

Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan

I finally realized that being grateful to my body was key to giving more love to myself. —Oprah

The ballot is stronger than bullets. —Joseph Schumpeter

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Register to vote on Tuesday, May 17th!

Information courtesy of Elections BC

What are the qualifications to register as a provincial voter in British Columbia?

To qualify as a provincial voter in BC you must be:

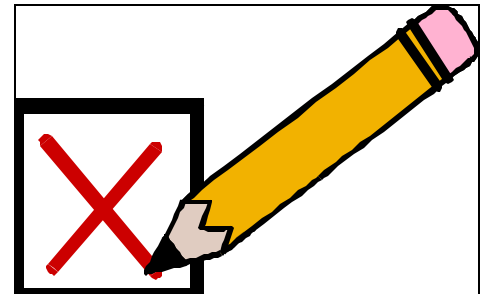
- a Canadian citizen;
- 18 years of age or older on General Voting Day for the election;
- a resident of the electoral district;
- have been a resident of British Columbia for at least 6 months immediately before General Voting Day for the election; and
- be registered as a voter for the electoral district or register as such in conjunction with voting; and
- not be disqualified by the *Election Act* or any other enactment from voting in the election or be otherwise disqualified by law.

Can I register as a provincial voter when I go to the voting place?

Yes. To register at the time of voting, a voter must provide two pieces of identification, that show, in combination, their name, current address and signature.

Time off from work for voting

Any employee who is entitled to vote is entitled to have four consecutive hours free from employment during voting hours on General Voting Day for the purpose of voting. Any time taken off work to vote is at the discretion



of the employer. It is an offence for an employer to take any deduction from an employee's pay for time off for voting.

Voters needing assistance

Assistance is available to voters unable to mark a ballot because of a physical disability or difficulty with reading or writing. A Voting Officer or friend of the voter may mark the voter's ballot in accordance with the wishes of the voter. If the voter is assisted by a friend, the friend must take an oath of secrecy. A template is available at all voting places to allow voters who are visually impaired to mark their own ballots if they so choose.

It takes less than five minutes to register online. Go to www.elections.bc.ca

To request a voter registration form by mail write: PO Box 9275, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC, V8W 9J6

Or visit our office:

We also have Voter Registration forms here at the Living Positive Resource Centre office where you can fill one out and we'll help you fax it to 1-866-466-0665 (toll-free).

TOPHER TALKS: A Client's jaded viewpoint

By Chris McKenzie

Well looks like Spring has sprung. Time to look forward to another beautiful summer in the Okanagan. When I watch the weather channels and see what the weather is like back east, I am glad I moved to the beautiful Okanagan.



Part of summer here is getting out and enjoying the area. So along with that I finally got around to renewing my gym pass at Parkinson's Recreational Centre. For those familiar with that, it is a nominal fee for use of the weight/exercise rooms and the swimming pool. I have taken advantage of the gym pass for the past two years and have enjoyed going to the gym. They have a small circuit training area, that in the course of 20 minutes works most parts of your body, then add a little bit of aerobic exercise and you have a reasonable work out. The circuit training is good because you set your own weight and can quickly change them to suit your ability. One word of Caution, watch out for the

older ladies, they pump some mean iron. It can be a little embarrassing when you are following someone who is about 20 years your senior, and you need to drop the weights to a lighter level.

But I digress, at approx \$30 for a six month pass, this is a great start to getting some exercise and feeling good about yourself. Even getting out, and spending time in the pool is also a good start to getting active. Most of us who have achy joints and muscles can benefit from a little bit more activity, or even floating in the pool, hot tub and sauna. One thing that makes this whole process a bit more enjoyable is finding a gym buddy. Someone who will go to the gym at the same time to help encourage both of you to go. Mind you make sure that both of you have the same timetable so both are interested in going at the same time.

One other thing I would like to put out there is the possibility of getting a personal trainer to work with the client base.

Some one familiar with the disease and is willing to work around some of the limitations with the clients. This helps with getting people motivated, plus helps to set realistic goals for ourselves in where we would like to see ourselves going. Plus they would give help in the safe and proper use of gym equipment to prevent injury, and good muscular development.

If you are interested in getting involved with a personal trainer or some other form of activity feel free to contact Karen Alexander at 862-2437. If enough people are interested we will see what the office can arrange.

Now is the time to start looking forward to summer. There are enough activities in Kelowna and surrounding areas that are free or darn cheap to keep most of us busy for the summer. The key thing this summer is to get out, get active, and get involved. **Remember to play hard but play safe.**

The Annual Healing Our Spirit Conference for Aboriginal people living with HIV/AIDS and community workers will be held in Kelowna, BC from April 10—13th, 2005. Contact OAAS for more info at (250) 862-2437.

Hip Hop Concert! Healing Our Spirit presents the "Reddnation" hip hop concert on April 12th at the Coast Capri Hotel on 1171 Harvey in Kelowna, BC. Cost \$5. Call 1-866-745-8884 for info. Drug and alcohol free event.

LPRC will no longer be open on Fridays

By Lance Talbott

In recent years we have seen reduction in the level of funding our organization receives. Sadly, we have reached a point where we are unable to remain open for a 'five-day week'. Therefore, effective from and including Friday, April 15th our office will be closed each Friday. This will also mean that we will be unable to answer your telephone calls, faxes or emails on those days. We will still be open

Monday - Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m..

We are currently looking for funding that will permit us to offer full services to the community once again and remain hopeful that we will achieve this. Please be assured that the decision to close on a Friday is one that has not been made lightly and will hopefully be a short-term measure. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Daryle Roberts or Lance Talbott at 862-2437.

By Nikki Maier

China has begun testing a new HIV vaccine on humans. One 20 year-old volunteer was the first to receive the vaccine. In total there are 49 volunteers. To date, China has more than 840,000 people living with HIV although some health experts estimate that the actual number is much higher. Of the 840,000 HIV+ individuals, 80,000 people are in the onset of AIDS stage. Previously, China, like many other countries, would not admit that there was a problem with HIV. However, their recent openness is viewed as an effort to stop what the World Health Organization estimates will be a rise to 10 million HIV cases in five years.

Tragically, AIDS activists are still being detained in China. This is troubling because as many of you know, any countries that denied that HIV is a problem have subsequently higher rates of infection. It

only goes to show how important it is to take prevention efforts seriously. It is not only important to take these efforts seriously but also to remain open about how HIV is transmitted. Many of us don't like to admit it, but we are truly sexual beings. This is a normal and healthy part of what makes us human. Since heterosexual sex is fueling the infection rates world wide (globally 70% of infection rates are attributed to heterosexual sex) we need to look at the issue with openness and stop being so shy about talking about these life and death matters. Yes sex, has become a life and death matter. To quote the hip hop duo of the 90s 'Salt 'n' Pepa' "Let's talk about sex, baby!" Let's talk about protecting ourselves and our partners. Let's encourage parents to talk to their kids about safer sex, even if the kids plan to wait. If you have to, whisper it, just don't let the cat get your tongue—whatever you do.



Nikki Maier, 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 HIV/AIDS, b) to develop and provide educational resources, c) to support those infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. 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

- Donna Hill, President
- Lorri Gasser, Vice-president
- Wayne Ross, Treasurer
- John Langston
- Lisa Mortell
- Martin Russell
- Josephine Stebbings
- Daryle Roberts, Executive Director

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.

Name: _____ E-mail address: _____

Mailing address: _____ Postal code: _____

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

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

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

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

Volunteer Profile:



Carlie Russell

By Carlie Russell

At the time of my father's death, I already had an interest in helping others but the need I felt to do something intensified. Although my father died of cancer, the effects of HIV and AIDS around the world shocked me, and as I looked for places to volunteer, the Living Positive Resource Centre appealed to me. Since attending the AIDS/HIV and hepatitis C workshops here at the Living Positive Resource Centre in 2004, I have volunteered regularly, becoming involved in office and computer-

based tasks and research. I will be starting my studies as a social worker this September and my experiences here have been extremely valuable. I have learned so much about AIDS and the behind-the-scenes work at social service organizations. More than anything, I believe it is vital to educate people of all ages about AIDS and hepatitis because we can all take steps to protect ourselves and prevent the spread of these illnesses. I encourage everyone considering volunteering to look at the LPRC. There are a variety of volunteer positions available and Karen, the volunteer coordinator, will work with you to ensure that you get as much as possible from your time at the LPRC.

I never used to worry about catching the cold or "flu du jour", but today it scares me worse than a bullet. At least a bullet would be quick. I have to keep track of who is sick in whatever I do or whomever I associate with. Once I went to cash my disability cheque, and while I was in the process of cashing the cheque and paying my bills I got sick. Three days later I was in emergency for six hours with pneumonia. Obviously I survived that one! But, between October and March/April, it's scary.

RICHARD'S RANT

On the other hand we're almost through the worst and I would like to wish everyone a wonderful April to October. Enjoy, I love ya. Richard Babcock

E-mail: richards.rant@telus.net.

The Living Positive Resource Centre's Board of Directors invite readers to get to know them. Here are the first two Board Members' profiles.



Wayne Ross

Meet Wayne Ross

Hi everyone, my name is Wayne Ross and I am the Treasurer of LPRC. I have been on the board for 3 years and I am so happy to connect with people through this great organization. I have two children, Shirlee and Trevor, and I have been blessed with three beautiful grand-girls! My passion is real estate, heritage homes, interior design, and running, as well as community involvement.

May the sun shine in your face always!

Meet Donna Hill

Donna Hill is President of the board.

Donna has been an active Volunteer with the agency since the summer of 1997 when she walked through the doors and introduced herself to the then-new Executive Director, Daryle Roberts. She has since worked in a number of roles including core training facilitator and speaker for the speaker's Bureau. But it has been in her role as a behind-the-scenes board member since 1999 that she has most enjoyed. Beyond the agency, Donna has been raising her three sons, working for School District #22, and has recently just earned her Bachelor's Degree-English Honours from OUC. In quieter times she writes and publishes poetry, prose, and book reviews, and has also been co-editor for three anthologies.

CLIENT SUPPORT PLUS

By Heather Clark, Practicum Social Work Student

We had one of our first guest speakers at the HIV Support Group last Wednesday, March 23. The topic was nutrition and three dieticians from Kelowna General Hospital facilitated the group presentation. The presentation was very well done and we had a lively discussion afterwards. Please attend and take advantage of these talks because you'll get to meet new people and learn something too. Check out the list of upcoming speakers in the "Clients' Notice Board" below. A list of speakers and topics up can also be found on

the bulletin board in the office lobby. Support group meetings are held every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. All clients are welcome to attend. If you have any ideas for future talks please contact Deborahjoy or myself and we will try to arrange for that topic to be covered.

On another note, my time here is coming to an end and I am feeling separation anxiety already. I know I am going to miss all the great people I have met here at this agency. I wish you all the best and would like to thank you all for making my experience here so enjoyable.

CLIENTS' NOTICE BOARD

NATUROPATHIC HEALTH CARE



Dr. Janice Potter, a Naturopathic Physician, offers her services free to our clients. Call for your referral at 862-2437.

MASSAGE THERAPY



Free half hour sessions
Tuesday afternoons with Kristi Maguire, RMT.

CLIENT SUPPORT

Kelowna

To meet with a client support worker, 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.

CHIROPRACTIC CARE

Dr. Derek Ginter visits LPRC on Thursday mornings. Call 862-2437 to arrange for your free session.

Upcoming HIV Support Group Guest Speakers

April 20 Volunteer Opportunities in the Okanagan – Louise Elliott

May 4 Wills/Power of Attorney – Martin Russell

May 18 Emotional Freedom – Dr. Janice Potter, Naturopathic Physician

June 1 Harm Reduction Therapy – John Langston

June 15 Alternative Methods for Pain Management – Lydia Kabatoff

Call Deborahjoy for info 862-2437.

CLIENT SERVICE HOURS

Monday—Thursday
(Closed Fridays)
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



REIKI & HEALING TOUCH

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

FREE COFFEE

Starbucks provides FREE coffee for our clients. Please ask at the reception desk.



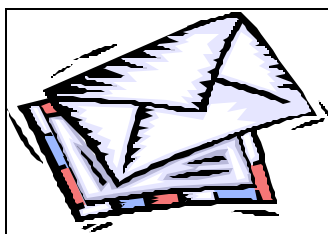
By Brian Mairs, OAAS Coordinator

The BC Persons With AIDS Society (BCPWA) is keenly interested in how their services are perceived outside of Vancouver, and by Aboriginal members in particular. Raw statistics show that upwards of 18% of BCPWA members—who defined their ethnicity—are Aboriginal, with a small, but growing portion located outside of the Vancouver area. In a recent discussion with one of the directors, there have been concerns raised that the magazine is ‘too white’ and ‘too gay’ for some members, and there have been criticisms raised over the lack of client based services outside of Vancouver.

We have offered to collect your concerns about the effectiveness of BCPWA services in the Okanagan Valley and forward them on to the Board of Directors for their action. Your anonymity will be protected so you do not have to worry about jeopardizing future services or relationships.

We invite you to voice your concerns in writing, and send them to: BCPWA Concerns, C/O OAAS, 101-266 Lawrence Ave, Kelowna BC V1Y 6L3, Or fax them to: (250) 868-8662 Or via email to: bmairs@oaas.ca

You do not have to identify yourself in the letter, and any identifying information in your e-mail will be deleted before we send it to BCPWA.



(250) 862-2481

www.oaas.ca

Renewing our Response

By Brian Mairs, OAAS Coordinator

On March 17 and 18, the OAAS team attended the “Renewing our Response” forum in North Vancouver. The forum’s goals were to come up with an action plan that would stop the spread of HIV in Aboriginal communities. The delegates had the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions, which focused on different issues such as determining how services could be improved and finally to creating an action plan that would make a significant difference in the spread in HIV infection rates. The action plan included the following items:

-Allocating \$15 per Aboriginal person for 15 years to AIDS Service Organizations (ASO) to provide adequate education and prevention.

-Perhaps it would be also appropriate

for funders to take on a holistic model, which in turn will aid service providers in the delivery of culturally applicable programs. It would also make it possible for appropriate funding for much needed changes in service delivery.

-It was suggested that the federal and provincial governments develop transparent partnerships.

-The groups also indicated on a number of occasions that there is money available from pharmaceutical companies and perhaps we should actively seek some funding from them.

-The group suggested that disability benefits should be attached to the client and not to their location as clients have difficulty getting disability benefits on reserve.

-Self-advocacy training is needed for the client so that they may effectively

advocate for themselves. Clients deserve a clear understanding of their rights. Further, if clients are unable to advocate for themselves, ensuring that advocates are there is also necessary.

When asked to determine whether the strategies that have been developed were working there was a resounding NO. The groups noted that the strategies make sense only to the individuals who wrote them but are not for our clients. It was recommended that the strategies consider the client and be written in a manner that both can understand and perhaps even evaluate.

The input from the OAAS team was well received by those in attendance. Unfortunately there was no representation from Interior Health Authority at the meeting, which was organized and funded by the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Virginity pledgers still contract STIs

By Nikki Maier

Studies continue to contradict the benefits of “abstinence only” education for young adults. Supporters claim abstinence and virginity clubs cut down on the number of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) virginity pledgers contract. However, the most recent study, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health’s* March 18th issue, tracked students that took virginity pledges in the US. The study found that these students still contracted the same number of STIs as those who did not pledge their virginity. Despite abstaining from sex until young adulthood there was not a significant decrease in the number of STIs that virginity pledges contracted. Even though pledgers had fewer partners and were more likely to maintain monogamous relationships, they still

could not recognize STI symptoms and often did not have protected sex; consequently, pledgers contracted the same number of STIs on average as those who did not pledge their virginity.

Advocates for comprehensive sexual health education, which includes abstinence and safer sex education, urge parents to communicate openly with their children about sex. For more information on how to speak to your children about HIV/AIDS come to the centre and get our brochures on this and other topics.

New Positive website for chats

The website www.positive.eu.com is the latest innovation in self-support for people worldwide living with HIV and AIDS. The concept of this new website is quite simple, it allows positive people to come together online for real time chat, allowing a virtual community to

develop and support each other. The aim of the project is to stop the isolation that most positive people find themselves in. As most positive people are aware the world can be a very lonely place at times.

The website’s creators have created a virtual community where each member has a user profile.

If you’re searching for positive friends, relationships, love, e-pals, support, or chats, they are out there. Hundreds of other positive people are online forming the world’s first ever positive virtual community.

Positive people of the world can interact and swap stories, coping mechanisms, make friends, or look for the partner of their dreams. Most of all the isolation can stop. www.positive.eu.com strives to provide a positive life experience for all.

STD Website polls visitors

The BC Centre for

Disease Control has an online STD Resource, which can be found at www.stdresource.com. A poll on the STD Resource website asked visitors the following question.

“Where have you been for STD/HIV testing?”

33.59% said, “I’ve never gone for testing.”

22.14% said “Family doctor”

14.89% said “Walk-in clinic”

25.19% said “STD clinic or youth clinic”

And 4.20% said “Other” for a total (at press time) of 262 respondents.

The highest number of respondents at 33.59% said they had never been for STD testing. This number is downright alarming. However, on the bright side because the respondents were visiting an STD website it might mean they are considering STD screening/testing.

This is especially important because some STDs like Chlamydia show no symptoms in many women. 20,000

of Chlamydia cases in Canada were found in females aged 15-19 years old.

Meningococcal C infection on the rise for men who have sex with men

There have been unusually high numbers of **meningococcal C infections** in gay men in the Lower Mainland and BC, causing meningitis and bloodstream infections. In rare cases this infection can cause brain damage or death.

The best way to protect yourself is to **get vaccinated**. Call your local public health department (in the blue pages) to find out where you can get the free meningococcal vaccine being offered to gay and bisexual men in BC. If enough men get vaccinated we can stop these infections from happening.

What the heck is an alternate therapy program?

By Karen Alexander

It's time to introduce a new term into the work we do at Living Positive Resource Centre – "Alternate Therapy". By this, I mean programs that are outside of the actual client support, education or volunteer programs that are part of our regular operations, but which are still designed to improve the quality of life for our clients. In the past, these programs have been initiated by client needs or requests, or by having a volunteer offer to operate a program for us. An example of this is our Complementary Therapy in which volunteers from the community provide services at no cost to our clients. In this case, as it is operated completely by volunteers, there are not really any direct costs to the organization. This is good news as we continue to see ongoing cuts to our funding from Interior Health combined with in-

creasing operational costs. The bottom line is that in order to initiate anything new for clients, we need either trained volunteers and/or increased funding.

Part of my job is to go out into the community and seek volunteers and/or funding support for these types of programs – I call this "Program Exploration". Now here's the "BUT" – in order to make program exploration a practical use of my limited time, we must have enough clients interested in participating in the program on a regular and ongoing basis before I head out into the community to ask for either money or volunteer time commitment. So remember folks, in order for us to initiate anything new, we need to know there are people interested and willing to commit to participating. I welcome your thoughts on this topic, so feel free to call me at 862-2437 if you'd like to discuss!

Inaugural "DINING OUT FOR LIFE" a success!

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 recent "Dining Out For Life" event.

The following restaurants put forth a great show of faith and support for the work that we do in our community by agreeing to donate 25% of their food revenues on the day of "Dining Out for Life" ~ **Agostino's Italian Cuisine, Finer Choice in Dining, Fresco, Harvest Dining Room, Minstrel Café, My Martini Grill, Siam Orchid, Staccatos, Surgeon Hall, Tuscan's Restaurant, Vintropolis, and Waterfront Wines.**

The generosity of these local business owners, particularly at a time when the hospi-

tality industry is slow and revenues are scarce, is both commendable and gratifying. The money raised from this event stays in our community, providing much needed dollars to provide support services for those individuals who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

Get help with your taxes

Well folks, it's that time again... and if you are anything like me, you dread doing your taxes and are totally confused by the maze of forms and calculations necessary. We are pleased to have a new volunteer who is willing to come into the office to assist our clients in wading through the tax maze... if you would like to access this service or need more information please call Karen at 862-2437. We are still working on dates and times this service will be available, but call now if you are interested!

Join us as we participate in the largest grassroots AIDS event the 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: 1.) To honor the memory of those lost to AIDS; 2.) To show support for those living with HIV and AIDS; 3.) To raise community awareness and decrease stigma related to HIV/AIDS; and, 4.) To mobilize the community in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Please join us:

Sunday, May 15th, 2005 at 7:30 PM at Benvoulin Heritage Church (2279 Benvoulin Road, Kelowna, BC)

For more information contact Karen Alexander at 862-2437 or email: events@lprc.ca

