



Tuesday November 29, 2005

NEWS RELEASE

‘Change the World’ AIDS Calgary encourages everyone to get the facts during AIDS Awareness Week

Calgary, Alberta – AIDS Calgary begins AIDS Awareness Week, November 24 through December 1, focused on increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS, reducing the discrimination faced by those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, and by promoting safer sex practices.

In Canada, over 57,000 people are living with HIV, and an estimated 17,000 people are not aware of their HIV-positive status. AIDS Awareness Week is important to the Calgary community, as it brings to light the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS, and the barriers to effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

“HIV/AIDS-related discrimination impacts education and prevention efforts in our community,” said Kristi Baron Team Leader, Communications and Development, AIDS Calgary. “Getting the facts about HIV/AIDS is important in our efforts to curb its spread. In Canada, there were 2529 new infections reported in 2004,” explains Baron, “In the past five years, there has been a 20% increase in new infections.”

Women represent an increasing proportion of HIV diagnoses, especially women between the ages of 15-29, who made up 42% of all Canadian women infected in 2004. Aboriginal peoples continue to be more vulnerable to HIV, and are five times more likely to be infected than any other Canadian.

“Fear of discrimination can prevent people from getting information, treatment and support, or from acknowledging their HIV status,” said Baron. “This fear can be detrimental to the person’s health – as antiretroviral medications continue to increase the longevity and quality of life for people living with HIV.” Baron continues by saying, “In order to ‘Change the World’ and stop the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we must come together as a community, educate ourselves and prevent the further spread of HIV.”

In an effort to raise awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, AIDS Calgary invites the public to take part in the activities being offered during AIDS Awareness Week including:

WORKSHOPS AT AIDS CALGARY

200-1509 Centre St. S

| | DATE | TIME |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Reaching Out to Street Youth</u> | November 29, 2005 | 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. |
| <u>Women and HIV</u> | November 30, 2005 | 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. |
| <u>Global HIV/AIDS Issues</u> | November 30, 2005 | 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. |
| <u>Human Rights and HIV</u> | December 2, 2005 | 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. |

EVENTS AROUND CALGARY

| | DATE | TIME |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| <u>HIV 101 presentation</u> University of Calgary, Building ST, Room 131 | November 30, 2005 | 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| <u>World AIDS Day Presentation and human ribbon</u> University of Calgary, Mac Hall, GAAG Booth | December 1, 2005 | 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| <u>World AIDS Day - Memorial</u> AIDS Calgary, 200-1509 Centre St. S | December 1, 2005 | 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. |

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For more information:

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AIDS Calgary is a local not-for-profit AIDS service organization that offers support services to individuals who are at-risk for, infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and provides prevention and education throughout the Calgary region. For more information, please contact AIDS Calgary at (403) 508-2500 or check out our website at www.aidsalgary.org