

Positive Vibes



AIDS PEI COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP INC.

July, 2017

Walk this Way: Scotiabank AIDS Walk

#TIEDTOGETHER
#TOUSRATTACHÉS



SCOTIABANKAIDSWALK.CA

Show your support on Sunday, **September 10th at Victoria Park** for the annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk! The Walk is a national awareness and fund-raising event that takes place every year in communities across Canada, providing needed resources for non-profit HIV/AIDS service organizations. This event also provides visible support for community members living with, and otherwise impacted by, HIV. All proceeds from this event stay in PEI and support AIDS PEI's education, awareness, and prevention activities. And - as many of you know - any direct support service offered by our organization is completely resourced through fundraised dol-

lars. AIDS PEI hasn't hosted a traditional AIDS Walk event in two years - so we want to bring it back with a bang! We're looking for volunteers to help make this event a success! There are endless ways to get involved; visit scotiabankaidswalk.ca/charlottetown today (or any day before September 10th) to register a team, join a pre-existing team, or register as an individual. Friends, family, and coworkers can sponsor you by using the search function, or you can donate to the organization directly by clicking "donate." You can also register in-person at Victoria Park on September 10th starting at 1:00PM. The Walk itself will begin at 2:00PM and will be followed by a BBQ with entertainment and prizes. Can't attend the event but still want to show your support? We've got you covered! You can donate directly to AIDS PEI at scotiabankaidswalk.ca/charlottetown or you can

participate in our FunDrive! We are partnering with Value Village for this event, and for every bag collected they'll donate \$2.50 to our Walk campaign. We're looking for used clothing and household goods; including shoes, accessories, small appliances, books, bedding, toys and more!

Donations can be



dropped off at the AIDS PEI office in the Sherwood Business Centre, Monday to Friday from 9am to 4:30pm. Can't fit us in during the day? Give us a call!

As captured by the Walk's tagline; we are all #tiedtogether as community members, Islanders, and Canadians. We will walk to remember those who are no longer with us. We will walk to support those living with and affected by HIV. And we will walk to help raise awareness to end the spread of HIV. So gather your friends and family, get some exercise, and give to a great cause!

Suggestions Wanted

Do you have ideas for the content of this newsletter?

Do you know of an upcoming community event that you would like to see highlighted here?

Do you have questions that you would like answered in this format?

Send your ideas to: outreach@aidspei.com

Or give us a call at:

1-902-566-2437

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HIV and Aging Video Series

Earlier this year Realize produced three short videos (about five minutes each) on HIV and aging.

The Canadian population is aging - and the number of people living and aging with HIV is increasing too. People living with HIV (and who have access to treatment) are living much longer thanks to advancements in pharmacology. Additionally, an increasing number of people are being diagnosed with HIV later in life. The intersection of HIV and aging is complex, involving factors like the natural aging process, the HIV infection itself, the treatment and management of HIV, co-infections and co-morbidities, modifiable risk factors, and the social determinants of health.

The increasing number of people who are aging with HIV, and the complexity of aging with HIV, presents new challenges for care, treatment and support. Realize is working as a catalyst - bringing together the HIV sector and the aging sector to respond to these challenges. Realize aims to stimulate the creation and exchange of knowledge about aging with HIV— this includes efforts and activities intended to *raise awareness and promote an understanding of the needs, wishes and experiences of older adults living with or vulnerable to HIV, as informed by the perspectives of people living with HIV* and other stakeholders. Hence the video series! Each video profiles one older per-

son living with HIV, who is interviewed on a related topic - living through the AIDS epidemic, being diagnosed later in life, accepting HIV as a chronic but manageable illness, mental health, physical health, working with health care professionals, stigma, transitioning into assisted living facilities, and staying active and engaged. The whole video series can be viewed at realizecanada.org (<http://www.realizecanada.org/en/video-vignettes-on-growing-older-with-hiv/>) and can also be found on YouTube by searching HIV and Rehab.

Canadian Guidelines for HIV-Testing, Are We Listening?

It's a head scratcher, but this scenario has been recounted to AIDS PEI staff more than once - folks getting talked out of getting, or denied, a HIV-test after requesting one! Health care providers reportedly telling patient's, "I don't really think you're at risk," or "the risk is so low, it's not really necessary." Total. Head. Scratcher. I mean, okay sure, if we're only going by the numbers HIV isn't the STI you're most likely to become infected with...but that's also a really poor way to conduct a risk assessment! Evaluating someone's risk for HIV infection involves finding out what they *do*, as in their actual sexual behaviors, and some folks - if not the majority of folks (particularly around here) - aren't super comfortable talking to doctors about their risky behaviors; that anonymous hook-up that happened last month, the encounters happening outside of their marriage, the fact that they're in an open relationship, experimenting with injection drug use, or having unprotected anal sex.

Now, don't get me wrong, it would be great if we all had open and honest relationships

with our health care providers, or that we all felt wonderfully comfortable talking about our sexual practices with our family physicians.



A willingness to communicate openly with our doctors is a key piece of the puzzle when it comes to receiving the best health care. So, open honest communication is definitely the ideal - but it's not the reality...particularly on a little Island where social circles seem indefinitely overlapping.

Here's the truth - nothing makes people shut-up faster than the thought of being judged. This part of the reason why Canadian Clinical Guidelines clearly state that an HIV-test should be provided to anyone who asks for one. These

testing guidelines; which were updated just this spring, also acknowledge HIV-stigma as major barrier preventing HIV transmission. For that reason, these guidelines encourage doctors to normalize HIV-testing within their own practice. Clinical guidelines recommend an active approach to HIV-testing and urge care providers to offer HIV-tests to clients routinely - that means whether the test is requested or not. In-depth risk assessments are not required for offering or providing an HIV-test. Care providers should work to remove barriers to testing - not create them. If every Canadian knew their HIV-status, we would be one step closer to eliminating the virus.

2017 AGM Ushers in a New Chapter

AIDS PEI's 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM), was held at UPEI's Faculty Lounge on June 26th. This AGM was particularly significant as one of the key agenda items involved the presentation of our new organizational identity! AIDS PEI's board, staff, and stakeholders have been discussing an organizational name change for quite some time now. At AIDS PEI's 2016 AGM it was decided that the organization would consult with a marketing firm around re-branding. And consult we did - Fresh Media was awesome; they took time to understand the history of this organization, put effort into understanding the activities we are currently engaged in, and helped us brainstorm for the future. As a result, Fresh Media provided our organization with a fitting new name, tagline, and logo - all of which was unanimously endorsed by those in attendance at the AGM. Yay!

We have some work to do before we can officially relaunch, but after some legal hoopla and a lot of paper work, AIDS PEI will officially become...well I

can't really say! We want relaunch in style, so you'll have to stay tuned for the official unveiling. BUT, what I can say is that our



organization has a lot on the go; advocacy for Trans identified Islanders, work on sexual violence prevention, outreach with folks engaged in drug use, and the list goes on. However, we remain solidly committed to supporting Islander's living with, and impacted by, HIV/AIDS. This organization was founded from that struggle - everything else has grown from that. A new name and logo won't change our roots - but (to keep the metaphor going) it might provide a better description of the tree. Thank you Fresh Media!

Changes to our organizational

identity took-up a chunk of our AGM, but it certainly wasn't the only thing on the agenda. We also went over organizational financials and our audit, which concluded with a clean bill of health from BDO. We reviewed some of the activities our organization engaged in over the last fiscal year; including the Make It Visible Hepatitis C Photo Voice project, the new Client Nutrition Program, and the ever growing LGBTQ+ Youth Group program. This work concluded a three year funding agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Beginning April 1, our organization entered into a five-year funding agreement with PHAC, which includes programming for gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who engage in drug use, youth, and service providers who work with these populations. Our AGM also included board nominations and elections. Our organization accepted three nominations before the AGM, and one from the floor. All candidates received unanimous support. Candace Hagan, Zak Court, Mike Chipman, and Frederic Fovet will join Nola Etkin (Chair), Troy Perrot- Sanderson (Vice-Chair), Janet Bradshaw, Ann Sherman, Treena Smith, and Amy Jenkins in providing engaged leadership for our organization. Welcome folks - we've got lots on the go and lots more to do! Watch for our official relaunch - which will include the unveiling of our name and new logo!



Prevention — Support — Community

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We are delighted to announce that the second annual OUTspoken Pride Poetry Slam was a huge success! With nine stellar slammers, three generous judges, two magnificent MCs, and over a hundred attendees, it's not an exaggeration to say that this had to be the highlight of our PRIDE week.

The OUTspoken Slam displayed the best of PEI's young talent – two of the three winners are under 16! Okay, so we already know PEI's LGBTQ+ Community (both the young and the young at heart) bubbles with energy and creativity, but it is a delight to see folks stepping into the spotlight and performing pieces that display that amazing talent - rage to joy, innocence to experience, and everything in between. MC'd by rainbow cape-swinging Rory Starkman and panda bear wrestling Russell Louder, the night was full of laughs, tears, and community.

Hats off to the three winners – Judy Yun with

OUTspoken Slam and PRIDE Parade

“Rainbow Pride,” Autumn Banks with “Queer,” and Sadie McCarney with “On Saying I Do.” Our three judges (who also read their own work) included author and Board Director of the PEI Native Council Stella Shepherd, Poet Laureate Deirdre Kessler, and curator of upcoming art show Glory Hole Dave Stewart. We would like to thank all OUTspoken participants - Natalie Pendergast, Paige Chaisson, Rachel Macleod, Allee Dixon, Noah Nazim, and Gillian Oakley.

The evening was rounded off by a performance by Kent Stetson, the multi-award-winning Island author of *Warm Wind in China*, the first Canadian play written about HIV/AIDS. After hearing the diversity of perspectives of young LGBTQ+ Islanders, the readings from Stetson's play ended the night with a poignant reminder of our history.

Many thanks to Beanz Café for providing catering, and Venus Envy bookstore for providing prizes to our three winners. And finally, three big cheers to Candace Hagen; the rock-

star who created this event last year and make it all happen again this year. Thank you for putting on such an unforgettable, awe-inspiring evening. Hip, hip, hurray! AIDS PEI was also amped up and in attendance for the PRIDE Parade - which was super fun and super well attended. We proudly walked with representatives from the Teen Zone, UPEI's Rainbow Alliance and members of our very own LGBTQ+ Youth Group. YAY! The fun didn't stop after our strut around town. AIDS PEI also participated in PRIDE In The Park with an information booth and pin-back button making station! Here I met Aden; a seven year old attending his first PRIDE with his nanny. Thanks for the help Aden - and thank you PRIDE PEI for organizing such an amazing week. #PEIPROUD

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About AIDS PEI

AIDS PEI is a not-for-profit organization that engages, supports, and educates all Islanders on issues related to sexual health and harm reduction in the context of drug use. Through innovative programming and educational workshops, we work to contribute to the prevention of HIV, Hepatitis C, and all sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI's). AIDS PEI strives to increase positive health outcomes by engaging and supporting those living with, and most impacted by, HIV and Hepatitis C while creating opportunities for partnerships, community engagement, and systems change. AIDS PEI provides a non-judgmental environment free from stigma in which people can access information and support .

Find us online:

www.aidspei.com

[Facebook.com/AIDS PEI Community Support Group Inc.](https://www.facebook.com/AIDSPEICommunitySupportGroupInc)
