

The Link

NOVEMBER 2004

From the Office of the E.D.

The AIDS Committee of Simcoe County continues in our quest to improve services to our clients, bring HIV/AIDS awareness to the county and seek to discover new and innovative fundraising initiatives. Our Board of Directors has been busy through committees; such as the Fundraising committee chaired by Gwen Crump who was instrumental in partnering ACSC with The New VR in our summer of 2004 television Ad Campaign; 'AIDS...It's not who you think'. Liz Branham, who is the secretary for the Board of Directors, was our 'Poster Girl' for both the television ads and posters. Liz's willingness to demonstrate her commitment to the HIV/AIDS movement in Simcoe County is inspiring to us all.

Our AIDS Walk for Life held here in Barrie on September 25, 2004 was well supported by both familiar friends and new ones. The lanterns lit up Barrie's Centennial Beach and our Chairperson for the Walk, Lance Chilton was on hand to rally us to a 3 km walk. The Silent Auction, balloon sales and donations brought in an estimated \$10,000.00 which will assist ACSC in continuing to offer services to both clients and the Simcoe Community. Barrie's Mayor Hamilton's proclamation of AIDS Awareness Week was the first time for this proclamation to have been made for which we are very grateful.

There are some exciting things happening in the upcoming months and once they have been firmed up we will be letting you know in our next newsletter. Our AGM is planned for January 4/04 with details to come. We need input from our members in order to elect a new Board of Directors.

A Walk to Remember

My Thoughts On This Year's AIDS Walk...

But first, my thank you to everyone who volunteered and the staff and board members, who help to make this year's walk the success that it was... A special Thank you to Lance Chilton of the New VR for the time and energy and the excellent coverage that went into the walk....

I have been involved in the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County's AIDS Walks since 1997, in one form or another, but this year I actually was able to make the walk. I have seen a whole new direction with the walk and the way it was organized, along with the events leading up to kick off. I have seen many changes (balloons with prize tickets inside, silent auction and the big tent). But the most important and enchanting part of the walk, was the candle light walk (lanterns) at night. My mother watched the coverage of the walk, like she has over the years and comment on this year's, she said " that this years was the best one so far because" she said " seeing the walkers carrying their lights of hope really touched her and made this year's walk even more special to her." After the walk was done and everyone was winding down, I noticed that a good time was had by all and I know that I will be talking about this year's walk right up to and into next year's walk.....Liz B.

ACSC STAFF:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GERRY CROTEAU

SUPPORT COORDINATOR
TIFF IDEMS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

BOARD CHAIR
SHARON SILK

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR
GWEN CRUMP

A Daughter's Perspective...

I am here to say what I feel about the Aids Walk. At first I didn't feel anything or really care one way or another and it didn't mean to much to me. But when a family member becomes infected or a very good friend, the whole world and the way you think changes. I am very glad and thankful that my mom is still on earth and in my life. I feel the support that we give the people with HIV/AIDS makes them feel better about themselves. I really enjoyed the walk this year to support the people living with HIV/AIDS, it gave me a chance to let them know that I care and that I will support them and continue to be there for them....Leeann B.

H.O.P.E Theatre Troupe Update

Ann Martin, who is the founder of the H.O.P.E. Theatre Troupe, has graciously offered to co-facilitate a weekend of sessions for any new and existing members who are interested in H.O.P.E.'s history as well as it's future. We are in the process of planning a weekend retreat for folks who are interested in partaking in related workshops in order to get H.O.P.E. revitalized! Call Tiff or Gerry at ACSC for more information and to get your name on the waiting list for registration! This is a great opportunity to get involved in changing our communities!

You are Welcome to Attend Our
Candlelight AIDS Vigil
on World AIDS Day

On Wednesday, December 1st, 2004
from 7-9 pm

ACSC invites all interested community members to join us for this year's Candlelight AIDS Vigil. We will hold vigil by candlelight for all of the folks we've lost, locally and globally, to HIV/AIDS, and in support of all of us who are infected, affected, or at risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS.

**Call Tiff or Gerry at ACSC for more details on the location.
705-722-6778 or 1-800-372-2272**

Stay warm! Refreshments will be provided.

Support Coordinator's Update

A lot has happened since the last newsletter. ACSC's client base has grown in numbers to a huge extent, which indicates to me that our profile is continuing to get out into our local communities and that the networking that's happening with other social service and health care organizations is working (we're getting a lot of referrals). Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding ACSC's services.

Gerry and I have been doing a lot of community education and awareness work. We've attended several Health Fairs, Trade Shows, and community awareness-raising events (ie. Take Back the Night). The communities of Simcoe County that we've reached out to have been receptive to information regarding our services, as well as to HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives.

On another note, a number of women who access services at ACSC have been discussing the creation of a 'Women Supporting Women' network/group. There's a lot to be done towards this, but with your ideas and assistance I'm sure we can get this sort of program off the ground.

We're hoping to get a temporary supply of vitamins in a.s.a.p. for clients who need/would like supplements. This should happen soon, so let me know if you would like to take advantage of this program and I'll put you on the list!

I'd like to send a huge thank you out to clients, board members, community volunteers, participants and sponsors for making this year's AIDS Walk such a huge success. We raised awareness and built a stronger sense of community! The event would not have been possible without the time and support that was contributed by each of you!

In regards to the community kitchen program, I've run into many roadblocks in looking for a confidential, appropriate, and affordable space to run the program. Once again, let me know if you're interested, so that I can call you with info as soon as the program takes off.

I've heard a lot of positive feedback regarding this year's Opening Doors Conference. It seems that many of us learned a lot and made connections with folks from our communities. Thanks to everyone who showed up and made it such a uniquely wonderful and safe space!

Take care and keep in touch, Tiff

ARE YOU:

***Lesbian Gay Bisexual
Transgendered Transexual 2-Spirited
Intersexed Queer Questioning***

ARE YOU 14-24?

WANT TO MEET NEW PEOPLE?

WANT A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE SPACE TO HANG OUT?

COME TO OUR DROP-IN!!

INTERESTED? CALL TIFF @ ACSC

705-722-6778 or 1-800-372-2272

Women Supporting Women Group

A number of women on the client base have expressed an interest in starting a Women's Support Group. We are looking for feedback on how big the need is in this area. Call Tiff at ACSC to offer suggestions and get more info. 722-6778 or 1-800-372-2272. The following is a submission by one of the women who is at the forefront of this idea.

Hello to all members and community. My name is Joanne S. I'm a 38 year old, white, hiv pos mother of 2 children, a 12 yr old girl and a boy of 10 yrs of age, who has ADHD. I was diagnosed in Dec of 97. I have been involved in the HIV/Aids community since 6 months after my diagnosis. I started with my local ASO {Aids Service Organization}, which was the ACO {Aids Committee of Ottawa} where I was born and raised. I participated and volunteered in fundraising events at that time. I sat on the board for Camp Chrysalis, a camp for PHA`S {people having Aids} parents who are affected or infected with these illnesses, and for children. Also at the same time, I was introduced to {VOICES} Voices Of Positive Women in Ontario. I became a member of a membership base of 525 and growing, then sat on several committees, treatment, communication, peer network to name a few. I was one of the original 6 Peer Mentoring program. I was a peer mentor in Ottawa, then eventually sat on the Board of Directors for VOICES for a 2 yr term. I relocated to Barrie a year ago. Now I would like to continue my work here in our region. I want to continue representing the community of PHA`S and the ladies. I would like to be able to help newly diagnosed HIV pos women, to inspire and empower them. I believe that you don't have to feel alone with this disease. I know what it feels like to be ALONE when you are surrounded by friends and family who truly care. You don't have to feel alone. I enjoy going for walks, reading a good book. arts and crafts, gardening. spending time in the great outdoors when it's not so cold brrrrr, being with friends. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you all. I had the opportunity to meet some of you at our Aids walk this year. I had a wonderful time selling those orange balloons. Thank you to those who supported us by coming out. A big Thank you to Gerry our E.D. Executive Director and Tiff our support worker and all the volunteers. It would not have been a success without them. Bravo! to all of you. I would like to be involved in starting a support group for women. For those who are interested, you may write to me via email at schingham@hotmail.com or contact Tiff at the ACSC Office. I would also like to sit on the board in the near future if they will welcome me . I will do my best to represent you as a PHA, to be a voice on your behalf and be able to contribute and be an asset in any way I can.

Thank you. Sincerely,
Joanne S. Stay Positive!!

A Note to Long-term Survivors of HIV/AIDS:

PHA's from our region have been invited to attend the "Survive and Thrive Retreat: Practical Tools to Help Long-term Survivors with AIDS-related Multiple Loss and Community Devastation". The next retreat will be held in Hamilton from January 28- 30/05. Call Tiff for more info.

AIDS Committee of Simcoe County

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Robert Steven's
Bell, Book and Candle
Running Room
Sports Swap
Paramount Canada's Wonderland
Grand & Toy
Pita Pit
Pharoah's Pita
Stinson Theatres
John McNabb Clothier
Think Clear
Concord Candle
Magic Mountain
Fancy That
Sinfully Fun
Ego Menswear
Three Smal Rooms
Bush Baby Interiors

Liz's Corner

A Better Tomorrow

By: Liz Branham

If I could find a better tomorrow,
Then maybe I can live without sorrow,
But sorrow is around both day and night,
And always ever there is a fight.

I wish that I could find a better life,
A person to love with all my might,
A love to share with some one new,
Someone who is loving and true.

True and loving, faithful and kind
This is always on my mind,
Love has been so cruel to me,
So this is what I hope you see.

Love to me has been unkind,
A terrible scar upon my mind,
So to love again is something I fear,
Until I can trust a love to share.

It's Almost Time for ACSC's Annual Holiday Drop-in!

On Wednesday December 15th from 2-4pm, all clients of ACSC, your partners, and your children are invited to join our staff and board for a holiday drop-in. It will be a great opportunity to meet, connect and socialize with old and new friends. Please RSVP so that we can make sure we've got enough refreshments and snacks for everyone! If you'd like to be here for the event but do not have access to transportation, give Tiff a call in advance and we'll try to work something out. Also, feel free to call with suggestions for activities and food. Call Tiff @ 722-6778 for more details.

***ACSC's Offices will close
@ Noon on Friday, Dec 24th
and reopen on
Monday, Jan 3rd, 2005***

