



ACYR presents...

2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Annual Report

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

September 21st 2010



AIDS COMMITTEE OF YORK REGION
2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 21st, 2010

Program

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| 6:00 PM – ongoing: | Welcome & Dinner |
| 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM: | Annual General Meeting |
| 7:00 PM – 7:20 PM: | Panel: Positive Reflections |
| 7:30 PM – 8:00 PM: | Presentation by Angela Robertson
<i>Addressing Changing Trends in Serving
HIV+ Populations</i> |
| 8:00 PM – 8:30 PM: | Awards and Closure |

Executive Director's Report

The AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR) has consistently remained innovative in order to meet the changing trends and this has been a hallmark of our continued success. Over the years, this organization has learned to foster new approaches through times of fluctuations and uncertainty, and this culture of creativity and looking afresh at the way we work shone through this year. Allow me to share some of our ground-breaking achievements this year.

In Ontario, there is an increase of new HIV cases among women. About 15% of the total numbers of Ontarians diagnosed with HIV are female. The Ontario Working Group on Women and HIV/AIDS was established by the AIDS Bureau of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the findings of the group link HIV to social determinants of health, including gender, race-ethnicity, mental health, and poverty. Closer to home in York Region, we continue to listen to and respond to the voices of those we serve. The ACYR is fast becoming an access point for women's HIV prevention messages, as a growing number of women have started to access our services. 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, the number of lone parent families grew by 37%, and 12% of children live in lone parent families, a majority led by women. These trends, both provincially and locally, have inspired the Women and HIV program at ACYR, funded by the AIDS Bureau. Using a participatory approach to prevention and with the rich tapestry of lived experience to share, we are proud to have completed a documentary and training modules that will help us build the capacity of local organizations. The documentary is a true collaborative and a testament to the strength of women in the community who have personal experience of HIV/AIDS and service providers who are engaged in promoting women's rights. The Women and HIV program is now an important part of the portfolio

of services we offer and is promoting the integration of HIV/AIDS into the policies of organizations serving women and their families.

Last year, I spoke to you about providing accessible services through the establishment of a unique "common roof" model of service in Richmond Hill through a successful collaborative grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation. Over the past year, the Community Support Centre has become home to five service organizations under one roof. We are happy to share that the centre has become a creative hub of shared services to benefit all the communities we serve. Our shared aspirations of offering more than one service from a storefront location in the south of the region have now become a reality. With the vibrant, sustainable potential of this partnership, the ACYR is able to meet the growth in demand from municipalities south of the region, including Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan.

The ACYR has also been actively expanding outreach in order to engage new communities and enhance awareness of issues relating to HIV/AIDS. Given the chronic lack of affordable housing stock in York Region and hearing the urgent voices of those we serve, we hosted a successful forum on World AIDS Day called "Speaking Out: Health, Housing, Stigma, and HIV/AIDS" to advocate for systemic solutions that garnered both print and television media attention. Also, we showcased our message to a broad audience through the artistic use of film. Our documentary *In My Shoes* was in the spotlight this year as it received the second place award for best documentary at the York Region Multimedia Film Festival. *In My Shoes* is a documentary that discusses HIV and Stigma in York Region. With five successful screening events that were hosted between the Town of Markham and Georgina and also, through the use of virtual technology, students from Unionville to Sutton were able to hold courageous and crucial (*continued on page 4*)

Executive Director's Report (Continued)

(continued from page 3) conversations about emerging issues right in their neighbourhoods. In order to build on this dialogue in communities, we now have translated brochures in several key languages and developed workshops that specifically address stigma. Given that the Regional Municipality of York reports that as of 2006, there were 204 ethnic groups made up of residents who were born in Canada and those who were not, the ACYR continues to use multi-pronged approaches to ensure that we are **the** community resource for HIV/AIDS.

Using our collective imagination and building on information from new connections, our annual Taste for Life fundraising event reached a best-ever goal of \$20,000. A delightful evening of music called "Solstice" that brought together school choirs, musicians, volunteers and the Aurora United Church, further spread the message that we are all connected in the pursuit of social justice. The most difficult economic conditions led to an invigorated approach with the support of our incredible volunteers. With over 500 participants, this renewal of support from our community partners for the work of our agency will continue to give voice to those who remain silenced. Programs such as our Drive-to-Care program, Compassion Fund program and Wellness Retreats for service users are entirely funded by our fundraising efforts. Our volunteers continue to plant the seeds of original thought and together we create ongoing circles of exchange.

Staying with the theme of innovation, I would like to thank the staff for their relentless efforts in bringing about positive change and building inclusive neighborhoods. With deep respect and humility, I thank you all for teaching me to embrace new ideas with courage and patience.

- Radha Bhardwaj



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
- Women and HIV Program
- 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



Board Chair's Report

Once again the AIDS Committee of York Region has had a tremendously successful year and has undergone significant growth, allowing it to increase its services and better meet the growing needs of the community. This year, the Agency experienced a 28% growth in revenue.

This revenue growth was achieved from increased government and United Way funding as well as from the tremendous success of fund raising activities.

In 2009 the Board introduced its Strategic Plan for the Agency for 2009- 2012. In this first year of implementation of the plan, the Agency has seen a number of successes. These include:

Organizational Development: The Agency continues to improve its training for staff to ensure that they are equipped with the skills necessary to support the community. In addition the development of revised Bylaws developed to more appropriately reflect the needs of the organization now and in the future, will strengthen the organizational structure.

Fund Development: Although the organization depends heavily on government funding to provide programs to the community, the Agency could not be successful in meeting the needs of the community without engaging in fund raising activities. Once again this year corporate sponsors and personal supporters helped the organization exceed its fundraising goals.

A Taste for Life 2010 was a great success with seven participating restaurants and more than 300 guests. This was a remarkable achievement and many thanks go to the Fundraising Committee for ensuring the success of this initiative.

Communication: Improvement in communications can be seen by the revamping of brochures, literature, and the launch of a new website which took place early in 2009. In addition, the Agency has enhanced its technology in order to improve its ability to keep track of its hundreds of volunteers, corporate and individual supporters who are vital to the success of the Agency.

Education: Numerous events held throughout the past year have resulted in enhanced awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS, and have helped position the Agency as a leader in HIV resources within York Region. Particular mention must be made of the Agency's doc-

umentary "IN MY SHOES" which was the recipient of the 2nd place award for Best Documentary in the Film Festival held in York Region this year. During that event five successful screening events were hosted between the Town of Markham and Georgina. Markham Mayor Frank Scarpiti presented the award for the documentary which has been viewed across the region by hundreds of community members of all ages.

In addition to the abovementioned activities the year was filled with many other tremendously successful events. The evening Solstice on November 13th saw almost 200 in attendance, with 30 hard working volunteers ensuring that we all enjoyed an evening of beautiful music and friendship. Other events included Part 1 of the annual Client Retreat, the Annual Open Doors Conference, media coverage on Rogers Cable and print media coverage of ACYR events throughout the year.

The most significant achievement this year in broadening the reach of the Agency to support all clients across York Region was the official opening of the outreach office in Richmond Hill. The Community Support Centre is a partnership of five local community support agencies operating under a common roof. As ACYR staff split their time between the Newmarket and Richmond Hill office, the Agency is able to better support a growing community of clients in York Region.

As always, the staff of the ACYR has worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide the much needed services for community users. In addition, an organization like this could not be possible without the many volunteers who spend countless 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.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to thank all staff, volunteers and community partners for making 2010 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 deserve.

Respectfully,

Glenor Pitters
Board Chair

Treasurer's Report

This past year ACYR has continued to improve the quality of life in York Region by raising awareness through community education and by providing support and access to dignified care for people living and affected by HIV/AIDS. The agency's mission is to embrace the GIPA principles, provide support and offer 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. The agency is committed to fulfilling its mission and goals.

The agency continues to grow and evolve. In the process it has been better able to serve its clients. The agency now has office space in Richmond Hill which is a more central location and clients are better able to access available programs. The agency has expanded some of its existing programs and has rolled out some new programs. This was made possible through the increase in grants the agency has received during the year.

Revenues have grown significantly this fiscal year. For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010 ACYR has increased its revenue over the previous year by 27%. The increase in revenues helped to fund programs such as Drive to Care, the Client Retreat, Awareness program and the Compassion Fund. As in previous years, funding has been secured through grants and other sources such as the agency's Taste for Life event. The Taste for

Life event was once again a great success thanks to the efforts put forth by the ACYR staff and volunteers.

The agency continues to seek new forms of funding in order to expand services to clients that will aid in fulfilling its mission. 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 agency is still committed to the goals and priorities set out in its strategic plan. The focus of the strategic plan is to fulfill the needs of ACYR clients and its community.

As this is my last term as Treasurer, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the board, employees and volunteers for their commitment to this agency. You are an unbelievable group of people who are incredibly committed to ACYR. This has been an amazing experience and I wish you all the best in fulfilling the agency's mandate.

Thank you,

Mary Raso, CGA

Treasurer



STAFF TEAM 2010

Haran Vijayanathan
Program Manager for Support Services

Jacqui Locke
Coordinator of Events & Volunteer Services

Danielle Stein
Volunteer Outreach Worker

Camille Griffith
Women's Health Promotion and Community Development Coordinator

Emily Dolan
Child & Youth Program Coordinator

Mark Kovats
Finance

Birgit Damstra
Bookkeeper

Radha Bhardwaj
Executive Director

ACYR gratefully acknowledges the support of:

Public Health Agency of Canada
AIDS Community Action Program



United Way
York Region
Member Agency



Ontario

Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care

**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
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**LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
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