

The Link

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ACSC STAFF:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GERRY CROTEAU

SUPPORT COORDINATOR
TIFF IDEMS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

BOARD CHAIR
SHARON SILK

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR
GWEN CRUMP

Executive Director's Report

We have begun a new year in which the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County is celebrating its 10th Anniversary. It started with a man, Ed Gilbert, who had a vision of establishing an AIDS Service Organization to support those of us who are infected, affected or at risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS. It is with gratitude that we express our appreciation to Ed for his continued support and input.

As we move forward into 2005, efforts to maintain our level of service will require not just MOHLTC and fundraising dollars but each of us ought to be willing to contribute to the success of keeping Ed's vision and focus alive. It has already begun with our new Board of Directors, who were elected at our recent AGM on January 4, 2005. The Board, chaired by Sharon Silk, welcomed three new members who believe in what we are doing and who want to influence the success and direction we will undertake over the next few years.

Fundraising efforts have taken on a new vitality chaired by Gwen Crump and our accounting system has been overhauled under the direction of our treasurer, Doug Jackson. We have established a Marketing Committee who will look at new ways of media presentation and print design chaired by Carolyn Tonin.

Although staffing levels at ACSC have shrunk and our client base has more than doubled in 2004, we are asking our volunteer base to become more involved. We all need to take up the challenge of Ed's vision and reenergize the AIDS Movement in Simcoe County. ACSC is seeking to reaffirm and create new partnerships to assist in this bold undertaking.

We have a great heritage and a strong foundation ...

Be A Part of It!

~ACSC~

Board of Directors:

Sharon Silk - Chair

Gwen Crump

Doug Jackson - Treasurer

David Krampp

Liz Branham - Secretary

Jean Louis Pitre

Carolyn Tonin

Mark Bowes

Staff:

Tiff Idems - Support Coordinator and Youth Facilitator

Natalie Weeks - HOPE Troupe Facilitator (Volunteer)

Gerry Croteau - Executive Director

FYI: ACSC is looking to setup an Emergency Food Bank for our clients. We welcome donations of non-perishable food items, vitamins & protein supplements (Ensure, Boost). For more information, or to make a donation, contact Tiff at 705-722-6778.

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

People living with HIV/AIDS 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 the Hamilton area from January 28- 30/05. Contact Tiff @ ACSC for more information.

H.O.P.E. is on the go!

We are pleased to have a new and exciting facilitator for the H.O.P.E. Theatre Troupe. Her name is Natalie Weeks and she has been a dedicated volunteer at ACSC for a few years. Natalie organized H.O.P.E.'s performance at the World AIDS Day Vigil, and is in the process of planning an educational piece for a group of Georgian College students. She has a passion for outreach and HIV/STI prevention issues, as well as for youth-centred education initiatives. The revitalization of the H.O.P.E. Troupe is in her capable hands!

Feel free to contact us at 705-722-6778 if you would like to get more information on how you can get involved in the H.O.P.E. Troupe. If you are aged 14-24, this is an excellent opportunity for you to gain confidence and skills, whilst educating your peers and making our community safer! If you are an educator, community worker, or concerned citizen, please feel free to contact us to find out how you can book a performance or organize a prevention workshop in your class, organization or community.

Coming Soon!

F.Y.I: The following events are upcoming at ACSC.

- ◆ **'Sweet Art' Silent Auction in collaboration with the MacLaren Art Centre. Complimentary Hors D'ouvres. Cash Bar. Thursday, Feb 24th, 7-9pm**
 - ◆ **'Gay Day' at Snow Valley**
- ◆ **Annual Candlelight AIDS Walk for Life, Saturday, September 24, 2005 @ Centennial Beach in Barrie, ON**
- ◆ **An Evening at 'Bluebarrie Hill', including a Fine Dining Experience and Live Jazz with Michele Guy (\$2 from each dinner will go to ACSC);
Details To Be Confirmed**
 - ◆ **ACSC 'Cut-athon' Fundraiser, Details To Be Confirmed**

For more info or to find out how to get involved, please call Gerry or Tiff at the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County. Phone: 705.722.6778

Support Coordinator's Update

Happy New Year to you all! Since the last newsletter, I've spent a great deal of time planning for the World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil as well as for ACSC's holiday programming.

The AIDS Vigil was successful in bringing community members together in a fabulous venue (MacLaren Art Centre) in order to allow for many expressions of remembrance and celebration. I am very pleased with the outpour of support that we received in the form of poetry, song, dance, and spoken word at the vigil. Once again, we were able to foster a strong sense of community and heighten awareness around HIV/AIDS-related support, education and prevention in Simcoe County.

The Holiday Drop-in was well received by ACSC's clients, as were the gift bags, food vouchers, and toys (donated by the Rock 95 Toy Drive). It was wonderful to be on the front-line distributing gifts, as the gratitude that was expressed was heart-warming as always!

Our focus on community education, outreach, awareness and prevention has been manifested through various events and initiatives that we've taken part in recently. I've been working closely with some of our H.O.P.E. Troupe members, namely Beau, Natalie, Kaela and Kayla, in order to get performances going at the AIDS Vigil, and at Georgian College, etc.

We're hoping to get a temporary supply of vitamins in a.s.a.p. for clients who have expressed interest in this program. We've received a lot of positive feedback on the need for such a program, so it is our hope to have vitamins in stock a.s.a.p..

I've received a lot of positive feedback regarding ACSC's programming in 2004, and am looking forward to continuing on with regards to providing support, education, outreach in 2005. I've learned a great deal from all of you in the past year, and plan to continue to grow and learn with you. Thank you for sharing your experiences and realities with me! I can honestly say that every individual whom I've worked with in the past year has demonstrated inner strength and empowerment beyond what I could have imagined. You are all incredible and inspiring people! Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding ACSC's services.

Take care and play safe, 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

In ACSC's November 2004 newsletter, we sent out a call to Women living with HIV/AIDS in Simcoe County to discuss the need for a Women's Support Network in our region. We wanted to gauge the need/interest for such a group. Due to a lack of response, we are postponing the formation of this group. However, for those of you who are interested in accessing women-centered support, here are a few options:

- ◆ **'Voices of Positive Women'** has a monthly support group that is accessible by telephone on a range of topics, such as 'Drug Holidays and Treatment interactions', 'HIV and Travel', 'Opportunistic Infections particular to Women', 'HIV and Pregnancy', and many others. The group is called Telelink and can be accessed by Women living with HIV within the province of Ontario by contacting VOPW's Support Group Coordinator at 1.800.263.0961.
- ◆ **'Voices of Positive Women'** also offers opportunities for peer support and peer mentorship, as well as for Women living with HIV/AIDS to attend their yearly retreat.
- ◆ Some of our local women's resource centers and women's support groups are:
 - Daphne's Drop-in**, 29 Manitoba St., Bracebridge. Open Mondays, 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Phone: 705.646.2122. Website: <http://www.daphnewymn.com/services/daphndropin.htm>
 - Women's Resources of Simcoe County**, 80 Bradford St. Suite 143, Barrie. Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Phone: 705.737.2884. Central Intake is at the Barrie Office, but there are satellite offices in Orillia, Midland, Alliston and Collingwood. Most of their programming is specific to issues around Sexual Assault or Violence against Women. However, they do run support groups and trainings surrounding issues such as 'Healthy Relationships', etc.
 - Simcoe Women's Wellness Centre**, 80 Bradford St., Barrie. Hours: Monday-Friday a.m.- p.m. Phone: 705.721.5875.
 - Muskoka-Parry Sound Sexual Assault Services**.
7 William Street, Parry Sound. Phone : 705.774.9083.
 - Comfy Corner Drop-in Program** for All Women. Tuesdays 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m. at St. James United Church, 24 Mary St., Parry Sound. For info or transportation, contact Linda at 705.744.9083 or 1.877.851.6662.

If the need for a Women Supporting Women support group/network at the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County is expressed in the future, we will let you know via our newsletter. Feel free to contact Tiff @ 705.722.6778 or 1.800.372.2272 for support, information, and referrals, or if you have any questions or concerns.

World AIDS Day Vigil 2004

Thank you to all of the clients, volunteers, board members, sponsors & community participants who made our recent AIDS Vigil such a positive experience! At the vigil, we strengthened our sense of community and raised awareness through spoken word performances, poetry, dance, music and art. Thanks again to Shoshana, Raven, Sarain, Carol, Joanne, Natalie, Kaela, Kayla, and Liz for your wonderful performances. A great deal of thanks go out to Paula from Starbucks, who supplied us with refreshments for the event, and to Colin from MacLaren Art Centre, who provided the space, time and organizational expertise, as well as to the volunteers who brought treats and helped with setup and cleanup for the event. We are grateful for all of the time and talents that you so generously shared with our community! Without your support, none of this would be possible!

Friends and Supporters of ACSC, we are requesting your assistance in order to assure that the needs of our clients and the community can continue to be met. Whether you can help us through support of our Walk for Life, sponsorship or participation, a financial contribution, or by offering your valuable skills and/or talents. Our clients have a variety of individual needs. Some require dollars to help pay their hydro, others require funds to help them attend doctors appointments in Toronto, and others need assistance with accessing groceries in order to ensure that they have adequate healthy food for themselves and their families. Our community needs to be able to depend on ACSC for our education and prevention services, but the demanding cost of resources, transportation, condoms, and staffing do put these services in jeopardy. Please fill out the form below and contribute to our valuable work.

Please Show Your Support

Fill out the following form and return it with an attached cheque or money order to the
AIDS Committee of Simcoe County, 336-80 Bradford Street, Barrie, ON, L4N 6S7

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____ Suite: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone Number : _____ Work Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

Donation: o Monetary \$ _____
 o Volunteer time _____

 (interests and times available)

o Resources _____
 (describe)

Please indicate if discretion is required with phone calls or mailings. o Yes o No

I give permission to the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County to inform me of the newsletter, AIDS Walk, special events, and other fundraising activities o Yes o No

Letters to the Editor

This Christmas Social was by far the best that I have attended over the years that I have been associated with the Committee both as a client and a board member. My sincere thanks to the staff and the board for a well prepared buffet and the gift bags. A special thank you from me for inviting my mother to attend the social with me this year. She has told me how much she enjoyed being there, and how thankful she is that there is a Committee that I can reach out to when I feel the need to and she is truly amazed by all the work that is done there.

Submitted by: Liz Branham

~

To Gerry, Tiff, the community and all my friends.

Merely putting your awareness in your body and breathing is a process of healing.

Did you know that there is a real relationship between the quality of your attention and the capacity to heal yourself? When you have an alert appreciation of what's really going on within you and outside you something inside begins to express itself. When you start paying attention to your feelings to your body and your breath something inside begins to tell you what you need. Healing is profound attunement. If you are willing to tune in you will find that the energy of your awareness can change you deeply. Because profound attunement is the natural state of healing and transformation. Open yourself and participate.

Listen to Your LIFE. I would like to Thank You all for being there for me. To those who were there for me in my time of need. I was in Barrie for a short period of time. During my stay I met some wonderful people. Some that I have great relationships with. And hopefully we will continue to keep in touch. As my journey continues, and my path has brought me to another destination. I will continue to volunteer in my new community. I will miss you All.

Submitted by: Joanne S

~

If you have something that you would like to share with our community, please send submissions to acscsupport@rogers.com or call Tiff at 705.722.6778.

OW & ODSP Recommendations (excerpt from OAN Support Newsletter Jan 2005):

In December 2004, the Ministry of Community and Social Services released a report by Deb Matthews with several recommendations to reform and improve the social assistance system in Ontario. Some recommendations are being acted upon immediately, others will be implemented over time. Some highlights include:

- *Community Start-Up Benefit will be reduced from once in 12 months to once in 24 months (except in exceptional cases)*
- *ODSP recipients can receive \$5000 per year exemption (previously \$4000) for gifts and voluntary payments*
- *Consider reforms to the current asset level and limits*
- *Review eligibility rules for transportation assistance*

To learn more about the report and recommendations, visit the website at www.cfcsc.gov.on.ca

Thanks to the Donors who made ACSC's Holiday Drop-in a Huge Success !

Thanks are in order once again for the support we received in regards to holiday programming! Due to the generosity of our donors, we were able to host a Holiday Drop-in at which we provided turkey and all of the fixings, gift bags, hams, and toys for our client's children! An estimated 40 people were able to make it to the drop-in, and many more took part in our holiday programming. Thank you to the Rock 95 Toy Drive, ACSC's Board of Directors, and to our anonymous donors, who made all of this possible through donations of gift items, money and time! Your generosity has made a huge difference in the lives of ACSC's clients! In fact, many clients have specifically requested that we send out a thank you on their behalf!

M is for Microbicides (excerpt from Voices of Positive Women's Website at www.vopw.org)

DON'T WORRY IF YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THEM - MOST WOMEN HAVEN'T

LEARN ABOUT THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR MICROBICIDES!

With condoms safer sex is his decision.

With a microbicide make it yours!

We are excited about the Global Campaign for Microbicides because it will benefit all women.

- Microbicides will benefit HIV positive women by protecting them from sexually transmitted and vaginal infections other than HIV, which are particularly dangerous when the immune system is compromised. They may even be useful in promoting healthy vaginal conditions to ward off yeast infections etc.

- Microbicides will benefit both partners. Positive women will be able to choose a non-contraceptive microbicide if they want children with less risk to a negative partner. Contraceptive microbicides would give them another option to avoid an unplanned preg-

nancy.

- Microbicide research is also leading to development of a vaginal wash for use when a caesarian delivery is not possi-

Health Canada in April 2002 said:

"For individuals who are unable to access condoms or negotiate condom use, particularly women, there is an urgent need to identify safe and effective alternatives in HIV prevention. Thus the development and evaluation of potential and effective microbicides is a public health priority."

ble. It may be possible to add a microbicide to breast milk.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AND HOW CAN I HELP?

The Global Campaign for Microbicides is a broad based, international effort to build support among policymakers, opinion leaders, and the general public for increased investment into microbicides and other user controlled preven-

tion methods. Contact any of the three organizations listed below to sign a petition and support the global campaign network.

You can also help specifically by:

- ü Asking for a copy of our trial information brochure about microbicides and showing it to your friends. We'll ask you to get their feedback and comments.

- ü Joining us at displays to spread the word, there will be a big push for International Women's Day to publicize the campaign.

- ü Joining a team to work on a simple brochure for teens, and to develop culturally sensitive material for at risk communities.

Visit the Global Campaign website at www.Global-campaign.org or the CANADIAN AIDS SOCIETY website at www.cdnaids.ca or contact Denise Jackson, Volunteer Coordinator at:

1.800.263.0961 or 416.324.8703, ext. 23 - or email her at djackson@vopw.org for further information.

CANADA PENSION PLAN – Changes to Disability Benefits (Excerpt from OAN Support Newsletter Jan 2005)

Presently CPP-D offers an incentive called "fast track reinstatement" for people who were previously on benefits, had their benefits suspended in order to work, but have now lost their ability to work and need benefits again. In order to qualify for reinstatement, the person must:

- Be applying with the same disability or medical reason that they were originally adjudicated/granted on
- Complete an application form that includes an updated medical form from the physician
- The disability must re-occur within 5 years of suspending CPP benefits

Must have the minimum earnings of \$3500 with contributions to CPP on those earnings in each year that you were working and not receiving CPP-D

In the near future, CPP will be creating "Automatic Reinstatement" to offer less barriers and more incentives for people to leave CPP to explore work opportunities. The new policy will require the same disability and the same medical information, but the disability must re-occur within 2 years of leaving CPP benefits, and the person is not required to have minimum earnings and contributions to CPP during those 2 years. For more information, contact CPP at 1.800.277.9914 (English) or 1.800.277.9915(French).

CATIE Workshops:

The Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE) offers a variety of workshops on various HIV and AIDS related topics. If there is sufficient interest in any of these topics, the ACSC would be pleased to host workshops for people living with HIV/AIDS. Let Tiff know if you would be interested in attending any of the following.

NEW!

You Need that Drug... When? - The drug approval process in Canada, presented in

partnership with CTAC
 Anal Cancer in HIV
 HIV and the Heart - Antiretroviral therapy and its effect on the heart
 Vaccines for HIV positive travelers – Before you travel, you should know this information
 HIV and Depression – How HIV and depression are connected and what you can do

Drug Treatment:

HIV Treatment 101 – An important foundation for learning about HIV. Learn the basics of HIV disease including the virus life cycle
 HIV Treatment – When to start, what drugs to start with,

switching and stopping treatments, adherence issues and resistance
 HIV Side Effects and how to manage them – Common drug side effects and strategies for managing them

Living with HIV:

The Doctor - Patient Relationship – An interactive workshop designed to help you make the most of your relationship with your doctor

Diverse Populations:

Recreational Drug Use and HIV – Learn the basics about harm reduction for HIV-positive recreational drug users
 Women and HIV - How HIV and HIV treatment affects women
 Pregnancy and HIV - Protecting both you and your baby in pregnancy and beyond

Diseases and Conditions:

HIV/Hepatitis C co-infection - A guide to managing both diseases

Complementary and Alternative Medicine:

Overview of CAM in HIV – Learn the basics of complementary and alternative medicine and how it is used in HIV
 Wellness Strategies – Tips for healthy daily living with HIV

Skill Development:

Researching Treatment Information - Learn how to do your research to make good treatment decisions

Vaccines:

HIV Vaccines

Catie Workshops for People Living with HIV/AIDS

Feel free to use the following form to express your interest in the above outlined workshops. Please let us know which workshops you would like to participate in.

First Choice:	Second Choice:	Comments:
Third Choice:	Fourth Choice:	

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

AIDS Committee of Simcoe County	
ACSC 80 Bradford Street, Suite 336 Barrie, ON L4N 6S7	Phone: 705.722.6778 Fax: 705.722.6560 www.acsc.ca acscexecutivedirector@rogers.com

A Call to All Volunteers!

To any of our fabulous volunteers who would like to help with the planning of this year's events at ACSC, we are looking for volunteers to sit on our 2005 Events Committee. We are currently in need of assistance for the following positions.

- ~ ***Volunteers for setup and assistance at ACSC's 'Sweet Art' Silent Auction (the event will be held on Thursday, February 24, 2005 from 7-9pm).***
- ~ ***Volunteers to assist at ACSC's outreach booth at Kempenfest (July 30-Aug 1, 2005).***
- ~ ***Planners, organizers, fundraisers, marshals, etc. for the AIDS Walk for Life 2005 (to be held simultaneously in Midland, Collingwood and Barrie).***
- ~ ***General Assistance with ACSC initiatives (ie. Newsletter, etc.)***
- ~ ***H.O.P.E. Theatre Troupe Members (ages 14-24) for performances in schools and community organizations. Contact Natalie at acscopyouthoutreach@rogers.com or 705.722.6778.***

If you are interested in sharing your time and talents with us, please contact Gerry or Tiff at 705.722.6778 or 1.800.372.2272.

An Interesting Perspective on the OHTN Conference 2004

My experience at the {OHTN} Ontario HIV Treatment Network conference was that I learned a lot, did some networking with friends and new one's. I was sent as a delegate to represent ACSC. It was emotionally draining, but as well satisfying and very informative. It was more so an International 2 days of action on HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS affects everyone, whether you are infected or know someone who is. And simply, care about the well being of our communities. This year they talked moreso about women and girls in recognition of the theme for World Aids Day 2004, which was HIV, AIDS, women and girls. The facts are that HIV/AIDS is increasingly a women`s disease. Globally, 37.5 million people are infected with Hiv and 19.2 million of the people are women. In Africa ,the world hardest hit continent, 75% of new infections in young people aged 15 to 24 are girls and young

women. In Canada, a large percentage of new infections are in women. Women's vulnerability to HIV directly correlates to the existence of their basic rights. They need to protect themselves, including the right to be free of sexual coercion and

Women need female controlled protection methods ... and the right to exercise control over their own bodies and lives.....

sexual violence. Women need female controlled protection methods and they need men and boys to take responsibility for their role in the spread of the epidemic. Women have the right to be free from harmful tradition practices and violence. The right to exercise control over their own

bodies and lives.....

What can You do to support the Fight against HIV/AIDS?

1 Have a guest speaker on HIV/AIDS at your workplace, school or wherever the need for education exists.

2 Volunteer at a local AIDS service organization, or bring up the issue at other community groups and organizations.

3 Take responsibility for combating HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination. Challenge people's assumptions about who is infected and why.

4 Talk to your kids, partner's, friends, relatives and colleagues about HIV/AIDS.

5 Write to your local MP and MPP and ask them what they are doing to bring issues surrounding HIV/AIDS onto the government agenda.

6 And of course offer brilliant suggestions of YOUR OWN!!

Submitted by: Joanne Schingh

AIDS Committee of Simcoe County

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Barrie, ON
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Phone: 705.722.6778
Fax: 705.722.6560

www.acsc.ca

acscexecutivedirector@rogers.com
acscsupport@rogers.com

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

AIDS Bureau

THE NEW VR

Starbucks

MediaLinx

Big Fish Video

Glaxo Smith Kline

Shire Bio Chem

Club C'est La Vie

David Anthony Salon

Cool Beer

Pepsi

Joe's No Frills

Jean's Café

Fox's Bakery

Polar Ice Vodka

Good Clean Fun

Results Placements

Town and Country Steakhouse

Tunnel Clothing

Garner's Sports

Better Vision Optical

Samson's Hair Design

Robert Steven's

Bell, Book and Candle

Running Room

Sports Swap

Paramount Canada's Wonderland

Grand & Toy

Pita Pit

Pharoah's Pita

Liz's Corner

Picture Of Love

By: Liz Branham

*The dictionary defines love differently than me,
I'll try to write a picture for you to see,
Love is warmth and holding close and tight.
It's needing someone near each night,
It's wanting to be clean and nice to all,
It's saying words and giving help to all,
It's asking for nothing and giving your best,
To bring someone else great happiness,
It's cleaning, cooking and making beds,
Till you're so tired you'd wish you were dead.*

*It's tears and smiles and feeling blue,
And hurting bad when it's all through,
Yes love is many different things.
Hugs, kisses, tears, dreams and blues..... but brings
Happiness, warmth, smiles and tears,
And something that stays all through the years,
This is what I mean by love,
A gift to me with warmth and hugs,
A life to share, a life to give,
All that I can, all while I live.....*

The H.O.P.E. Theatre

Troupe is looking for new members.

Interested youth can get

involved by calling

705.722.6778, ext. 3.

