



Volume 18

Issue 1

Spring 2005

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A Brief History of AIDS Thunder Bay

In July and August, 1985, a small group of individuals in Thunder Bay began meeting in one of their homes to talk about AIDS and what it might mean to Thunder Bay. Attendance at these meetings varied, but the following individuals participated in the discussions and moving the group toward a more formal structure: David Belrose, Doug Broman, Tom Cherry, Karen Maki, Patrick Sperry and Michael Sobota. There were others who wish to remain anonymous. Some of these individuals were already doing speaking presentations within Thunder Bay schools on the topic of homosexuality. Occasionally, a question would arise in these classroom presentations about the "new disease", AIDS.

That establishes some of the context of that era: AIDS was linked to homosexuality, and was commonly called the "gay disease". Politically, there was no legislated protection for gays and lesbians in Ontario. Discrimination and stigmatization of gays was common (Ontario did not ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in its Human Rights Code until December, 1986). Our local group concerned about AIDS emerged within this environment.

Late in 1985, the first publicly known case of AIDS in Thunder Bay was reported by local media. There was some controversy in the local press, with letters to the editor demanding that the individual be identified to protect the community. In reality, the individual was isolated in McKellar hospital, had food trays left outside his door, and was basically treated with fear and a lack of dignity. The person died during the Christmas holiday period. In learning how the person was treated in hospital, the forming group decided never to let this happen again to someone with AIDS in Thunder Bay.

In January 1986, the group formed itself as a board of directors, chose the name AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay (or ACT-B) and began the process of provincial incorporation, drafting By-Laws (adapted from The AIDS Committee of Toronto who had organized themselves in 1983) and federal registration as a non-profit charitable organization. It was assisted with this work by Sarah Colquhoun of Kinna-Aweya Legal Clinic. The first directors on the groups' Letters Patent were David Belrose, Doug Broman and Michael Sobota. At the time of incorporation, the full Board of Directors consisted of Dr. Fred Ball, David Belrose, Dianne Britton, Doug Broman, Andre Chamberlain, Michael Chan, Rev. Barb James, Karen Maki and Michael Sobota.

From 1985 through late 1987, ACT-B operated completely as a volunteer organization, listing Michael Sobota's home address as the group's mailing address and sometimes using office space that he rented in the Zeller's Block in downtown "Port Arthur".

Continued on page 7

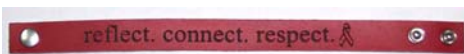
Fundraising

special events & activities



We are still collecting A&P receipts for the agency. ATB receives \$1.00 for every \$450.00 spent. Look for the new collection box located at the River Street Store; an easy and convenient way to deposit your receipts right at the store. A collection box is also located in the lobby of the office.

ATB has been taking part in this donation program for the past three years. Your support has helped us raise over \$230.00 This is an easy fundraiser that many people take part in, some have even set up envelopes at their places of work to collect co-workers receipts.



ATB is selling red leather bracelets branded with our 20th anniversary slogan, **reflect. connect. respect.** These bracelets are new to Thunder Bay and will be sold at the agency and a select number of other places in town. The bracelets sell for \$5.00 each and are now available at the office. Please call Crystal at 345-1516

Ahh.. the joys of summer

Driving cross country visiting places and exploring new worlds!
Traveling into the depths of the woods to find the best fishing spots.
Buying ice cream for the kids as a treat on the way to the baseball game!
Driving to camp with the trailer on the back of the vehicle!

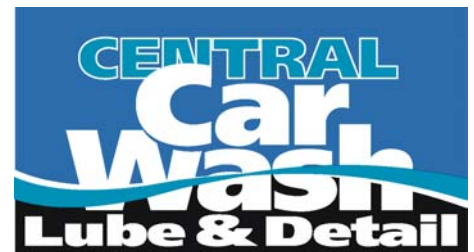
These are just some of the many splendid things that happen during summer.. When you return home it's time to get everything freshened up and head back to work. At this point you realize everything that has to be done... Laundry, Take film to be developed, Get gift for house sitter, Reinstate paper delivery, and the list goes on....

While the list continues to grow, your vehicle still shows the mileage of our trip(s)... bugs splattered on the windows, ice cream melted into the seats or upholstery, mud baked on the doors and lights

But have no worries, AIDS Thunder Bay and Central Car Wash can help "clean sweep" your vehicle at the

**Wash Your Wheels for
AIDS Thunder Bay
July 15th at Central Car Wash**

If you are unable to attend the benefit day, secure online donations can be made to the agency at www.aidsthunderbay.org



20th Anniversary Celebrations

AIDS Thunder Bay has planned a number of special events and activities for our 20th anniversary. There is something planned almost every month of the year, so check out the website to keep up to-date. www.aidsthunderbay.org

If you would like to receive monthly emails send a quick note to Crystal in fundraising and you will be added to the list:
cporteous@aidsthunderbay.org

**Watch for our
Icy Surprise
in the next month!**



Sunday, September 25, 2005 Lakehead University Outpost

**20th Anniversary of AIDS Thunder Bay.
Let's make this Walk a day of celebration & reunion!**

In light of our anniversary year, we are trying to plan as many fun and exciting events as possible. Thus, this year's AIDS Walk will have the theme of family. Remember, a family can be made up of parents, kids, partners and friends! Over the years many people have become a part of AIDS Thunder Bay's family. We would love to see you at this and other events! Consider it a year long reunion party!

We are in the midst of planning a number of activities that will take place at the Outpost, in conjunction with the AIDS Walk. Tune into our website to keep posted on the Walk's development!

For fun... For family... For life...



Dr. Mysterion's Halloween Hoopla!

Friday, October 28 at the Lakehead University Outpost



Mysterion the Mind Reader is Toronto's foremost mentalist, with a PHD in ESP. Expect the unexpected from this mad Doctor at this Halloween Hoopla! Telepathy with random spectators, thought reading of words, numbers & objects, mind mental bending of forks, keys, nails and spoons! Mysterion Knows what you're thinking! In addition, see his side show of bizarre and strange exhibits – Siamese turtles, albino squirrel, evidence of big foot and more!

This “Hoopla” will be one heck of a party! Come dressed for the Occasion – it's Halloween!

Spooktacular Waffle Breakfast!

Saturday, October 29 at the Unitarian Fellowship

ATB's ever popular Valentine's Waffle breakfast has just expanded to Halloween! A feast not to be missed! Waffles with delicious berry toppings themed for the occasion!

Reflections on Twenty Years

It is hard to believe that twenty years have passed since a small group of us, under the leadership of Michael Sobota, got together to address the issue of AIDS in Thunder Bay. When the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay was first established some of us thought that we would devote a few years to the issue until a cure was found, and then we could go back to our ordinary lives. Now we see that HIV and AIDS have become our ordinary lives and will be for the foreseeable future.

Some 40 million people worldwide are living with HIV or AIDS and the number grows daily. Thanks to an enormous number of dedicated volunteers, and hard working staff, I think we have made a significant impact both in limiting the number of HIV infections and in providing support to those living with or affected by HIV and AIDS here in Thunder Bay. From a totally volunteer group, we have evolved into a respected, professional organization.

There have been enormous developments around HIV and AIDS over the past twenty years, and yet it seems that we have only just begun. While attitudes have changed significantly over the past twenty years, stigma and discrimination are still faced far too often by people living with HIV or AIDS. With many people living longer and a lack of public awareness campaigns, many people have become complacent. Too many people of all ages fail to practice safer sex consistently.

As we move into our third decade of dealing with this disease, we need to continue to work at the whole range of issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. Looking at things from a holistic “determinants of health” point of view, and operating from a non-judgemental harm reduction perspective, we need to revitalize our prevention, support, education and advocacy efforts.

On a personal note, I have learned much over the past twenty years, especially from those men and women who have lived, or are living with HIV or AIDS. I also want to express my thanks and appreciation to all those many people who have helped in any way with prevention and education efforts over those twenty years.

David Belrose
Education Coordinator

Testing Campaign

You will soon see evidence of our new social marketing campaign around the region. A campaign to promote HIV testing will feature billboards, transit shelter ads, bathroom ads and posters. The campaign features the idea that whether results are “negative” or “positive” “It’s Good To Know”. The campaign will promote anonymous HIV testing, and we hope that it will encourage people to get tested.



Anonymous, Free HIV Testing • Call 625-5981



A Final Word or Two...

From the Health Promoter

By the time you read this article, I will have been gone from AIDS Thunder Bay for a few weeks. So where to begin????

Four years working with a very special group of people -- people affected by HIV/AIDS -- has given me so many lessons and opportunities for growth; I know I'll do no justice to my journey by trying to articulate it.

So who are the "people affected by HIV/AIDS"? The male, female, young, old who are HIV+, worried they are positive, love someone who is positive, know someone who is positive. They are the people who work with any of the above. Affected is affected. Concerned youth, curious elderly, socially conscious, fear driven prejudicial, gay or straight, affected is affected.

I thank you all for your wisdom, direction and challenges. I am honoured to have been permitted in to a few hearts, dreams and fears. "Thank you" is not enough for the gifts you have given me. Know that I will remember you.

Charlene Burford

EHOP Update...

From Carrie Miller (EHOP Coordinator)

During the past few months the Enhancing Healthy Options Program has had many new and exciting programs and activities. In December a well-attended Client Christmas Dinner took place. During the late winter months both a Computer Training Course and Life Skills Support Group were offered. Planning for the Annual PHA Retreat will be starting soon. If you would like to be part of the PHA Retreat Planning Committee please call Carrie at 345-1516 ex.16 for more details.

The following article is reproduced from the website (www.allenklein.com) for educational purposes.

The information is presented as a point of interest; it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of AIDS Thunder Bay.

Laughter and Humor: Myths and Realities

by Allen Klein

Almost twenty-five-years ago, Norman Cousins claimed, in his book *Anatomy of an Illness*, that laughter cured him of a rare debilitating disease. Ever since people have been attributing all kinds of benefits to laughter and humor. Some of it can be documented, some cannot.

For example, you may have heard that children laugh 400 times a day but adults only fifteen. Anyone who hangs around children for a while knows that they laugh a lot. But 400 does seem excessive. So I asked my humor colleagues if they know the source of this information.

Guess what? None of them did.

The closest any of them could up with was from a study which showed that "glee" (not just laughter) in a nursery school did range from 18.4 to 45 incidents an hour per child. While "glee", described in the dictionary as jubilant delight and joy, might contain periods of laughter, it does not indicate a period of repeated laughter.

So, the jury is still out on the notion that kids laugh 400 times a day.

Adult laughter, on the other hand, is a little easier to track down. The book, *American Averages*, clearly states that "The average person laughs 15 times a day".

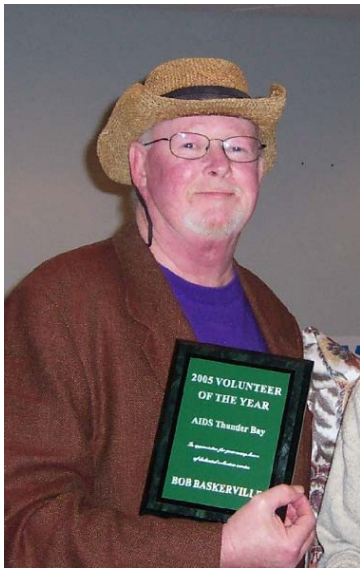
Another popular idea is that endorphins are secreted into the blood system when we laugh. Unfortunately, this has not been proven in the scientific world. What has been proven, by Dr. Lee Berk of Loma Linda University, is that cortisol, an immune suppresser, is less prevalent in the blood when we laugh. In addition, hearty laughter also produces other chemicals which help boost the immune system.

What we also know is that laughter oxygenates the blood (so we think better after a laugh), relaxes our muscles (maybe that's why we leak when we laugh) and raises, then lowers, our heart rate and blood pressure (similar to aerobic exercise).

While most of us know that we feel better after a good hearty laugh, science, in many cases, is yet to prove why. But that doesn't mean that we should stop laughing. After all, how many centuries did it take to prove that the world was round?

News from the Volunteer Department

2005 Volunteer of the Year



Bob Baskerville

Here's what's happening in the coming months:

*Yard Sale—June 11

*Tag Day—June 18

*AIDS Walk—Sept 25

*Mysterion the Mind reader—Oct 28

*Halloween Waffle Breakfast—Oct 29

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

Also watch for many 20th Anniversary events:

*July-Memorial bench installed at Marina Park

*August—Reunion Picnic for all former and current staff, clients, members and volunteers

*November 3-6—Visions & Light Film Festival

*November—20th AGM

Volunteer Activities

ATB celebrated National Volunteer Week with our annual Volunteer Appreciation on April 21. To celebrate our 20th anniversary we had a quiz about ATB's history. We all learned a lot of interesting facts about the agency and the people who have been connected with it over the years. Michael Sobota, Executive Director, proposed a toast to 20 years of service to the community and Rob MacKay, President of the Board of Directors, cut and served the anniversary cake.

Several people received special certificates and pins for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of volunteering. In the past year, 6 volunteers contributed 1,827.75 hours between them. These people are Richard Beck, Joe Czernik, Fran Dutli, Eunice Ryan, Michael Sobota and Jamie Taniwa. Our sincere thanks go out to these people as well as to all the other volunteers who contributed a total of 6,510.25 hours in 2004.

The **2005 Volunteer of the Year is Bob Baskerville**. Bob has been volunteering with ATB since September of 1994. He has been our main driver for over 10 years. In that time, he has given many hours and driven many, many miles. He is always cheerful and friendly and many clients ask for him when they need a driver. Thank you Bob for all you've done for us!

Check the list next to this column for upcoming events. If there's something you're interested in, give me a call at 345-1516, extension 12 and I'll sign you up. Check our website or call me about upcoming anniversary events—we would like you to be a part of them.

If you're interested in volunteering at bingo, call me. You'll have a lot of fun working with a great group of people.

If you'd prefer to work in the ATB office, we have some regular shifts available. We are also looking for people who are available on short notice when a regular receptionist can't make it in for their shift. Reception shifts are 4 hours, either 8:30 to 12:30 or 12:30 to 4:30.

A Brief History of AIDS Thunder Bay *Continued from page 1*

The group continued speaking engagements in local schools and in the late fall of 1986, organized the first public "town hall meeting" about AIDS, held at the Waverly Library. It applied for and received a small grant to do this from Health Canada. Featured at this first public information session about AIDS in Thunder Bay were Dr. Sam Graham, Medical Officer of Health for the Thunder Bay District and the nurse who was in charge of the ward at McKellar Hospital when their first AIDS patient was admitted. Also featured was Joan Anderson, at that time the President of the Board of the AIDS Committee of Toronto.

In the summer of 1987, ACT-B successfully answered a call for applications for funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health. With this original core operating grant of approximately \$80,000, the board moved quickly to rent a post-office box for a mailing address, rented a small office on Bay Street, and hired its first paid staff: Michael Sobota as Executive Director, Serge Tittley as a 1/2 time Educator and 1/2 time Volunteer Coordinator, and Lawrence Korhonen as 1/2 time Office Manager (for a total of 2.5 positions). In subsequent years, provincial funding allowed staffing to expand the Education and Office Management positions to full time, and add a full time Support Coordinator position. The Volunteer Coordinator position expanded to .8 full time. ACT-B held a public competition for its first logo and the winning design was done by Brian Holden, featuring the groups' initials in lower case with a butterfly hovering above. The image suggested humility and metamorphosis.

During the immediate years following core funding, ACT-B began developing a full roster of services. Presentations and speaking engagements expanded beyond schools to churches and local groups. An outreach tour into the region - organized by the Community AIDS Project at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit - saw ATB staff take the community message into smaller towns east of Thunder Bay. Volunteers and people living with AIDS came to Thunder Bay slowly, as the fears and stigmatization swirling around AIDS continued to play a strong influence. But by the time ATB celebrated its tenth anniversary in the Fall of 1995, the annual general meeting that year featured a panel of speakers that included past board-members, current clients, volunteers and staff.

ACT-B identified early-on the shift of the HIV epidemic into Northwestern Ontario's drug using population (one of our first clients, in 1988, had disclosed his transmission occurred through needle - sharing). The agency began an informal, "under the counter" needle-exchange service pioneered by staff member Daryle Dollan (aka Cano), while publicly working with the District Health Unit toward securing a funded, public needle-exchange program in Thunder Bay. Simultaneously, ACT-B championed the importance of anonymous HIV Testing (once HIV anti-body testing began in the latter half of the 1980's, most people in Thunder Bay sought testing elsewhere for reasons of confidentiality, traveling to Winnipeg, Duluth or Toronto to get tested). Only anonymous testing allowed true confidentiality to the worried individual and, after extensive lobbying, Ontario introduced this option in 1992.

Throughout its history, the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay - now AIDS Thunder Bay - has been a strong advocate on a broad range of issues relating to people living with HIV/AIDS, including access to treatments, housing, human rights, sexuality and sexual orientation, homophobia, racism and poverty. As we turn the corner of twenty years and enter our third decade of service in Northwestern Ontario, we can look with pride at a range of accomplishments: a strong volunteer base numbering some 170 active volunteers, a dedicated, elected board of community volunteers, a professional staff team and people living with HIV participating and contributing at various levels to the ongoing work of the organization.

A great deal has changed since 1985. Some difficult challenges continue and our dedication to addressing them needs to remain vigilant. While medical treatments have improved and people living with HIV are living longer, there remains no cure. We pause at this two-decade turning point, to mark this anniversary. We created a 20th Anniversary Committee and adopted a slogan for the occasion: reflect. connect. respect. We invite you to contemplate our slogan, and to connect with us during the anniversary year.

Parting Glance

Frequently Asked Questions About HIV/AIDS

Question #10 Is it safe for others to be at work, school, or day care with someone who has HIV?

YES. We need to understand that it's quite safe to work, study, or play with people who have HIV and AIDS. It's also safe for children to be in day care or attend school with children who have HIV and AIDS.

Everyday contact with adults or children who have HIV/AIDS is safe. For example:

You cannot contract HIV through

- Shaking hands, hugging, or kissing
- Working or playing side by side
- Sharing equipment or toys (even toys that children put in their mouths)
- Sharing washrooms
- Sharing water fountains, food, dishes, or cutlery
- Changing diapers

HIV infection is only transmitted through semen, vaginal fluids, breast milk, and blood. Other body fluids, like mucus or vomit, do not transmit HIV unless they contain infected blood.

The three main ways you can get HIV are

- Having unprotected sex
- Sharing needles with someone who has HIV
- Being born to an HIV-positive mother

Even if HIV-infected blood touches your skin, it won't cause infection. For you to become infected, enough HIV-infected blood has to get into your bloodstream through an entry point like an open sore or cut. In our daily lives, such blood-to-blood contact with others is unusual—even in cases of biting, scratching, accidents or fights.

If you ever have to clean up blood, wear latex gloves, wipe the blood-soiled surface and disinfect it with bleach. Place blood-stained materials in a sealed plastic bag and discard in a lined, cover garbage container. Wash your hands afterwards. Machine wash any blood-stained clothes separately in hot soapy water.

Canadian law recognizes HIV/AIDS as a disability, like any other medical condition. The *Canadian Charter of Human Rights* prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, including HIV/AIDS.

This is one of a series of fact sheets developed to answer frequently asked questions from clients of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse in 1999. This material was originally produced for the Canadian Health Network

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Infection Control/Safety, St. Joseph's Care Group
ATB Board of Directors

AIDS Thunder Bay Board of Directors

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- ♦ Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - AIDS Bureau
- ♦ Health Promotion and Programs Branch, Health Canada (ACAP)
- ♦ John Andrews Foundation
- ♦ N.M. Paterson Foundation
- ♦ Elton John Foundation
- ♦ Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation
- ♦ Fort William Rotary Club

And all of the people involved in general fundraising and the support of many local businesses and individuals

CLGRO

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www.web.ca/clgro clgro@web.ca
Contact us. Work with us. Join us.

If it's Laughter You're After

by Allen Klein

Sometimes it is hard to find something to laugh about. So here are twenty-two simple suggestions to help you in your quest.

- 1) Do something different. Eat with your opposite hand, etc.
- 2) Create a humour environment. Have funny signs around like "never wrestle with a pig, you both get dirty and the pig likes it."
- 3) Diffuse anxieties by preparing alternative humorous responses to stress situations, such as, "beam me up, Scotty."
- 4) Experiment with jokes. Learn one a week and spread it around. (Remember, however, that jokes are only a small part of humour).
- 5) Laughter is contagious. When you need a chuckle, call a humour-buddy or hang around with people who make you laugh.
- 6) Make a conscious effort to collect funny stuff. Write down and file things that amuse you.
- 7) Focus humour on self. After you've used up all the funny things about yourself you can move on to others.
- 8) Share your troubles. Laughter and tears are both cathartic.
- 9) Seek the child within. It's still there wanting to play.
- 10) Hang around children. They are some of our greatest teachers.
- 11) Be positive. Find someone doing something right, or almost right, and tell them about it!
- 12) Keep FUN-raising items handy. Toys, signs, posters, etc.
- 13) Intimidated? Draw a cartoon of the person who annoys you; make it as outrageous as possible. . . or visualize that person sitting on the toilet.
- 14) Give fun gifts. Garage sales often have great inexpensive silly items.
- 15) Can't laugh? Smile! Can't smile? Fake it!
- 16) Remember that you are not becoming a comedian, you are seeking humour for balance and perspective.
- 17) Dress-up. Halloween, April Fool's Day, and Mad Hatter's Dinner Parties are great for this.
- 18) Schedule playtime. If you don't, it probably won't happen.
- 19) Waste some time. Type-A behaviours don't know how to do nothing.
- 20) It's OK to be silly. When things get too serious, sometimes nonsense makes the most sense.
- 21) Look for opportunities in the negative. They're always there!
- 22) Practice. Practice. Practice.

Why did I select twenty-two ways to go after laughter? For no particular reason except that twenty-two is my lucky number. (Good thing my lucky number is not 8,437.)

This is AIDS Thunder Bay... & this is what we do

Reasons To Donate



AIDS Thunder Bay is a community-based agency providing quality, compassionate support, education and advocacy around HIV and AIDS and related issues. This year we celebrate our 20th Anniversary.

We are facilitators, communicators, and providers to Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. Professional, compassionate staff, dedicated volunteers, and established community networks are hallmarks for what we do.

People in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario continue to be affected (men, women, gay, straight, injection drug users, aboriginals, young, old), while stigma and discrimination impact on the lives of those affected by HIV and AIDS.

It will take more than 20 minutes to tell you everything about us. So get up and act out - read about us on the web at www.aidsthunderbay.org

We are not kidding, 20 years of work will take more than 20 minutes to share, and is worth \$20 dollars.

So check out our website!

1. I know someone with HIV/AIDS
2. One person's \$20 can help another family
3. \$20 is worth twice as much to the people it helps
4. I have lost someone to AIDS
5. It's easier to give \$20 than find time in a busy schedule to volunteer 20 hours
6. It warms your heart & helps heat a family's home
7. One \$20 bill... No extra paperwork
8. Helps open our doors wider & keeps the lights on
9. Similar to buying a gift, you could spend \$5.00, but \$20 will buy something nicer
10. Buys a pair of warm boots for someone with neuropathy
11. \$20 Buys 24 bus tickets for trips to and from doctors and lab appointments
12. I'm able to donate
13. Our bank won't take hand drawn 20's
14. You could go to jail for hand drawing a bill
15. Buys enough rice to help 45 families
16. Gets information to young people so they can make safer choices
17. \$20 can't buy everything, but it helps make a difference.
18. Could you look into the eyes of children and say no
19. You will not be mailed the 50 reasons to donate \$50
20. 20/20 hind sight - Someone you love may need our help!

Donate online! www.aidsthunderbay.org

reflect, connect, respect.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: (Hm) _____ (Wk) _____

Email address: _____

Name (as it will appear on the donor listing): _____

☐ In memory of _____

☐ \$20.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ \$20.00 ☐ \$20.00 a month

I would like to donate...

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

This information may be used in future to contact you about ATB events. Please note, AIDS Thunder Bay does not exchange mailing lists. All lists are confidential.
☐ If you DO NOT want to receive information please check this box.

Charitable Registration # 106689847