

# reACT-Believe

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay  
Fall, 1996 Volume 9, Issue 3



## National AIDS Awareness Week! September 30 - October 6, 1996 Theme: Substance Use and HIV/AIDS



The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay will participate in National AIDS Awareness week activities and events from September 30 - October 6, 1996. The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness about the relationship between substance use - which includes alcohol and other drugs - and HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has generated a whole new set of challenges when it comes to the issue of substance use. The direct harms associated with drug injection in particular and the indirect harms associated with substance use overall have greatly increased since the appearance of HIV.

If you are, or know someone who...

- ♦ drank too much alcohol or smoked too much pot at a party one night and then engaged in unprotected sex...
- ♦ has not talked to their kids about the risks of substance use, unprotected sex and HIV/AIDS..
- ♦ does not have access to bleach or new needles...
- ♦ uses dirty needles to inject alcohol so that it won't be detected on the breath...

- ♦ thinks that steroids are different from other drugs and uses dirty needles...
- ♦ is unaware of the risks of substance use and unprotected sex...
- ♦ is afraid to seek help for drug addiction due to the stigma attached to it...



- ♦ has a partner who uses injection drugs and refuses to use a condom during sex...

*...then HIV/AIDS could affect you.* (continued on page 4...)

## AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay Membership Renewal Notice!

Our Annual General meeting will be held in November. In order to be an eligible voting member, you must have a valid membership 30 days prior to the meeting. Please help to make us strong. Renew your membership today!

Memberships only cost \$10.00. Use the handy form on the last page of the Newsletter to renew.



## Under our Cover...

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Insert



# AIDS Awareness Week

## Schedule of Events

(as of August 30, 1996)

Sunday, September 29

AIDS Walk  
Lakehead University Outpost  
Registration: 12:00 Noon  
Opening Ceremony and 5 km. Walk: 1:00 p.m.  
Entertainment and food to follow

Monday, September 30

Tree Planting Ceremony  
Marina Park: 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, October 1

Information Display  
Lakehead University Agora  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Workshop "Substance Use and HIV"  
Lakehead University Residence,  
Conference Room A - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Open to the General Public  
Workshop at the Smith Clinic (details TBA)

Wednesday, October 2

Shaw Cable Television - Channel 7  
Live Call-In Show 9:00 p.m.  
Condom Blitz - Sharkey's Pub  
Confederation College - Evening

Thursday, October 3

"Opening More Doors" Regional Counselling  
Conference, Prince Arthur Hotel, begins at noon  
Candlelight Vigil 7:00 p.m. Prince Arthur Hotel  
Condom Blitz - Lakehead University Outpost  
Evening

Friday, October 4

"Opening More Doors" Regional Counselling  
Conference

Saturday, October 5

Community Dance for Lesbians, Gays,  
Bisexuals and friends, St. John  
Ambulance 518 Fort William Road - 9:00 p.m.

Information Displays will be up at Confederation College and Intercity Shopping Centre during the week. Call the office (345-1516) for details.

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# "Opening More Doors"

## NW Ontario Regional HIV/AIDS Counselling Conference

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During AIDS Awareness Week, The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay will host its fifth annual regional counselling conference, "Opening More Doors". Registrants from across Northwestern Ontario will have the opportunity to network with colleagues and learn more about working with individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

The conference will be held on October 3 and 4, 1996 at the Prince Arthur Hotel. Funding has been provided by the Ontario AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health.

In the past four years, the counselling conference has been a popular and successful venture. The participants have been impressed with the quality of the presentations as well as the knowledge of the facilitators. The networking has proven a valuable tool in our regional work.

A wide variety of topics will be addressed during this conference. They include:

- ♦ Barriers facing individuals in Northwestern Ontario:/ Issues relating to smaller centers, rural life, confidentiality, anonymity, etc.
- ♦ Issues relating to dying, death and the grieving process.
- ♦ Counselling family members of someone with HIV/AIDS
- ♦ Issues relating to youth: peer pressure, sexuality and STD's.
- ♦ Issues regarding wills and funeral arrangements.
- ♦ Drugs, alcohol and other chemical dependencies as they relate to HIV.
- ♦ Counselling native populations.

If you would like more information about the conference please call Karen Ferland at 345-1516 or 768-0699 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



### It's Not Too Late!

The Federal Government's National AIDS Strategy ends in March 1998. This strategy spells out the role and responsibility of the Federal government in responding to HIV and AIDS in Canada, including the delivery of funds to community based AIDS organizations. Please write to your Member of Parliament, calling for a renewal of the National Strategy in support of national research funding and local community activities.

Stan Dromisky, M.P.  
(Thunder Bay-Atikokan)  
1500 S. James Street  
Thunder Bay ON P7E 6N7  
Fax: 577-1905

Joe Comuzzi, M.P.  
(Thunder Bay-Nipigon)  
180 Park Avenue, Suite 210  
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6J4  
Fax: 345-4752

# Get To Know More About Drugs,

(continued from front cover....)

All communities are affected by substance use - but in different ways. Needle and syringe sharing among people who inject drugs is a major factor in the spread of HIV. According to the World Health Organization, people who use dirty needles to inject drugs are the second largest, and in some places, the fastest growing group of AIDS cases in developed countries.

Although alcohol consumption and non-injection drug use do not directly affect the spread of HIV, there are many indirect impacts associated with their use. Being under the influence of a substance may lower inhibitions or impair perceptions of danger, making unprotected sex seem less risky.

The above risk factors may seem obvious. Not so obvious, however, are the underlying reasons why people turn to drugs and alcohol in the first place. This campaign explores how self-esteem and depression can lead to both excessive substance use and unprotected sex. As well, the campaign tries to break down some of the stigmas that surround both substance use and HIV/AIDS. Failure to respect the rights and dignity of people who use drugs may promote the hidden use of drugs and impair our efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

IN THUNDER BAY CALL

**The  
Exchange**



- Needles/Syringe Exchange
- HIV/AIDS Education
- Counselling & Referral
- Condoms
- Bleach Kits

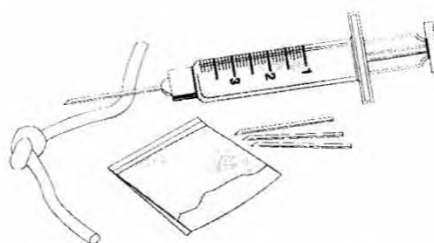
Phone: 625-9767      Pager: 626-7308 (Janet)  
626-7507 (Don)

## THE LINKS

The three main links between substance use and HIV/AIDS involve:

- ♦ needle sharing,
- ♦ impaired judgment or heightened sex drive due to drug use; and
- ♦ cultural expectations people have around sex and drugs, especially alcohol.

## Injection Drug Use and HIV/AIDS



Needle and syringe sharing among people who use injection drugs is a major vehicle for the spread of HIV. Sharing needles allows HIV to pass directly from the bloodstream of one person to the bloodstream of someone else. When an individual injects drugs, some blood gets pulled back in the needle and syringe. The blood left in the needle and syringe is shot into the bloodstream of the next person who uses it. If the equipment is not sterilized with bleach before it is shared and one of the individuals is already infected with HIV, the virus is very likely to be passed on.

When the virus is present among drug injectors, and when unsterilized injection equipment is shared, the spread of HIV infection can be very rapid indeed. In Milan, Edinburgh, and New York, the prevalence of HIV infection (the percentage of people with HIV) among drug injectors grew rapidly, with 50 percent or more infected within a few years of the first appearance of the virus in these populations.

(Source: Addiction Research Foundation and the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS.)

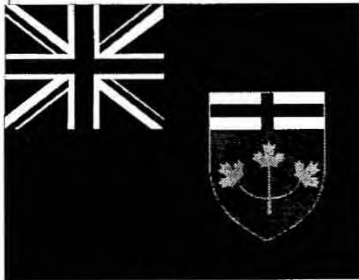
*Dryden and District  
AIDS Committee*

*Longlac Community  
Health Centre*

*Recently in  
the News. . .*

# *Regional News*

*Many groups and individuals from around Northwestern Ontario are involved in AIDS work. If you would like to promote your organization or activities, submit your articles to reACT-Believe for inclusion in our next newsletter. The next publication is scheduled to be in your mailbox at the beginning of December.*



ONTARIO

*The "Opening More  
Doors" Counselling  
Conference is a regional  
initiative. Have you  
registered yet?*

## *Dryden AIDS Committee Up and Running!*

by Kevin Crigger  
Chairman, Dryden &  
District AIDS Committee

Dryden Ontario is now offering support services for persons affected by HIV/AIDS!

The Dryden and District AIDS Committee has been operating officially for about a year. The directors have volunteered countless hours from their own busy schedules to organize functions which promote AIDS awareness and education in Dryden and in the surrounding communities.

On September 29, 1996, we will be hosting our second annual AIDS Walk: A Walk For Life.

We would like to extend an invitation to all of our neighbours in Northwestern Ontario to join us in this event.

If you would like more details regarding the walk, or about our services, please leave a message at 1 - 807 - 221 - AIDS (2437). All messages are confidential.

## *Longlac Community Health Centre*

My name is Louise Marcil. I am a volunteer with the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay and have been for four years. Presently, I live in Longlac and work at the Longlac Community Health Centre in Health Promotion.

My role is to facilitate presentations for any size of group and to access material and resources regarding HIV/AIDS related issues. I also offer short term counselling and ongoing support to individuals and/or family members who are affected by HIV/AIDS. As part of the health care team at the Health Centre, I am able to provide referrals to our primary care physicians for medical support.

NOTE: Primary care services are limited to clients within our catchment area: Longlac, Caramat, Long Lake Reserve #58 and Ginoogaming First Nations. All other services are available to anyone who comes in or calls the health centre. I am also available to travel to Geraldton.

If you are in the area and require information, support or a liaison to ACT-B, please call me at (807)876-4887.

## *Recently in the News. . .*

Taken from Thunder Bay's Chronicle Journal, Monday August 24, 1996

### **AIDS grows among natives**

*Numbers approach epidemic proportions across Canada*

by Warren Goulding  
The Canadian Press

Canada's aboriginal people are waging a losing battle against AIDS and health professionals say the situation is approaching epidemic proportions.

Official statistics show the aboriginal rate of infection far exceeds that of mainstream society. But natives who work with AIDS victims say even those numbers are low.

Between five and seven per cent of Alberta's 140,000 aboriginals, including Metis, may be infected, said Jo-Anne Daniels of Edmonton's Feather of Hope Aboriginal AIDS Preventions Society.

Some reserves and tribal groups in British Columbia have rates of infection approaching 10 per cent - 100 times the rate in the overall Canadian population, said Rod George of Healing Our Spirit, a B.C. group working with infected natives.

Health Canada estimates that one in 1,000 Canadians is infected with HIV, the virus that can lead to AIDS.

"In one study, we found that one of the tribal groups with about 7,000 members had a 10-per-cent infection rate," George said. "That's 700 people in one tribal group."

Eighteen AIDS-related deaths have been reported in the group so far in 1996.

George said the infection is most widespread among B.C. natives. The problem is particularly acute in Vancouver's downtown east side where three people are diagnosed with the virus each week.

"I think the younger generation seems to feel invincible to it," he said. "They seem to have the idea that only gay people or needle users are going to get it."

Denial is a major problem among many aboriginals. George's study revealed half of native women refuse to be tested for HIV or won't reveal test results.

An estimated 600 native women in B.C. are HIV positive, said George. "Many of them don't say anything for fear of abuse, violence or being ostracized or shunned - things that native communities do."

AIDS activists in other provinces are discovering similar trends and patterns of denial and discrimination.

"It's a disease that's killing our children," said Daniels in Edmonton. "It's claiming our future and our past at the same time. We're in a lot of trouble."

As of January, Health Canada statistics show 176 reported AIDS cases among aboriginal people, or 1.4 per cent of the total number of cases.

Health Canada researchers blame unprotected sex and injection drug use as the leading causes of the high infection rate among natives.



*AIDS is a global epidemic. We ARE  
affected in Northwestern Ontario.*

# Alcohol, Sex and HIV/AIDS

People who use injection drugs and share unclean needles are at great risk of being infected with HIV.

## Some Facts To Consider

- ♦ As of April 1996, 1047 AIDS cases in Canada could be attributed to injection drug use. Of these, 484 cases (354 men and 130 women) could be directly attributed to injecting drugs, and 563 cases involved men who have sex with men and who also use injection drugs.
- ♦ Of the total adults in Canada with AIDS, 3.6% have identified their only risk factor as injection drug use. Another 4.2% of those people with AIDS identify two possible risk factors - injection drug use and being a man who has sex with men. Therefore, the proportion of AIDS cases in which injection drug use is a factor is 7.8% - almost double what it was before 1987 when it was 4%. Because the epidemic among injection drug users in Canada is in its early stages, we can expect the proportion of injection drug user cases among all AIDS cases in Canada to increase over the coming years.
- ♦ The incidence of HIV among injection drug users in Montreal is estimated to be five new infections per 100 users per year, *which is one of the highest rates in North America.*
- ♦ Since 1994 in Vancouver, there has been a steady increase from 2% to 6% in the proportion of injection drug users who test positive for HIV (among those who go for HIV testing).

(Sources: Health Canada's Laboratory Centre for Disease Control: Second National Workshop on HIV, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use Proceedings, 1994: Horizons 1994: Alcohol and Other Drug Use in Canada, Health Canada and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse)

## Alcohol, Other Drugs and HIV/AIDS

The role that alcohol use may be playing in the spread of HIV infection has received relatively little attention in Canada. We know that alcohol and sexual risk often coincide - in terms of venues, opportunities for sexual encounters and in terms of individual behaviour. Studies in various populations have found correlations between alcohol use and sexual risk. Interestingly though, many researchers now think that our cultural expectations around alcohol and sex are more important than the physical effects of the substance.

Generating dialogue on this issue is extremely important. People need to explore their own thinking about alcohol and sex and to what extent we are all influenced by social attitudes.

Some studies say that there is a correlation between substance use and the practice of unsafe sex. Others contend that there are other contributing factors such as poverty, racism, lack of education, misogyny, internalized homophobia, etc.

## Other links

- ♦ Research has indicated that alcohol, as well as street drugs, damage the immune system, leaving the user open to infection and disease.
- ♦ The cause of AIDS is a type of virus (called a retrovirus) which changes the structure of the cells it attacks. It may require the presence of an already damaged immune system before it can cause disease.

(Source: "Alcohol drugs and AIDS: what's the connection?", San Francisco AIDS Foundation.)



# The AIDS Walk



**AIDS WALK CANADA**  
**A PLEDGE IS THE FIRST STEP**

## **Imagine**

if something you do every day could help fight AIDS.

## **Like walking for instance!**

Sunday, September 29th, starting from the Outpost at Lakehead University, the people of Thunder Bay will walk a 5 kilometer course and return to the Outpost for refreshments and entertainment.

## **As never before we need your help.**

Though there is some hope in the treatment of AIDS, that will not stop it from spreading. The trend in Thunder Bay parallels national patterns with people becoming infected at a median age of 23. This means that many are becoming infected three to five years before that. We cannot become complacent now. So join us on Sunday September 29th.

Before you Walk, collect as many pledges as you can. Think of a friend you would like to walk with and ask if they would also collect pledges. Call the office and let us register you as an official pledge collector for the AIDS Walk.

On the same day over 60 communities across Canada will also be walking. Last year over \$2,500,000 was raised to help the fight against AIDS in 40 communities.

## **All money raised in Thunder Bay will stay here!**

First prize for most pledges collected is a trip for two to Toronto and accommodations at the Toronto Colony Hotel. Other prizes include massage gift certificates by Jeannie Tuomi and Kathryn Loftus and one nights accommodation at the Nor'Wester Hotel.

Locally, the Walk is sponsored by 94 FM, the Argus, Canadian Airlines, Domino's Pizza, The Finnish Bookstore, Janzen's Pharmacy, Lakehead Travel Agency, Kathryn Loftus RMT, MDS Laboratories, McEachern Marketing, Mediacom, Molson, North Algoma Confectionery (442 N. Algoma St.), Nor'Wester Resort Hotel, The Outpost Pub, Rainbow Printers, Toronto Colony Hotel and Jeannie Tuomi RMT.

Call the AIDS Committee office for more information - 345-1516.



# Potpourri



## For Gus

*Just to hold you and kiss you like I've  
done so many times ago.  
To feel loved and needed.  
I know that someday these feelings will be  
mine once again.*

*Just to have said good-bye to you.  
Like you wanted to and I needed to do so  
badly.*

*I love you very much and I always will.  
Forever you will be in my thoughts.*

*Day, every waking moment.  
When I look around and think you're  
there.  
I will picture you smiling, with arms open  
wide.*

*Night, When I turn in my bed and find  
only emptiness.*

*I will wish you there with me.*

*To hold you once again and whisper in  
your ear.*

*My dear sweet man,  
I'll see you on the other side.*

Jeff

## Cheesecake Challenge a Success!



Thank you to all the businesses and individuals who entered our first annual Cheesecake Bake-Off. The 31 entries were delicious! Special thanks go to Anne Ciemny and Christa Alsch for their invaluable organizational skills. Thanks also to Stokes, Zellers & Coles's Book Store for their generous donation of prizes. We gratefully acknowledge our judges - Brenda Jakubowski, Floranne Faulkner and Andy Weiler.

*We gratefully acknowledge a grant from the Norman M. Paterson Charitable Foundation toward the purchase of a new agency vehicle.*

## Up Coming Events

On October 26, 1996, the trio *Broadway Bound!* will be hosting a benefit concert for the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. Featured music will include show tunes from "Les Miserables", "Crazy for You", "Miss Saigon", "Showboat" and dozens more. The concert will take place at St. Paul's United Church, 349 Waverley Street at 8:00 p.m. Tickets: \$10.00

ACT-B and Definitely Superior present an evening with performance artist David McLean. "*Dysfunctional Travelogue*" is a solo performance which explores issues of gay identity, male intimacy, spiritual searching, desire and loss in the midst of the AIDS era. The performance will be held November 29, 1996, 8:00 p.m. at a location TBA. Tickets are \$5 for students, ACT-B & Definitely Superior members. \$10 general admission.

*Tickets for both events will be available at the ACT-B office  
217 South Algoma Street. Information? 345-1516*

# Parting Glance



The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay acknowledges and thanks our various funders:

- Ontario Ministry of Health - AIDS Bureau
- Health Promotion and Programs Branch, Ontario Region, Health Canada



- Thunder Bay WINS!
- All of the people involved in general fund raising and the support of many local businesses and individuals.

The opinions and medical information offered by "reACT-Believe" are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the staff and Board of

Directors of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay. Medical information offered should be used at your own discretion. Please consult your doctor.

Please address any comments or concerns to

**reACT-Believe**

P.O. Box 24025

Downtown North Postal Outlet

Thunder Bay ON P7A 8A9

(807) 345-1516

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I want to become a member of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay!

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my \$10.00 Membership fee.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to be a Supporting Member. I have enclosed \$25.00.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to make a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name:

Address:

City, Province & P.C.:

Telephone:

✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕

## ACT-B Advisory Council

|                  |                                                                |
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| Nicky Tittley    | Safety Coordinator, Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, Port Arthur |
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## reACT-Believe Contributors

Jo-Ann Jacomb Editor  
 ACT-B staff and volunteers  
 Typing by Anne Ciemny and Jason