

POSITIVE Okanagan

May, 2008

Volume 12

Issue 2

Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan

“Learn with me the lessons of history and grace, so my children will not be afraid to say the word AIDS when I am gone. Their children, and yours, may not need to whisper it at all.”

~Mary Fisher

“There comes a time in a man’s life when to get to where he has to go—if there are no doors and windows—he walks through a wall.”

~Bernard Malamud



Dine Out, Fight AIDS

The following restaurants put forth a great show of faith and support for the work that we do in our community ~ participants from Lake Country to Westbank included: **Agostino’s Italian Cuisine, Bohemian Café, Café Soleil, Chai Baba Tea House, d.j.’s Restaurant, Earls, Fixx Café & Pasta Bar, Freddy’s Brew Pub, Fresco Restaurant & Lounge, Mahdina’s Bistro, Memphis Blues BBQ, Minstrel Café, Old Vines Restaurant at Quail’s Gate Winery, Ricardo’s Mediterranean Restaurant, Rotten Grape, Samosas, Siam Orchid, The Keg, and Waterfront Wines.** Participants from Peachland to Penticton included: **Black Iron Grill, Bogners of Penticton, Fibonacci Roastery & Café, Gasthaus on the Lake, Sumac Ridge Estate Winery, and The Vanilla Pod.**

4th Annual DINING OUT FOR LIFE Raises over \$12,500!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and clients of Living Positive Resource Center, we would like to thank the community and, in particular, thank the local restaurants that supported our 4th Annual “Dining Out For Life” event. **Over \$12,500** was raised from restaurant and individual donations, which stays in our community for support programs and services for those individuals and families whose lives have been impacted by HIV and AIDS.

AND THE WINNER IS....!!

Congratulations to **Kathy Otter** of Kelowna, who is the winner of our Dining Out for Life draw. Kathy and a guest will enjoy a wonderful four day, three night long weekend at a luxurious private chalet at Lake Okanagan Resort, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Michael Clegg. Thanks to all who participated in Dining Out for Life!

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The generosity of these local business owners, particularly at a time when the hospitality industry is slow and revenues are scarce, is both commendable and gratifying, and **we truly hope that people will continue to support them throughout the year!** We also thank our wonderful **Ambassadors: Bev & Andy, Brooke, Buffy, Carmen & Jock, Daryle, Dyan, Gwen, Jean-Pierre, Karen, Kerri, Khati, Marjorie, Michele, Paula, Sally, Sharon & Michael, Sheila, Tracy & Duane, Val, Vern & Wuthipong** - these folks did an amazing job of representing Living Positive Resource Centre and the work we do, and their efforts resulted in an additional \$2,500 in individual donations! This year’s **sponsors were CHBC Television, Shaw TV, Sun FM, AM 1150, and Silk FM; and BC Restaurant & Food Services Association.**

PAN IS COMING TO TOWN!

By Chris MacKenzie

On June 1-2, 2008, the Pacific AIDS Network (PAN) is coming to Kelowna to meet with HIV-positive people from across the region.

PAN is a network of HIV/AIDS support agencies from across BC. Two meetings are held each year, one in Vancouver, and one outside the lower mainland. Meetings have been held in Kelowna, Victoria, Prince George, Kamloops and Cranbrook, but the biggest challenge is to engage more HIV-positive people to attend the HIV Forum at the bi-yearly meetings.

Each member agency is allowed to send two delegates, one of which must be HIV-positive. The meeting consists of 1.5 days of HIV-positive forum,

and 1.5 days of general assembly. In the HIV-positive forum all participants are positive and are there to speak as an individual, not for their member agency. The agenda is set by the room and controlled by a positive facilitator.

This year we are trying something a bit different. The spring meetings have been broken down to each individual health region. This year PAN will be bringing together HIV-positive people from the Interior Health Region (Kelowna, Kamloops, Nelson and Cranbrook) to discuss concerns and challenges as well look at solutions to these problems. There will also be a chance to meet with our support agencies so we all are on the same page to face the challenges identified.

So keep your eyes on the mail/email for more details on this upcoming meeting.



MEET ZIGGY

Hi, my name is Ms. Ziggy Stardust. When I'm not working at LPRC I live at Penny's house. I'm very mellow and like lots of treats and pats. If you come in to visit us here, I will try to make you feel comfortable and loved.

Most of the time I just lie around. My paws are not as nimble as they once were, so no one thinks to give me any computer work—which I don't mind, really. I much prefer having people just adore me and say nice things about me. (I wonder if they think I'm the boss and they have to be nice to me? Oh well, it works for me.)

The next time you come over you can bring me something good to eat. I especially like dog treats... and tequila.



Ms. Ziggy Stardust

A MESSAGE FROM JAMES

Let's talk about discrimination. It's all around us. If you have a fear of discrimination, you have a major problem.

For the last nine years, I have been very open about my illness—in other words, I have used my status of living positive to my advantage, being constantly in the media and taking up my issues with all levels of government as an advocate for people living positive, to a point where I have gained respect from my community. In one instance in which I was discriminated against, I used the media as my weapon, and I prevailed—with a letter of apology, and the dismissal of the person that made the unwanted remarks.

If you fear reprisal from your family, or the community you reside in, you are the only one who will suffer to protect their integrity. I would rather be known as an HIV/AIDS person than an alcoholic or a drug addict, and believe me: there is not many of us. So if you feel you have too much baggage, "live with it".

It gets me very angry when HIV/AIDS is held to the policies of confidentiality. We would have a more powerful voice if we would all reveal ourselves and speak on our own behalves. If you feel that I may sound somewhat radical and offensive, I'm sorry, it's how I feel, and I will keep advocating until we all stand up for each other without society telling us that we should just go away and not be seen or heard. That is not my style.

So, in conclusion, my message to those who are suffering in isolation is: Stand up for yourselves and be counted!

Today I can truly say I am happy with myself. I have all the things I want: respect, dignity, and self-confidence. I don't like myself, but I love my attitude.

James Banko,
Advocate

"My only fear is God, everything else is a detail."

RICHARD'S RANT

Ultimately, a person travels their own path alone.

Why is this? Is it a means of survival? Safety? Maintaining our own space? Probably all of these.

Now add a disease with enough stigma to overshadow any other problem we have, and most people don't have enough left to give (everyone has their own Bag of Dirty Laundry)—maybe they don't know how to deal with you, may feel guilty by association?!

I bring this up after surviving one more winter—one more, according to my specialist, than I was supposed to. I was given five years in 2002.

I hibernate all winter, scared I'm going to catch something that will kill me. Having difficulty taking care of everyday tasks (if it involves leaving the apartment), I'm completely depressed all winter, I don't want contact with others. I'm also stressed.

Although I try to be as spiritual as possible, my fear of death has a way of taking over in the winter—even "God's will, not mine" doesn't cover it—So I pray for spring, 'cause then I know I have at least until all the flues and colds come rushing in in September or October. Approximately 7 months out of 12 are good ones.

I'm already making plans for fishing and camping, restocking on propane, hooks—I already have my fishing license, \$1.05 for the year!

The difference is night and day, as they say.

Not only do we not have support groups (which I now say can happen at my place at the end of April, I will speak to Daryle about ramifications), but neither do we have a dating service (maybe a separate paper, but winter/depression/hibernation do not help the loneliness of the situation).

So... (and in this case, not so much the paperwork and red tape) We need help!

For winter and beyond, we need a personals column, an honest one, one that says what we need and what we won't put up with, then we might not hibernate (at least, not on our own).

For ideas or help, if you are computer savvy and believe that maybe we aren't meant to be born alone and to die alone, call me. 250-869-4192.

For the summer—Beef up, Be active, Be happy, and I'll be thinking of you all when I see a ball thrown or a kayak paddling or someone just soaking up some rays. God Bless until winter, and let's see if we can do something about that.

HIVers BEWARE!

By Sheila Kerr

In the last issue of *Positive Okanagan* we included a warning about the drug Viracept (Nelfinavir) which, in addition to the usual flatulence, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fatigue, frequent urination, rash, mouth ulcers and hepatitis, has recently been shown to cause cancer in humans, and cancer and birth defects in animals.

Now we've got a few more drugs to add to the long list of medications that can save your life—if they don't kill you first.

Let's start with Abacavir (ABC), an NRTI that also goes by the trade name Ziagen, and is used in the combinations Trizivir and Kivexa/Epzicom. This drug is known to cause upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, tiredness, difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, muscle or joint pain, headache, pain, burning, or tingling in the hands or feet, swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs, pink eye, bruises in the mouth, redistribution or accumulation of body fat causing central obesity, facial arm, leg, and/or buttock wasting, breast enlargement, and fat accumulation at the base of the neck (buffalo hump), and severe allergic reactions that can lead to death. New research suggests that this drug may also increase your risk of heart attack by 90%.

Another drug for the list is Didanosine (ddI), another NRTI. This one is commonly referred to by the trade name Videx or Videx EC. Somebody taking this drug may experience diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, headache, rash, peripheral neuropathy, pancreatitis, retinal changes, optic neuritis, and alterations of liver functions. This drug has now also been found to significantly increase your risk of heart attack.

I can't help but become a little jaded when every step forward becomes two steps back. Vaccines that look promising do more harm than good, prevention methods that seem to be effective are losing government funding, microbicide trials fail miserably, and the medications we rely on to keep people healthy and alive cause people to become sick and die.

We need something different, and we need something that works—without ripping to shreds the quality of a person's life. I'm hearing some promising stuff about a new drug—KP-1461—that is currently undergoing phase II trials. I'm trying not to set myself up for another disappointment, I am attempting to take the wait-and-see approach, but I can't help but hold on to a glimmer of hope that will undoubtedly lead me to sit in a corner a year from now, pulling out my hair while I write yet another article detailing the latest battle lost in the war this virus has waged on us.

Living Positive Membership

For a small fee, you can support Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan by becoming a member. Membership entitles you to vote on issues that affect the agency, and the fee helps cover the cost of this newsletter. Please take the time to fill out this membership application and drop it off at our office or mail it to: **Living Positive, 101-266 Lawrence Ave,**

Kelowna, BC V1Y 6L3

Living Positive Membership Application

Members must agree to uphold the aims of the Society and maintain confidentiality.

(Please Print) Name: _____ E-mail address: _____

Mailing address: _____

Postal code: _____ Phone number: _____

(Check here ☐ to receive Positive Okanagan by e-mail only)

Fee: \$100 (lifetime); \$12 (individual); \$25 (organization); Free (client)

Make cheques payable to **Living Positive Resource Centre**



Sheila Kerr, Editor

This newsletter is the official publication of the Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan. It is published four to six times a year. The materials in this newsletter are meant to be consistent with LPRC purposes which are: a) to promote awareness of blood-borne pathogens, b) to develop and provide educational resources, c) to support those infected with or affected by blood-borne pathogens. Even so, the opinions and comments within this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect LPRC policy. The newsletter does not endorse the use of any particular treatment or therapy. The Board, staff and volunteers of LPRC do not accept the risk of, nor responsibility for any damages, costs or consequences of any kind which may arise or result from the use of information featured in this newsletter. Persons using the information provided through this newsletter do so by their own decision and hold the society's board, staff and volunteers harmless. Submissions for publication may be sent to our office at any time; publication deadline is three weeks prior to publication date. Submissions will be returned if a request is made in writing and an address is provided. Reprinting and distributing this newsletter is openly encouraged.

LPRC's Board of Directors

Josephine Stebbings
Wendy McNiven
Judy Goodsky
Marjorie Mitchell
Ron Turner
Beryl Itani
Tracy Hansen
Karen Medland
Wayne Pierce
Daryle Roberts, Executive Director

LPRC's office is located at:

**101—266 Lawrence Ave,
Kelowna BC V1Y 6L3**

Phone: (250) 862-AIDS (2437)

1-800-616-AIDS (2437)

Fax: (250) 868-8662

Website:

www.livingpositive.ca

A VANCOUVER ÉMIGRÉ REPORTS

By Kevin Saya-Moore

It is as though I have lived in two worlds. Vancouver had been my home for ten years and I loved it. I wouldn't have moved except for the death of my beloved Michael and the job offer in Kelowna. Kelowna, the second of my two worlds, is far different from my life in Vancouver.

There are medical services for those with run of mill ailments. Muggles do not live in the same magical world as I do with my needs for healthcare. My needs revolve around blood tests, HIV medications, and the concerns of sexually transmitted infections. Serious stuff balanced by my rich promiscuous fantasy life that permits me to have that gaze of longing and the flirtatious moment. My happy moments are fewer in Kelowna because the reputation and the reality of a professional medical circle willing to take on my realities to deliver my healthcare are minimal and even then, the sensitivity and awareness of how to do that care is lacking.

My new doctor's medical receptionist confidently told me I would have to call St. Paul's in Vancouver to get my requisition for meds filled. My request for an order for blood work was met with "I would have to wait for my appointment." After my initial reaction of just acquiescing and hanging up, I thought, this request is a standing order that I have had for a year or more in Vancouver. Didn't she understand my HIV meds are a necessity? It had been a long time since I had been treated as "the other". I felt as though obstacles were being placed in the way of getting what I knew I required to be healthy, and in reflection, I now view it as an opportunity to educate. My thoughts turned to how fortunate I was to live in Vancouver.

I didn't have to think about where I could go for social support and to exercise my playfully erotic side. Doctors, medical receptionists, optometrists and other professionals tuned in and were aware of what my healthcare required and gave me the space to vent with the clear understanding, if not empathy, of what it might mean to live with HIV/AIDS.

Peer support groups in Vancouver are available when needed, as opposed to Kelowna where the surrounding social culture appears to reduce the GLBTQ communities' ability or willingness to come out and be known. The predominance of churches belies a level of ignorance and judgment for those of us who dare to live outside acceptable labels of the status quo of the heterosexual reality. There is not the feeling of safety or support except in the circle with whom I work.

The radical conclusion of this piece and the intent was to let my community in Vancouver know that the life we share is far different when we move to another area of the province. We need the wider community to support those of us who have to live in other areas to be aware of how there is a disparity and the social advantages for GLBTQ are not the same across the province. The warning is the hard won rights of our community are not as easily discerned in the smaller communities when it comes to the delivery of public healthcare. I, for one, have come to a place both literally and figuratively where to turn the clock back on GLBTQ rights one only has to move to a smaller centre to find the mind-set of fifty years ago. Those of us living in a smaller community away from Vancouver know this all too well.

TOPHER TALKS — A Client's Viewpoint

I am not a big proponent of junk emails, but every once in a while there is one that passes my computer screen that is worth sharing.

Staying Young:

1. Try things you like more than once.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down (Keep this in mind if you are one of those grouches).
3. Keep learning: learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain get idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop", and the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long, and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots of time with HIM/HER.
6. Tears happen: Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. LIVE while you are alive.

7. Surround yourself with what you love: Whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: if it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next country, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell people you love them, at every opportunity.

These are all strong ideas that will help you keep your life on an even keel. These are all things that I have tried to keep in my life, I know it is not always easy and a few times we drop into comfort zones and put up with stuff we know we should not. BUT then again, if you take time for yourself, laugh with friends; keep your mind sharp and alert, you can slowly overcome most obstacles.

BUT when all else fails, remember to ask for help. Just don't expect someone to fix your problem; they can only help you help yourself.



Positive Okanagan would like to remind you that we encourage our readers to write in with their opinions, concerns, art, poetry, or ramblings. Please send all submissions to skerr@lprc.ca, or fax to 868-8662, attn: Sheila Kerr.



CLARE'S CORNER

Most of you will already know that housing in the Okanagan is at a premium. That is to say that rent throughout the valley has skyrocketed, and vacancy is close to zero in some areas. With summer just around the corner things are bound to get worse before they get better. That is why holding onto your current housing is crucial. Unfortunately, some landlords see the current housing crisis as a way to fill up their bank accounts, giving little regard to the welfare of their tenants. If you are unfortunate enough to receive an eviction notice or rental increase, or any other type of communication from your landlord make sure you know your rights before you sign anything!!

Regulations of the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) can be found online at www.rto.gov.bc.ca. If you do not have access to the internet, or just require some extra help be sure to contact an advocate who has some knowledge of the RTA. You can call LPRC anytime for this kind of information. Another valuable resource is the Okanagan Advocacy & Resource Society (OARS) (979-0201).

If you do not currently have stable housing, or will have to move in the near future here are a few tips to help you on your way:

Check the classifieds EVERY DAY. Use newspapers, websites, magazines, agency notice boards, anywhere you can think of.

Call right away. Rental units go quickly, especially good ones, so don't procrastinate.

Make sure you leave a clear, brief, but informative message for a potential landlord with a call back number where you can be reached.

Ask friends and neighbors if they know anyone looking for a tenant. Landlords like to rent to people who come with good references.

If you have pets, don't automatically disregard the ads that specify no pets. Get an appointment to view the place, don't mention your pets right away, and let your award winning personality come across to your potential landlord. Mentioning your pets at the end of a good interview could sway the landlord in your favor if they like everything else about you.

Don't be discouraged! You may find a place after making just a couple of calls, but it's more likely that you will make many, many calls before you find a suitable place. Remember that you're not the only one out there looking for affordable housing in a very tight market.



Clare Overton,
Client Advocate

To all of our Penticton clients, please note: Clare Overton, our Client Advocate, will be in Penticton every second Wednesday at the Penticton and District Community Resource Centre from 10am-1pm. You'll need to book your appointments through Clare at least 24hrs in advance, as she cannot accommodate drop-ins at this time.

CLIENTS' NOTICE BOARD



REIKI & HEALING TOUCH

Enjoy the relaxing and balancing benefits of a quiet hour with Toshie. Call 862-2437 to book your free Wednesday session.



CHIROPRACTIC CARE

Dr. Troy Tater D.C., BSc. of the Core Chiropractic offers free chiropractic care for LPRC clients out of his office at #102-1441 Ellis St., Kelowna, across from the library.

To book your appointment, call Chris or Karen (862-2437) for your referral.



HEPATITIS C SUPPORT GROUP

Self-help group focuses on issues which affect those living with chronic hepatitis as well as their friends and family members.

Contact Lisa at 1-866-637-5144 or ljmortell@cablelan.net



CLIENT ADVOCACY

Kelowna

To meet with a client advocate, call 862-2437.

South Okanagan & Similkameen: call 1-800-616-2437 to book an appointment.

Vernon & North Okanagan: Call Theresa McDonald of North Okanagan Youth & Family Services Society at 545-3572.

NATUROPATHIC HEALTH CARE



Dr. Janice Potter, a Naturopathic Physician, offers her services to our clients. Call Clare for referral.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE



Effective immediately, clients needing help with the following will be able to get assistance with these documents *free of charge*:

-Wills -Representation -Power of Attorney -Trusts

Please contact our Client Advocate, Clare Overton for a referral.

E-mail: overton@lprc.ca

MEET WENDY—OUR FEATURED BOARD MEMBER!

Wendy McNiven joined the board of LPRC in September, 2006 as a “member at large”, and has graduated to the position of Secretary. She finds this to be a Good Thing, because it means that she has to pay attention during board meetings so that she can take notes of what people have actually said. It seems that “inventing” the minutes of a meeting is frowned upon.

Wendy and her family have lived in Kelowna since 1995. She worked for the first 10 years as minister of the Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna. Since leaving that position, she works as an itinerant minister, travelling to Kamloops, Vancouver and Edmonton. Fortunately or unfortunately, the aforementioned LPRC board meetings usually fall between trips, so she doesn't miss too many. There is also enough time at home to be involved in the community in other ways: as an On-Call Chaplain at the hospital, as an occasional volunteer with Inn From the Cold, and the odd one-day voluntary event for other organizations.

In her spare time, she sings in a choir, practices an energy-based type of meditation and healing art, and plays outdoors as much as possible.



*Wendy McNiven,
Secretary, LPRC Board of Directors*

CONGRATULATIONS, DARYLE!



*(l-r) Honourable Steven Point, BC Lt. Governor,
Daryle Roberts, Premier Gordon Campbell*

LPRC Executive Director Daryle Roberts Receives BC Community Achievement Award

Well folks, we always knew he was an extraordinary individual, but now the rest of the province knows it as well!

On April 23rd, Daryle travelled to Government House in Victoria for the 3rd Annual BC Community Achievement Awards ceremony. He was recognized for his tireless and compassionate work for those whose lives have been impacted by HIV, AIDS and hepatitis, and all individuals in our community who live in marginalized circumstances. His vision and guidance have made Living Positive Resource Centre a recognized leader in our community and throughout the province, not only because of our knowledge of blood borne pathogens, but also our stance of how poverty, homelessness, social exclusion, and inequality negatively affect the social determinants of health and the overall wellbeing of our community.

Daryle was nominated by our Board Chair, Beryl Itani (a former BC Community Achievement Award winner), and was one of 45 recipients chosen from hundreds of nominees.

**WAY TO GO DARYLE –
WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU!**

STRANGE BUT TRUE...

Each month, www.thebody.com (the World Wide Web's complete HIV/AIDS Resource) compiles and publishes some of the strangest letters from concerned citizens. For your amusement, we have decided to share one of the most recent contributions, along with its response:

Q: Hi Dr. Bob, I was eating at a restaurant recently and a small piece of my food fell off of my plate and onto the table. I picked it up and ate it. Is there any chance that I could have contracted HIV in this way? If someone with HIV had recently bled on the table? There was no sign of blood on the table. I am sure this is not possible but I cannot find anything about this type of thing on the net. So I would very much appreciate if you could answer this for me, I am very worried. Thankyou

A: You can't find anything on the net that pertains to the HIV risk of a small piece of food falling off your plate and onto a table where there was no sign of blood, but you wonder "what if" someone with HIV had bled on that very spot (even though there is nothing visible now) and you picked up the tiny morsel of food and popped it into your mouth and ate it!!!! YIKES! And you really can't find anything on the World Wide Web specifically addressing this HIV risk???? Geeeee, I wonder why. Dr. Bob.

Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society Welcomes Program Assistant, Rhoda Hallgren

My name is Rhoda Hallgren, and I am pleased to announce that I am the new Program Assistant with the Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society. My family and I moved to Westbank in August of 2006 from Burns Lake, BC, and we are members of the Lake Babine Nation (we have since happily adjusted to the climate change). I am grateful to be given the opportunity to work with OAAS in partnership with the Living Positive Resource Centre to provide information and support services to those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and/or hepatitis B and C. I am also excited to be part of an organization that is able to offer preventative and informative services to the seven bands in the Okanagan. I look forward to getting to know the Okanagan region and learning from the many people that I meet along the way.

Thank you to all those who submitted design ideas in our logo contest that took place in December. It was a difficult choice, but we decided that the overall concept of the logo submitted by **Dreannon Smathers** was exactly what we were looking for to represent our organization – congratulations, Dreannon, on your winning design and on the \$500 bursary! The OAAS website is currently undergoing design changes, and we hope to launch our new and improved website, proudly displaying our new logo, in the next few weeks – happy browsing!

Since I began working with OAAS in February, 2008, I have learned a great deal about the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis B and C. As the lucky mother of 3 healthy, beautiful children that I absolutely adore, I am grateful for all the knowledge that I am now able to pass along to my children. It has been proven that when parents are open and willing to talk to their children about sexuality from an early age, their children are more likely to postpone sexual involvement until they are older. I believe that, in order for our people to thrive and stay healthy, it is important to educate our children about taking care of their sexual health and protecting themselves against devastating diseases like HIV/AIDS, and viral hepatitis.

Since access to sexual education has declined in schools due to the merging of health education with physical education and career planning, children tend to learn about sexuality from their peers. Unfortunately, when young people are learning about sexuality from peers, many myths and misconceptions are also being learned. Furthermore, when children learn about sex from peers, they tend to engage in sexual activities at a younger age, when many are not ready—and most times do not consider the repercussions of engaging in sexual activity.

As the mother of a 12-year old boy, I know that talking with your children about sex and the issues surrounding sexual activity can be uncomfortable; however, let it be known that once you've breached the issue it does become easier, and you can take comfort in knowing that your children can now make informed decisions about what is right for them and the consequences surrounding unsafe sex.

Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society Also Welcomes Practicum Student, Elaine McGilvery



Elaine with sons Sage (L) and Sundance (R)

Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society has taken on an Aboriginal practicum student who is in her 3rd year of Social Work studies at University of British Columbia Okanagan.

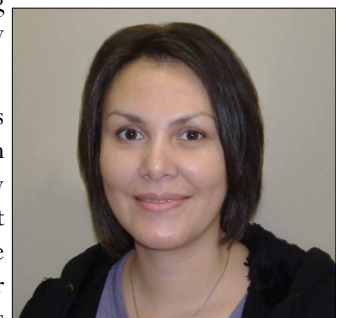
Elaine McGilvery is a Plains Cree female from Saddle Lake First Nation, Alberta. Elaine moved away from Edmonton and has lived in Westbank, BC for five years. Her interests include listening to music, reading, and going to garage sales. Elaine has two sons at home named Sundance and Sage.

Elaine decided to join OAAS as a practicum student because she wanted to learn more about HIV and hepatitis C so that she can help give back to Aboriginal communities by raising awareness about the viruses. She looks forward to working with the people at Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society and Living Positive Resource Centre.

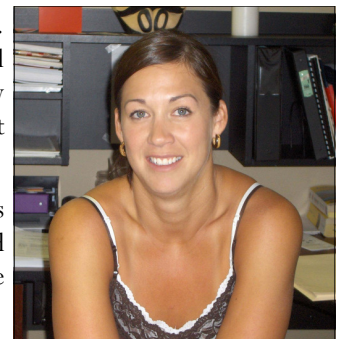


(250) 862-2481

www.aaas.ca



*Rhoda Hallgren,
OAAS Program Assistant*



*Buffy Mills
OAAS Program Coordinator*

EVENTS PAGE

"Never Give Up, Never Forget"

Join us as we participate in the largest grassroots AIDS event in the world!

Each year, Memorials take place in over 4,500 communities in more than 93 countries.

The International AIDS Candlelight Memorial has four main objectives:

- To honor the memory of those lost to AIDS
- To show support for those living with HIV and AIDS
- To raise community awareness and decrease stigma related to HIV and AIDS
- To mobilize community involvement in the fight against HIV and AIDS

The theme of this year's memorial is "Never Give Up, Never Forget". We are pleased to have **Denise Becker** as our Keynote Speaker for this event. Denise is the founder of the Hummingbird Kids Society in Vancouver (www.hummingbirdkids.com). The Society is a registered charity operated by volunteers whose mission is to provide a network of support for children living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, to assist them in improving their quality of life. Denise has appeared on Vicki Gabereau, Canada AM, and is a recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal. In 2007, she spoke in front of the congregation of Trinity Baptist Church as they launched their AIDS initiative to support work in Cameroon, West Africa and here in the Okanagan.



Join the Global Movement...
www.candlelightmemorial.org



Sunday, May 25th, 2008
7:30 PM
Benvoulin Heritage Church



Spring 2008 Regional Meeting

Interior Health Authority Region

YOUR PRIORITIES ❖ YOUR COMMUNITY ❖ YOUR REGIONAL MEETING

Regional HIV+ Forum: Monday June 2nd, 11:00am-4:30pm

Regional Meeting: Tuesday June 3rd, 9:30am-4:30pm

Coast Capri Hotel
1171 Harvey Avenue
Kelowna, BC

As with PAN's conferences, delegates are registered by PAN's member agencies. If you are a person living with HIV/AIDS who would like to attend, please contact an agency in your region. For the Okanagan, please contact Living Positive Resource Centre or Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society at 1-800-616-2437.

Registration confirmation must be received by PAN no later than May 22nd, so contact your local agency soon!

HELP LIVING POSITIVE WIN A WEBSITE MAKE-OVER!

Living Positive Resource Centre's website is in dire need of a makeover, but we do not wish to take funds away from the services we provide to the community - so we have entered a contest to receive a complete web makeover from Twin Creek Media.

The winner will be decided by public votes, so we ask that you go online to: <http://www.twincreekmedia.com/supremewebmakeover.php> and cast your vote for before May 15th! . Each computer can vote 5 times, so please use all of your votes for Living Positive Resource Centre.

Thank you for your support!