
“Walk in Our Shoes”
WE EMBRACE

We fought against the invisible
We looked to one another for comfort
We held the hands of friends and lovers
We did not turn our backs
We embraced
We embraced

~ E. Ethelbert Miller, 2005

Dedicated to those we have loved, those we have lost, those who live within us
AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, September 19th, 2009
4:00 p.m.
Tommy Sexton Centre
St. John’s, NL

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Dedication and candle lighting
3. Approve agenda for 2009 AGM
4. Accept minutes of 2008 AGM
5. Board Chair Report
6. Executive Director Report
7. Financial Report
8. Appointment of auditors for 2008-2009 fiscal year
9. By-Law Amendment
10. Guest Speaker: Jack Harris, Member of Parliament – St. John’s East
11. Election of Officers
12. Adjournment
Report from Board Chair

I would like to recognize the tireless work of our staff, volunteers and all supporters during this past year. It has become clear to me as I have observed what happens at the Tommy Sexton Centre that what they do is motivated, not by a need for recognition or remuneration, but rather by their passion to help others. It is also evident that despite the setbacks and conflicts which arise, they are, above all, united in that goal. It is because of their efforts that ACNL can lead this province in the fight against HIV infection and the support of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The past year has been a dynamic one for ACNL. Personnel changes have occurred at both staff and board positions. Moreover, in many ways we are all still learning how to best fulfill the great responsibility which comes with running the Tommy Sexton Centre. Our staff and volunteers capably manage the many challenges and situations which arise here on a daily basis. The role of current and future Boards of Directors must be to identify, and provide direction in achieving, the long term goals for this facility.

2008-2009 has been the first year under the leadership of our new Executive Director, Christopher Pickard. Chris has demonstrated a heartfelt dedication and exceptional ability in quickly learning and handling this very demanding position. He, as well as the staff, deserve particular credit for ensuring that the right voices have been heard during the ongoing crisis surrounding the loss of the province’s only Infectious Disease Specialist and the issues encountered at the HIV clinic.

It has been an honor to serve as the Vice Chair and Chair of ACNL. I extend thanks on behalf of the entire Board to my predecessor, Kim Dawson, for her nine years of loyal service to the organization. I also wish to acknowledge and thank my fellow board members. They have been asked to provide direction on many, often difficult, questions over the past 12 months. They have, to a person, always done so in a completely principled and respectful manner, and I believe this organization as a whole has benefited as a result.

Bruce Chislett
Executive Director’s Report

Today is a sort of anniversary for me. I consider that my first real formal introduction to ACNL came at the AGM last year – it was my second day here! Well, it has certainly been an eventful year!

As many will attest, learning acronyms becomes critical from the get-go – ACNL, PHA, CATIE, RAAN, RAFT, PHAC, CASEY, CTAC, AIRN – and the list goes on. More important than knowing what letters represent is becoming actively aware of what they mean to our organization and the people we work with every day. The networking that takes place here and the value of connections to supportive groups and organizations is paramount. We have a vibrant community; that extends from local organizations committed to advocacy for sexually exploited youth, to national and international networks that provide vast resources towards HIV and AIDS education and training.

In other places that I have worked, I have seen vibrancy and dedication from staff and volunteers, but the difference at ACNL, is that the knowledge base and passionate level of commitment from staff is unparalleled:

- When we held a rally at Confederation Building, it was staff members who gave their time to make posters
- When someone dear to us was close to his last breath, it was staff members that were holding his hand
- On Christmas Day, when they could be home with their families, it was staff members who gave of their time to share a special holiday meal with residents

That said, we are not without our challenges – it comes with the territory. We have seen changes this year. Some has been the result of internal shuffling as people take on new roles, some have been related to projects or work terms coming to an end, and some have been the result of people moving on and then us scrambling to fill positions. Much more difficult is filling the personal void left when staff and volunteers leave.
One of our biggest challenges this past year has been the departure of the province’s only Infectious Disease Specialist for adults. Upon hearing of this in December of 2008, we have been very diligent in ensuring that it is seen as a critical health issue and have lobbied hard. We have seen some positive supports put in place at the HIV Clinic, but we are still without a specialist.

The picture on the front cover of this report is entitled Walk in Our Shoes. The art work was designed by Don Short (Program Coordinator at ACNL), and won a national competition, to be used across the country for the 2009 Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life. It depicts the ongoing hope of the “red ribbon” highway as it winds through a Canadian landscape to reach a brighter horizon. The road starts as a lace from the walking shoe which represents the commitment of those who participate in the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life. It ends as the official red ribbon ... suspended above the sunrise. The image is intended to invigorate a renewal of hope and purpose of the AIDS Walk for Life—to identify with those who are living with HIV/AIDS by walking along the red ribbon highway in support and encouragement.

The SWAP Program has expanded to meet demands for service within the community, to the point of Fran moving into the role of Outreach Worker with SWAP. We recognize that there is need for education and support services in other parts of the province, and are in discussions about trying to expand further to other regions.

We have seen a broadening of the distribution of resource materials throughout the province: newsletters, pamphlets, manuals and flyers. Some are mailed, some distributed on-site, some handed out during outreach presentations and a growing number circulated through the web.

We see people here every day. Sometimes it is in search of a safe place to stay, access to resources and information, or in search of a comforting conversation.

We have had symposiums and rallies, funerals and celebrations. Sometimes the turnout is less than hoped for, and sometimes it has been very encouraging. While we report in numbers and figures, we know too that every individual opportunity to support, educate and promote is embraced.

As always there are challenges ahead, and we will continue to work with you all and one another to do our best to meet our goals.

Christopher Pickard
Mission Statement
Through the development and implementation of diverse programs and services, we aim to:

- Prevent the spread of new infection through education
- Provide support to those individuals already infected/affected
- Network with other groups working in AIDS related areas on a regional, provincial, national and international level
- Advocate for social and political change

Philosophy
ACNL believes in and encourages social and political advocacy to ensure individual and collective right to non-judgmental education and support, thus encouraging responsible decision-making and personal empowerment.

Vision Statement
ACNL is a consumer-focused, non-profit organization that provides supportive programs and services aimed at preventing HIV/AIDS and supporting persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. We work on a collaborative basis with our partners, interested groups and stakeholders to achieve our goals. We demonstrate accountability by ensuring a competent, effective and transparent organization.

ACNL Project Objectives
- To increase availability of and access to health promotion services and treatment information for PHAs and their caregivers
- To increase targeted services to women living with HIV/AIDS
- To liaise with community and government service providers in order to enhance the provision of services to PHA and those at risk
- To increase prevention education and awareness opportunities for the general public.
- To develop a peer based education and support program for PHA
- To affect positive policy changes within community and government
- To provide capacity building opportunities within ACNL for board, staff and volunteers
- To ensure the meaningful involvement of priority populations in organizational development
- Seek new partnerships and maintain existing partnerships with groups who work with priority populations
- To provide supportive housing and short term shelter at the Tommy Sexton Centre.
- Provision of 6 safe affordable housing apartments for people living with HIV/AIDS
- Administration of the PHA Health Fund
- Offer PHA Skills Building Opportunities
SWAP – Safe Works Access Program

Protect Yourself from HIV and Hepatitis Infection:

• HIV and Hepatitis B & C can be transmitted from one infected person to another through shared needles and other injection equipment.

• SWAP provides services and information needed to help prevent harms that can result from injecting drugs, tattooing, piercing and other activities that can be risky.

Some of the risks related to injecting drugs:

• HIV
• Hepatitis C
• Other infections, including: Hepatitis A or B, abscesses, endocarditis and blood poisoning (just to name a few)
• Cotton Fever
• Dirty Hits
• Overdose

SWAP Services:
SWAP services are done in a private, confidential area where individuals can access or exchange needles and other injection equipment. We provide the tools and information required to reduce the risk of harm related to injection drug use, including

• New needles
• Safe Disposal of used needles
• Filters
• Alcohol prep-pads
• Sterile water
• Vitamin C
• Safer using & vein care info
• Access to testing
• Access to Hepatitis A and B vaccine
• Information on HIV
• Information on Hepatitis B & C
• Condoms & Lubrication
• Support and referrals
• Mobile Outreach Services
Some of the Challenges

Eastern Health announced in November of 2008 that the only Infectious Disease Specialist in the province would be leaving as of March 2009. The impact of this on people living with HIV/AIDS has been profound and very real. ACNL has taken on the role to advocate for our clients and others who are also impacted as patients of the HIV Clinic. What began with letters of support, developed into a full media campaign, and very public and private approach to tactful lobbying. While project activities continued, staff, volunteers and clients put in a lot of time towards this critical issue.

We have been taking advantage of every opportunity to provide information and education to the public, to policy makers, to health care professionals, to individuals living with specific diseases, to people who face specific risk factors. This has been done through extended media interviews and articles, and through opportunities to sit down and have open and frank discussions with the Ministry of Health, members of Eastern Health, Community Partners, PHAs and other community members.

We have committed to keeping this issue topical and on the minds of government and community and will continue to advocate until two Infectious Disease Specialists are hired.

Resources
We are very fortunate to have had the support of The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) as a key funder of operational costs. Representatives of PHAC have been very committed in providing their support on a regular basis. The challenge that lies ahead is ensuring that we are able to secure funding beyond March 31st, 2010. We are part of a National Lobby Group that has been actively connecting with regional and national health ministries, and we are hopeful that a continued commitment to AIDS Serving Organizations across the country will be forthcoming.

Stigma and Discrimination:
Stigma and discrimination constitute one of the greatest barriers to prevention and providing adequate care, support and treatment for people affected by HIV/AIDS. It exists in workplaces, media and the health care field -- and in our families and communities.

What can we do?
- Continue to raise information about HIV in all areas (schools, government, community) both formally and informally to help people exchange thoughts, feelings and experiences regarding HIV/AIDS
- Outreach about HIV with groups inside classrooms and workplaces
- Promoting meetings with people affected by HIV/AIDS where they can be able to share their experiences and feelings about stigma and discrimination.

"We can fight stigma. Enlightened laws and policies are key. But it begins with openness, the courage to speak out. Schools should teach respect and understanding. Religious leaders should preach tolerance. The media should condemn prejudice and use its influence to advance social change, from securing legal protections to ensuring access to health care."

~ Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations
Supports

What are our greatest supports? Clearly it is the people we help serve and work with. It is the people who work hard as staff and volunteers within our organization and with partners. Some of these include:

- ACNL Volunteers -- Over 50 Volunteers for day-to-day operations and for special events:
  - Supportive Services
  - Outreach
  - Governance
  - Special Events
  - Fundraising
  - Student Placements

Board of Directors

- ACNL Board of Directors is comprised of a balanced group of people with representation from health care field (nurses and doctors), and with people living with HIV/AIDS.

Partnerships

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
  - Human Resources Labor and Employment
  - Eastern Health
- Memorial University
  - School of Medicine
  - School of Nursing
  - School of Social Work
  - School of Pharmacy
  - Hope
- RAAN
- RAFT
- CTAC
- CATIE
- CASEY
- Positive People’s Network
- Salvation Army – Wiseman Centre
- College of the North Atlantic
- CompuCollege
- Community Youth Network
- Choices For Youth
- SJHHN
- AIRN
- ICAD
- St. John’s Native Friendship Centre
- OAN
- Labrador Friendship Centre
- Coalition Against Violence
- Canadian AIDS Society (CAS)
- United Way of Avalon
- Ontario HIV Treatment Network
- HIV Edmonton
- RAAN ASO's
- OXFAM
- Stella Burry Community Services
Services

Who have we worked with this year?

Target Populations

- Injection Drug Users
- Sex Trade Workers
- Youth
- Gay Youth
- Gay Men
- Homeless Men and Women
- People living with HIV
- Newly diagnosed people (HIV/Hepatitis C)
- Women

Professionals

- Social Workers
- Nurses
- Media
- Physicians
- Politicians and government workers
- Youth service workers
- Community service workers

Policy Makers

- St. John's Housing and Homelessness Committee
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Health, Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment, Department of Education)
- Substance Use Strategy
- CASEY (Coalition Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth)

Students

- Students (secondary and post-secondary)
- Health-Care Students (nursing, medical school, massage therapists, social workers, child and youth care)

Specific Services

- Toll free 24 hour crisis line
- Specific programs for PHAs
- Tommy Sexton Shelter
- Apartments for PHAs
- Education/outreach sessions at other homeless shelters and communities
- Information exchange at conferences and with partners
- Newsletter and regular information exchange to PHAs and partners
- Mobile Needle Exchange Services
Reaching Out – Out-Reaching

ACNL has the experience and expertise to provide HIV prevention & Hepatitis C education services across Newfoundland and Labrador. ACNL arranges educational sessions for schools and community groups that focus on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C prevention, sexuality, HIV testing and healthy relationships. As well, we work with employers and organizations to provide training and help develop workplace policies.

✓ ACNL information booths at various community events. (1500 est)
✓ Support to families (PHAs)
✓ Regular outreach to partner organizations on issues around HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and Risk Factors
✓ Ongoing support to residents of Tommy Sexton Centre

✓ Members of ACNL sit on advisory committees, assist with hiring, selection and training of volunteers, development of resource materials and advocacy within the community (ie. Provincial Substance Use Strategy Working Group, the Addictions Treatment Services Association, Opiod Treatment Service Community Advisory Committees, RAAN, AIRN, CTAC…)

✓ SWAP provides needle exchange, condoms, information, support and referrals to people who use drugs and are engaged in high risk activity

✓ ACNL provides student placements for various programs and disciplines. During the past 6 months, ACNL provided learning opportunities for students in nursing, social work, child and youth care and community studies programs. Placements lasted 4-10 weeks

✓ A four bed, short term shelter for men and women (ages 16-65) in need of emergency or short term shelter. PHAs are given priority

✓ The PHA Supportive Housing Program has 6 self-contained apartments that provide safe, affordable housing and supports to PHAs

✓ PHA Health Fund provides emergency and health related services

✓ Presentations to schools and community groups about HIV/AIDS prevention, information (2800 est)

✓ Support service for PHAs (Peer Support and Training), and to people at risk through outreach service within community (300 est)

Estimate over 600 referrals for services:
- Treatment (Addiction services, testing, methadone maintenance, counseling…)
- Social Services (Clothing, food, shelter, children…)
- Personal support Services (Transportation, home care, recreation…)
- Legal Advocacy (Employment Equity, Human Rights…)

Distribution of over 5000 pamphlets, brochures, newsletters, manuals, training materials

35 media pieces
Housing

The PHA Supportive Housing Program provides an ideal opportunity to monitor changes in access to health services.

Through the PHA Supportive Housing program, staff measure increases in knowledge about care, treatment and support options. An initial intake procedure involves asking the individual to rate their perceived level of knowledge about care, treatment and support, what additional knowledge they require and what supports could be established to facilitate this knowledge acquisition. Since the centre opened in 2006, 85% of PHA residents have reported increased knowledge in one or more areas of care, treatment and support.

Ongoing support is provided to residents of the Supportive Housing program.

Intake and discharge evaluation is conducted with all residents of the Short Term Shelter program to assess the level of support they need, what they received, and what changes resulted due to their stay (i.e.: increased access to housing, health information, addiction treatment, etc.)

The Short-term Shelter is in high demand with occupancy rates at 74% and climbing.

- 24-hour-per-day Staffing
- 24-hour Emergency support and crisis contact
- Availability to provide support to clients
- Fully operational kitchen facilities -- 3 meals per day plus snacks
- Personal supports
- Intake Services
- Individual rooms
- Fully wheelchair accessible
- Male and Female ages 16-64
Evaluation and Checking In

✓ ACNL staff held an internal follow-up evaluation meeting to review the methods and tools used to evaluate service access and delivery. A summary contact sheet has been developed for use by each staff to more effectively track all requests for service, referrals, information, etc. This information is incorporated into monthly staff reports to monitor numbers, issues, etc.

✓ Prevention education sessions are evaluated through participant surveys or questionnaires. Participant feedback is analyzed and used to guide the content and delivery of future education initiatives.

✓ Ongoing record keeping has been used for evaluation purposes, including call logs, needle exchange record logs, client files, meeting minutes, and monthly/quarterly staff reports.

✓ Staff and board meetings are held on a regular basis and are key components of program evaluation as they are forums for discussion on programming issues.

✓ The Program Coordinator receives feedback from PHAs during individual phone calls and interviews.

✓ ACNL has agreed to be part of more formal evaluation program linked through the Public Health Agency of Canada.

✓ ACNL has been part of evaluation and profiling of sector in partnership with the St. John's Housing and Homelessness Network

✓ Evaluation continues to be a key component of the short term and supportive housing programs. Both programs receive feedback from residents which is used towards the effective ongoing development of the programs.

Special Event Highlights

✓ World AIDS Day (Tattoo U)
✓ Tommy Sexton Benefit
✓ Candlelight Vigil
✓ PHA Symposium
✓ Staff Training
✓ ScotiaBank AIDS Walk for Life
✓ Regional Education Conference
✓ Christmas hampers
✓ Annual General Meeting