

**Can you help us
fund 1,000 meals
for people living
with HIV in our
community?**

AVI's Hot Meal Program

Every day AVI's hot meal program in Victoria serves lunch to over 40 HIV positive people – often the only meal they will eat that day.

A hot meal is one of the most effective ways to provide practical support and address the poverty issues faced by many of our clients. The meal meets the specific nutritional needs faced by someone who is HIV positive, while bringing people together and supporting them in their commitment to better health.

Sadly, in 2007 AVI learned that the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) would no longer fund nutritional support for HIV positive people – a potentially lethal blow to the Hot Meal Program.

We need your help.

Every meal served at our hot meal program costs \$4.50. Please help us to fund 1,000 dinners for HIV positive people living in our community.

**Step up to the plate...
you can make a difference!**

How you can help:

1. Donate now!
2. Invite your friends and family to enjoy a meal and raise funds for the hot meal program.

Visit www.avi.org or call James at 384-2366 for more on how to host a meal or make a donation.



AVI Nanaimo Working to Meet the Needs of Clients

It's been another busy year in Nanaimo's Positive Wellness Program (PWP), with a slow, but steady, rise in the number of clients coming in for support with issues ranging from health concerns to mental health.

Clients are expressing a great need for assistance in the search to find and obtain safe, affordable, housing. Affordable housing in Nanaimo is very limited and most apartments and suites are priced out of reach for those on a severely limited income.

Because of this, PWP counsellors are now compiling and posting a weekly housing list in our drop-in and sharing it with other agencies such as the AVI Health Centre, Clearview Detox, Athena House and Nanaimo Citizen's Advocacy.



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AVI Nanaimo staff members build community relationships by providing education and prevention information sessions. Recent presentations have been made to the Royal Canadian Legion in Lantzville and the Knox United Church in Parksville.

We're now gearing up for the final three big events of the year. November 26 marks the beginning of AIDS Awareness Week and AVI will be hosting a World AIDS Day Community Open House on November 29. This year's client Holiday Party will be held on December 12.

AVI Receives Standing Ovation from Campbell River Rotary

This fall, AVI's Leanne Cunningham, and AVI volunteer Sari, made a presentation to the Rotary in Campbell River that had an astounding effect.



Leanne did a brief presentation on the work of AVI, and about the need for the community to identify and understand the problems. Sari, a former drug user and current AVI volunteer added to the presentation by standing up and telling the group her story – straight from the gut.

From an early age, Sari was caught in the triangle of drugs and abuse that left her homeless and unable to look after her children. After years of abuse and addiction, she met Leanne at AVI and is now on the way to recovery and getting her life back on track.

Tod Peachy, a Rotarian present at the talk, recognized its impact and wrote this message: "I was very pleased with your message and blown away at the courage of Sari to share her story with us. I have been a member of this club for over 8 years and we have seldom had such a moving presentation."

"I saw many people moved to wipe a tear away. Her story and bravery was very compelling. This is the first time I have seen our group so moved that we spontaneously gave a standing ovation."

Staff and volunteers from AIDS Vancouver Island do hundreds of presentations up and down the Island each year. From schools to community organizations, from the Rotary to the United way — AVI brings health promotion and harm reduction information to the community.

For more information on how to book a presentation, call Heidi Exner in Victoria (250) 384-2366, or visit www.avi.org for the number of your local AVI office.





Island's First Safer Body Modification Workshop



In October, AVI Port Hardy staff brought messages of safer tattooing and piercing and HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) prevention to over 30 people at an innovative new workshop.

The need for this workshop comes from the fact that there is a high incidence of HCV on the North Island, which can be transmitted through non-sterilized modification practices.

"The response from the community was solid," said Shane Thomas, AVI harm reduction worker and workshop organiser. There were many people aged 18-25, which was a key part of the target audience.

"Tattooing and piercing is something we wanted to address as risk activities because there are no regulated tattoo parlors north of Campbell River," said Thomas. "When youth, or anyone for that matter, does home tattooing or piercing, they are at risk of

contracting HIV or HCV."

The workshop was delivered in partnership with staff from Nexus Tattoo and Piercing, which operates in Port Hardy. Nexus staff provided education regarding a wide range of risks associated with home body modification, and AVI staff provided training specifically regarding risks regarding HIV and HCV.

Nexus staff also established a sterile and private studio on site, and participants who were 18 years and older were eligible to have one free piercing on site. In total, 10 people received piercings and the event was completed by 2 a.m.

Financial support for the event was provided by AVI, Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre, Gwasala-Nakwaxdaxw Family and Health Services, Quatsino Health Centre, KDC Northern Health Centre and VIHA Public Health, and in-kind support was provided by several community members and businesses.

Victoria's Alley Patrol Hits the Streets!

This fall, Victoria's Health Promotion and Community Development department will be taking our new Alley Patrol Project to the street!

This pilot project, funded by the **Vancouver Foundation**, seeks to meet people where they are at by combining peer education with a street outreach component.

Increasing rates of injection drug use, as well as high levels of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) infection among vulnerable populations make innovative projects designed to influence their health increasingly important. Peer outreach is an accepted best practice for working with populations vulnerable to HIV and HCV.

The project team members have been gathering regularly to prepare for the street phase of the project. They have chosen the name GEAR – Giving Everyone Access to Resources – and have received training in such things as safer using, community resources, and peer support ethics.

This unique foot patrol model will take harm reduc-

tion tools and information to the streets with a focus on locations where large numbers of people who use injection drugs are known to congregate.

The team will carry backpacks full of harm reduction tools, such as needles, crack pipes and other equipment to be given out with one-on-one harm reduction support, information and referrals to local resources that can enhance health and safety for those most at risk. They will also take used needles for disposal.

This pilot project will run until the end of March 2008 and the results will be shared with the community.



AVI health promotion workers Erin and Heather sporting GEAR sweatshirts.




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