

Volunteer MATTERS

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THE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER OF AIDS CALGARY AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

June 2009

Reaching High

Goals. We all have them. Ambitions for our careers, dreams for our families and individual aspirations.

AIDS Calgary has goals too. Big ones. And we want you to be a part of them. This summer we want to recruit 50 volunteers. We want these volunteers to collectively give 2000 hours of volunteer service. And we need these volunteers to help us promote our mission to reduce the harm associated with HIV/AIDS for all individuals in Calgary. To make sure we are all successful, we've named this goal the "Volunteer Challenge" and we've set a deadline – September 20, 2009, the same day as our AIDS Walk.

"The Volunteer Challenge is aimed at creating a new and diversified volunteer experience," says Beverly Spencer, Volunteer Program Assistant. "The program allows volunteers to hone and establish personal skills while at the same time making a meaningful contribution. In reality, it is the volunteers that really help us to make a difference to promote HIV/AIDS awareness on a personal level out in the community."

Spencer is managing the Volunteer Challenge this summer and supporting volunteers who want to take part.

"The goal," she explains, "is to motivate and encourage a culture of volunteerism." AIDS Calgary is a volunteer driven agency and aims to promote the integration of volunteers into all areas of our work, including client services, fundraising, communications, operations, education and community development. "Volunteering fosters an environment of social responsibility. It encourages cooperation and acceptance of diversity which is critical in a world where stigma and discrimination still exist," adds Spencer. In addition, volunteering has always been known as a great way to strengthen skills to put on a resume and have fun doing something out of the ordinary.

Now, volunteering doesn't have to mean coming to the agency during our office hours to complete a task. The Volunteer Challenge allows people to get involved in the agency's work, in a more flexible and independent way. And, it's a way to challenge yourself in your own life to make a difference by sharing your time with others.

"The Challenge isn't restricted to one role, place or environment; it is highly adaptable to schedule differences and comfort level," notes Spencer. Volunteers are being encouraged to take leadership in their volunteer activities by doing things like distributing ribbons to friends, organizing a lunch and learn about HIV for co-workers or creating a team for the AIDS Walk with family. These types of activities are crucial to AIDS Calgary's mission as they are effective in raising awareness and garnering more support. Most often, it is these one-on-one contacts that volunteers make with the community that have the most impact in the long-term.

"The personal rewards are endless" says Spencer. In addition to the satisfaction of knowing you've made an impact, joining the challenge may lead to winning prizes as well. At the end of the Challenge the volunteer with the highest number of hours will win a trip for two to anywhere Westjet flies.

Participating in the Challenge is easy. Fill out a simple form and a pledge to take a few hours this summer to reach out and create awareness in your neighbourhood, workplace or social circle. Then, take our list of volunteer suggestions or think of your own ways to support AIDS Calgary and go out and make an impact. One volunteer, one day at a time, we will reach our goal. Join us. Help us reach higher. Make our goal part of your goals.

Contact the Volunteer Challenge Team at volunteer-challenge@aidscalgary.org to find out how you can get started now.

Open House update

Thank you to everyone who attended the Volunteer Open House on April 22, 2009. We had a great turnout of 70 new and current volunteers and AIDS Calgary supporters. Over 25% of attendees registered to participate in the Volunteer Challenge. Thank you again for your support!

Casino

AIDS Calgary is excited to announce that we will be holding our next Casino fundraiser on **Monday October 26 and Tuesday October 27, 2009** at the Elbow River Casino. We need your help to make this fundraiser a success! By law we are required to fill all volunteer positions in order to hold the Casino. Please note, NO experience is necessary and training is provided. Recruitment starts immediately for various positions including: Cashiers, Bankers, Chip Runners and Countroom staff. Contact us at 403 508 2500 or volunteer@aidscalgary.org to find out what positions and shifts are available.

Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life 2009

Planning for the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life is already underway. As always, volunteers will be required to fill various roles on event day which is **Sunday September 20, 2009**. Recruitment for these positions will begin in late July. Watch this space for more information!



Beverly Spencer, Volunteer Program Assistant

Volunteer Opportunities with the Development Team

Calgarians are slowly becoming familiar with the services and programs that AIDS Calgary provides to the community: support for people living with HIV/AIDS, outreach for youth, adults, people working in the sex trade and the gay and MSM community and, of course, our educational presentations in schools and to community groups. Volunteers actively work in these areas and we couldn't do our work without their support. But, what about the work that happens behind the scenes? Did you know you could get involved there as well?

"Volunteering with the Development Team can make a difference in the lives of clients," says Tracie Seeley, AIDS Calgary's Development Assistant. "As a development volunteer you may not see how your fundraising or marketing efforts affect the clients directly. However, working behind the scenes to fundraise can create fluid dollars to support the clients and the programs and services we offer."

Volunteers can become fundraisers in many ways such as creating a team for the AIDS Walk, holding a fun third-party fundraiser or spending time to educate your employer and co-workers about why supporting AIDS

Calgary financially or through in-kind gifts is important for the continued success of our services.

In addition to fundraising, AIDS Calgary's Development Team is responsible for marketing, communications and organizing special events. During the recent restructuring of our

"Volunteering with the Development Team can make a difference in the lives of clients"

volunteer program, many more opportunities were created for volunteers, including:

Marketing: Use your great people skills in person or on the phone to help us connect with individuals, community groups and business owners to educate them about our upcoming agency events such as the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life.

Writer: Be a part of AIDS Calgary's communications throughout the year by researching and writing articles for our blog, The A Word,

our newsletter, Red Matters and other publications.

Editor: Assist our Communications Analyst by proofreading communication material, such as newsletters and reports.

Photographer: Capture important moments in AIDS Calgary's history by taking photos at exciting events such as the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life, our AGM and our volunteer holiday party.

Designer: Contribute to the design concepts of various marketing materials produced each year, such as posters, advertisements and agency mail outs.

Do you have skills in these areas and some time to share? As Seeley points out, joining the Development Team "is a great opportunity for volunteers who would like to gain professional experience in marketing and fundraising." If you are looking to give back to the community and want to build your resume and portfolio, these opportunities are for you!

Contact us today at volunteer@aidscalgary.org for full position descriptions and the volunteer application form.

Share Your Creative Flair

Have you ever wondered what it's like to see a gala like "Calgary Cares" from behind the scenes? The excitement, the creativity, the planning all come together in one fabulous night to raise funds and awareness for HIV/AIDS. What if you were a part of something like that?

Now you can try it out for yourself! AIDS Calgary is holding our first-ever "Event Planner for a Day" contest. All you have to do is come up with a unique idea for an event and write us a short outline of what you would do if you were the boss. There is no limit to the number of proposals you can submit and you can be as creative, wacky or innovative as you want. Any time you spend researching or writing your proposal can count toward your Volunteer Challenge hours and even better, there is a fantastic prize! The person who submits the most inventive entry will win a one night stay for two at the Delta Bow Valley Hotel and brunch.

Your proposal should include:

- Your name, contact information, and suggested date for the fundraiser.
- A statement about how your event supports AIDS Calgary's mission.
- Brief description of what the event is, such as the theme or event activities.
- Basic budget, including your goal for net profits from the event.
- The target audience and estimated number of attendees.
- How do you foresee AIDS Calgary being involved in this event?

Please submit your typed, 2 page maximum proposal to Tracie Seeley at tseeley@aidscalgary.org. Contest closes on September 20, 2009. The winner will be announced in the first week of October.

Have fun and good luck!

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