



The Connection

The Newsletter of Regional HIV/AIDS Connection

Serving Perth, Huron, Lambton, Elgin, Middlesex, and Oxford Counties

February 2011

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Regional HIV/AIDS Connection Picks Up Where ACOL Left Off

Welcome to Regional HIV/AIDS Connection and our renamed newsletter "The Connection"! Starting 2011 with a new agency name and brand can present a significant challenge for an organization with a well-established identity. Will the community recognize who we are? Will our donors continue to support us? Will the people who need our services be able to find us? It will be our priority to ensure that all stakeholders understand, while change has occurred, we are the same skilled and caring people they have come to trust and respect. It is true that in most ways we are the same agency, however as you may know, the organization formerly known as ACOL has an expanded mandate both in terms of region and areas of focus. These are the primary reasons we changed our name - to serve our mission! Serving, Lambton, Elgin, Perth, Huron, Oxford, and Middlesex counties while addressing HIV/AIDS, and officially Hepatitis C, is our call to action as we move forward. Our commitment to continued excellence is appropriately reflected in our new mission statement:

"We are a community-inspired organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals and diverse communities living with, at-risk for or affected by the challenges associated with HIV/AIDS."

The language of our mission was carefully chosen and succinctly captures the reason we exist. "Community-inspired" is a powerful and precise statement which reflects the place from which our work originated and continues—our community. "Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life" speaks to the heart of our service delivery efforts through which the team of staff, volunteers and board members strive to ensure programs, services and organizational directions employ strategies that facilitate an "enhanced quality of life" for those we serve. "Individuals and diverse communities" reminds us that those living with, or at risk for HIV are not from one specific group within our society. It illustrates that vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C has more to do with issues associated with the social determinants of health and/or pre-existing fault lines. These

realities influence health risk factors and quality of life across the life span, generation to generation. "By the challenges associated with HIV/AIDS" speaks to the complexity of issues associated with the virus such as stigma, fear, ignorance, poverty, addiction, and mental health. It is because of these issues our mission is inspired by a community that understands our work is not yet done.



Regional HIV/AIDS Connection

Community Inspired. Courage Driven.

From my perspective, one of the most exciting elements of our new branding is what I refer to as our "power ribbon." Lashbrook

Marketing and Public Relations took the iconic AIDS ribbon, which has become a globally recognized image in the fight against HIV, and infused it with powerful language. The words that form the power ribbon were expressed by the staff, volunteers, clients, and community partners during the rebranding consultation process in 2009/10.

Social justice, kindness, voice, knowledge, hope, diversity, dignity, and human rights offer dynamic language which help to articulate the profound meaning and purpose driving the organization. I encourage you to take a moment to view the "power ribbon." You will find the words contained within truly reveal the values and passions of those attached to this organization.

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection! While the name has changed, we remain community inspired! I thank you for your continued support.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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Community Inspired. Courage Driven.

Reports from the Field

Greetings from the Six Counties!

Jennifer Gritke, HIV Regional Resource Coordinator



As the HIV Regional Resource Coordinator, I have been busy logging many kilometres, doing presentations, and meeting folks from Huron, Perth, Oxford, Elgin, Lambton, and Middlesex. Since my last update in August we have made great strides in our regional delivery.

Our anonymous HIV testing clinics held in Sarnia in August and Woodstock in September were a great success. We had strong support from our host locations, the West Lambton Community Health Centre and the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre, as well as media coverage. Regional HIV/AIDS Connection and the Options Clinic are excited to continue offering these clinics in other communities. Our next clinic is scheduled for February 24 from 2-4 p.m. in St. Thomas at the Central Community Health Centre. We are also hoping to run a clinic in Huron County in the spring and one in Stratford during the summer.

We continue to work to increase our visibility throughout the region. Six thousand households in Perth County received our agency brochure with their copies of the Stratford Beacon-Herald on September 17. This widespread distribution will help make people living in Perth County more familiar with our agency and services.

Our second World AIDS Day Vigil in Stratford was held November 30. This service was held at Community of Christ and featured local musicians, speakers, and a chance to remember, honour and celebrate those we have lost to and those still living with HIV/AIDS today. We had strong support from the community with the Mayor of Stratford, Dan Mathieson, attending as a special guest speaker.

We continue to conduct many presentations at social service agencies, community organizations and community networks. I really enjoy and value the opportunities to let people know about our agency, learn about the communities we serve and meet people from all areas of the region.

As Regional HIV/AIDS Connection makes the exciting transition with our new name and identity, I look forward to continuing to expand our regional presence in 2011!

We are pleased to announce Regional HIV/AIDS Connection is now better accessible to those who experience mobility challenges!

In 2010, we secured one-time funding through the Federal Government's Enabling Accessibility Fund to install a platform lift at the King Street entrance of the building. The lift accommodates standard and electric wheelchairs, walkers, etc. and includes a seat for people who do not use mobility devices, but who experience challenges climbing stairs due to poor knees or hips. This important development now ensures access to anyone who wishes to use our services.

Thanks to all who worked to bring this project to completion.



Sign the Call

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection has joined in the effort to develop guidelines to be used when approaching cases involving criminal charges related to non-disclosure of HIV status.

We believe that the use of criminal law in cases of HIV non-disclosure must be compatible with broader scientific, medical, public health, and community efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and to provide care treatment and support to people living with HIV. While criminal prosecutions may be warranted in some circumstances, we view the current expansive use of criminal law with concern.

We therefore call on Ontario's Attorney General to immediately undertake a process to develop guidelines for criminal prosecutors in cases involving allegations of non-disclosure of HIV status.

Guidelines are needed to ensure that HIV-related criminal complaints are handled in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. The guidelines must ensure that decisions to investigate and prosecute such cases are informed by a complete and accurate understanding of current medical and scientific research about HIV and take into account the social contexts of living with HIV.

We call on Ontario's Attorney General to ensure that people living with HIV, communities affected by HIV, legal, public health and scientific experts, health care providers, and AIDS service organizations are meaningfully involved in the process to develop such guidelines.

Learn more and sign the on-line petition at <http://www.ontarioaidsnetwork.on.ca/clhe>





OPENING DOORS CONFERENCE March 3 - 4, 2011



Featuring Keynote Speaker
Sue Johanson
Renowned Sex Educator

Thursday, March 3

- Welcome Dinner
- Surprise Activities
- Health and Wellness Evening

Friday, March 4

- Sue Johanson
- Ryan Peck, HALCO
- Concurrent Sessions
- Linda Robinson, HIV Pharmacist

Information and Registration:

Susan Casler, Conference Co-ordinator
swodconference@gmail.com • 519-971-8989

AIDS Committee of Windsor
www.aidswindsor.org • 519-973-0222

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection
www.hivaidconnection.ca • 519-434-1601

Huron County HIV/AIDS Network
www.hchan.ca • 519-482-1141

PHA News

Women's Support Group

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection provides a monthly support group for POZ women on the last Thursday of every month from 6–8 p.m. The group provides a safe, woman-friendly environment where women gather to share food, offer support and encouragement to each other.

This group has been evolving over the last year and interest continues to grow. The group caters to the many changing needs of the participants and to date we have enjoyed many incredible evenings together. Come out and join us!

For more information please contact Miriam or Bonnie at Regional HIV/AIDS Connection – 519-434-1601

Living My Life - PHA Women's Retreat

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection and the AIDS Committee of Windsor are hosting a women's retreat for women living with HIV/AIDS. The retreat will be held on March 2 and 3 at the Hilton Hotel in Windsor.

Contact Miriam at 1-866-920-1601

Camp Wendake Registration

Spring is in the air and the crew is hard at work preparing for another fantastic week on the shores of Lake Huron from August 29 – September 3. On May 1, registration forms will be available online for people living with HIV/AIDS. Be sure to register quickly as camp spots fill up fast.

*For more information, contact camp registrar Rob Newman from Regional HIV/AIDS Connection
519-434-1601 • 1-866-920-1601
rnewman@hivaidconnection.ca*

Client Lunch

The next Client Lunch with Brian Lester, Executive Director and Shannon Dougherty, Director of Client Services will be at 12:00 noon on Friday April 29.

Please join us on the second floor at R.H.A.C. (186 King St.) for lunch followed by some lively discussion. Come prepared to give us feedback about our programs and services. What works? What doesn't? New ideas are welcomed. We look forward to hearing from you!

Client Contact List

If you want to be on the client contact list, please let Rob know. We will be able to phone or email you to keep you updated about upcoming events you may want to attend.

rnewman@hivaidconnection.ca or 1-866-920-1601

PHA Café

PHA Café is a support group for people living with HIV/AIDS. Meetings happen the second Thursday of each month on the second floor at Regional HIV/AIDS Connection from 6-8:30 p.m.

Contact Richard at 1-866-920-1601 to R.S.V.P.

Commemorating our 25th Anniversary



Deb Matthews & Darlene



Brian Lester, ED



Pam Hill



Paul & Sue



Congratulatory
Plaques

Britney Queers



Dan



Rob at the podium



Yvette and Wayne of ABPO



George Performing
'Lean On Me'



A Lovely Two



Peter Hayes & David Feeny



Charlene & Sue



R.H.A.C.
Education Team



A Celebratory Toast



Remember, Honour, Celebrate Candles



Regional
HIV/AIDS
Connection
Community Inspired. Courage Driven.



Retrospective Display



Honourable Deb Matthews



Sharing Memories



Yvette Perreault



Kevin, Paul & Rob



Kevin Performing

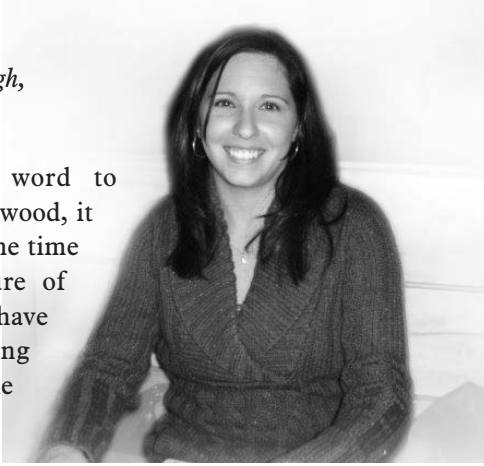


Margaret, Shannon & Gloria

Volunteers in Action

By Richard MacDonagh,
Case Manager

If there was one word to describe Krystle Heywood, it would be *heart*. In the time I've had the pleasure of knowing Krystle, I have witnessed her putting all of herself into the work she does to help others.



Krystle began her involvement with our agency several years ago. Wise and strong beyond her years, she spoke to her peers at the age of 14, educating them about issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, and putting a face to what may have only been an abstract concept to them before hearing her speak.

Since that time, Krystle has been a volunteer, fundraiser, support, and advocate for what is now the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection. Krystle and I shared time at the former AIDS Committee of London as placement students in the Support Department. Her warmth, care, and contagious laughter put people at ease and made them feel welcome to walk through our doors.

When in Krystle's presence it is evident she strongly believes we all deserve dignity, respect and a voice to share how we feel and who we truly are. Currently Krystle works with me as a facilitator for PHA Café. She is committed to creating a group where all feel welcome to be who they are with no apologies. She also is adamant that everyone is well fed with awesome food!

Through her connection with Dawghouse Pub & Eatery, where she has been a dedicated staff member for several years, she has worked tirelessly in coordinating fundraisers, including an incredibly successful event last year that raised hundreds of dollars for the programs of Client Services. This year, through her dogged determination, she has again raised a large sum that went toward our Client Valentine's Day Dinner, an event that without her help and promotion, would not have come together as it did.

Krystle is an amazing, humble volunteer who, if I may be so bold to say, avoids the spotlight. Through this article, I hope to help others see how much she shines and lights up our agency, and our clients' lives.

Thank you Krystle for all you do.

Public Education/ Volunteer Orientation Nights

Tuesdays in 2011 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on the second floor of R.H.A.C., 186 King St., London

**June 7
November 1**

Role specific volunteer training workshop will be held Saturday, March 26 & Saturday October 1 from 1-5 p.m. at R.H.A.C., 186 King St.

For more information, contact Natalie Hébert at nhebert@hivaidconnection.ca

Come be Appreciated by Us!

What: Volunteer Appreciation

When: Wednesday, June 1, 2011 from 5-7 p.m.

Where: London Music Club, 470 Colborne Street, London

Who: Anyone who has volunteered with Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (AIDS Committee of London) in the past year

RSVP to Natalie Hébert by Wednesday, May 18 at nhebert@hivaidconnection.ca or by calling 519-434-1601

Staff Announcements

Destini Millar is on placement two days per week for reception duties from November 4 – March 31. Her placement is subsidized through YOU.



Camp WENDAKE

A GALA EVENING

In support of Camp Wendake
Friday, March 18

Featuring...

A Talent Show & A New Musical Play Songs From The Bar

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

7:15 – 8:15 Talent Show

8:30 Feature Show

McManus Theatre @ The Grand Theatre

Tickets are \$40.00 per person

519-672-8800

2011 Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life in London NEW DATE and DAY!



WHEN: Saturday, September 17

WHERE: Springbank Gardens
(same place as last year)

Visit www.aidswalkforlife.ca

Options Anonymous HIV Testing Clinic

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection

On the first and third Monday of the month

Clinics run from 3-5 p.m.

(Should there be a fifth Monday in any month the clinic will also take place at R.H.A.C.)

Youth Action Centre

On the second and fourth Monday of the month

Clinics run from 3-5 p.m.

Central Spa

Mondays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and Thursdays 6-9 p.m.

University of Western Ontario

On the first and third Friday of the month
until March 2011, from 1-4 p.m.

Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Access Centre (SOAHAC)

On the first and third Wednesday of every month,
from 2-4 p.m.

For more information, or to set up an appointment call 519-673-4427



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R.H.A.C. Staff Listing:

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Elizabeth Lam, ext. 234 elam@hivaidsconnection.ca

Administrative Assistant

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Director of Counterpoint Harm Reduction Services

Sheila Coad, ext. 244 scoad@hivaidsconnection.ca

IDU Outreach Worker

Nick Scivo, ext. 238 nick@hivaidsconnection.ca

Hep C Educator

Sarah Wood, ext. 226 swood@hivaidsconnection.ca

Harm Reduction / Hepatitis C Peer Support Worker

Nicole Elliott, ext. 260 nelliott@hivaidsconnection.ca

Needle & Syringe Program Coordinator

Karen Burton, ext. 224 kburton@hivaidsconnection.ca

Director of Client Services

Shannon Dougherty, ext. 237 sdougherty@hivaidsconnection.ca

Case Manager

Miriam Rivera, ext. 235 mrivera@hivaidsconnection.ca

Case Manager

Richard MacDonagh, ext. 228 rmacdonagh@hivaidsconnection.ca

PHA Peer Advocate

Rob Newman, ext. 253 rnewman@hivaidsconnection.ca

Director of Education

Daniel Pugh, ext. 230 dpugh@hivaidsconnection.ca

Gay Men's HIV Prevention Worker

Kevin Murphy, ext. 250 kmurphy@hivaidsconnection.ca

MSM HIV Educator

Paul Sutton, ext. 258 psutton@hivaidsconnection.ca

Women's HIV/AIDS Community Development Coordinator

Bonnie Baynham, ext. 249 bbaynham@hivaidsconnection.ca

Multicultural HIV Prevention Coordinator

Mercy Nleya, ext. 222 mnleya@hivaidsconnection.ca

Director of Community Relations

Darlene Pratt, ext. 229 dpratt@hivaidsconnection.ca

Coordinator of Volunteer Services

Natalie Hébert, ext. 257 nhebert@hivaidsconnection.ca

Fund Development Coordinator

Michelle McKay, ext. 252 mmckay@hivaidsconnection.ca

HIV Regional Resource Coordinator

Jennifer Gritke, ext. 231 jgritke@hivaidsconnection.ca

Board of Directors

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Vice President, Eugene Dufour

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Stephen Barr

Sue Brooks

Ryan Campbell

Tendayi Gwaradzimba

Mana Khami

Tamara Landry

Graham Pollett

Save us the postage! Opt to receive **The Connection** by e-mail and you will save the agency close to \$3 per year. Please send your request to be removed or added to our mailing list to dpratt@hivaidsconnection.ca