



*ACYR presents...*

# 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## Annual Report

AIDS Committee of York Region  
Newmarket Health Centre  
194 Eagle Street, Newmarket, Ontario

Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009



**AIDS COMMITTEE OF YORK REGION**  
**2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Tuesday, September 22nd, 2009*

*Program*

- 6:00 PM – *ongoing*:** Welcome & Dinner
- 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM:** Annual General Meeting
- 7:00 PM – 7:30 PM:** Presentation by Greg Wood, Consultant  
Topic: Growth & Change Management
- 7:30 PM – 8:00 PM:** Global & Local Reflections
- Devan Nambiar on the 9<sup>th</sup> International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP)
  - Youth at the ACYR
- 8:00 PM – 8:30 PM:** Awards and Closure



## MISSION STATEMENT

The **AIDS Committee of York Region** is a community-based, non-profit organization, which embraces the GIPA\* principles, provides support, and offers education which promotes the development of a caring and compassionate society, as well as access to dignified care for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.

\*GIPA=Greater Involvement of People with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

## VISION STATEMENT

The **AIDS Committee of York Region** envisions an informed and compassionate society, which is supportive of people living with HIV/AIDS who are striving to overcome social, economic and service challenges, working with them towards a healthy and empowered lifestyle.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### Direct Services

- HIV Ambassador Program
- Annual Client Retreat
- Individual support
- Monthly support groups and peer support
- Educational Workshops
- Information resource
- Referrals to other services
- Holiday gift program
- Nutrition For Wellness: Web-based resource & newsletters

### Education and Outreach

- HIV 101 Workshops
- IN MY SHOES: Documentary on Stigma
- Volunteer Program: training & outreach
- Community information workshops, high school presentations
- Speakers' Bureau
- Ongoing drop-in services and resources
- Special events
- Newsletters

### Referrals





## Executive Director's Report

The theme of growth has been consistent in the life of the AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR). From the time of the agency's inception, our dreams have always been running boldly ahead of us. Each year, we have dared to make our joint meditations a reality and this year was no exception. Allow me to share our year of growth with you.

We continue to listen to the stories of those we serve, for they act as our compass. A recent report by United Way of York Region reminds us that about 1 in 8 residents of York Region face or are at risk of facing economic hardships, and that 29% of the residents living in low income households are children less than 18 years of age. We heard the growing need for programs from children and youth impacted by HIV/AIDS right here in our midst. Peer-based approaches that reduce isolation, foster learning and build self esteem are ideals that are critical to children's wellbeing. So, this year we moved to provide outcome-focused services through the next phase of United Way of York Region funding. Our volunteers are inspirational in their giving and we asked ourselves, are we maximizing their potential? With the excitement of possibility that our volunteers offer us, we were able to expand the scope of training and outreach opportunities through funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Over the years, we have explored the option of providing a sustainable outreach office that would be accessible, central, and vibrant. This year, the vitality of our vision came to fruition through a partnership with Hospice Richmond Hill. Through a successful joint proposal submitted to Ontario Trillium Foundation, we will now be part of a sustainable "common roof" initiative that will create a relevant and exciting community centre in Richmond Hill. All our shared aspirations of offering joint programs, sharing resources and offering more than one service from a storefront location in the south of the region will now become a reality.

The stories are many and poignant as they point us towards our goals. There were many more triumphs this year, some personal journeys that will be shared with you by our youth at this year's AGM, and others which brought together the creative energies of volunteers and staff. At our AGM in 2008, we listened to Beth Jordan tell us about our changing regional statis-

tics. That in 1901, there were 25 ethnic groups in all of Canada. As of 2006, in York Region alone, there were 204 ethnic groups made up of residents who were born in Canada and those who were not. Our renewed website reflects the diversity and spirit of our agency and growing communities. I encourage you to visit our site and enjoy this participatory project that took many months of collaboration. From visioning, design to functionality and sharing one intense day of photography in what could be the most humid little studio space in this hemisphere, our volunteers walked "the walk" with us. Speaking of walks, the idea of change and growth was very much a part of our event planning discussions this year. The Walk to the Water in August was a 41km journey from Aurora to Lake Simcoe that put a face to HIV and the stigma it evokes in our region. The marathon walk was a remarkable new achievement by volunteers and staff of the agency who gave their best effort to demonstrate solidarity and commitment to serve those living with HIV/AIDS. Together, we are creating new stories rooted in the richness of our experiences.

Staying with the theme of change, you will see new and familiar faces of staff tirelessly extending services and volunteers who take action because they truly care about building inclusive neighborhoods. Our dreams would not grow without you! As we march forward with our strategic goals in hand, I thank the people who come to the agency everyday for teaching me to think anew and act anew. With deep respect and humility, I thank you all for the many gifts you have shared in my journey as a student of change.

- Radha Bhardwaj

*"One thing that never ceases to amaze me, along with the growth of vegetation from the earth ... is the growth of understanding." - Alice Walker*

## Board Chair's Report

This has been another exciting year for the Aids Committee of York Region. The Agency has grown tremendously in the past year, including a 39% growth in revenue, doubling of staff, and an increase in the number of volunteers and community partners. This growth has allowed the Agency to increase the programs it provides to the community, including for example the addition of specific services directed at children and youth.

In the fall of last year the ACYR undertook a strategic planning initiative in order to establish the strategic direction for the Agency for the next three years (2009 – 2012). The planning process included interviews with community stakeholders, ACYR service users, ACYR staff and ACYR Board members, as well as a review of relevant literature, socio-demographic analyses and review of practices of other AIDS Services Organizations (ASO's).

The review process showed that the ACYR services continue to meet the continuum of care needed for the York Region HIV/AIDS community for prevention and maintenance, and that as the community continues to grow so will the requirement for the ACYR to grow, to keep in step with the needs of the community.

In the end, the following four strategic directions were developed by the Board of Directors for the ACYR for the next three years:

**Organizational Development:** To invest in the development of systems, structures, and resources which will help guide the Agency and its work, as well as support staff and Board through their own development and growth.

**Fund Development:** To create and sustain strategic alliances, and build the capacity of the Agency to provide its programs while fulfilling the mission and values.

**Communication (Internal/External):** To develop a clear and comprehensive communication strategy which will facilitate the strategic directions.

**Education:** To enhance awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS, and position the Agency as a leader in HIV resources within York Region.

The Board and staff are already well on the way to fulfilling the requirements of the strategic plan. Improvement in communications can be seen by the revamping of our literature, and the launch of a new informative website which includes an interactive Nutrition for Wellness forum. Please take the time to visit our website at [www.acyr.org](http://www.acyr.org).

The year was filled with many activities including the Taste for Life dining event, Client Retreat, Central Opening Doors Conference, 41K Walk to the Water awareness-raising event, and many others. Through these events the Agency has been very successful in achieving tremendous media coverage which ultimately helps to broaden its reach and provide information to many in the community.

Following on the success of the receipt of United Way of York Region funding in 2008, which allowed the agency to expand the scope of services to children and youth impacted by HIV/AIDS through a Child and Youth Program, the Agency has been successful in securing Trillium funding in partnership with Hospice Richmond Hill for the creation of an outreach office in Richmond Hill. This is a tremendous achievement for the Agency as the outreach office will provide the much needed space that is required as the Agency continues to grow. We look forward to the official opening of these offices which will allow the Agency to reach out to many more and to different areas of York Region.

As always, the staff of the ACYR has worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide the much needed services for community users. They have worked many long hours always mindful of the fact that we are here for the benefit of the individuals we serve in the community. In addition, an organization like this could not be possible without the many volunteers who spend many hours lending a helping hand. The hard work of the staff and volunteers has ensured the success of all ACYR initiatives. Of note as well is the support and assistance the ACYR receives from community partners with whom we work closely to ensure we provide a wide range of support and services to our users. I would like to thank all staff, volunteers and community partners for making 2009 a year of many successes for the ACYR and hope that we have provided our user community with the best of services and support they require.

I look forward to the coming year working with Board members old and new and getting to know staff and community partners better. I will strive to do my best to ensure that the work we do reflects the Vision and Mission of the agency to serve those in need of our support.

Respectfully,

Glenor Pitters  
Board Chair

## Treasurer's Report

The ACYR continues to successfully provide support, service and expertise in the areas of HIV/AIDS. The agency has had many changes and challenges in the past year and has remained focused on the mission of providing support and offering education which promotes the development of a caring and compassionate society, as well as access to dignified care for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.

Revenues have grown significantly this year. For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2009 ACYR has increased its revenue over the previous year by 39%. The increase in revenues helped to fund programs such as Child and Youth, Drive to Care, Winter Needs and the Client Retreat. Additional funding has been secured through grants and other sources such as the agency's Taste for Life fund raising event which was once again a great success.

The agency will continue to seek new forms of funding in order to expand services to clients in order to fulfill its mission. The agency is determined to fulfill this goal and not lessen efforts in this time of economic uncertainty. The agency has been successful in

securing funding from the United Way and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). This funding will expand the services of the agency. The Board of Directors completed a new strategic plan. Through the assistance of an external consultant, the board reviewed priorities and goals and made adjustments in order for the agency to remain relevant in the community and to its clients.

I would like to thank all of the members of the board, employees and volunteers for putting forth such an outstanding effort. Everyone is so willing to give their time to assist in any way they can. What an amazing organization. I am looking forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year.

We look forward once again to fulfilling our mandate to work with and on behalf of those living with and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Thank you,

Mary Raso  
Treasurer



## STAFF TEAM 2009

**Haran Vijayanathan**  
*Program Manager for Support Services*

**Jacqui Locke**  
*Coordinator of Events & Volunteer Services*

**Mollie Coles-Tonn**  
*Volunteer Outreach Worker*

**Emily Dolan**  
*Child & Youth Program Coordinator*

**Mark Kovats**  
*Finance*

**Radha Bhardwaj**  
*Executive Director*

ACYR gratefully acknowledges the support of:

Public Health Agency of Canada  
AIDS Community Action Program



**United Way**



**Ontario**

Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care

**THE ONTARIO  
TRILLIUM  
FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION  
TRILLIUM  
DE L'ONTARIO**