



Red Matters

Volume 3 • Issue 2

THE NEWSLETTER OF AIDS CALGARY AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

Fall 2011

In this issue:

**2011 Scotiabank
AIDS Walk for Life**

**HIV Support Services
is going to the Zoo**

**Volunteer
opportunities**

Walking into a new year

Get ready for the most exciting Walk yet

On Sunday, September 25, AIDS Calgary Awareness Association (ACAA) will be hosting the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life. 2011 marks the 17th year of the event in Calgary, with over \$1,350,000 in funds raised towards the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Calgary area.

It's been 30 years since the first cases of what would become known as HIV/AIDS were reported. Throughout the last 3 decades, some amazing advancements have been made, however, we can't forget the future of those who continue to live with or are affected by HIV/AIDS.

That's why the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life is so important. With over 700 participants annually, the Walk is ACAA's largest fundraiser. All proceeds from the Walk directly support ACAA's community-based programs in the Calgary, Medicine Hat, and Bow Valley areas; and will help address the needs of those individuals who are living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Not only is the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life a key means of contributing support for our clients, programs and services, it is also a vital means of raising awareness. In Canada, the number of new diagnoses continues to rise (The Public Health Agency of Canada), and the face of HIV has also changed since 30 years ago. Worldwide, the largest growing population of HIV/AIDS diagnosis is women and in 2009, Aboriginal people made up 17% of new reported cases in Alberta.

By participating in and supporting the Walk this year, you are investing in the wellbeing of our community. You will be directly contributing to creating positive social change, not just for those living with HIV/AIDS, but also for those affected. We hope that you'll take the Walk as an opportunity to gather friends, family and colleagues and have fun in support of such an important cause.

What makes this year's Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life better than ever? New to this year's event is a Market Square, featuring an assortment of local vendors with some great items for sale. A pancake breakfast will open the event starting at 10:00 a.m., and there will be great live music and fun for all ages throughout the day.



2010 Walkers show their support and have fun while doing it.

There are also some excellent prizes for top fundraisers, including a return trip for two to any scheduled WestJet destination, two night's accommodation in a Lakeview room at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, overnight accommodation including breakfast at the Fairmont Banff Springs, just to name a few.

So whether you're part of a team or walking solo, come on down to Eau Claire Market on Sunday, September 25, and help us reach our goal of \$150,000. Remember, although we have come a long way, there is still a long road ahead, and your support can make a difference. For more information, or to register, visit www.aidscalgary.org.

Thank you!

ACAA would like to thank all of this year's Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life Sponsors. Your support helps make the Walk possible!

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Day of Walk Schedule Sunday, September 25, 2011

- 10:00 a.m. - Pancake breakfast & Market Opens
- 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. - Registration
- 11:30 - 12:00 p.m. - Opening Ceremonies
- 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. - **WALK!**
- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. - Snacks/Entertainment

Medicine Hat Cares Centre update

New staff, new connections and other news from Medicine Hat

Over the past two months, Medicine Hat Cares Centre (MHCC) has worked closely with immigrant serving organizations in both Medicine Hat and Brooks to actively engage their African communities in sexual health promotion and HIV, STI and Hep C prevention. MHCC has also partnered with Dream Centre, a local church where people can drop off food and clothing items to be distributed to clients who lack food security or proper housing.

Heading into the fall season, things are certain to remain very busy at MHCC. The centre is still focused on partnering with both the Medicine Hat Police and Fire Departments to set up needle drop- boxes within the city. Starting in September, weekly luncheons and monthly wellness days will be offered to clients of the centre, during which they can schedule massages, socialize with other clients, and attend presentations on topics such as nutrition and stress management. Additionally, in response to a number of client requests, a Hepatitis C support group will be initiated in the coming weeks, providing peer support and counselling for those living with the virus.

Amidst all these events and expanding program offerings, MHCC recently increased its permanent staffing with the addition of Sherri Wist, the centre's new Harm Reduction Outreach Worker. Sherri has been with MHCC since mid-July, and



ACAA would like to welcome Sherri Wist (above) to the MHCC team. Sherri is the Centre's new Harm Reduction Outreach Worker.

in addition to receiving a social work diploma, is currently working towards her degree through the University of Calgary's Learning Circle. She has three children and in her spare time enjoys walking her four dogs in the off-leash park. In her new role as Harm Reduction Outreach Worker, Sherri will work closely with the needle exchange program supplying safer injection supplies such as clean needles, alcohol swabs, and sharps containers to reduce the risk of contracting HIV and Hepatitis C. On behalf of all agency staff, members and clients, welcome to the team Sherri!

EVENTS CALENDAR

Core Training

September 17, October 15
Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm,
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

September 9 & 23, October 7 & 21, November 4 & 18 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. Friday Lunch on October 7 will be in celebration of Thanksgiving.

Shifting Perspectives

September 20, October 20,
Time: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.
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

September 8, October 20, November 10, 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. Participants must be registered clients of AIDS Calgary. Please call our Client Services team at 403.508.2500 or speak to us in person to sign up.

Interactive Coffee Connection (ICC)/ Coffee Connection (CC)

September 16 (CC) & 30 (ICC), October 14 (CC) & 28 (ICC), November 25 (CC)*, December 9 (ICC).** Time: 2:00pm. Location: Calgary Cares Centre.

At ICC you'll learn simple cooking and food safety skills while enjoying a nutritious light meal and conversation. Through CC you'll connect with others over a nutritious snack and conversation. Available for registered clients only.

* There will not be an ICC in November as we are closed for the Remembrance Day holiday.

** There will not be a CC in December due to the Holidays.

Bow Valley Cares Update

Summer time in the Valley brings exciting new opportunities

Each year the Bow Valley region has over 10,000 new seasonal workers arrive for the summer, taking up residence in hotel staff accommodations or working at one of the many local tourist attractions. The Valley also hosts over eight million tourists each year that pass through the gates of Banff National Park, one of the main gateways to the Rocky Mountains.

Since opening its doors this past spring, the Bow Valley Cares Centre (BVCC) has had some great opportunities to engage this transient worker population along with many of the locals.

In June, BVCC attended two "Health & Safety Fairs", trade shows held by both the Banff Centre and The Banff Springs Hotel, which reached over 265 staff members. The Centre was able to hand out hundreds of condoms and brochures while inviting the workers to play our trivia challenge.

In June and the beginning of July, the Centre also formulated three new partnerships with the larger hotels, and had the opportunity to present at their staff orientation. BVCC highlighted HIV/AIDS and STI prevention and introduced the services available at the Cares Centre.

The community events BVCC attended include: community pot-luck dinners, barbecues for new workers to the area, and community café events that focus on creative expression. At each event the Centre was successful in sharing and connecting with the audience by presenting on HIV/AIDS, handing out condoms and engaging the audience with a fun and interactive dialogue.

In June and July, BVCC has pursued new relationships with housing and residence establishments where many of the new workers, international travelers and youth live. In an effort to promote safer sex practices and create awareness of the resources at BVCC, the Centre has partnered with 20 housing accommodations and community businesses to offer free condoms, brochures and BVCC information.

Over the past two months, BVCC has distributed a total of 4,594 condoms, handing them out to the residences and community stores who serve a high volume of youth. At two of the larger hotel chains, the Centre has already had to re-fill over 1,000 condoms in just one month due to the high occupancy and percentage of youth staying at these residences. In the coming months, we aim to continue our partnership-building through connecting with the YWCA of Banff and a group from Canmore called "Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies" to co-facilitate a number of workshops and events.

We are still in the process of creating many new partnerships in the region and will continue to make connections with all the service providers and health professionals in the area. The last few months have been a great success for BVCC, as we continue to expand our services by attending events, forming new partnerships and establishing BVCC as a key resource regarding HIV/AIDS prevention and harm reduction in the Bow Valley region.

Welcome Ken Fierheller!



ACAA would like to welcome Ken Fierheller, as the new Project Manager of the Bow Valley Cares Centre. Ken joined ACAA this past June, and brings a diverse background in the practice and philosophy of Gestalt Psychotherapy.

Ken started his career operating a treatment centre for troubled youth with behaviour and mental difficulties. After leaving the treatment centre Ken turned his attention to organizational development where he was the lead facilitator at the Kingbridge Conference Centre.

Ken is very excited to be a part of the ACAA team and looks forward to great year ahead in the Bow Valley Region.

HIV Support Services

Annual trip to the Calgary Zoo and other exciting program updates

HIV Support Services (HSS) has recently created a monthly client calendar, outlining all of the activities and services provided. The calendar is available on the home page of the ACAA website, www.aidsalgary.org, and is also emailed out to consenting clients. If you are a client and would like to receive the HIV Support Services monthly calendar please email info@aidsalgary.org.

Along with the Shift Program, HSS will be extending their hours on Thursdays until 8:00 p.m. These new hours began in August and will continue throughout the fall. For more details please call 403. 508.2500. An exciting upcoming activity is the second annual Calgary Zoo Rendezvous. Join HSS for an afternoon at the Calgary Zoo! This is an opportunity to explore the Zoo at a relaxed pace, in a social group setting. This event is free and open to anyone living with HIV and their guest. Lunch at the Zoo Café and Zoo admission will be provided. Transit tickets are also available for those with transportation needs. Spaces are limited so registration will be required for this event. For more information, please contact Amanda B. or Aditi at 403-508-2500.



NEWS REEL

AIDS at 30

On June 5, 1981 the American public health publication 'Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report' included a report of a rare lung infection, Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia (PCP), recently diagnosed in five homosexual men in Los Angeles. This report marked the first public identification of what would later be known as AIDS in North America. While it is now widely acknowledged that HIV originated much earlier than 30 years ago, June 5, 1981 has been designated as the 'birth date' of the epidemic.

Thirty years after the first known cases of AIDS were identified, the key message remains one of prevention. Education and harm reduction endeavors remain vital for the prevention of transmission in all its forms, enabling those who do not have HIV to protect themselves from infection. People living with HIV/AIDS have also be empowered to manage their own health effectively and take precautionary measures to ensure they do not transmit the virus to others.

Controversial campaign launched to target Syphilis

In early June, Alberta Health Services in conjunction with Alberta Health and Wellness launched a provocative and controversial awareness campaign centered on syphilis, generating buzz around the province and across the country. The two million dollar campaign entitled 'Plenty of Syph' parodies an online-dating site and features a website and YouTube channel, as well as radio and television ads. The site features a number of racy, fake profiles that mimic a regular dating site, to educate visitors in a unique and eye-catching manner. The campaign is the first part of a three year action plan. Visit www.plentyofsyph.com to view the much talked about campaign, or read our blog article at <http://aidsalberta.blogspot.com>.

Bold targets announced following international meeting

When the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS concluded on June 10, world leaders issued a declaration outlining bold targets to reduce sexual transmission of HIV and halve the number of new HIV infections amongst injecting drug-users by 2015. The countries who attended the meeting also agreed to push for the elimination of new HIV infections among children in the next five years.

Leaders who attended the meeting also made a commitment to increasing the (*cont'd on page 5*)

Get ready for Mardi Gras



Mardi Gras 2012. Are you ready?

ACAA launches first Mardi Gras Gala in 2012

Masks, food, music, beads and, of course, what would Mardi Gras be without condoms! On February 18, ACAA is gearing up for what might just be one of the hottest Mardi Gras parties in town. You can expect to see some racy entertainment, fabulous prizes and a perhaps a parade. All of the proceeds from the Mardi Gras bash will go to support ACAA's many programs and services. Stay tuned for more details!

Aboriginal art contest winner announced



Winning artist Stanley English with ACAA's Community Engagement Coordinator, Andrea Carter.

ACAA is pleased to formally recognize the winner of the agency's Aboriginal Artwork Contest. Contestant Stanley English's entry was selected as the winning piece following careful deliberation by a selection committee. While all of the received entries provided a unique and thoughtful insight into Aboriginal art and culture, Mr. English's entry was found to best

encapsulate the contest theme of "strong voices working together in the face of HIV". To see Mr. English's winning submission, please visit: http://www.aidsalberta.org/files/Contest%20Poster_Winner1.pdf.

NEWS REEL (cont'd)

number of people on anti-retroviral treatment. Their goal is to see 15 million people (more than double the current 6.6 million currently on treatment in low- and middle-income countries) on the life-saving drugs by 2015.

At present, an estimated 7,000 new HIV infections occur per day, and the declaration notes that there is currently an inadequate focus on prevention amongst high-risk populations such as men who have sex with men, sex workers and intravenous drug-users. In the future, countries must focus their response to the epidemic based on their national and epidemiological context. To read more about the UNAIDS 2011 - 2015 strategy, visit <http://www.unaids.org/en/strategygoalsby2015/>

Monumental appeal heard in Ontario

A challenge to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been initiated by three sex workers, Terri-Jean Bedford, Valerie Scott and Amy Lebovitch, regarding Canada's prostitution laws was heard in the Ontario Court of Appeal on June 13, 2011. Their challenge first struck down three provisions of the Canadian Criminal Code in the Ontario Superior Court back in September 2010, as the three women successfully argued that their rights to security of a person were violated by the laws that ban operating/working in a brothel, communicating for the purpose of prostitution and living off the avails.

The Ontario Court of Appeal originally granted stay of provisions in December, and the five-member panel who presided over the appeal have decided to further extend this order. The judges will convene to further discuss the constitutionality of the provisions being challenged, and their landmark decision is expected to be announced within the next six months.

Harm reduction outreach makes a big stir in Calgary

On July 31, 2011, Vancouver's recent decision to launch a pilot project which will distribute clean crack pipes to drug users has caused quite the stir in Calgary. Since the press brought to light Calgary's own Safeworks harm reduction initiative which has distributed clean crack pipes since 2007, many Calgarians have weighed in on the topic. ACAA wrote an editorial supporting harm reduction approaches, which was published on August 7, 2011. To read ACAA's editorial visit <http://aidsocalgary.blogspot.com/2011/08/say-yes-to-harm-reduction-editorial.html>.

What's new with Shift

The Shift program discusses what's new and upcoming this fall

Shift has moved upstairs, above the Calgary Cares Centre! This new, Shift specific drop-in and meeting space is available for those who are involved in the program. The new Shift Lounge provides a space that is Shift-specific. This is a place for clients to drop in for snacks and coffee, meet with the Shift staff, gather together for a workshop or simply relax. The computer, laundry, complementary therapies and other downstairs services will still be open to Shift clients as well.

Shift and HIV Support Services will begin to be open late on Thursday nights until 8:00 p.m. This is to ensure that both programs are accessible to those people who might not be available during daytime office hours. During these later hours, Shift will have regular phone, appointment and drop-in services available. The occasional meeting and event will be held during this time. Evening hours began Thursday, August 4.

Shift has resumed "Walking Outreach". This is a time when Shift staff head out to the streets to give out water, snacks, safer sex supplies, Shift material and other essentials to sex workers. Shift will head out one evening a week.

Recently, the Shift program has had a lot of interest in online outreach. Shift is actively involved in social media: Facebook, Twitter and the Shift blog which all discuss sex work related issues as well as the programs and services Shift offers. Adding to that, the program also connects with adults involved in sex work on review and recommendation boards. Connections are made through online forums where sex workers gather to discuss topics relevant to their work. Many sex workers have sent questions and messages, and a few have thanked Shift for being available to those who might need it!



Sex Professionals of Canada (SPOC) paid a visit to the Shift program to support all of the hard work they've been doing. In this photo: Shift Team Leader Catharine van der Linden (left), SPOC Executive Director Nikki Thomas (centre) and Shift Case Manager Janine Frey (right).

Looking Forward a success

ACAA's hot topics and new research conference well received

On June 23, ACAA held the first annual Looking Forward: HIV Hot Topics and New Research conference. The conference featured 5 different speakers from various parts of Alberta and Canada, each presenting on a unique topic pertaining to the conference's theme. Speakers included Keynote speaker Francesco Ibáñez-Carrasco, PhD of Ontario, Dr. Hartmut B. Krentz of Calgary, Dr. Ameeta Singh of Edmonton, Jonathan Glenn Betteridge of Toronto, and a special appearance made by Senior Provincial Medical Officer of Health Dr. James Talbot who gave closing remarks to Dr. Singh's presentation.

ACAA's goal is to hold the Looking Forward conference annually, in order to continue engaging in important discussions on new research with field experts and address current issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in Alberta and beyond. This year's conference topics primarily focused on hot button issues, which have been gaining attention both locally and nationally. Some of the important issues discussed included HIV and aging, Southern Alberta Clinic's non-trial research over the past 10 years, Rapid/Point of care testing for HIV and Syphilis in Alberta and HIV non-disclosure and the law.

There were many interesting and thought-provoking issues addressed by each presenter, which evoked lively discussions



Dr. Ameeta Singh discusses rapid testing in Alberta at the Looking Forward conference.

from the audience members. Looking Forward highlights included Keynote Speaker Francesco Ibáñez-Carrasco's in-depth look at the epidemiology of an aging population living with HIV, Dr. Krentz' interesting non-clinical trial research at the Southern Alberta Clinic on HIV and new-comers to Canada, Dr. Singh's overview of the various pilot point of care testing projects around Alberta, and Jonathan Glenn Betteridge's detailed breakdown of the different laws pertaining to the criminalization of HIV non-disclosure in Canada.

Overall, the conference was a huge success, and next year we hope to explore new topics, introduce new speakers and engage a wider audience.

Spring and Summer in review

Fairytales, ARGRA, Afrikadey and Pride

Spring and summer are filled with a multitude of community events and this year was no exception. ACAA had the opportunity to partner up with several great community driven events to promote HIV awareness, education and support. Here's an overview of some of the great community events and partnerships ACAA continues to be a part of.

FairyTales Queer Film Festival: On May 30, ACAA hosted a film screening and panel discussion at the Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival. FairyTales is the largest LGBTQ film festival in Alberta and prides itself on showcasing local, national and international films that represent alternative and innovative views.

ARGRA: On the weekend of June 30th-July 3rd, the Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo Association (ARGRA) held the 17th annual Canadian Rockies International Rodeo (CRIR) in Strathmore, Alberta. CRIR is the largest event of its kind in North America, and ACAA's HEAT Worker Mark Randall was in attendance with a booth to raise awareness and provide information regarding how HIV is spread and recommended preventative measures.

Afrikadey: On August 12, 2011, ACAA's Right to Know project (a part of the African Communities project) teamed up with Afrikadey to present the film Africa United, a road trip across Africa. ACAA is also a supporter of Afrikadey and was able to set up a booth promoting all of the agency's diverse programs, including the Right to Know Project.



Your Diversity is Our Strength!

Celebrate Pride with AIDS Calgary and Calgary Sexual Health Centre
Sunday, September 4, 2011 at 12:00pm

 

Parade Begins at Olympic Plaza,
heading west and finishes at Shaw Millennium Park

Once again ACAA has partnered up with Calgary Sexual Health Clinic (CSHC) for Pride. ACAA and CSHC supporters are invited to join us at noon on Sunday, September 4 at the Olympic Plaza.

Volunteer MA+TERS

Volume 3 • Issue 4

THE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER OF AIDS CALGARY AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2011

Don't just stand there! Make your mark by becoming a Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life Volunteer

On September 25th, hundreds of Calgarians will gather at Eau Claire Market to walk or run at the annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life in support of the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Walk for Life slogan: 'Don't Just Stand There', empowers us to stand up, raise our voices and let our community know that HIV/AIDS is still an issue, and we need to act! Be a voice and take part in this inspirational day by volunteering on Walk Day.

Over a 100 volunteers share their time and talents to make Walk Day operate smoothly. From cheering walkers on route and directing them where to go, to serving food and beverages to hungry participants, volunteers play a key role in making the Walk happen. Help make this year's Walk Day a success by signing up to volunteer on September 25th. Recruitment for volunteers is now underway and positions are given on a first come, first serve basis. The AIDS Walk for Life is a family friendly event and we encourage volunteers of all ages to participate and help us make this Walk the best yet.

When: Sunday September 25, 2011

Time: Position times vary between 8:30am and 3:30pm

Where: Eau Claire Market Plaza – 200 Barclay Parade SW

How to apply: If you, a friend, family member or a co-worker are interested in volunteering at this year's event, follow these simple steps to register:

1. Get your application form by downloading it from: <http://www.aidscalgary.org/getinvolved/volunteer/volunteerapplication.cfm> or by calling

the Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement at 403-508-2500

2. Fill out the form completely and don't forget to indicate your preferred position(s)

3. Return the form via:

Email – volunteer@aidscalgary.org

Fax – 403-263-7358

Mail – 110, 1603 10 Avenue SW Calgary, AB T3C 0J7

4. Wait for a confirmation email or phone call .

Please register early, as this event will fill up fast!

If you don't want to volunteer, there are still other ways to participate. You may want to consider registering as a Walker, creating a team or sponsoring a Walker. Feel free to call us anytime to get tips on fundraising and how to create a Walk team. It's a great way to get your family, company or social groups involved in an important cause and have a fun time doing it. Please visit: <http://www.aidscalgary.org/events/aidswalkforlife/registerpledge.cfm> for details.

Don't just stand there! Join us for this year's Walk and see how your support makes a difference. We look forward to seeing you on September 25th.

YOUR diversity is OUR strength! Celebrate at the 2011 Pride Festival!

March with us! ACAA is gearing up to participate in this year's Pride Festival and we want to recruit you. With over 3000 people attending Pride events, it is the perfect opportunity for us to reach out to the community. We are looking for volunteers to come out and march with ACAA

along the parade route and distribute condom packs, candy and information to the crowd.

When: Sunday, September 4, 2011

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Where: The Parade begins at Olympic Plaza

For more information, or to register, email: volunteer@aidscalgary.org and put "Pride Volunteer" in the subject line.

Join our volunteer team and plan an exciting new event at ACAA

There's a new event coming to town and we want YOU to be part of it! In its inaugural year, the AIDS Calgary Mardi Gras 2012 Event will be a special event to raise funds and promote the work of AIDS Calgary to the community. We are looking for several dedicated, enthusiastic and creative volunteers to join our Mardi Gras Event sub-committee to help set the stage to make this event the one that 'everyone is talking about'.

When: The committee will be active between September 2011 and February 2012 and volunteers must be available on event weekend, February 17th and 18th, 2012

What: There are several sub-committee positions including: Prizing & Small Gifts, Entertainment, Marketing and Communications, Décor and Logistics, Bar and Pub and Parade. For full position descriptions please visit: <http://www.aidscalgary.org/getinvolved/volunteer/volunteeropportunities.cfm> or contact volunteer@aidscalgary.org

To register or for more information please e-mail us at volunteer@aidscalgary.org to find out more or to apply for any of the above positions.

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