



Working together since 1983

Annual Report 2004 - 2005

AIDS Vancouver exists to alleviate individual and collective vulnerability to HIV and AIDS through care, support, education, advocacy and research.

From the Chair of the Board of Directors



Jamie Myrah, *Chair*

What an amazing year for AIDS Vancouver! For all the challenges we have faced, I strongly believe that the past year has been one of AIDS Vancouver's most exciting. Both our client-services and prevention programs have continued to evolve in innovative and exhilarating ways, positioning AIDS Vancouver as a leader in many areas within the HIV/AIDS community, including case management, gay men's health promotion, harm reduction, and volunteerism.

AIDS Vancouver's staff and volunteers have continued to work in close collaboration with many community members and organizations to ensure that our programs and services remain accessible, relevant, comprehensive and responsive. As a result, this year has seen AIDS Vancouver take the lead on many exciting initiatives. As one of Canada's oldest and largest AIDS service organizations, it comes as no surprise that AIDS Vancouver continues to be at the forefront of the community-based AIDS movement.

Of course as an agency working towards alleviating collective and individual vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, our work will never be free from challenge or change. Whether due to the increasing complexity of the work, the constantly shifting political environment we find ourselves in, or organizational changes that at times require a great deal of trust and patience, it has been my experience that AIDS Vancouver is an organization that thrives on challenge.

Through it all - the challenges and the many, many triumphs - AIDS Vancouver's Board, staff, and volunteers have continually inspired me with their hard work, commitment, and unwavering belief in our mission. For that, I thank each and every one of them from the bottom of my heart. By working together and constantly learning from the past while working towards the future, I have no doubt that AIDS Vancouver will remain a strong and important force in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Myrah'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

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Executive Highlights

It was our great honour to lead AIDS Vancouver's programs and services over the 2004/2005 fiscal year. This year, AIDS Vancouver continued to strive to meet the challenges presented by the ever changing face of HIV/AIDS. Our achievements reflect our commitment to move forward with innovation, strength, and stability.

Several new initiatives demonstrated our agency's strong resolve to provide leadership within the HIV/AIDS sector, to develop programs to reach vulnerable populations, and to provide increased opportunity for connection to the most isolated members of our community. Our *Family Home Visiting Project* delivered enhanced support to families living with HIV. Our social marketing campaign for the prevention of HIV among gay men entered its exciting second phase: The development of a new campaign, in collaboration with community partners in six Canadian cities, is currently underway.

Among the highlights of this year, we expanded our involvement on several harm reduction coalitions, and continued to provide leadership in promoting the principles of harm reduction within our communities. Gayway approached its second anniversary with vibrant, successful programs. Our Client Services department continued to develop new strategies and to nurture and expand community partnerships, to ensure that our services reach those who need us most.

We value our on-going relationships with Vancouver Coastal Health, the Public Health Agency of Canada, community donors, foundations, and United Way districts. This vital financial support makes our work possible. In 2004/2005, this work included: Over 10,000 contacts with 1,396 individuals living with HIV/AIDS; 28,420 grocery bags distributed to 1,640 individuals and families; 6,371 information requests to our PARC library; and 79 workshops reaching 1,586 participants.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the strength and commitment of AIDS Vancouver's staff and volunteers. We draw our inspiration from the exceptional creativity and dedication demonstrated by volunteers and staff in their provision of services to HIV affected and infected communities.

Phillip Banks, Director, HIV Prevention & Awareness Programs

Miranda Compton, Director, Client Services

John Dubé, Director, Finance & Human Resources

Contents

02 Letter from the Chair

03 Executive Highlights

04 Case Management

05 Gay Men's Health Programs

06 Grocery

07 Helpline/Reception, Website

08 Library

09 Substance Use & Harm Reduction

10 Support Programs

11 Volunteer Resources

12 Women's Programs

13 Financial Report

14 Annual Donor Report

16 Contact Us

Case Management

The Case Management program assists persons living with HIV/AIDS to increase health stability through increased access to resources in the areas of healthcare, income, housing, psycho-social support, practical assistance and harm reduction. Of the 1,396 distinct clients served this year, 269 were new clients. 27% of our clients are women, 71% are men, and 2% are transgendered.

The case management program is divided into two teams: The Access team provides drop-in services and assessments, and delivers brief interventions to meet short-term needs. The strength of the Access service is its ability to respond concretely to individuals in their moment of need, whether they are newly-diagnosed, or long-term clients facing an unexpected crisis.

The Intensive Case Management team delivers comprehensive care planning and coordination of services through scheduled appointments, telephone contact, and home/hospital visits. The Intensive team delivers multi-faceted support to clients who are facing multiple and complex issues.

One case manager located at the Downtown Community Health Centre, delivers both short and long-term interventions to residents of the Downtown Eastside who access the Health Centre for their healthcare.

The Family Home Visiting Project

AIDS Vancouver's *Family Home Visiting Project* delivers sustained in-home support to address the needs of aboriginal and endemic-country families who are living in isolation with HIV/AIDS. This project was honoured to be the recipient of a grant from the GlaxoSmithKline-Shire BioChem HIV/AIDS 2004 Community Innovation Program. The *Family Home Visiting Project* has enabled us to fill a tremendous gap in existing services and to demonstrate the role of home-based support in improving quality of life and enhancing health.

When asked to assess the success of the program, Case Manager Shannon Krell speaks movingly about the changes she has witnessed in the families to whom she has delivered support over the course of the project: "To have had the opportunity to break down tremendous barriers in the families' lives - barriers presented by distance, lack of childcare, poverty and stigma - has been huge. Meeting families in their homes has made a big difference to my ability to build a relationship - we build rapport so much faster than if we were to meet in an office. We are able to identify so many concrete tasks together...and to achieve lasting change..."

We are profoundly grateful to GlaxoSmithKline-Shire BioChem for making this project possible. Our goal for 2005/06 is to ensure that this vital service to isolated families continues.



Gay Men's Health Programs

In its second year as a storefront gay men's health resource exchange, Gayway solidified its position as a program supporting the development of a thriving gay community in Vancouver. The programs at Gayway have increased dramatically, as has client contact with Gayway via the website, drop-ins and group attendance.

Peer counselling continues to be central to Gayway services. Volunteers continue to provide on-line and face-to-face support to gay men, and this year began group facilitation. Gayway hosted a weekly peer-driven 40's/50's discussion group, a baking class entitled *Fruitcakes*, writing workshops, and several book discussion groups. Gayway also hosted a panel discussion exploring gay men's spirituality entitled *Homospiritual*.

Gayway launched a new website, containing all the gay men's health resources and a schedule of events at the storefront. Gayway's outreach to gay social spaces continued, with the distribution of condom packs and fact sheets on the street, info fairs at colleges and universities, and the Vancouver Pride Festival. *Gayze* magazine, with a distribution of 12,000, continued to be published quarterly.

Gayway continued the "Gay is Good" promotional campaign, completing 5 diverse images in a poster series. The program also successfully led the implementation of *Assumptions*, Canada's first national gay men' HIV prevention campaign, funded primarily by the Public Health Agency of Canada. This campaign challenged faulty assumptions some gay men make that put them or their partners at risk for HIV infection. It was seen in over 24 cities across Canada. Following an evaluation of the campaign, the national project began work on a second campaign, to be launched in Fall, 2005.

AIDS Vancouver also took the lead in the local coalition responsible for the production of *Euphoria*, a gay men's wellness and community development event. Over 500 men attended the two day event, during which they participated in workshops, cultural and social events, and created stronger social networks.

Gayway has supported me by sponsoring group discussions on issues of relevance to me ... which have made it possible for me to share a dialogue, in a supportive environment, with some interesting gay men These sessions have also helped to raise my awareness about issues which affect me; they have helped me feel more "connected" to my gay community.

- A Gayway participant



Posters created for the National Assumptions Campaign

Grocery

Demand continues to grow for our free supplemental food service for persons living with HIV/AIDS. The Grocery Program is delivered by one part-time coordinator, and over 20 dedicated volunteers (the majority of whom are peers). Each week, the Grocery provides food to an average of 700 individuals and families, via six different sites.

Over the course of the year, the Grocery served a total of 1,640 distinct individuals and families. Each week, our customers receive a range of fresh produce, as well as milk, a high protein and easy to prepare food item, and at least one personal hygiene item.

This year, we introduced a monthly Breakfast Grocery. This enhanced program is built upon the recognition, that for many of our customers, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Strategically scheduled mid-month, when our customers living on a fixed income are particularly low on funds, the Breakfast Grocery provides additional foods such as bread, eggs, peanut butter, and enriched cereals.

How do I feel about my involvement? I am amazed at the honest-to-God caring that people in AIDS Vancouver have to give and how dedicated they are. I feel a sense of pride in being involved with such a great group of people and being of some help in my own small way.

- Care Team Volunteer



Grocery Coordinator, Willow Lloyd, with some of the great, nourishing foods that are available through the grocery program.

Helpline / Reception Services

I volunteer to help eliminate the stigma associated with AIDS and to contribute in some way in trying to stop this epidemic.

- Helpline Volunteer

The highly trained Helpline volunteers continue to assist callers and email correspondents with questions regarding the transmission of HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Hepatitis. This year, the majority of calls dealt with 1) harm reduction information (e.g. safer sex, intravenous drug use); 2) HIV/AIDS symptoms; and 3) HIV/AIDS testing. We noticed an increase in calls from men who have sex with women. There were also a number of calls dealing with the availability and access of the HIV/AIDS rapid test.

In addition to answering calls, the Helpline volunteers continued their work updating resources lists. These include current information on local HIV/AIDS services, community centres, shelters, weekly rental accommodation, sources of free food, and a list of local doctors specializing in HIV/AIDS care. The lists are vital resources for AIDS Vancouver staff and volunteers, as well as community partners and the general public.

Website

The AIDS Vancouver website went through an extensive process of usability testing. The overall findings were positive: the data and resulting recommendations gathered from this process are informing plans to modify the site to simplify the design, increase relevant content and essential information, and enhance overall site accessibility. Our experience is that an increasing number of persons affected by HIV/AIDS are contacting us through our website, and we are excited to continue the process of improving our site based on this vital data. The AIDS Vancouver website had 76,868 hits this year.



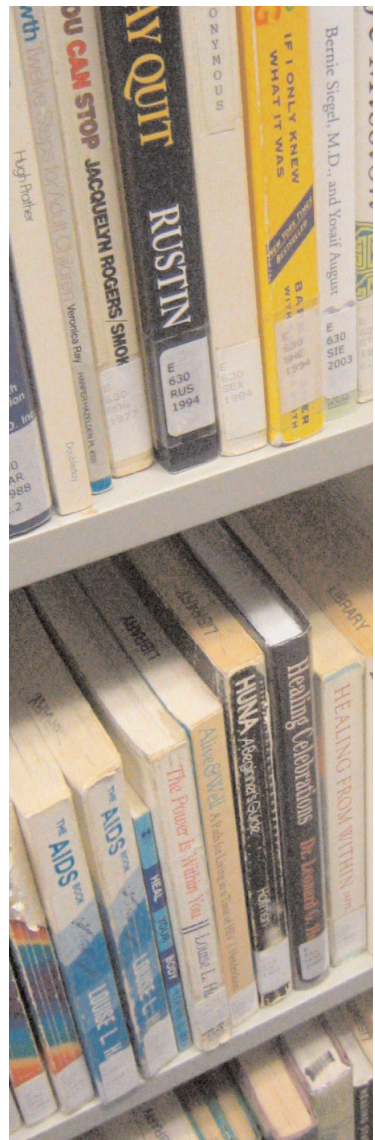
Library

The PARC library continued its primary goal to ensure that books, videos, periodicals and a variety of electronic and print resources related to HIV and AIDS are accessible to anyone who needs them. Our users have a broad range of information needs from prevention education resources to basic healthy living tips for the newly diagnosed to in-depth medical research. We provided information on HIV to a diverse group of users including clients, community organizations, health and education professionals, students, and the media. By maintaining a broad and dynamic collection of materials in a variety of formats, the PARC Library was able to keep up with the changing needs of our current users, and to reach out to new users.

We continue to remain involved with CONNECT, a joint project of Canada's five largest HIV/AIDS organizations' Resource Centres, that has recently been revitalized to further increase accessibility nationally to HIV/AIDS resources.

As a volunteer, I have borrowed courage from those clients who so courageously set a daily example for me in their battle against a disease that has the power to diminish and intimidate.

- Library Volunteer



Substance Use and Harm Reduction

Safer Crack Use Coalition of Vancouver

The Safer Crack Use Coalition (SCUC), of which AIDS Vancouver is a founding member, continued its work to promote issues around the safer use of crack cocaine, and the need for health services specifically targeted to consumers of crack cocaine. In the fall of 2004, the Coalition held its first Awareness Day; community members, policy makers, service providers and users came together to hear presentations from members of SCUC, and from user representatives, and to discuss how best to address issues regarding the use of crack.

Keeping the Door Open: Dialogues on Drug Use

AIDS Vancouver is a founding member of the coalition *Keeping the Door Open: Dialogues on Drug Use (KDO)*. KDO is a multi-stakeholder coalition comprised of individuals and organizations representing a diverse range of stakeholders, including institutional and community-based service providers, health authorities, research centres, charitable foundations, public policy makers, drug consumers, consumer advocates, government, and business. In 2004, KDO continued its successful work at engaging the public in the dialogue on how to address the issue of problematic substance use. In September, the symposium "*Moving Forward: Improving Treatment of Heroin Addiction*" was held at the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. Professionals and experts from British Columbia and across Canada, Australia, Europe, and the U.S. discussed the latest practices of delivery of methadone maintenance and substitution therapies. The event was an outstanding opportunity to share information, learn about new approaches, and network with peers from other jurisdictions.

Gay Men's Crystal Meth Working Group (GaMMa)

GaMMa, a sub-committee of the Methamphetamine Action Response Group, was formed as a response to the problematic use of crystal methamphetamine in the gay men's community. Over the last year the Working Group focussed considerable attention on preparing an extensive funding proposal to Canada's Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund. The proposed project would include both outreach and needs assessment components. Outreach efforts would provide gay men within certain venues with harm reduction and addiction information and resources, while peer-involved research efforts would help determine the context of use and other relevant issues regarding crystal use in the gay male community.



Warren Michelow and Michael Mancinelli greet participants at one of the many KDO events.

Support Programs

Care Teams

Care Teams provide practical and companionship support to persons living with HIV/AIDS. The program continued to adapt its services in response to changing client needs and new service priorities, to ensure that the program continues to reach the most vulnerable members of our community.

In the 2004-2005 year, Care Team volunteers contributed over two thousand hours of service. At present, 25 committed volunteers support over 40 AIDS Vancouver clients in their homes, and in care facilities.

This past year, the Care Team program was expanded to provide the Family Care Team service. Volunteers were recruited to provide specialized support to families living with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS. This program prioritizes families who face multiple barriers such as newcomer families, families with several children, and/or families with multiple members living with HIV.

Our Care Team volunteer training program has been re-designed to provide a more relevant and practical knowledge base for new recruits. Medical staff from the John Ruedy Immunodeficiency Clinic at St. Paul's Hospital provide the medical basics to help Care Team volunteers build their clinical understanding of the complexities of living with HIV/AIDS. Lectures, activities and client scenarios are incorporated into the training to provide volunteers with the tools needed to deliver comprehensive support to AIDS Vancouver clients.

Volunteering makes me feel like I really am giving a helpful hand to someone - that I'm doing something worthwhile.

- Care Team Volunteer

Counselling Services

The Professional Counselling Program helps low-income clients access professional counselling services to address psycho-social needs. A partnership with Stewart & Associates Counselling & Consulting as well as the on-going partnership with Living Through Loss Counselling Services resulted in low or no-fee counselling to our clients and their friends and families. The Support Programs Coordinator provided in-service training to help ensure that counsellors are familiar with the unique needs and barriers for those living with HIV/AIDS.

In addition to our 8 community-based counsellors, we continued to offer Art Therapy in partnership with the Art Therapy Institute of Vancouver. To expand accessibility of this program, we offered Art Therapy at a Downtown South site, as well as at a residence in the Downtown Eastside.

Volunteer Resources

AIDS Vancouver values volunteerism. We provide meaningful volunteer opportunities in order to help achieve the mission of the agency. Volunteers continue to make a vital and valuable contribution to our work. Their enthusiasm, skills, resources, motivation and commitment fuel the agency's ability to enhance and expand our response to HIV/AIDS and related issues. Paid and unpaid staff work together in an environment of respect, inclusiveness, diversity and commitment.

We have recruited, trained and placed 200 volunteers who are involved in over 20 different volunteer opportunities that support our diverse programs and services at AIDS Vancouver. Volunteers provide service and support in the following areas: direct services; care and support; outreach and prevention education; administration; fund development; research and advocacy.

I would like to personally acknowledge all AIDS Vancouver staff who engage and work with volunteers on a daily and weekly basis. AIDS Vancouver is a leader in the local voluntary sector and it's the dedication, enthusiasm and commitment for volunteer involvement by staff that is a part of that success. You are an amazing team to work with. Thank-you!

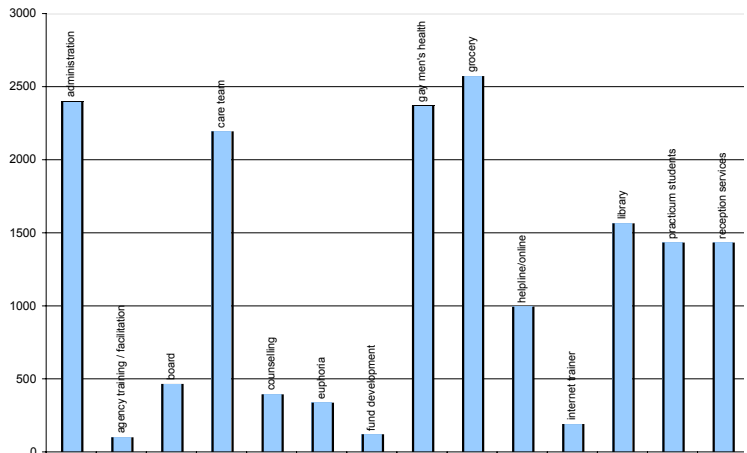
- Parm Poonia, Manager of Volunteer Resources

Our key successes this year include:

- Integrating the value of volunteers and volunteerism at all levels of the agency; from hiring practices to program planning and agency standards and practice.
- Sustaining an interactive Forum on Volunteer Management to discuss and dialogue current and emerging issues.
- Developing and implementing a dynamic and vibrant Community Outreach Team. This team of agency ambassadors have been trained to provide comprehensive information, awareness and prevention education regarding HIV/AIDS and related issues.
- Collaboratively enhancing and delivering a comprehensive orientation and HIV/AIDS education curriculum for new volunteers, staff and Board of Directors.
- Facilitating workshops on Volunteer Management and Community Development within the HIV/AIDS and voluntary sectors.

Volunteer Hours by Programs for 2004

totaling 17,000 Hours = \$340,000 dollar value of volunteer time



Women's Programs

Women's Programs continues to focus on the development of a gender based prevention program in response to the growing number of individuals in Canada who are becoming infected with HIV through heterosexual contact. Within this group women continue to be more vulnerable than men in terms of infection. It is the position of this program and agency that an analysis of the role men play in increasing women and men's vulnerability to HIV needs to be addressed and that women and men's risk of infection will only be reduced through mainstream gender based prevention and education initiatives.

In addition to responding to the educational needs of many community organizations with the delivery of sexual health workshops and trainings, Women's Programs produced a public awareness event for World AIDS Day and formed new partnerships with community agencies in order to create a more integrated approach to HIV prevention.

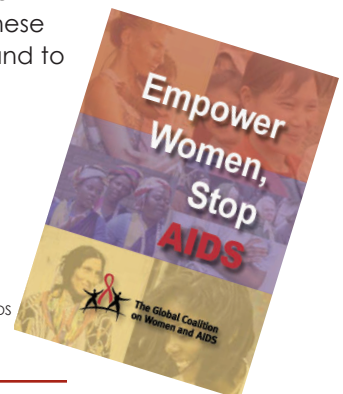
HIV prevention-based sexual health workshops and trainings were conducted at various treatment centers, recovery houses and organizations including: Pacifica Treatment Centre, Aurora Treatment Centre, New Dawn Recovery House, Charlford Recovery House, Life Recovery Society, BC Corrections for Women, The Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Immigrant Services Society, Mosaic, Capilano College and Langara College. In addition, the program has responded to requests from various agencies to provide Professional Development training for staff.

For World AIDS Day the Women's Program took the lead in organizing an event around the film *Women are Leading Change* in recognition of the World AIDS Campaign focus on Women and Girls. The film was screened at the Pacific Cinematheque and was well attended; discussion on gender and HIV followed.

New Dawn and New Day recovery houses are working with The Battered Women's Support Services on a support group for Aboriginal women who are survivors of residential schools. Women's Programs is working with these groups to integrate information about HIV into the support group and to develop a peer based prevention program within that group.

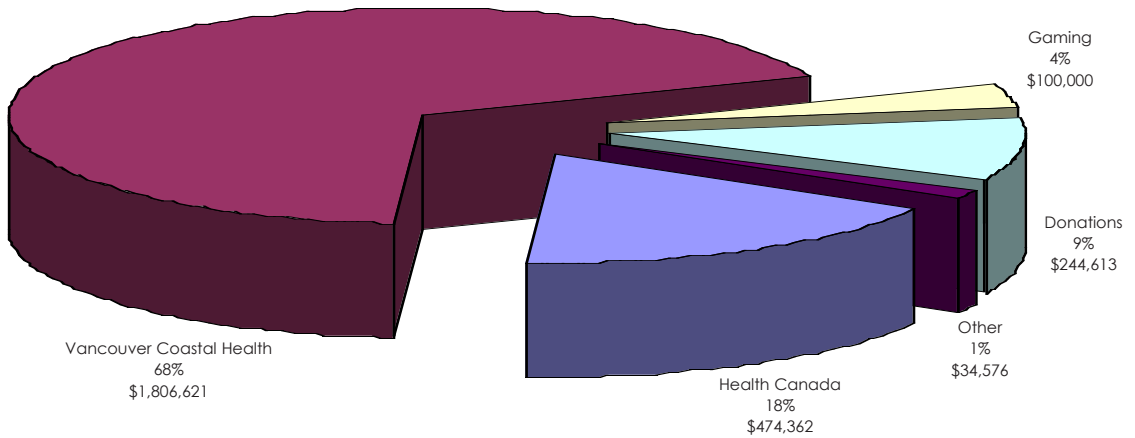
The Mind/Body Connection is a ten week support group for HIV positive women developed in partnership with Positive Women's Network. The focus is on how emotional support can have an impact on the physical health of HIV positive women.

Resources produced by the UN initiative The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS

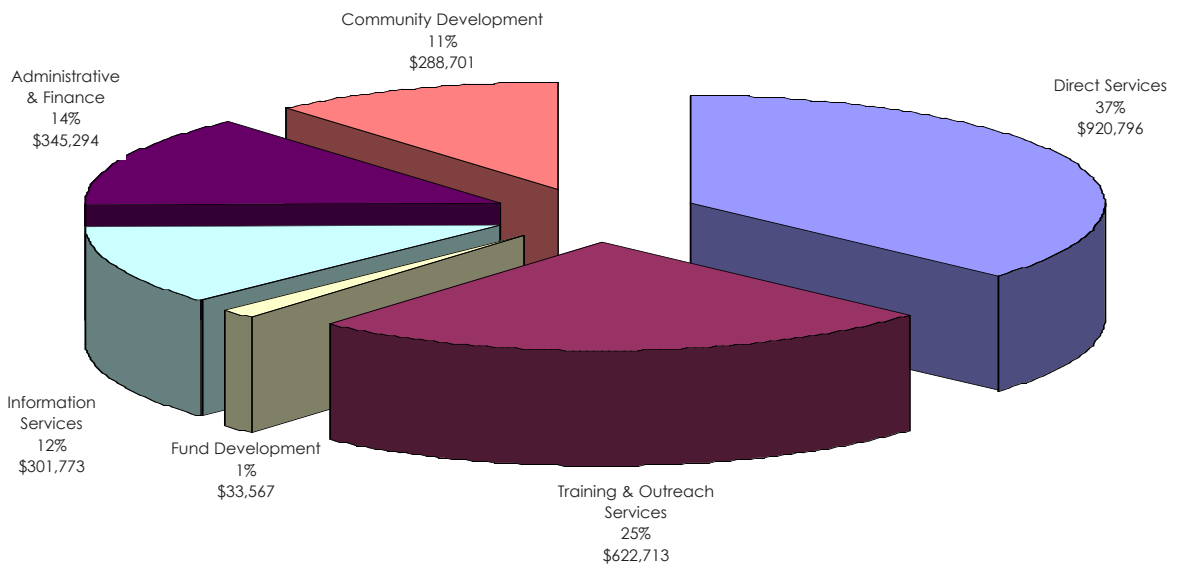


Financial Report

Revenue 2004 - 2005



Expenses 2004 - 2005



Annual Donor Report

A very special thanks to all our donors, whose generosity ensures we can continue to offer essential services to our clients and continue our prevention and awareness education to lower mainland communities.

- Nancy Armitage, Manager of Fund Development

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Vancouver Coastal Health
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Between \$5,000 and \$10,000

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Annual Donor Report....continued

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