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+ POSITIVE DISPATCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE AIDS COALITION OF NOVA SCOTIA · SUMMER 2014

Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) Annual Forum

In June, the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) hosted their Annual People Living with HIV/AIDS Forum in Ottawa. There were participants from all over Canada, with the purpose in creating the vision for the future. It was an excellent opportunity to network with other PHA's from across the country. Canada, to engage the community-based AIDS movement, and to participate in the general business of the Canadian AIDS Society. ACNS received some submissions from those who attended from Nova Scotia.

Arthur "Dave" Miller - May was an exciting month for me. I received a full scholarship to attend the CAS Forum and Annual General Meeting. As an Aboriginal person living with HIV I was not only impressed with this event but honoured to attend. Events like these are not only important to Front Line workers who work with people living with HIV/AIDS but also very important to those who live with HIV/AIDS and for those who have lost someone in their lives due to HIV/AIDS. Not only did I receive the most up to date information concerning HIV/AIDS research, treatment and prevention and the many advances that the HIV/AIDS movement has accomplished, it was an engaging atmosphere where people like my self had a voice. A loud voice !! You see, for me this is part of my journey and a way for me to continue to heal. Words cannot describe the feelings and emotions that surfaced during the CAS Forum and AGM. You always hear about " Power In Numbers" and being part of a conference where everyone who attended was affected somehow by HIV/AIDS is not only touching but reassuring that WE are being heard and helped. There have been a lot improvements but there is still a lot of work to be done. Forums like these are a fantastic way to brainstorm and address issues.

Being involved with many AIDS Service Organizations both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal is part of my everyday life. The brilliant information and skills I received while I attended has given me a great opportunity to report back to my community to those who were not able to attend. The whole Forum and AGM was very well organized and I felt very comfortable and welcome and had an opportunity to meet many great new friends. I hope to attend next year. Thank You CAS!!!!

Rev. Simon Thwaites PWA (NACS – ACNS) - Canadian AIDS Society PLWHIV/AIDS Forum 2014 and AGM were held in Ottawa in early June. I had the privilege of being able to attend and participate in some of the events hosted. CAS has a wide selection of contributors which make up its membership (check out their web site for more details <http://www.cdnaids.ca>)

I've attended many conferences over the years and was surprised at the undercurrent of uncertainty in our future for those who work and volunteer with ASO's across the country. In the Atlantic Region there is a feeling of confusion and hope. Confusion because the governments push to merge groups and consolidates funding by 2017 into one or two groups that outreach to those with blood borne diseases. This has people scratching their heads as to how this will work and look. Will AIDS groups even be called AIDS groups or some other name like "Positive People" reflecting the mix of different Blood Borne diseases and issues a group will have to service to. Hep C is one such example being suggested in the merging. The "hope" part is that AIDS service groups are well organized and efficient at coordinating the services they provide. In fact ASO's are considered leaders in community based work so Kudos to us. Of course local ASO's are only as good as its members. It is extremely important for the membership to step up and be a bit more active in this process. Change will happen and one must decide do they want to help shape the future of our local groups. If you access services or volunteer this whole evolution that is upon us could potentially change even the most basic services one may take for granted. I can't stress the importance of getting involved and adding your insight in living with HIV and those who live with us.

From CAS's view because they are federal they are attempting to take the bull by the horns to steer and take control of the process Government is pushing for. It was very clear they (CAS) intend to be part of the process if not dictate

certain aspects of it. So there's a lot of excitement for those in being active and volunteering right now with them. Also CAS's focus on "Youth" was refreshing someone somewhere has realized that youth will play an important part in the future as the general PHA population ages. Not forgetting from the PHA Forum a strong message about issues around "Aging". Mixed in amongst the discussions were issues facing Immigrants and native concerns in all a very exciting and interesting conference. I expect over the next couple of years the debates to get hot and heavy with a strong passion to do what is right in serving our PHA community.

Maria Mac Intosh, Executive Director, ACNS - I recently attended my third Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) Annual Meeting (AM) this past June which took place only a week after ACNS's NS Knowledge Exchange & Health Promotion Forum. I was elected as the Atlantic Director on the CAS board for a two year term back in June of 2012 and was re-elected again this year for another term. The Atlantic director typically works in collaboration with other AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) in the region. Al Mc Nutt, also from ACNS, is in his last year of a six year run on the CAS board serving as their board chairperson and your PHA representative in the Atlantic.

Each year as part of the AM and Forum, CAS holds an Open Spaces session for PHAs and another session that involves PHAs and member group representatives to learn more about the issues and opportunities that are emerging from the ground up. These sessions along with receiving resolutions from our members help to inform the future work of CAS. There were a number of new voices in the room this year and those who have been around for a number of years and it is always motivating to feel the passion and commitment to the HIV/AIDS movement in the room. It was also great to see a larger number of positive youth in attendance with members from the Atlantic.

Some of the themes I heard this year were:

- ◆ HIV Disclosure
- ◆ PHA first voice and the application of the principles of the Greater Involvement of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in organizations and the movement overall
- ◆ Addressing issues of gender overall and women and HIV
- ◆ The need for positive youth to be engaged at a National level
- ◆ HIV & Aging and the need for programming that targets living longer
- ◆ Access to treatment and care for PHAs in Canada remains an issue

If you have questions for us or want to touch base with us feel free to contact me directly and you can reach your PHA representative, Al McNutt at nacssuper@eastlink.ca.

Johnathan - Dear fellow Nova Scotian's this is my second time writing in this news letter and I would like to talk about a few things. First off is the Canadian AIDS Society conference that I attended in Ottawa, Ontario. To be brutally honest I loved every minute of it, from the amazing hotel downtown to the 'oh so vibrant people' I got to meet and the information I received, all in all it was a great experience. The first mind blowing thing for me was when the Atlantic caucus sat down for our meeting and there were a good ten people there. Second was when the English speaking people got together and everyone introduced themselves and described what they did in their local ASO'S and me being only 19 years of age after hearing all of the 'important sounding positions' I said "Well I'm no one important but one day I hope to be as important as all of you are." And they replied my son what you just said was way more powerful than all of what we said and I guess that made me feel pretty damn special! Another noteworthy thing is when a African woman sat down and said her name and also said that she was HIV positive and just wanted us all to know that and a friend from Durham area said "don't worry about that cause were all positive in this room." This statement made me automatically feel so much safer to be open about my experiences being positive myself. There were a lot of meetings but all for good cause and my favorite part about the CAS conference was probably the karaoke on the last day where everyone got a chance to sing by themselves and me being the good man that I am decided to do a 'gangnam style' number which is sung in Korean so you can just imagine the language barrier there. But altogether it was an amazing experience and very progressive and I feel like I made a difference!

Summer Camp!

Also this summer I volunteered at a camp in Ontario which was very life changing and it was a camp that was either you were HIV positive or it directly affected your life. I met so many interesting people and reunited with many loved ones that I hold so dearly to my heart and never wanted to let them go so you can imagine how hard it was getting on that plane back to Halifax only to miss them every second of my life!

I've been living with HIV for 15 years now, ever since I was 4 years old, I was so ashamed of myself and thought there was something wrong with me. I wanted so badly to change it but now I know HIV is something none of us asked for. Also it is nothing to be ashamed of and there is so many people out there living with it even in a small city like Halifax we have supports and people that would love to meet you especially myself! I guess I just want you all to know that your not alone in this struggle of stigma and just getting through every single day, I know how it feels I really do and we've all been through some rough times but just know I am here for you and so is every one at ACNS and your local AIDS organizations. I hope everyone that reads this has an amazing summer and please don't give up, keep your heads held high because if we gave up then all the people who fought to get where we are today would have died in vain. I love you all and have an amazing day! May your God whoever you believe that is bless you all!

Johnathan

Changes at the ID Clinic

In April 2014, Alison Littlefair and Pam Routledge-McKinnon joined the ID clinic staff. Alison has assumed the lead role of STD clinic nurse; Pam moved into the role as the clinic nurse in both HIV and STD clinic. Together, Alison and Pam bring over 30 years of diverse nursing experience to the ID clinic.

Support Services Updates

Suspension of the Health Fund Update:

It's our hope that we have notified everyone at this point regarding the decision made by our Board of Directors so suspend the Health Fund program which happened on June 13th. As a recap of what was communicated in letters that went out in June:

The basis of the decision resulted from significant changes in the funding ACNS receives to support the fund directly as well as not meeting our fundraising goals over the past 2 years, despite our best efforts. The decision was necessary to ensure that we remain in a reasonable financial position, while we look at ways of increasing our revenue. The board will review our financial situation again in March of 2015.

We recognize that this situation will cause stress and we remain committed to supporting PHAs as we work through this time of transition. Our Support Services Coordinator will continue to be available to provide support sessions, to help work with you and advocate on your behalf along with assisting in referrals and connections to health and community services.

Maria Mac Intosh, ED

Did you know that the Support Services Coordinator helps with...

Counselling: you can give me a call anytime to let me know how things are going? I can also help with daily problem solving, stress, relationship building, challenges around grief and loss as well as other topics like HIV treatment or preparing to disclose.

Advocacy: I can help you access community programs and health services in your area. Lots of times we all have challenges making contact or we might have a negative experience that we could use some support around. ACNS can help with this by talking with you or even attending appointments with you in some cases either in person or by phone. Let's talk about it.

Referrals: ACNS has many partners across NS and it's easy for us to make quick referrals to services that address legal situations, addictions, mental health and many more.

Social Groups: Give us a call and we can tell you about the support and other social groups that we offer to PHAs and there are even opportunities for us to bring those living further away to join by phone.

Information Sessions, Programs & our Annual Knowledge Exchange & Health Promotion events: give us a call and we can tell you about what sessions are happening and how you can get involved. If you have ideas for program topics please share them with us.

Annual General Meeting

ACNS's board was newly elected on May 31st, 2014 as part of our Annual General Meeting

Executive Members

Al Mc Nutt, Board Chairperson
Suzanne Kennedy, Vice Chairperson
Augie (Russell) Westhaver, Treasurer
Kristen O'Keefe, Secretary
Ed Savage, Member at Large
David St. Laurent, Member at Large

Directors at Large

Eric Ross
Megan Longley
Christina (Tina) Elgee
Ayed Alotaibi
Rene Corbett
Margaret LaPointe

PHA involvement on our Board of Directors:

If you are looking to make contact with our board of directors or if you are interested in joining our board we are always looking for more PHAs to be involved and share your 'first voice' with us. We also offer mentor sessions with other PHA board members so that you can learn what our board about as well as training sessions. Just contact Maria directly or Al Mc Nutt at nacssuper@eastlink.ca or 1.800.566.2437.

Fund Development Updates!



JOIN US for the 25th Anniversary of the AIDS Walk here in Halifax!

The Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life is happening on September 28th, Halifax Commons

Help us celebrate this milestone in the fight against HIV/AIDS here in Halifax as we dance, walk, reflect and have some fun on the Halifax Commons on September 28th, 2014. We have lots of amazing teams already signed up to party the afternoon away and we have lots of room left, so why not join us! Register as an individual or register a team at www.aidswalkforlifehalifax.ca

We have so much planned this year and we are so excited to share the day with you! We have dancing, provided by Trenas Dance Studio, hosted by The BOUNCE, Super hero games, Hal-Con, BBQ, guest speakers and so much more.

What are you waiting for! Register today and join us!

Follow us on twitter and Instagram

@AIDS_NS

Like us on Facebook

To see all the up to date news on the walk!



Programming Updates

Forum Recap

The 2014 HIV-STBBI Knowledge Exchange and Health Promotion Forum was held from May 30th to June 1st, 2014 in Halifax. We were excited to continue with last year's focus on resilience. This year, our theme, "Making Connections" went further into the topic of resilience and integration within our communities. We explored resilience and integration for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, HCV, and other STBBIs, and how we as individuals and organizations can further implement programming and services that foster a community of integration, connection, and resilience. Check out ACNS website for some great stories on personal resilience that participants shared with us! Go to: <http://acns.ns.ca/resilience-our-stories/> to read some of the inspiring stories we received. If you would be interested in sharing your story, contact Michelle at (902) 425-4882 ext 226 or pc@acns.ns.ca

Sexual Health for Trans People

This fall the Gay Men's Health project will begin the development of a sexual health / HIV prevention piece for people who are transgender. We'll be looking for input from interested trans individuals on the development of all aspects of this new tool. If this might be you, please get in touch. Contact Chris Aucoin at 425-4882, ext. 222 or email GMHC@acns.ns.ca.

Announcements & Events

Gay Men & Prostate Cancer - Are you a gay man with prostate cancer living in NB, NS, or PEI? If so, Dr. Tracey Rickards at the Faculty of Nursing at UNB in Fredericton would love to speak with you about your experiences post-treatment! Please contact her via phone (506) 447-3412 or e-mail srickarl@unb.ca to express your interest in this research study, and feel free to pass along this information! You can also follow us on Twitter @GayProstateUNB or find us on Facebook!

The **Halifax Pride** festival runs from **July 17-27th** and has a wealth of things going on. Below are a few highlights, but you can find out about the whole schedule at HalifaxPride.com.

Friday, July 18, Noon-1 pm, RBC Theatre, Halifax Infirmary, 1796 Summer Street

Pathways to LGBTQ Health in NS, FREE

Learn about a research study being conducted at Dalhousie University, in partnership with prideHealth, to understand and measure the health of LGBTIQ Nova Scotians with Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan. Contact pride-Health@cdha.nshealth.ca or 902 473-1433.

Friday & Saturday, July 18-19, 7 pm, Company House, 2202 Gottingen Street

A Boy And His Dog : Stories From A Life, \$15/\$12

This new play by Chris Aucoin is a series of connected stories about love, loss... and starting over as a middle-aged gay man. It also touches on the impact an HIV diagnosis can make on a long term relationship. This workshop production is part of the *Queer Acts* LGBTQ theatre festival. Tickets \$15/\$12. Visit HalifaxPride.com for tickets and info.

Monday, July 21, 7 pm, Venus Envy, 1598 Barrington Street

Safer Sex Queered, FREE

STIs and safer sex for queer women and trans folks. Contact 422-0004 or visit www.venusenvy.ca for more info.

Saturday, July 26th

Halifax Pride Parade & Community Fair, FREE. Watch for the ACNS float in the parade and our *Check Me Out* and *AIDS Walk* booths at the fair afterwards at the Garrison Grounds. Go to HalifaxPride.com for more info.

Service Users' Bill of Rights

ACNS is in the process of developing a bill of rights where we hope to outline the rights and responsibilities of service users (members who access the support service programs of ACNS). The purpose of this document is to ensure that all services and programs of ACNS reflect the rights of PHA's which, in turn, will contribute to creating an accessible and safe space for ACNS service users seeking support. Your input is essential to the creation of a meaningful bill of rights! If you would like to be involved in the development, contact Laura by August 15th!

Announcements & Events, continued...

A Red Rose of Hope

The 25th Anniversary of the AIDS Walk in Halifax is happening on September 28th, 2014 at the Halifax Commons. To help mark this special milestone we are creating A Red Rose of Hope Wall. With your purchase of a Red Rose for Hope tag, we will place your message on the tag and attach it to a red rose on walk day and create a red rose wall full of hope, reflection, and memories. For just \$5.00 you can help make a difference in the lives of those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Finish the line in one of the following messages:

I walk because..... I hope..... In memory of.....I wish.....I Remember.....



For information on purchasing a Red Rose of Hope please contact Kenda Riles at 902-425-4882 x 228

Or you can purchase them online at www.redroseofhope.myevent.com

What's Happening?

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
10—Poz Guys Group 26—Pride Parade	14—Poz Guys Group	11—Poz Guys Group 28—AIDS Walk	9— Poz Guys Group

Volunteer Opportunities

Pride Volunteers Needed!

The Gay Men's Health Project needs volunteers (for 2-3 hour shifts) at Halifax Pride Day - Saturday, July 26th re this year's Pride health promotion. Contact Chris Aucoin at 425-4882, ext. 222 or email GMHC@acns.ns.ca.

Front Desk Receptionists

The Front Desk Receptionist is the ambassador of the organization. As you are the first person people come into contact with, we rely on you to make a good impression for the organization. We require you to have such qualities as politeness, courtesy, and patience.

You are responsible for answering and transferring calls; greeting people; keeping reception area in good order; assisting staff with clerical duties; providing contact information of other organizations; and, any other appointed duties. Shifts run from 10:00am until 1:00pm and from 1:00pm until 4:00pm. Training is provided. For more information, please contact Ned MacInnis or call him at 425 4882 Ext 224.

Complimentary Therapists

We are building on the strengths of our Complimentary and Alternative Therapies Program to promote healthy living strategies to our members that will have a lasting effect on their quality of life.

We are seeking registered therapists who are motivated by improving health care in our community. You should be a motivated and personable therapist registered in your respective modality. You would work in compliment with other volunteer therapists.