

Sharon was the heart of the care team program and the glue that held it together for 10 years. She was a true friend and mentor to dozens of care team recruits and an experienced resource for agency staff. Her wisdom and empathy motivated dozens of inexperienced volunteers to develop the commitment and compassion to provide a consistent, supportive presence in the lives of isolated clients. A pharmacist and teacher who helped chronic pain patients reduce their dependence on medication; Sharon had an encyclopedic knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its treatment, but believed love was the best complementary therapy. She felt that if clients allowed unconditional love into their lives, disease could seem less catastrophic and pain could be eased. We will always remember her for her staunch belief in the work done by AIDS Vancouver, her unwavering commitment to the care team program and her dedication to helping clients die with love and dignity.

Vicki O'Brien, Care Team Volunteer

I first met Sharon just over five years ago. As we worked together I was struck by two of Sharon's qualities. The first was that her work as Care Team volunteer and leader was evidently motivated by a genuine and profound concern for the welfare of the agency's clients and indeed all people living with HIV/AIDS. The second thing that impressed me about Sharon was her quiet determination. She had strong beliefs and clearly strong values underlying those beliefs, and she stuck to them with a dignity and conviction that was truly inspirational. I had the privilege of working with Sharon in a variety of capacities, most recently when she was Chair of the AIDS Vancouver Board of Directors. Sharon's contribution to AIDS Vancouver was, and indeed still is enormous. She leaves us a legacy of generous spirit that will not soon be forgotten or replaced. She will be sadly and profoundly missed by all who were lucky enough to know and/or work with her.

Stephen Smith, Acting Co-Executive Director

Remembering an Extraordinary Volunteer



Hearfelt tributes from people who worked with Sharon McKinnon

...Over the years, I drew inspiration from the support Sharon provided to so many individuals as they coped with the most challenging period of their lives. She provided a human connection to people when they were at their most isolated, and comfort to combat their experience of profound pain. I continue to draw inspiration from her tremendous contribution to the lives of persons living with AIDS. Sharon set a standard of compassionate love and support that I strive to meet in my work and life.

Miranda Compton, Case Management Supervisor

It rained on my first day of work at AIDS Vancouver. As I approached the main door fully drenched, a woman held it open for me. That was the first time I met Sharon. She extended a warm welcome and wished me the best of luck as I joined the AIDS Vancouver team. As I got to know Sharon, her dedication and compassion for people living with HIV was inspiring. I believe she lived her life with incredible grace, kindness, warmth and respect. Sharon will be deeply missed but not forgotten.

Parm Poonia, Coordinator, Volunteer Resources

Sharon was truly an inspiration to me and I feel touched to have been given the opportunity to know her. Sharon showed me what it meant to be a selfless person and she will always be held in my heart as one of my greatest role models. The world has lost a great soul.

All my love,
Adam, care team volunteer

Sharon McKinnon was instrumental in my starting at AIDS Vancouver as a volunteer. Sharon spoke at both my Core Training and Care Team training and I was inspired by her compassion and dedication. I will miss Sharon terribly.

Ian Benner, Coordinator of Helpline and Reception Services

Editor's note: Due to space restrictions we were only able to include a limited number of the letters we received. Some of these have also been edited for length.



Volunteer Bulletin

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AIDS Vancouver Volunteer Resources Program Philosophy:
 Volunteer Resources strives to build organizational commitment and competency by providing meaningful and relevant volunteer opportunities that support and enhance the mission of AIDS Vancouver. Paid and unpaid staff work together to alleviate vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Vancouver
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Submission Deadline:
 March 8th, 2004

Volunteer Opportunities

- ? Gayway
- ? Care Teams
- ? Helpline/Online
- ? Grocery Distribution
- ? Grocery Delivery Drivers
- ? Board of Directors who identify as HIV+

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604-893-2266

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A Message from the Acting Co-Executive Directors

The beginning of a new calendar year is always a time that inspires people to assess where they are and how things are progressing for them. Here at AIDS Vancouver, this is certainly the case. Many of us are busy thinking about the activities that are coming up in this New Year as well as reflecting on the challenges and accomplishments of the past year.

2003 was a good year for the AIDS Vancouver in many ways. In early August we marked the 20th anniversary of our agency ñ two decades of responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in our midst. We commemorated the original group of dedicated volunteers that formed and ran AIDS Vancouver in 1983, as well as the gigantic and immeasurable contribution that volunteers like and including you have made to AVís programs, services and spirit in the ensuing years.

Last year also saw the launch of our new gay menís resource exchange program *Gayway*, which has already generated a huge interest among local gay men, a population often accused of being disinterested in services that promote health. Our Case Managers continued to work tirelessly to assist hundreds of clients living with HIV in achieving a more stable and improved level of health. The Grocery program was busier than ever before, and AVés education and prevention services connected with over 10,000 individuals looking for information about HIV and AIDS.

The challenges that come forward from 2003 into the New Year are not small ones. There are indicators that HIV infection rates are going up in several of the populations we work with. As well, there are also signs that for many people who have been taking HIV medications

successfully for a long period, treatment failure may be looming with a resulting return to the awful reality of increasing numbers of HIV-related deaths.

As an agency, we have a responsibility to respond to these challenges. We must continue with our prevention and education work in order to meet new targets of reductions in HIV infections, set by the Ministry of Health Planning and Vancouver Coastal Health. We also must continue to provide the exemplary support services that we have come to be known for, while strategically shifting them to respond to the new realities of AIDS ñ this will be particularly true for our wonderful Care Teams.

As an agency we must also do this work at a time when fiscal resources are increasingly scarce. This will demand creative approaches to utilizing the resources available as well as raising new funds. To help us with this, the Board of Directors will soon begin the search for a new Executive Director who can bring creative vision and strong leadership skills to AIDS Vancouver.

We have our work ahead of us this year. What is crucial to accomplishing these tasks is the talent and dedication of all members of the AIDS Vancouver team, most notably volunteers like you. We thank you for the gift you give us when you volunteer for AV, and encourage you to keep involved throughout the coming year. We will soon be working on developing a new strategic plan for the agency, and we will be looking for your input in this process.

Thank you for all you did in 2003, and all the best for 2004!

Kim Hiebert and Stephen Smith
 Acting Co-Executive Directors

Support Programs

By Robbin Jeffereys

In the past few months there has been a lot of activity in Support Programs. With the help of Volunteer Resources we've done a lot of advertising and recruiting and we're happy to announce that we now have enough volunteers to create a 3rd Care Team. This is great news for our clients because we can now provide service to many more people in need.

Along with an increase in volunteers we have begun providing support services in the downtown east side. People with HIV/AIDS who live in the Downtown East Side are among the most isolated people in our city. We are very pleased to announce that volunteers are being prepared to provide social support and practical assistance that is so badly needed by these clients.

Starting on January 29 we will present our new Care Team training package to 9 trainees. The training has been re-written to include a tour of the Infectious Diseases Clinic at St. Paulís Hospital and a presentation from nurses involved with HIV/AIDS focusing on opportunistic infections and the challenge of living with the medications.

COUNSELORS NEEDED!!!

We are badly in need of counselors who are willing to volunteer one hour per week to provide counseling for one of our clients. We would love to hear from counselors and therapists out there who might be able to help us out. Thanks!

Taking the Plunge for AIDS Vancouver

Lorrie McCallum, a stylist and esthetician in New Westminster, jumped into the Fraser River on December 14th in support of AIDS Vancouver. Before her plunge Lorrie was overheard saying ilim going in regardless of rain or snow. With a thick wet suit and a charitable heart, Lorrie took the dive on one of the wettest and windiest days of the month.

Lorrie worked hard for weeks to collect pledges before swimming her way across the Fraser from Sapperton Landing in New Westminster, to Brownsville



Beach in Surrey. The swim was part of her training as a triathlete, but more importantly pledges collected directly benefited AIDS Vancouver.

McCallum swam over one mile in the icy waters, fighting the tide, rain and wind while along side she was accompanied by a boat piloted by firefighters from a local fire hall.

On behalf of AIDS Vancouver, Thank you Lorrie, for your caring heart, spirit and imagination.

Holiday Grocery 2003

Well we made it through the Holidays, with a Bang!! This year our Holiday Grocery was held December 15 and 16th, 2003. There were over 700 bags given out to clients in 2003. Items given out included hams, cereal, jams, fruits and vegetables, and much more!

The Holiday Grocery distributes two to three times the usual groceries in mid December to help supplement food budgets over the holidays.

The training room was decorated beautifully, with a jolly Santa Clause who had toys for the kids.

A special thank you goes out to all the staff, volunteers, and practicum students for making this Holiday Grocery, a success and definitely one to remember!

Specials thanks are also sent out to all those who helped donate for the Holiday Grocery in 2003

including: Terra Breads (Granville Island), Greater Vancouver Food-bank, the Humming Bird Society (toys) and other donors!

In particular I would like to thank all those dedicated grocery volunteers who work so hard each week, and who put in so many extra hours, to make the Holiday Grocery a reality.

Willow Lloyd
(Grocery Coordinator)
AIDS Vancouver



GAYWAY

Talking about it- cause knowing what you want leads to getting it...

It may be cold outside but things are heating up at Gayway, AIDS Vancouver's Gay Men's Aliveness Program.

Since the launch in August of last year, Gayway has been getting more and more positive attention and feedback from gay men and others about the program's approach to health promotion and HIV prevention. With all the enthusiasm that can be mustered, staff and volunteers have been busily developing new programs and services for gay men and we want to let everyone in on what's going on.

Coffee Talk, our volunteer staffed peer counselling program, provides guys with the opportunity to talk one-on-one with someone about things going on in their lives and get support and referrals to services at AIDS Vancouver and in the community at large.

Chit Chat, our volunteer and staff facilitated discussion groups have been a hit. The topics for these groups come from the community and it seems to be just what many men have been looking for. Right now one of our most popular Chit

Chats is the Safer. Sexy. group. This is a monthly, facilitated discussion group for men who want to talk about sex, intimacy, aging, safer sex, communication, and open relationships... the whole shebang. If you're interested drop in and get involved. Another popular Chit Chat is our book discussion group iHot Between the Sheets. There's a new one starting February 23rd. If you like to read and discuss what you're reading, check it out.

In March we'll be launching **Gaze, Gayway's quarterly organ for men**. This little magazine will cover a wide range of gay men's health issues from a broad holistic perspective. Gaze will be launched at our first Spring Fever Cabaret at the Odyssey. Check out our website at www.gayway.ca to find out more.

In March we'll also offer a **six week workshop series examining sex, communication and relationships**. This series will be led by a visiting Sexology practicum from the University of Quebec at Montreal. It's going to be a good spring. If you have any interest in learning more go to our website or come on down to 913 Davie and give us a visit. We'd love to see you.

News from PARC Library ñ January 2004

Do you want to improve your Internet search skills, get a free email address or learn basic word processing? PARC Library offers free introductory computer training on Thursdays from 1-2 p.m. Stop by the library or phone us at 604-893-2294 to sign-up. Pre-registration is required.

Upcoming in 2004, PARC Library, along with four other HIV/AIDS resource libraries from across Canada, is planning to move our book

and video catalogues on-line to a fully searchable union catalogue. The project, called CONNECT, will allow people from across the country to search a list of PARC Library materials and request the items for loan. If an item is not available in our library, it can be borrowed from other resource libraries, like AIDS Committee of Toronto, CATIE, the Canadian HIV/AIDS

Information Centre or the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. This exciting project will greatly improve access to our library resources, especially for people outside Vancouver who are unable to visit the library in person.

Finally, remember to check out our monthly new book and video lists at http://www.aidsvancouver.org/services/library/new_material and always feel free to phone, email or stop by the library for research assistance!

Aboriginal Peoples

A quiet crisis: federal funding and unmet needs in Indian Country. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC, 2003.

Strengthening ties - strengthening communities: an aboriginal strategy on HIV/AIDS in Canada for First Nations, Inuit and Metis people. Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, [Ottawa], 2003.

Complementary and Alternative Therapies

Eat for immunity: the practical guide to strengthening the body's defence system. Hartvig, Kirsten.

Annual Reports: 2002/2003

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

YouthCO AIDS Society

Conference Reports

Global health is a human right!: a national civil society summit, 21-22 May 2003, Ottawa - final report. Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, Ottawa, 2003.

Drug and Alcohol Use/Harm Reduction

Peer manual: a guide for peer workers and agencies. Toronto Harm Reduction Task Force.

History of HIV/AIDS & Alternative Theories

The no-nonsense guide to HIV/AIDS. Usdin, Shereen.

A Little Light Reading



Social Aspects

A history of AIDS social work in the hospitals: a daring response to an epidemic. Willinger, Barbara I., ed; Rice, Allan, ed.

Treatments

Targeting therapy beyond viral load: the importance of immune load. Soriano, Vincent.

Medical Management of HIV Disease

HIV & AIDS: a foundation for nursing and health care practice. Pratt, Robert J.

International Aspects

An advocate's guide to the international guidelines on HIV/AIDS and human rights. International Council of AIDS Service Organizations. 1999. LIBRARY USE ONLY

NGO summary of the international guidelines of HIV/AIDS and human rights. International Council of AIDS Service Organizations. 1999. LIBRARY USE ONLY

Progress report on the global response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, 2003 (Follow-up to the 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS). Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Legal & Ethical Issues

Briefing note for CBAOS: HIV disclosure & the criminal law in Canada. Canadian AIDS Society.

Patents, international trade law, & access to essential medicines. Elliott, Richard; Bonin, Marie-Helene; Devine, Carol.

Living with HIV/AIDS

Helpful information about funerals. Funeral Service Association of British Columbia, Victoria, 2003.

Prevention

Canadian guidelines for sexual health education. Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, Health Canada.