

The
Newsletter of
The AIDS
Committee of
Thunder Bay

re-ACT Believe

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Spring 2002

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Have You Signed the Petition?

Please come into the ACT-B office and sign the petition asking the federal government to increase funding for the Canadian AIDS Strategy to fight HIV/AIDS. We need your signature. Petition forms are at the reception desk.

Fighting for More Funds: CCORA

On January 30, 2002 the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay [ACT-B] took part in the launch of a new national network - the Canadian Coalition of Organizations Responding to AIDS [CCORA]. ACT-B is a founding member of CCORA.

CCORA has one goal: to pressure the Federal Government to increase funding for HIV/AIDS.

Federal financial support flows through the Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS. The Canadian Strategy funds everything the Federal government does in response to AIDS: research, national partnerships - like the Canadian AIDS Society - the Federal bureaucracy responding to AIDS and community based work through its AIDS Community Action Program [ACAP]. The amount is \$42.2 million dollars.

The Federal funding has not changed since 1994 - when Brian Mulroney was still Prime Minister.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Canada [and the world] is, however, unstable and constantly changing. In 1990 there were approximately 30,000 Canadians living with HIV/AIDS. Today there are 50,000. There are approximately 11 new cases of HIV transmission each day in Canada. HIV has moved rapidly into some of the most vulnerable groups in our communities - many struggling to meet the basic needs of daily living, let alone the added challenges and costs of living with HIV.

CCORA has attracted broad-based membership from across the country. It includes community-based groups like ACT-B, as well as researchers, professional organizations and people living with HIV/AIDS. CCORA has developed an advocacy strategy. Locally, this includes making our case to our two Federal MP's - Stan Dromisky and Joe Comuzzi, as well as collecting signatures on a public petition. To date, we have collected more than 1,500 names and we want more. If you have not signed one of our petitions, please call our office or drop in and add your name to a petition at our front desk.

While there is no cure for HIV/AIDS, it remains 100% treatable and 100% preventable. The Federal government must increase its support, so that all of us can do the work that needs to be done.

FUN-raising Events May to September 2002



***Spring Cleaning
means.....
Time to get rid
of odds & ends***

Your donated household and other items can help us raise funds for our programs and services. All types of donations accepted such as dishes, knickknacks, crafts supplies, vintage coats, games, movies, books, etc. We appreciate the items that you are able to donate but reserve the right to not accept items we feel will not sell. **Donations will be accepted until May 27th.**

To arrange for a pickup or drop-off of items please call Crystal at 345-1516

Yard Sale Dates:
June 1st & August 17th
St. John's Anglican Church, 226 Pearl St.



Cash Register Receipts

AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay is collecting A&P cash register receipts as a new fundraising initiative. ACT-B will receive \$1.00 for every \$450.00 in cash register tapes collected.

**Start collecting receipts
& help raise funds for ACT-B!**

Tapes can be dropped off at the office, 217 S. Algoma St.



Taking steps across Thunder Bay...

AIDS Walk Canada

Sunday, September 22, 2002

Join us in making our local Walk another success!

Pledge forms and team packages are available at the office.

The behind the scenes crew needs YOU!

If you have a few hours of spare time & would like to help organize this annual event... Join the Walk Committee.
Call Crystal at 345-1516 for further information.

A PROJECT OF

Canadian AIDS
Society



in partnership with community AIDS
organizations across Canada

Membership - Supporting our programs and services

Our membership symbolises the support and strength ACT-B has in the community. As a member, you have shared in our growth and many accomplishments. We want to continue to grow and share our success by encouraging others to join the team.

Your membership fee contributes to the Emergency Financial Assistance Program. Every dollar that is contributed to this fund goes directly to helping people with HIV/AIDS and their families.

As a member you have a voice in the future direction of the agency by supporting the aims, goals and objectives of ACT-B. If you would like to take an active role in the agency's growth, you are eligible to stand for nomination to the Board of Directors, as well as the option of nominating and electing others. As a special bonus, all members receive our reACT-Believe newsletter providing up-to-date information on HIV/AIDS, treatment and notices about fundraising and special events.

With your assistance, we can help our membership grow. Share with others what it means to be a member of ACT-B and how your membership directly helps people in our community with HIV/AIDS.

For further information, please call Crystal at 345-1516.



Please make your cheque payable to:
AIDS Committee
of Thunder Bay
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 24025
Thunder Bay ON
P7A 8A9
Phone: 345-1516
Fax: 345-2505

Charitable Registration
106689847 RR001

Yes, I want to be a member of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (Work) _____ (Home) _____

E-mail address: _____

Basic Membership: ☐

Supporting Membership: ☐

I would also like to donate: \$ _____

When calling, do you prefer we use discretion?	Yes	No
Would you like to receive information by e-mail?	Yes	No
Would like to become a volunteer of ACT-B?	Yes	No

EDUCATION UPDATE

David Belrose. Education Coordinator

FINDINGS FROM THE IMAGE PROJECT

In our newsletter of June 2001, I reported on the Image Project that was underway. Since then, the surveys were completed, data has been analyzed, and steps have been taken to follow through on the project. Some of the developments that have resulted from the project are as follows:

- We used survey results in the creating of a prevention project funding proposal.
- A new agency name and logo are undergoing focus testing at this time.
- We have developed a communication plan for the agency.
- A marketing strategy will feature messages influenced by the results of the surveys; for example, correct information on disease and modes of transmission, social attitudes, and agency services.
- Education and training sessions will emphasize some of the areas highlighted by the survey results, as above.
- This project was a good example of collaborative community-based research in action, with the involvement of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay, CLEAR (Community-Linked Evaluation AIDS Research) at McMaster University, Lakehead University Social Work Department, and McEachern Marketing.
- The project was selected for a poster presentation at the Canadian Association for HIV/AIDS Research (CAHR) Conference in Winnipeg, April 24-28, 2002.

Here are some of the highlights and results from the surveys.

Purpose of the study

To use an outreach/needs assessment approach to determine community perceptions and needs, and to determine community knowledge about the agency and its services.

Specific study questions were:

1. What are the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about HIV/AIDS in the general community and high-risk groups (youth, bar frequenters, aboriginal youth)?
2. What is the knowledge about ACTB and the services it provides and its importance to the community?

Methods

This was a survey that was conducted in two parts: over a five week period by outreach (going into bars, bus stations, malls, campuses), and by telephone.

Results

Characteristics of the Sample:

- a total of 467 participants completed the survey (397 by outreach, 70 by telephone)
- no statistically significant differences in responses to the knowledge and attitude questionnaires, the groups were collapsed and analyzed together
- participants in the outreach survey had fewer males, were younger; fewer working full-time, and lower educational levels -to be expected as aimed at a younger population

- the majority of the sample were young (49% age 14-24, 21% age 25-34); and more females (273) participated compared to males (192)

Knowledge of HIV/AIDS

- basic transmission was well understood (99% for unprotected sexual intercourse and 98% for sharing needles)
- 68% did not know that AIDS can damage the brain
- 36.8% did not know that AIDS is a collection of diseases that happen after a person has been infected with HIV
- 19.1% did not know that there are medications available that can lengthen the life of a person infected with HIV
- 24.2% thought that there is currently a vaccine available to the public to protect against infection with HIV
- 22.9% thought HIV could be passed by sharing plates, forks, and glasses with some one with HIV
- 49.7% thought HIV could be transmitted by mosquitoes and other insects
- 36.4% thought HIV could be passed by kissing someone with HIV on the mouth
- 28.3% felt that they could get HIV by being cared for by a nurse, doctor, dentist and other healthcare worker with HIV.

Attitudes and beliefs

- most respondents indicated positive attitudes and beliefs
- 44.5% indicated everyone should be forced to be tested for HIV
- 29.8% indicated persons with HIV should be reported to the authorities
- 26.2% felt that needle/syringe exchanges should not be promoted to reduce the risk of HIV transmission.
- When asked whether they thought they were at risk of becoming infected with HIV, the greatest number of those indicating yes or not sure is in the younger age groups, with the exception of the 55-64 year olds with 20% indicating being unsure.

Knowledge about AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay

- 67.5% of the total interviewed indicated knew of the agency
- youth (ages 14-24) have less knowledge about the agency
- 82% indicated it was very important, 17% some what important and only 1% indicating it is not at all important to have an ASO in the community
- Knowledge of services with counselling and the HIV/AIDS hot line being the best known and the financial and food bank services being the least well known.
- posters, flyers, newspaper and TV were the most frequently reported methods of hearing about the agency (of the 67.5% who knew of the agency)
- TV, magazines, newspapers and displays in bus shelters were the most frequently reported way of receiving messages about HIV/AIDS

The Extra Mile

News from the Volunteer Department

Selly Pajamaki, Volunteer Coordinator

Here's what's happening in the coming months:
***NOSFA Film Night—May 16**

***Yard Sale—June 1**

***Tag Day—June 29**

***Yard Sale—Aug 17**

***AIDS Walk—Sept 22**

***Opening Doors Conference—Oct**

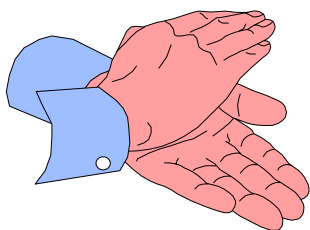
***Visions & Lights Film Festival—Oct 11-13**

***Tag Day—Nov 16**

***AIDS Awareness Week—Nov 24-30**

***World AIDS Day/ Seattle Coffee Day—Dec 1**

If you would like to volunteer for any of these events, please call Selly at 345-1516.



Thank you to all our volunteers!

ACT-B Names 2002 Volunteer of the Year

On Wednesday, April 24, ACT-B held their annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at the Port Arthur Ukrainian Prosvita Hall. Entertainment included "Getting to Know You" bingo, improv comedy by the Wayward Clams, and music and song by Sheila Berry.

Certificates and pins were presented to many long-time volunteers who have volunteered with ACT-B on a continuous basis since first signing up. These included: 10 years—Marge Cross, Marla Hollingsworth, Rob Shepherd; 11 years—Brad Hetsler; 12 years—Sheila Berry, Joanne Books, Anne Ciemny, Denyse Culligan, Mary Lang-Atkinson, Gail Linklater, Sonya Matijek; 13 years—Rick Atkinson, Ida Korhonen; 15 years—Lawrence Korhonen; 16 years—Fred Ball; and 17 years—David Belrose, Michael Sobota.

171 volunteers gave 6,896 hours to ACT-B in 2001. We are proud and happy to have so many wonderful, dedicated people sharing their time and talents with us! Our sincerest thanks to all of you!

Special gifts were presented to groups of volunteers, including receptionists, drivers, bingo workers and bingo bakers.

The highlight of the evening was the naming of the 2002 Volunteer of the Year. That honour was given to Sherry Britton. Sherry has given many hours to the AIDS Committee. She is a board member and serves on committees. She also helps out in Fundraising by working Tag Day, the Yard Sale, the Spaghetti Supper, the AIDS Walk, and at bingo. She also works at display and information tables for us. She is willing to try out just about any task we ask of her. She has a great sense of humour and is a lot of fun to be around. She is also dedicated to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay is very proud to name Sherry Britton as the 2002 Volunteer of the Year!

Here and There...

Our world at a glance

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:



There would be:

57 Asians
 21 Europeans
 14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south
 8 Africans
 52 would be female
 48 would be male
 70 would be non-white
 30 would be white
 70 would be non-Christian
 30 would be Christian
 89 would be heterosexual
 11 would be homosexual
 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all
 6 would be from the United States
 80 would be living in substandard housing
 70 would be unable to read
 50 would suffer from malnutrition
 1 would be near death
 1 would be near birth
 1 would have a college education
 1 would own a computer

The above is taken from the January/February 2002 Transition magazine of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities

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

RPO Downtown North

Thunder Bay, ON P7A 8A9

Or, e-mail us at: actb@tbaytel.net

Visit us on the internet at: www.tbaytel.net/actb

reACT-Believe Newsletter

In order to cut production and mailing costs, we are now posting our newsletter online. It is in Adobe PDF format so it can be read online or printed out in hard copy. If you are now receiving our newsletter by snail mail and you have an email address, PLEASE send us your email address so we can add you to the email newsletter list. This will help reduce costs and allow us to keep producing the newsletter. Send it to actb@tbaytel.net

For Information -

About AIDS or HIV Infection:

Call the AIDS Hotline at 1-800-668-2437

About Superior Points:

Call 624-2005, 625-8830 or 625-8831

About Anonymous HIV Testing in Thunder Bay

Call 625-5981

About Regular HIV Testing

Call the STD Clinics 625-5944 or 622-7585

About Counselling or Referrals

Call the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay 345-1516

About HIV/AIDS Treatment Information

Call Catie (Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange) 1-800-263-1638

Service bilingue disponible

ALL CALLS CONFIDENTIAL

Monday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern Time)

Tuesday to Thursday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Eastern Time)

Friday & Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern Time)

The

Network

1-800-263-1638

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information

email: info@catie.ca

catie

internet: www.catie.ca

Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange

Attention all clients, volunteers and visitors to the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay. We are a 'scent-free' building. Please do not wear colognes, perfumes, aftershave, or scented makeup or hairspray when visiting our premises. They have been known to cause allergic reactions for staff, clients and volunteers.

Parting Glance

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay would like to acknowledge the United Way of Thunder Bay for supporting our Emergency Financial Assistance Program. ACT-B applied for and received funding for this unique program through the United Way's Community Response Grants. This is a wonderful community partnership that in turn will directly help people with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Frequently Asked Questions About HIV/AIDS

Question #1

The difference between HIV and AIDS

AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

AIDS is the advanced stage of the disease caused by HIV. HIV attacks the body's immune system. Over time the immune system is weakened and an HIV-infected person can become sick with different illnesses. The HIV-positive person is then diagnosed with AIDS.

How many AIDS cases?

Up to December 1998, 16,236 people in Canada have been diagnosed with AIDS. This number doesn't include people who are infected with HIV but have not yet become sick.

There have been 11,525 reported deaths attributed to AIDS in Canada.

According to the statistics for AIDS in Canada, fewer people are being diagnosed with AIDS each year. This is probably due to better treatment for HIV-positive people which delays the onset of AIDS.

The number of people dying each year from AIDS-related illnesses is also declining. There has been a 90% drop in the number of reported AIDS-related deaths from 1995 to 1998.

Again, this decline is probably due to better treatments.

New HIV infections

It is difficult to know the exact number of Canadians infected with HIV because many people have not been tested for HIV or have been tested anonymously. The latest research suggests that, up to the end of 1996, there were approximately 40,100 people living with HIV in Canada. Of this number, an estimated 15,000 did not know that they were HIV positive.

Each year in Canada, there are an estimated 4,200 new infections. The nature of the epidemic is changing dramatically. Prior to 1986, 90% of all infections occurred among men who have sex with men. In 1996, new transmissions among men who have sex with men declined to 30% of all new infections. Transmission via injection drug use has increased from 24% in 1986 to 47% in 1996. Prior to 1986, women accounted for only 10% of new transmissions. In 1996, women accounted for 23% of all new infections. In addition more heterosexual males and young people are becoming infected with HIV than ever before.

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Re-ACT-Believe Contributors

Selly Pajamaki Editor
ACT-B staff & volunteers

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 (ACAP)
- All of the people involved in general fundraising and the support of many local businesses and individuals.

A Word or Two from the Health Promoter

(Charlene Burford)

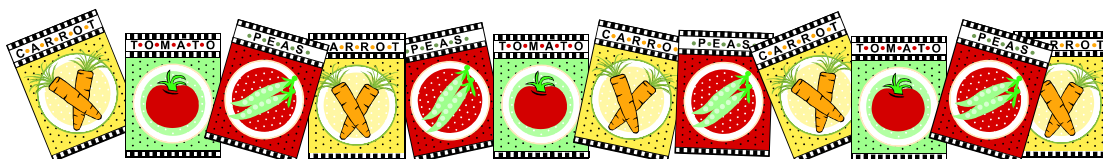
Spring is in the air, then it isn't, then it is again -- ahh, the beauty of the North. The warmer weather brings about plans for the Community Garden. Last year Mother's Cupboard -- the Emergency Food Bank for HIV positive service users -- Committee decided to venture into the earth and grow fresh produce for clients; we used a 15x20 foot plot at the County Park "Our Kids Count" Community Garden. Plenty was learned about gardening and organizing; the people who received the vegetables were ecstatic (no exaggeration -- they were seriously delighted). We have decided to repeat the Garden project this year!

So there's the pitch. And here's the plea. I could use all the help I can get! Anything from seeds to bedding plants, fertilizer to watering cans, gardening wisdom and physical bodies. You got it! I'm looking for volunteers. There will be two "soil prepping" work parties -- Sat., May 11 from 11:00-2:00 and Wed., May 15 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. (if needed); planting will follow the full moon, Mon., May 27 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. and Wed., May 29 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. (if needed). Once the seeds and plants are in the ground, there will be one day a week (later once every second week) that a volunteer is responsible for watering and weeding (1 hr. commitment each day). Children are welcome to accompany and help out. Daytime tending visits to the Garden are totally acceptable.

In fact, the County Park "Our Kids Count" Community Garden creates a summer schedule to notify other members of weekly tending days (i.e. last year, Tuesdays 9:00-12:00). This gives members an opportunity to meet each other and share garden wisdom and experience; people will help each other out in the plots and kids play together. The scheduled meeting days are identified as a courtesy, there is no requirement to attend.

I am very excited to begin the Garden. I hope others will become excited and join this totally satisfying project. Not only do you get to play in the dirt, watch the wee seeds grow into plants, you also get a warm fuzzy feeling knowing how much the fresh vegetables are appreciated. It is difficult to articulate the moment when tomatoes, lettuce or carrots are handed over -- genuine giving.

If you are interested in gardening to help people who are HIV positive (and their family), give Selly (volunteer coordinator) or myself a call at the office (**345-1516**).



A Word or Two from the Health Promoter Con't.

(Charlene Burford)

Qualifier: The information presented is not necessarily the opinions of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay, rather, the article is meant to inform and provoke thought of it's readers.

As I was preparing to write this article, I visited many websites related to alternate health and medical practises. I have come to the conclusion that there are a bazillion sites! Y'all are welcome to forward me the names of reputable "health" related Internet sites that I can use and pass on to the readers.

The flu, the common cold, allergies – these ailments have smacked people of our region. I'm guessing many were given antibiotic or other prescriptions to help them get through or overcome the illness. This got me thinking about western medicine and how quick some doctors are to prescribe a pill or liquid to "get rid of" sniffles, congestion, abdominal discomfort and lethargy. This is not an attack on medical doctors, just my inquisitive nature at work.

A health article entitled: "Doctors: Strep bacteria suddenly resisting common antibiotic" caught my attention (website: canada.com/health/fromthewires - Apr 18, '02 by Linda A. Johnson). Rather than quoting the majority of the article, you can cruise to the site using your own, a friend's or a library computer. In a nutshell, the article referred to an outbreak in the U.S. of antibiotic-resistant strep throat. It concerned doctors because

"Until now, antibiotics have easily killed group A streptococcus, the bacteria that cause strep throat and life-threatening septic infections, so doctors at the hospital were startled by its sudden, widespread resistance to widely used erythromycin. The drug is commonly given to people allergic to penicillin."

In her article, Johnson went on to state how there has been an increase of resistance to other forms of antibiotics due to heartier strep bacteria. "Doctors have long warned that overuse of antibiotics is making some germs immune."

For years, the medical field has known about "drug resistant "superbugs", bacteria that defy all known antibiotics... Bacteria are very smart--they learn to develop resistance" (website: all-natural.com/news). I wonder how many of us common folk may have missed this antibiotic vs. superbug concern. Yes, it has appeared in the media, but it is easy to brush off the information presented claiming rare cases or geographically too far away to be a threat. As stated in the articles I read, there is no safety in distance since we have a very mobile society (i.e. Africa one day, Canada the next -- basically sharing the recycled breathing space of many countries).

The medical profession has taken steps to reduce antibiotic resistance by imposing regulations limiting the use of extra strong antibiotics (i.e. macrolide, Finland 1990) to ensure it is effective when absolutely needed. In 1998, U.S. researchers were looking for a more effective antibiotic -- one that doesn't kill off your helpful bacteria before attacking the harmful bacteria --I am uncertain of the progress. Alternative or complementary health approaches have also been incorporated into some medical doctor's practise. So you see, I am not suggesting people suddenly quit taking the antibiotics prescribed by their doctors, just be informed and seek out what you don't know. Ask your doctor, talk to your friends, search the Internet, stop in at health food or nutritional supplement stores, visit the library and believe you are worth protecting.