



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



# ANNUAL REPORT



## ACYR MISSION

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).

## ACYR VISION

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.

## ACYR VALUES AND BELIEFS

- We value and believe in the greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS at all levels of the organization
- We value the practice of anti-oppression and anti-racism in our provision of equitable service to diverse communities affected by HIV/AIDS
- We value and respect people and believe in their ability to succeed
- We believe in a holistic approach to wellness that encompasses physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects characterized by respect for human dignity and diversity
- We believe in the encouragement of self empowerment by enhancing an individual's ability and opportunity to make informed choices
- We believe in an individual's right to information, access to service, and education
- We value the confidentiality of all people living with, or impacted by, HIV/AIDS who use our services
- We value collaboration of individuals, families, communities and agencies in support of those affected by HIV/AIDS
- We believe that Harm Reduction and Risk Reduction approaches are legitimate strategies and choices for support of individuals and families



# Snap Shot

There are more than **65,000** Canadians who are HIV positive.

Ontario has more than 26,000 people living with HIV/AIDS and has experienced the greatest number of HIV infections.

According to research commissioned by the Public Health Agency of Canada and conducted by Ekos Research Associates Inc., "72% of Canadians indicated that they are supportive of the Government of Canada being involved in HIV/AIDS in Canada."

As per the Regional Municipality of York Region, we have the fastest growing Census Division in Ontario with an estimated population of over 1 million, and the number of families increased by 23% from Census 2001 to 2006. According to a June 2009 report by Dr. Robert Remis (Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto), York Region has the 3rd highest number of HIV diagnoses and rate in the GTA, next to Toronto and Peel regions.

The **AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR)** is the only AIDS Service Organization in the region and we continue to see a growing number of people impacted by HIV/AIDS in our community.

We know  
that HIV/AIDS is  
an important issue  
for all  
Canadians!

## Here are some key concerns in our region:

- Under-resourced to address the scope of concerns of those impacted by HIV
- Poverty and increasing need for financial assistance to support basic needs
- Lack of accessible housing for those living with HIV
- Specialized medical care relevant to chronic disease management remains a critical issue
- Stigma & discrimination continue to prevent people from effectively managing the disease
- Growing need for HIV prevention and education/support in our region

## Some highlights of ACYR's accomplishments this year:

- Stepped up our fundraising initiatives through A Taste For Life and also A Walk N' Roll To The Water to meet the growing need for key programs and services.
- Enhanced infrastructure by developing tools such as a communications training resource, and by producing educational materials, including a documentary on women and HIV and a men's resource. Thus, expanding prevention efforts and ensuring a strong knowledge base of HIV/AIDS in our region.
- POSITIVITY, our documentary about women's lived experience of HIV was showcased across five municipalities through the York Region Multimedia Film Festival, and won 2nd place award for best documentary. Thus, shattering the myths that lead to stigma.
- Investing in building key community partnerships to advocate on behalf of our service users in a variety of forums to ensure that the medical, social, housing and economic needs of our community remain visible and prominent in our region.

## REPORT FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is an honour to be a part of the AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR) and share our accomplishments with you. This year, the ACYR has experienced significant growth and achievement in our mission to provide hallmark service to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. With offices in both Newmarket and Richmond Hill, we continue to remain innovative as we foster stronger partnerships to promote awareness about HIV in our region, and build community resilience to maintain a high level of social service in York Region.

Ontario continues to have the highest number of positive HIV test reports in Canada. Ontario has more than 26,490 people living with HIV/AIDS and has experienced the greatest number of HIV infections and AIDS related deaths since the start of the epidemic. Also, it is important to note that an estimated 67% of people living with HIV and AIDS in Ontario know their HIV status. That means that 33% of people who have HIV do not know that they are infected. Closer to home in York Region, the ACYR continues to advocate on behalf of people living with HIV and provide innovative programs that bring those affected by HIV/AIDS in from the margins, so that individuals can reclaim their role as valued members of our community. With unwavering support from our funders, sponsors, donors, and volunteers, we deliver a unique platform of relevant services to diverse populations that promote wellbeing, address stigma and isolation, and provide educational support across sectors to prevent the spread of HIV. As the only AIDS Service Organization in York Region, we work hard to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The ACYR has continued to build internal infrastructure this year to support the array of services we offer. Some of the highlights include a visioning day to develop key messages to enhance the way we liaise with the public and our supporters. Through this visioning process and the collaborative efforts of volunteers, service users, and staff, we have developed a communication training tool to facilitate the agency's strategic goals. This resource will greatly enhance our ability to build staff and volunteer capacity, ensure stronger communication with key partners, as well as develop a model of best practice that can be shared with other service organizations. In addition, with the development and implementation of revised Bylaws and formalizing a Fundraising Committee, we continue to strengthen the organizational structure.

We greatly expanded outreach efforts this year to ensure enhanced community engagement. The Women and HIV Program was established last year, and through this initiative, we developed a documentary called POSITIVITY that features women's lived experience of HIV in York Region. The documentary was showcased across five municipalities through the York Region Multimedia Film Festival, and won the second place award for best documentary in the professional category. The ACYR hosted several successful educational sessions this year and participated in diverse



community events, including a World AIDS Day community forum for service providers to provide much-needed education about women and HIV, an interactive “live” video-conferencing session in partnership with three York Region District School Board high schools and York University, a one-hour Rogers Television program, several media appearances to promote HIV awareness, targeted community event outreach, an annual Central Opening Doors Conference, outreach in schools and post-secondary institutions through the Ambassador Program, and active involvement in growing the PRIDE York Region events. These expanded prevention efforts ensure a strong knowledge base of HIV/AIDS in York Region.



While we rely on government funding to provide relevant programs, fund development and organizational stability are key priorities for the organization. As such, we could not be successful in meeting the needs of the community we serve without engaging in fund raising activities. This year, we stepped up our fundraising initiatives through A Taste For Life (our signature dining event in April 2011) and A Walk N' Roll To The Water (a marathon 42km test of endurance starting from Aurora and ending at Lake Simcoe). With the support of corporate sponsors and individual donors, we are proud to report that we have exceeded our fundraising goals.



Programs such as our Drive-to-Care Program, Compassion Fund Program, and Wellness Retreats for service users are entirely funded by our creative fundraising efforts.

Collaboration, team work, innovation, and community are words you will often hear in human service delivery, and here at the ACYR we live it! We would like to honour the dedication of the Board, volunteers, and staff for all their immense contributions this year. We acknowledge our community partners for their immeasurable support.

With deep respect and humility,

*Marnie Sigmar, Board Chair*  
*Radha Bhardwaj, Executive Director*





## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### Direct Services

#### Client Support Services Program

This program is a crucial component within the range of services we offer at the ACYR and improves the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS. The ACYR provides individual case coordination, referrals to community resources including housing help and legal support, encourages participation from people living with HIV, provides educational resources, and peer support programs. The Support Services Coordinator and the Program Manager for Support Services continue to be guided by the needs of our service users in order to facilitate the programs listed below:

- **Drive-to-Care:** This is a key program that provides free door-to-door transportation to medical treatment and care appointments. Entirely funded through our fundraising efforts, this program alleviates geographic isolation and eases the financial burden faced by individuals trying to access much-needed supports.
- **Compassion Fund:** Provides emergency financial assistance to clients and basic needs support to those at-risk of homelessness. This program is funded entirely through our fundraising efforts and eligibility is based on the priority needs of our service users.
- **Practical Support:** Includes accompaniment to appointments, home visits, bus tickets, nutritional supplements, and food vouchers.
- **Monthly Support Groups & Children's Activities:** These meetings provide health promotion, peer support, educational workshops, and capacity building activities to meaningfully engage the community we serve. Special activities for children and youth, including picnics, farm visits, and nutritional workshops are offered to reduce isolation and promote health.



- **Annual Client Retreat:** A wellness retreat offered to our service users. This popular event provides opportunities for peer mentorship, enhanced support networks, building resilience, educational support, volunteerism, and promotion of wellbeing. This program is funded entirely through our fundraising efforts.
- **Holiday Sponsorship Program:** The ACYR supports families in poverty who struggle to sustain their lives. These challenges become even more apparent during the holidays. This program matches wish lists from children, families, and individuals with donor(s) from the community. There are wish lists targeting every budget and the donor(s) choose items that suit their pocket book.
- **Nutrition For Wellness:** Nutritional workshops and periodic newsletters that promote healthy eating.
- **Positive Space:** A zine/creative forum created by people living with and impacted by HIV to express their thoughts, feelings, and talent with the greater community.



(left to right) Presentation at Aurora United Church, Staff retreat and training, Aurora Street Fair ACYR Booth, York Pride Picnic flag raising with Chief Jolliffe of the York Regional Police



## Education and Outreach

The ACYR promotes health and provides targeted HIV prevention education in York Region. The aim of these services is to prevent the spread of HIV, reduce the risk of HIV re-infection, increase knowledge, self-esteem, and negotiation skills. Also, to recruit and work with volunteers, our community, and key partners to create relevant HIV prevention programs and effective solutions for service providers.

To help break the silence surrounding HIV and sexual health in our region, we offer workshops for varying age groups and diverse audiences. We use our award winning documentary: *IN MY SHOES* to discuss the impact of stigma and isolation on the lives of those living with HIV. The Volunteer Outreach Coordinator has collaborated with the community to coordinate events including a health fair, community events outreach, coffee night drop-in, condom stuffing parties with volunteers, ribbon-making get-togethers with volunteers, and offers several engaging workshops and forums in collaboration with people living with HIV including:

- **HIV 101 Workshop**
- **Stigma & HIV Workshop**
- **Ambassador Program** promoting youth engagement and leadership in high schools and post-secondary institutions, specifically relating to building knowledge relating to HIV/AIDS, sexual health, and HIV prevention.
- **Central Opening Doors Conference** jointly organized with the Peel HIV/AIDS Network and the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County.



## Volunteer Program

This program aims to enhance the skills of volunteers at all levels of the organization in a comprehensive manner and expand community awareness of HIV infection through a broad-based prevention program. The goal is to build a sustainable organization by providing ongoing education to community members engaged with the organization in identified areas such as fundraising, marketing of programs and to promote environments where individuals can seek information to prevent the spread of HIV. The Coordinator of Volunteer Programs is responsible for volunteer support, including recruitment, screening, orientation, training, retention, and evaluation. Volunteers at the ACYR provide essential support in various areas, including client support services, outreach and education, special events, and administration. This year, a student placement recruited from Seneca College provided valuable support to staff.

Training manual and formalized guidelines have been developed to offer consistent support to volunteers. The volunteer program offers various training sessions including:

- **Volunteer Program Training**
- **Speakers' Bureau Training**
- **Special Events Training**

This year, with the support of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the ACYR has worked with service users, volunteers, and supporters of the organization, to develop a comprehensive communications training DVD and Guide to allow the organization to build the public speaking capacity of staff and volunteers. We look forward to implementing this tool to enrich and engage new and existing volunteers.



(left to right) Ribbon making party, Pride and Remembrance Run, Michelle at condom stuffing party, Precious Maseko gives volunteer appreciation gift to Glenor Pitters, Jacqui commending a volunteer at the Volunteer Appreciation, Danielle at a mall outreach event



### **Women and HIV Initiative**

Our Women and HIV program aims to reduce HIV transmission among women, enhance local community capacity to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and women, and support women and their HIV/AIDS prevention needs. The Women's Health Promotion and Community Development Coordinator has designed workshops that can be tailored to suit the needs of diverse service providers.

Through this initiative, a World AIDS Day Community Forum on Women and HIV was successfully held. With the support of the AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, we had the opportunity to produce an award winning documentary called *POSITIVITY* that showcases the lives of HIV positive women in York Region. A comprehensive training guide has also been developed to enhance community building initiatives. A half-day training session for service providers was held to promote the integration of HIV/AIDS into their current programs. This program is actively supporting staff at community organizations to build their knowledge and capacity to respond to women's HIV prevention needs, particularly within the Violence Against Women service sector.

Key events for promoting this program have included the Take Back The Night March, the International Women's Day event, and the York Region Multimedia Film Festival. The Women and HIV initiative also provides our sister agency in Simcoe County, the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County, with outreach support.



## Administration

The goal of the administrative structure at the ACYR facilitates the smooth delivery of programs and services, and ensures that the organization remains accountable to the broader community. Some highlights include:

- The emphasis on strengthening the valuable human resources at the agency through staff development opportunities and team building activities.
- The ACYR has successfully transitioned to a secure online OCASE client service management system to more effectively monitor trends in the region.
- The Policies and Procedures manual developed in 2010 is now being consistently implemented.
- This year, a revised orientation manual for staff and board volunteers was completed by the Administrative Support Staff.
- A modern IT system has been set up with a secure server and remote back-up to ensure the effective coordination of the two locations.
- Event planning and high level fund development decisions are effectively strategized with the establishment of the Fundraising Committee.
- Newsletters and flyers are also developed periodically to promote the services we offer to the broader community and ensure agency visibility.



(left to right) ACYR team at the York Region Multimedia Film Festival award ceremony, World AIDS Day Vigil volunteers, Walk N' Roll To The Water, ACYR Visioning Day

**Who has HIV?**

HIV IN YORK REGION?  
*Get educated.*

WE ARE ALL AFFECTED.

www.acyr.org

**AIDS COMMITTEE OF YORK REGION**

**The ACYR Mission**

The AIDS Committee of York Region is a community-based, non-profit organization, which adheres to the UNAIDS "principles, provides a caring and compassionate society, as well as a priority to support of care for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS."

**What We Do**

- Services for men, women and children impacted by HIV/AIDS
- Workplace and 9-5 Workers Bureau on HIV prevention
- Volunteer programs to build leadership and community support and education efforts
- Goals to create a sustainable response to local HIV/AIDS
- Build partnerships to enhance support networks

www.acyr.org

# Resources

**Women and HIV/AIDS**

**HIV/AIDS in York Region**

*How much do you know?*

**Youth and HIV/AIDS**

*How much do you know?*

**10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO ELIMINATE STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION**

your community

**Positivity**

**Stories of Women Living with HIV**

**User Guide**

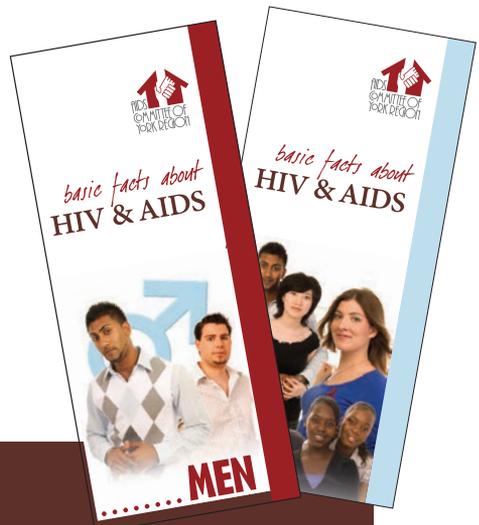
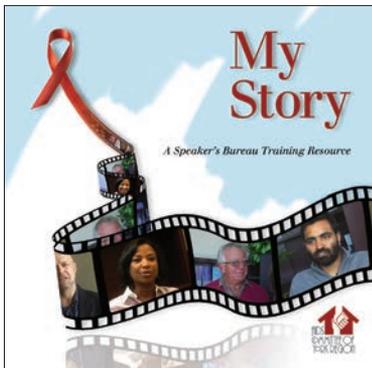


(left to right) ribbon making for World AIDS Day, Asian Community AIDS Services visits ACYR



## 2009-2012 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- **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 members 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 agency's strategic directions.
- **Education:** to enhance awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS, and position the agency as a leader in HIV/AIDS resources within York Region.



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the year ended March 31, 2011

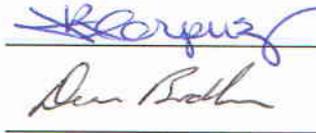
	2011	2010
	\$	\$
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash	78,604	81,429
Cash - restricted	4,846	11,715
Term deposits	57,391	57,105
Grants receivable	2,043	5,260
Prepaid expenses and sundry receivables	11,813	7,002
	<b>154,697</b>	<b>162,511</b>

## LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES

<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	37,071	39,357
Deferred contributions - (Note 5)	-	19,300
	<b>37,071</b>	58,657

<b>Fund Balances</b>		
General Fund	112,319	93,810
Restricted Program Fund	5,307	10,044
	<b>117,626</b>	103,854
	<b>154,697</b>	<b>162,511</b>

Approved on behalf of the Board:



Handwritten signature of Dan Bollen, appearing to be written in blue ink, positioned above a horizontal line.

# STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND FUND BALANCES

*For the year ended March 31, 2011*

	General	Restricted Program	2011 Total	2010 Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenues</b>				
Foundation grants	42,190	-	42,190	49,465
Government grants	401,674	-	401,674	289,029
Government grant - PHAC Hep C	26,425	-	26,425	27,100
Donations	4,846	-	4,846	7,935
Fundraising - Bingo, net revenues	-	18,265	18,265	20,414
Fundraising - Other	24,421	-	24,421	24,292
Interest income	1,336	-	1,336	792
	<b>500,892</b>	<b>18,265</b>	<b>519,157</b>	419,027
<b>Expenditures</b>				
<b>Program costs</b>				
Salaries and benefits	309,289	-	309,289	240,255
Ministry of Health one-time	15,400	-	15,400	-
PHAC program - ACYR	14,581	-	14,581	12,104
PHAC program - Hep C	25,877	-	25,877	26,725
Drive program	4,340	16,756	21,096	20,512
Winter needs program	6,616	-	6,616	-
Compassion fund	318	6,083	6,401	6,650
Awareness program	8,382	-	8,382	7,662
United way program	1,741	-	1,741	2,837
Client retreat	1,196	-	1,196	1,162
Travel	6,639	-	6,639	3,943
Resource development	18,269	-	18,269	12,223
	<b>412,648</b>	<b>22,839</b>	<b>435,487</b>	<b>334,073</b>
<b>Administrative</b>				
Office and general	23,547	163	23,710	20,709
Building occupancy	20,805	-	20,805	17,472
Technology enhancement	643	-	643	13,147
Professional fees	18,610	-	18,610	12,474
Staff training and development	2,583	-	2,583	1,984
Fundraising	3,547	-	3,547	4,372
	<b>69,735</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>69,898</b>	70,158
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses for the Year</b>	<b>18,509</b>	<b>(4,737)</b>	<b>13,772</b>	<b>14,796</b>
<b>Fund Balances - Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>93,810</b>	<b>10,044</b>	<b>103,854</b>	<b>89,058</b>
<b>Fund Balances - End of the Year</b>	<b>112,319</b>	<b>5,307</b>	<b>117,626</b>	<b>103,854</b>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dean Bodkin**  
Exiting Board Chair

**Marnie Sigmar**  
Interim Board Chair

**Denis Heng**  
Secretary

**Ruth Corpuz**  
Treasurer

**Glenor Pitters**  
Director

**Precious Maseko**  
Director

**Brent MacKinnon**  
Director

**Joanne Anderson**  
Director

**Devan Nambiar**  
Advisor

### ***ACYR acknowledges the support of:***

AIDS Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Health  
and Long Term Care

AIDS Community Action Program,  
Public Health Agency of Canada

United Way of York Region

The Ontario Trillium Foundation

Regional Municipality of York

ACYR acknowledges the support of all our  
corporate sponsors and individual donors.

Thank you!



[www.acyr.org](http://www.acyr.org)

## STAFF TEAM & SUPPORT

Lisa Di Pietro  
*Administrative Support*

Haran Vijayanathan  
*Program Manager for Support Services*

Jacqui Locke  
*Coordinator of Events and Volunteer Services*

Danielle Stein  
*Volunteer Outreach Worker*

Emily Dolan  
*Support Services Coordinator*

Camille Griffith  
*Women's Health Promotion & Community  
Development Coordinator*

Mark Kovats  
*Finance*

Birgit Damstra  
*Bookkeeper*

Michelle Talamo  
*Student Placement, Seneca College*

Radha Bhardwaj  
*Executive Director*

**Newmarket Head Office**  
The AIDS Committee of York Region  
194 Eagle St. East  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 1J6

**Richmond Hill Outreach Office**  
The AIDS Committee of York Region  
c/o The Community Support Centre  
10155 Yonge Street  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 1T5

**(905) 953-0248**  
**Toll Free 1-800-243-7717**

*All calls are completely confidential.*