

Tuesday Sept 27th, 2005

NEWS RELEASE

Leaders Among Us

AIDS Calgary awards Safeworks with their highest honour

Calgary, Alberta – AIDS Calgary Awareness Association announced today they presented the 2005 Roger LeBlanc Spirit Award to a well-deserving Calgary group, Safeworks. The Roger LeBlanc Spirit Award is given annually to an individual (living or posthumous) or group that has made an outstanding contribution to the AIDS movement or impacted the lives of people in our community.

“We have a strong partnership with Safeworks, and felt they deserved recognition for their dedication and investment in the Calgary community, “ said Susan Cress, Executive Director of AIDS Calgary. “Safeworks shares our philosophy of harm reduction, and the Roger LeBlanc Spirit Award celebrates Safeworks’ programming and their efforts to raise awareness and prevent HIV/AIDS in our City.”

Safeworks is a Calgary Health Region program designed to prevent the spread of HIV, along with many other diseases such as Hepatitis B and C. Safeworks reaches people “where they are at” with the ultimate goal reducing the risks related to substance use and other unsafe lifestyle choices. They offer a prevention and education program for Calgarians and all services are free and confidential. Like AIDS Calgary, Safeworks promotes respectful compassionate and non-judgemental holistic care.

“We are honoured to receive the Roger LeBlanc Spirit Award, as it acknowledges our work with populations that, due to their circumstances, are not always recognized,” said Diane Nielsen, Safeworks. “Whether people are at-risk for, infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, our goal is to help those struggling everyday with addictions, homelessness and the associated stigma and discrimination.”

Each year, the award distinguishes a member of the Calgary community for their dedication and outstanding contribution to HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Named in honour of Roger LeBlanc, a long-term employee of SMED International (now Haworth), who was diagnosed with HIV in the early 1990s, this award emphasizes the importance of HIV/AIDS awareness, while keeping Roger’s memory alive. Roger truly was a leader of HIV/AIDS education and prevention in the Calgary community.

This year, the recipient of the 2005 Roger LeBlanc Spirit Award – Safeworks Calgary - was recognized at the 2005 Calgary AIDS Walk for Life.

AIDS Calgary is a local not-for-profit AIDS service organization that offers support services to individuals who are 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 online at www.aidscalgary.org.

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