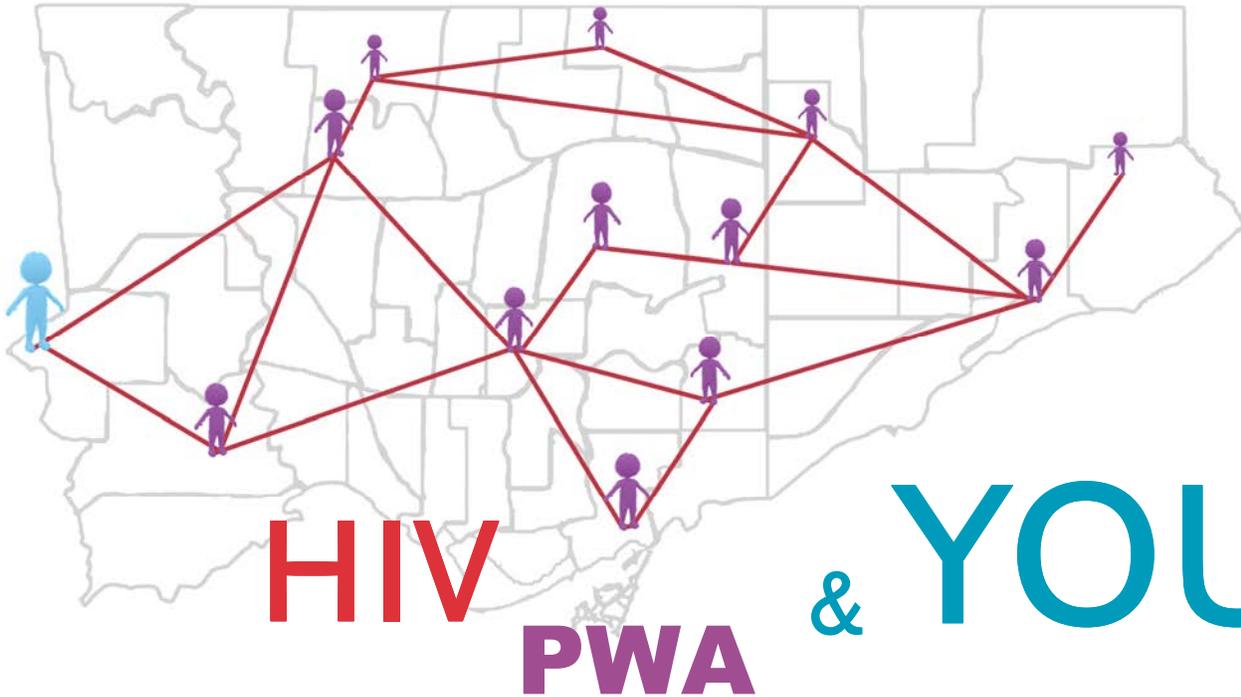




MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation Newsletter

SPRING 2014



FEATURE ARTICLES

HIV, PWA & YOU



We All Have A Reason To Ride

It's no secret that our supporters are special. Every year thousands of individuals and groups donate their time, talent and treasure to PWA ensuring that people with HIV receive food, financial support, therapeutic care, and opportunities for growth. As an organization, we continually look for ways to engage people in the work we do, whether it be participating and/or volunteering time in a program, taking part in one of our events, making a donation or pledge, and the list goes on. For example, between March and October of last year, 169 individuals volunteered 7700 hours of their time at

PWA. Now, that's pretty amazing! These are highly engaged, well informed, passionate people who believe in giving back to their communities and have chosen PWA as the conduit for impacting change.

It's also no secret (heck, it's right in our vision statement) that at PWA, we believe there is inspiration in our community and that inspiration feeds how we live and how we interact with one another, it feeds our desires and dreams, it directs us to healthier and better versions of ourselves.

This of course is all well and good; imagine if we could put a glass dome over the little piece

of the world we live in. But that's not realistic and doesn't make sense. Healthy communities don't thrive in a vacuum and the issues that face the people who come to PWA for support are bigger and broader than the four walls that house the programs and services offered at PWA. So we ask ourselves, are we meeting the needs of our community? What is our impact? Where are the gaps? Are we expanding our reach?

What Research Tells Us

In 2012, the Canadian Institutes of Health research in HIV Prevention (CIHR) published the results of a 2011 national survey of Canadians on their

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You are important to PWA and we would like to know more about YOU. Share your story on why you've chosen PWA as one of your partners, recipients of charitable dollars and/or in-kind donations. Please write, email or call us info@pwatoronto.org, (416) 506-1400 ext. 239

attitudes, knowledge and perceptions of HIV and AIDS in Canada. According to the CIHR website, “The results of this national survey are being used to gauge what is happening in the Canadian population, to know what the general public is thinking and doing in relation to HIV and how they are responding/interacting with people living with HIV in order to assess and inform educational strategies, modifying intervention efforts and combat stigma and discrimination.”

For the most part the results are encouraging. Overall Canadians reported a relatively high level of overall knowledge about HIV and AIDS. The findings collected suggest that there are improvements in societal acceptance of people living with HIV, that there is widespread understanding of HIV transmission and specific knowledge (e.g. that there is no cure, that HIV positive people can show no signs or symptoms), and that progress in HIV treatment has improved the quality of life for people with HIV.

However the research also found that acceptance and knowledge is not universal in Canada. Fifty-four percent of respondents said they would be somewhat or very uncomfortable with a close friend or family member dating someone with HIV/AIDS. And while 90% of Canadians self-identify as moderately knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS, there are gaps. Two-thirds of respondents are unaware that HIV can be transmitted from an HIV-positive mother to her baby through breastfeeding.

Among other issues researched, the study also collected information on Canadians’ behaviour around charitable giving to HIV and AIDS related charities.

The most recent (2010) Statistics Canada survey, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, reported that 47% of Canadians aged 15 and older volunteered 2.07 billion hours to their volunteer activities and 84% made a financial contribution to a charity or non-profit organization. One could say Canadians are generous!

Looking at these statistics through the lens of an AIDS service organization (ASO), the CIHR report asked how Canadians rate in relation to HIV/AIDS. If you’re a glass half full kind of person you would say, overall, the statistics show a lot of opportunity:



- + Most people identify health organizations, agencies assisting children and youth and disaster relief as primary targets of their charitable gifts.
- + Big gap with giving to HIV/AIDS related charities and non-profits: 1 in 10 gave to HIV/AIDS orgs in 2011 and 25% have ever made one in the past.
- + Half who have not donated to an ASO would consider making a donation; could be persuaded to do so.

This Is Where You Come In

Because HIV prevalence in the general population is below 1%, research and prevention efforts have strategically targeted specific populations that are deemed most vulnerable to HIV infection. So while Canadians overall are in-the-know of HIV and AIDS, there’s a lot of room for growth in engaging more Canadians with the work we do.

This research also illustrates the importance of YOUR support. While people with HIV/AIDS (PHA’s) are living longer and healthier lives, there is still no cure. And BECAUSE PHA’s are living longer and are healthier, the absolute number of Canadians living with the virus is increasing. As PHA’s age, their needs for treatment, appropriate nutrition and medical and emotional support are compounded by issues normally associated with aging: lack of appropriate retirement facilities and housing, deteriorating mobility and decreasing social engagement.

PWA addresses some of these issues through our programs, but we only reach approximately half of all the people living with HIV/AIDS in Toronto. The most recent Communicable Diseases in Toronto Report indicates the average incidence of HIV infection is 522 over the past 5 years.

The growing perception that HIV in the western part of the world is now under control could not be further from the truth. HIV/AIDS is a disease present on a daily basis in our neighborhoods. This is why we need those who support us not only to continue this support but also to be our ambassadors in the community at large. +

A FEW GREAT REASONS

6 days of fun and friendship

16th year

400 riders & crew

600KM with support every step of the way

\$11.5 m raised to-date!

10,000 clients assisted

What’s YOUR reason?



We All Have a Reason To Ride



16th Annual Friends For Life Bike Rally Co-Chairs, Allan Hooey (L) and Kevin Wolfley (R)

The Friends For Life Bike Rally celebrates 16 years in 2014. While departure day is still four months away, a dedicated team of Steering Committee volunteers and PWA staff are busy putting together plans building on the tremendous success of 2013.

The Bike Rally is the sustaining fundraiser for PWA. Since 1999 it has raised over 11 million dollars providing essential funding for the development of programming and services for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Described as a 6-day bike ride from Toronto to Montreal, we know that it is much more as planning, training, fundraising and team building take place months in advance of the actual rally to Montreal. And during this pre-rally time friendships are formed, memories are made, and individuals are transformed.

The theme for this year's ride is "What's Your Reason?" and with that in mind, we asked co-chairs Kevin Wolfley and Allan Hooey a few questions to get a sense of what's keeping their passion for the Bike Rally alive.

1. Why are you involved with the Friends For Life Bike Rally?

K: My initial reason was to see if I could actually do it physically, and each year I have more reasons to ride. Those reasons include a strong connection to, and belief in, the work that the PWA does, the multitude of friends I've made each year and, quite simply, an intense need for the amazing amount of fun we have during that 6-day adventure!

A: Like many others, I joined to challenge myself physically and mentally. I thought of it as a great opportunity to see part of Ontario while raising money for PWA. My reasons changed when I grew to understand the importance of the ride through interactions with crew and riders, talking with clients from PWA and their friends. Ten years on, the amazing abilities of riders, crew and volunteers bring me back each year.

2. When people ask you what it's like to cycle 600km, how do you describe it?

A: I describe it as being extremely liberating and you become incredibly self-aware! The encouragement from everyone has an amazing impact, whether it be a bike rally participant, a stranger clapping as you ride by, or a hug from someone you may never see again who has been touched by HIV/AIDS. Cycling 600 km is an accomplishment in and of itself and when you factor in all the other experiences, emotions and feelings, it's life changing.

3. Why is the Bike Rally an important fundraising event?

K: The Bike Rally is the sustaining fundraiser for PWA and without those funds they wouldn't be able to provide the essential services and support that are so badly needed. One

of the less obvious reasons is that it helps remove stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Our cause is not one that is socially discussed with as much frequency as others and that needs to change. The Bike Rally gets people talking and thinking about HIV/AIDS and those living with or affected by it. Whether through fundraising efforts, being seen on training rides, or through the Bike Rally event itself, it gets people talking – and we need more of that.

4. Why should someone take part in this event?

A: There is no other event like it in Ontario. Whether you volunteer on crew or as a rider you will laugh like never before, cry for joy and pain, and you will recognize a strength in yourself you didn't know existed. The people that you meet will comfort every ache, support your fears, and laugh hysterically with you. You will have the time of your life and will come back time and time again because simply put, you get more than you give.

What's your reason to ride?

PWA's FRIENDS FOR LIFE BIKE RALLY

SPONSORED BY Scotiabank

"MY REASON IS..."
The ability to make a positive difference in someone's life."
Carol Grandison (Rider)

JULY 27TH - AUGUST 1ST, 2014
TORONTO TO MONTREAL
WWW.BIKERALLY.ORG
IWANT2RIDE@BIKERALLY.ORG | 416.506.1400

PHOTO: An annual fundraiser in support of the Toronto, Made With AIDS, campaign

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Toronto People With AIDS Foundation

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Toronto, Ontario M5A 2E6

TEL: (416) 506-1400 FAX: (416) 506-1404

www.pwatoronto.org

Charitable Registration #: 13111 3151 RR0001



\$60 will pay for a member of the Speakers Bureau to educate listeners about living with the virus and dealing with associated stigma

\$100 provides coverage of an average claim for uninsured medication expenses

\$250 supports necessary living expenses while making the transition to disability benefits

\$500 supports HIV positive volunteer leaders to develop needed programming

Make a donation Email donate@pwatoronto.org or call **416.506.1400 ext. 239**

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5. Is there a 'most memorable moment' you are comfortable sharing?

K: My most memorable moment on the Bike Rally was just last year, which was my fourth year as a rider. It was the morning of Day 5, which on the ride is known as "Poz Day". Poz Day allows participants who are HIV Positive to self-identify in a supportive, confidential and safe space. Ending with our Candlelight Ceremony, this day has always been a highlight for me because of the tremendous strength I witnessed in those around me. I never grew to fully appreciate it, however, until I was confronted with the personal choice of participating.

Having learned I was HIV Positive only a number of months prior, my status was still very private and the fear I felt, (even amongst a group of peers who I knew would still love, accept and protect me), was incredibly intense. I'll never forget the moment I emerged from my tent that morning and self-identified. It was at once both scary and liberating on levels I'd never before experienced. But what really makes it the most memorable experience is the outpouring of love and support that I received throughout the day. People hugging me, thanking me and giving me the courage to hold my head up high - it's something I'll never forget and serves as a constant reminder that I am made stronger by these amazing people who spend so much of their time and energy supporting others.

A: Over the 10 years I have collected many memorable moments like the hugs from my husband (who volunteers on crew) after a long day, seeing my sister every day on the ride sharing laughs and some tears, friends and family meeting me in Montreal with the biggest smiles.

My most memorable moment was one year as we cycled toward Kingston. There was a sign on the route that said "You are all Heroes". I rode my bike for many kilometers that day thinking what makes a hero. My heroes are the friends I lost in the 80's and 90's to AIDS, sometimes living in fear; my friends that wake up every day to face HIV/AIDS determined to live stronger and stronger. My heroes are the people who support me each and every year without a second thought. My heroes are my fellow riders and phenomenal crew. My true heroes stand up and take notice! +

Mission Statement

We engage people living with HIV/AIDS in enhancing their health and well-being through practical and therapeutic support services and broader social change, and we inspire them to live into their dreams and discoveries.

Our Vision

We live in affirming, sustaining communities where we find inspiration and support for our dreams, health, well-being and meaningful contributions.

Our Board

President - Cory Garlough

Vice President/Vice Chair - Brian Fior

Treasurer - Michael Shreve

Board Secretary - Mercedes Umaña

Members at Large

Andy Baldwin

Sherri Byer

Susan Holita

Zeenet Janmohamed

Jeremy Smith

Ian Mole

Alex Wu

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