or if they have warrants for their arrest.

Shift, an AIDS Calgary program, provides case management, outreach and counseling to individuals involved in, or those who have been involved in, sex work. One of the main intents of the Shift program is to create safer working conditions for people involved in sex work.



The red umbrella is the symbol for ending violence against sex workers.

In recognition of International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, Shift will be hosting a symposium and launching Shift's Red Umbrella Challenge on December 15 from 5-7pm. Details to follow.

Thank you, thank you!

Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life

We cannot say it enough; thank you for making the 17th annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life a huge success. 588 people walked, ran or strolled at this year's event, and 112 dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers contributed their time and talents to ensure the success of the walk. Through pledges, donations and sponsorships, a total of \$200,285.14 was raised to support ACAA's programs for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

The top team overall, the Board Warriors, raised over \$20,000, setting the bar high for the next board of directors. The top corporate and non-corporate teams, Starbucks: Partners for Life and Team Klinck, each raised over \$6,000. The top fundraiser,

Shannon MacLeod, raised over \$3,000, indicating that perhaps a career in fund development should be on the horizon. We would also like to recognize our top adult, youth and child walkers – Terry MacKenzie, Stacey C, and James R.

More than the dollars raised, walkers, donors, sponsors and volunteers stood up to break the stigma of HIV/AIDS to remind us that this is still an issue within our community. Walkers walked for those who couldn't, honoured those who lost the battle, celebrated those who continue to fight, and stood up for those who are at risk. To every walker, donor, sponsor, and volunteer: thank you.

Seeking board directors

AIDS Calgary invites applications for the Board of Directors

Make an impact in the Calgary community and be a part of creating a compassionate and caring society. AIDS Calgary is actively seeking Calgary Professionals with passion, vision and commitment to issues related to HIV/AIDS to sit on the Board of Directors.

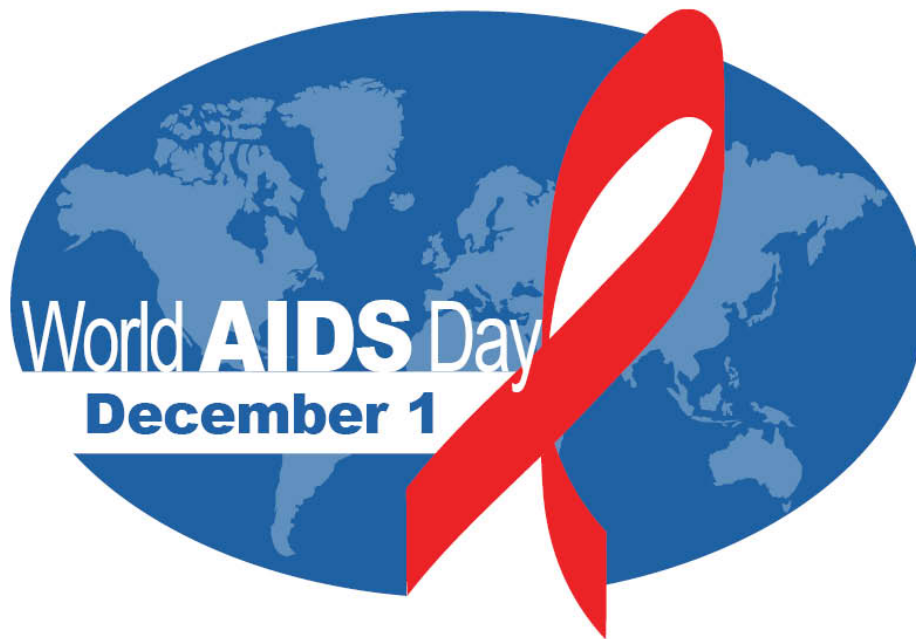
A Director is accountable to the membership for effective governance of AIDS Calgary. Be advocates to the funder and donors for the financial responsibility of the agency and to the community for the mission, vision, strategic direction and

outcomes of the organization. Responsible for supporting the Executive Director, attending Board meetings, approving yearly budget, contributing to project work, attending AGM, serving on committees and assisting with fundraising and advocacy work. Applicants must be comfortable talking about HIV/AIDS, sexuality and related issues in a wide range of settings.

For more information and to submit an application, please contact AIDS Calgary at 403-508-2500 or info@aidscalgary.org

What colour is your condom? Watch for ACAA's "What colour is your condom?" campaign coming in the spring. For every sexual mood, there is a corresponding colour – whether you're a fiery red, a kinky black, or a juicy pink.

Join us in recognition of World AIDS Day 2011



The international theme for World AIDS Day 2011 is **“Getting To Zero”**.
Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Discrimination and Zero AIDS-related deaths.
Learn how our innovative programs and services are making this goal a reality.

Join us for international appetizers, drop by to meet staff, learn about programs, and connect with others passionate about HIV issues.

Take part in an informal passport event and learn about HIV in our community and around the world, collecting stamps, prizes, and knowledge along the way.

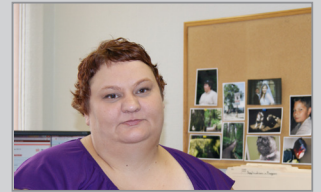
**RSVP to WorldAIDSDay@aidscalgary.org
or 403-508-2500**

December 1st, 2011
3:00pm to 6:00pm
#110 1603 10 AVE SW



▶ WWW.AIDSCALGARY.ORG

Welcome Tamrin Heardt!



ACAA would like to introduce Tamrin Heardt to the role of Senior Development Officer. Tamrin comes to ACAA with several years of fund development experience and a Master's in Non-profit Management and Leadership to the role. With previous roles at a feminist film festival, Calgary OutLink: Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, and a domestic violence shelter, Tamrin is no stranger to tough conversations and “taboo” topics. She is passionate about the diversity inherent in our society and is excited to share the work of ACAA in the community.

Welcome Jamie Schneider!



ACAA would also like to welcome Jamie Schneider to the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association team. Jamie is the Centre's new Communications Coordinator. Jamie comes to ACAA with a BA in Professional Communications, and a diploma in Digital Graphics Communications. Jamie has a clear passion for non-profits, and is very excited to be part of the ACAA team.



AIDS Calgary
is rebranding

We're close to 'hatching' a new image, but we will need your input soon. Visit www.aidscalgary.org for more details.

Volunteer MATTERS

Volume 2 • Issue 4

THE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER OF AIDS CALGARY AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2011

Happy International Volunteer Day – December 5, 2011!

Volunteers 'light up the world' every day with the actions they take to make our communities locally, nationally and globally vibrant places to live. On December 5th, the world will join together to recognize a group of committed, passionate and caring people – YOU! At AIDS Calgary, your hard work and commitment contribute to the critical mission of reducing the harm associated with HIV/AIDS for all individuals. You've donated your time and skills for a more compassionate and caring society and an improved quality of life for individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Calgary is so proud to say thank you to all of our incredible volunteers for generously sharing your time and talents with our agency. Your dedication to help raise HIV/AIDS awareness, reduce the stigma surrounding HIV and support our clients is making a meaningful impact on our community. On International Volunteer Day we celebrate YOU for the difference you make each day.

A Year in Review

Volunteering matters, just take a look! What an exciting and impactful year it has been in our volunteer program! In 2011, 292 volunteers have committed over 5000 hours to AIDS Calgary programs, events, and activities!

Volunteer Activity Nights

9 Volunteer Activity Nights, 73 volunteers and 223 hours of making condom packs, ribbons and helping with newsletter mail outs, activities that our crucial to the everyday education, awareness and outreach events of AIDS Calgary.

African Communities Project

21 volunteers have contributed 220 hours to HIV/AIDS education, awareness and prevention in Calgary's African communities.

Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life

112 volunteers and 597 hours contributed to a very successful 2011 AIDS Walk.

Complementary Therapies

5 volunteers supported clients with acupuncture, massage therapy and yoga contributing 97 hours of time and skill.

Casino

24 volunteers and 264 hours contributed to the success of the ACAA 2011 Casino raising critical funds for AIDS Calgary programming.

Speaker's Network Program

8 volunteers contributed 76 hours of their time to giving HIV 101 and 201 presentations to educate and engage students, health care workers and various other community members throughout Calgary.

Friday Lunches

8 volunteers contributed 283 hours to providing nutritious and hearty meals to our clients.

Special Events and Booths

44 volunteers contributed 276 hours to support AIDS Calgary participation at Fairy Tales, the ARGRA Rodeo, Pride Festival, Afrikadey, Mardi Gras, Taboo and other events throughout the year.

Communications

8 volunteers contributed 45 hours taking pictures at events, writing blogs for the A Word, editing newsletters and designing posters to educate the Calgary community.

Front Line and Outreach

7 volunteers contributed 97 hours to support AIDS Calgary's front line work in and out of the office.

Committees

23 volunteers contributed 262 hours to plan and execute the AIDS Walk for Life, a new Gay Men's Social Marketing Campaign and the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers.

Holiday Office Closures

The AIDS Calgary office will be closed for the holidays from December 23, 2011 to January 2, 2012. We will re-open Tuesday January 3rd at 8:30 am.

Editor: Jamie Schneider **Contributors:** Andrea Carter, Roseline Carter, Ken Fierheller, Vanessa Hasdell, Tamrin Heardt, Barbra Madonko, Capri Rasmussen, Jamie Schneider
Design/layout: Jamie Schneider **Printing:** Unicom Graphics

Red Matters c/o AIDS Calgary Awareness Association 110, 1603 10th Ave. SW, Calgary, AB T3C 0J7

Phone: 403.508.2500 **Fax:** 403.263.7358 **E-mail:** newsletter@aidscalgary.org **Web:** www.aidscalgary.org

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