

# pwa newsletter



**Fall 2008** Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA)  
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**Making a positive difference.**

## THE PWA FAMILY

### *Being there during the Holidays*

Here at PWA preparations for the holidays have already begun. Wish lists have been made, PROUD FM has launched the Joy Drive and community businesses are filling donation boxes around town!

But while most of us are making plans to be with family, many clients coming to PWA tell us that going home for the holidays is not an option. Sadly, the stories of stigma, poverty and isolation are stories we hear every day at PWA. During the holiday season, feelings of depression and loneliness intensify and the demand for our services increases.

Alex came to PWA from a small town in Ontario. He tells us, "It's hard to be a gay man in Timmins. It's harder still to be HIV positive in Timmins. My parents have refused to speak to me but my sister still calls. I'll be spending this Christmas with friends that I met at PWA's food bank. We're planning to go to the Holiday Party and maybe cook a turkey at Bill's."

"Last year, I got a gift certificate from PWA. It saved my life!" says Meta. "I have no family here and I had nothing to give my daughter. How do you explain that Santa isn't coming this Christmas? How do you tell a 5 year old girl?" PWA's Children's Fund provided just over 200 gift certificates to help HIV positive families purchase gifts for their children.



**A sea of Holiday Bags!**

*For many HIV positive people, the holidays can be lonely and desolate.*

So here at PWA we try to be their family. For many, our holiday party is the only celebration they will have — PWA's holiday bag is the only gift they will receive. With your help, together we can make the holidays a little brighter for people living with HIV/AIDS in our community.

There are few things in life more awful than feeling empty and alone at the holidays. At this time of giving and sharing, please consider making a generous donation. Help us to **be there** not just for the holidays but each and every day.



## Pie In the Sky

### Making the pie bigger!

Thank you. It was a sweet Thanksgiving at PWA!

Once again, our dedicated pie peddlers were out en masse selling our gourmet apple and pumpkin pies. Some did it in the traditional way and others participated in a viral sales campaign where emails were forwarded one to another. In total, 739 pies were sold and over \$45,000 was raised.

This year, we welcomed new bakers from the AGO, Centro restaurant and Crystal 5 at the ROM. We were also hosted at 2 LCBO locations for the first time. LCBO Summerhill and Bayview Village let us use their kitchens prior to the event. Celebrity Chefs baked apple treats that were paired with Ontario wines and at the same time PWA volunteers took orders for pick up.

Our dedicated team of drivers braved traffic jams, gridlock and rush hour to stop at multiple locations to pick up from our bakers and then deliver them to the distribution sites.

Thank you to all who purchased, to the drivers and site volunteers, to the peddlers and to the talented bakers all of whom gave generously of their time.

## The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation is moving!

We are excited to formally announce that we will be moving into new office space at the end of December. Our new location will be 200 Gerrard Street East (at the corner of Gerrard and Sherbourne).

With the completion of our current lease, PWA's leadership undertook an extensive review of our needs and options. Focusing these efforts was the strategic planning vision of PWA as a place to be positive and the efforts to continue creating this space by focusing on the key direction of an **affirming connection place**.

This meant building on and expanding the aspects of PWA that our clients tell us feel like a safe harbour, a second home, and a comfortable place of acceptance. As well as creating an actual physical space that takes into account our clients' different needs and requirements including a fully accessible space.

Building on the history of working closely with the AIDS Committee of Toronto, PWA is pleased to be identifying new opportunities and collaborations that might arise from this change in our long-standing partnership of shared building space with ACT. In addition, to build on our efforts to strengthen community partnerships, we are extremely excited to be able to have staff from Black CAP and McEwan House sharing space with us at 200 Gerrard St East. This will enhance our ability to provide services and effective referrals to all people living with HIV/AIDS.

We are planning an Open House in the New Year! Please check on our website [www.pwatoronto.org](http://www.pwatoronto.org) in the What's New section for details.



## PROUD FM JOY DRIVE HOLIDAY WISH LIST

### Food Stuffs:

pasta and pasta sauce  
 can soups  
 tuna  
 Ensure  
 cat/dog food & toys  
 dry beans, chip peas, lentils  
 powered milk  
 protein bars  
 can salmon & tuna  
 multi vitamins

### New Gifts:

winter scarves and gloves  
 socks  
 hats  
 small picture frames  
 candles  
 holiday treats, i.e. cookies, cakes, chocolates  
 manicure sets  
 wallets, key chains  
 blankets  
 health and beauty aids  
 CD's, books  
 yoga mats  
 grocery store gift certificates



Kevin & Mark welcome our guests at the Holiday Bag distribution

## The Proud FM Joy Drive is Back

### And it's bigger than ever!

This years Joy Drive will be taking place from November 15th to Dec 21st. And PROUD FM will be kicking off live at Woody's on November 15 with surprise guests, giveaways and more! Admission is a donation.

This year, as well as food donations, we are requesting donations of new, unwrapped gifts for our Holiday Hampers. Often, people living with HIV/AIDS find that the hamper they get from PWA is the only holiday gift they receive.

As we all know HIV is a disease that effects every community so this year we've tried to spread out the drop off outlets to other areas of Toronto. We hope that we've made it as easy as possible for people to give where it makes a difference this holiday season.

So check out our locations and our wish list and give generously!



## PROUD FM Joy Drive locations

- Wine Rack** 77 Wellesley St. E.
- Lettieri** 77 Wellesley St. E.
- Fab** 511 Church St, Suite 200
- Zelda's** 542 Church St.
- Pegasus** 489 Church St.
- Firkin** 475 Church St.
- Woody's** 467 Church St.
- Church St. Diner** 555 Church St.
- Timothy's** 500 Church St.
- Black Eagle** 475 Church St.
- Yonge St. Fitness** 7 Isabella St.
- Whole Foods** 87 Avenue Rd.
- Carrot Common groceries** 348 Danforth Ave.
- Sarah Sheard Therapy** 27 Howland Rd. Riverdale  
across from MCC
- NOW Magazine** 189 Church St.

Check our website [www.pwatoronto.org](http://www.pwatoronto.org) for a complete list of locations.

# Spokes Folks

## 2008 Friends for Life Bike Rally raised \$1.2 Million!

The 10th Annual Friends for Life Bike Rally took place from July 27th – August 1st 2008. 415 courageous riders and crew departed from Queen's Park and cycled over 600 km in just 6 days to arrive in Montreal. A record was set this year with over \$1.2 Million raised for the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation in support of men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS. The Friends For Life Bike Rally has been a huge success since it began ten years ago and is PWA's largest fundraiser. PWA would like to sincerely thank the Bike Rally participants and its sponsors: Scotiabank Group, Tibotec, GlaxoSmithKline in partnership with Shire, BMS Virology, VIA Rail Canada, Movado, Rubbermaid, Timothy's, PROUD FM, NOW, fab, Gay Guide Toronto and Cycle Therapy who have made the event an amazing success!



## Thank you to our Corporate and Foundation donors

### AGENCY PARTNERS

**Visionary**  
M.A.C AIDS Fund

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Scotiabank Group  
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\*Donations of \$100 +



Empress XXI Bitsie Vanderbilt & George Pratt present a cheque to PWA

## Community Events

### TICOT

The Imperial Court of Toronto, Reign XXI chose PWA as its charity in October of 2007. Empress Bitsie Vanderbilt and her Court of volunteers raised a record \$60,000 to support our Food For Life Program. Working tirelessly, they executed over 68 events throughout the year. We are deeply grateful.

This year, Reign XXII Emperor Hunter James and Empress Tiffany Louise-Charles have chosen the 519 Community Centre and PWA as their charities. Congratulations! We look forward to working with you.

### Home + Style Studio Tour Exclusive Access Sale

Once again, PWA was chosen to be the beneficiary of the Home + Style Studio Tour Exclusive Access Sale at the Fall National Home Show.

The event kicked off on Thursday, Sept. 18th with an amazing silent auction. Everything from designer cushions to a Samsung Washer & Dryer was available to bidders. In the meantime, the Exclusive Access sale was offering all brand new furniture donated by Direct Interiors. Their design team created 4 rooms of beautiful furniture complete with accent rugs and lighting.

A big thank you to Jeffrey Stolberg, Direct Interiors. Storage Stadium and a host of volunteers who helped raise over \$20,000 at this year's Home + Style.

### Mr. Steamworks 2008

Mr. Steamworks 2008, Steve Callow hung up his title this month but not before raising close to \$9,000 for PWA. He and his volunteers held the Tightly Whitey car wash with 2 pre events this summer. And in his official capacity, Steve joined us in Pie In The Sky as a pie peddler. Thank you Steve! You're the best!

## Welcome & Farewell

### PWA Annual General Meeting

The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation held it's Annual General Meeting on Thursday, October 2nd at Ryerson's Oakham House.

Please join us in welcoming new Board members **Ken King** and **Deborah Randall-Wood**.

**Ken King** has extensive experience in the HIV community, as a person living with HIV, as a counsellor and therapist, and as a volunteer with AIDS service organizations. Ken was on the board of Casey House for many years and is currently active on the board of the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation, which among other issues, researches the barriers to employment experienced by PHAs and advocates for policy change that will allow PHAs to be part of the work world and be able to do so in a flexible manner.

**Deborah Randall-Wood** is one of 18 Registered Nurses (RN) in Canada with specialty certification in HIV/AIDS Nursing (ACRN). Deborah has over 20 years experience working with people living with HIV/AIDS, including the position of Executive Director of Casey House from 2000 to 2004. As a volunteer, she has held numerous positions including past president of the Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (CANAC), co-chair of the Ontario AIDS Network, founding member and co-chair of the AIDS Network of Toronto. In addition, Deborah has participated in numerous local, provincial, national and international task forces and working groups relating to HIV/AIDS care and hospice palliative care. Most recently Deborah volunteered as a member of the Wellness Team for the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation 2008 Friends for Life Bike Rally.

The Board also welcomed returning member **Andy Baldwin**, who was elected to his first three-year term after completing a mid-term position vacated by **Victor Inigo** in 2007. Andy brings a vital perspective to his role on the Board as an individual who has accessed PWA programs and services. Alas, we say farewell and thank you to **Alan Stewart** and **Michelle Borthwick**. Your dedication and support is deeply appreciated.

The awards were presented for Outstanding Community Support to **Alan Anderson** aka **Empress XXI Bitsie Vanderbilt**, **TICOT** and **PROUD FM**. The awards for Outstanding Corporate Support went to **M•A•C AIDS Fund** and **Dineene Beaven** at **Canada's Wonderland** and last but not least our awards for Outstanding Volunteers went to **Robert Dykeman** and **Joy Vineberg**. Congratulations!

## Our Programs

### Food Bank

Higher gas prices and the ensuing higher food prices of this summer resulted in our food bank receiving fewer food donations. In response, PWA organized a community food drive and the community responded. Proud FM launched the food drive by announcing to the airways PWA's need for donations. Businesses from around the Church and Wellesely area participated as donation drop-off locations. These collective efforts, along with the Metropolitan Community Church food drive and our own annual Bike Rally packing day food drive, proved successful. Our shelves were once again stocked with the essential items our clients depend on each week. Our regular food donations have resumed to stable levels and we are thankful to a community that supports us.

The summer was also spent planning enhancements to the food bank. To make the food bank an affirming connection place as set out in PWA's strategic plan, a plan is being designed to create more of a 'shopping' experience. The intent is to reduce the stigma of accessing a food bank by creating more self-determination and participation opportunities for clients. Options for a new 'shopping' model might provide opportunities for clients to select some of their own items based on a point system and to have areas of the food bank set up in aisles more similar to a shopping experience. More details of these plans will be finalized as PWA moves into our new space. Watch for more information over the next couple of months!



### Food for Life

The experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS continue to change and evolve. Initially envisioned as a short-term rehabilitative nutritional program for people recovering from AIDS-related illnesses, the Food for Life program has also become a longer term health maintenance program for those struggling to sustain health. To keep up with changing needs, the program is currently undergoing a formal evaluation based on the recommendation of the Food for Life steering committee, comprised of ACT, Casey House, Mid Toronto Community Services and PWA.

The intent is to determine the effectiveness of the program's current services and identify future service directions based on the needs of clients. As co-lead of the Food for Life program, PWA hired independent consultants, Deborah Leach + Associates, to design and conduct the evaluation. The consultants developed a survey to collect input from Food for Life clients and conducted staff interviews to receive input from the steering committee members. The final report and recommendations will be reviewed by the steering committee this fall.

### Health Promotion

Food, finances, HIV treatments – we at PWA believe these are basic rights all people living with HIV/AIDS need access to. But there is more to promoting health and well-being, as stated in our mission statement, than these basic necessities. All have a right to health promotion, which is why our complementary therapies, haircut and social programs are so important. Once again, thanks to the generous donation by Canada's Wonderland, we distributed 1000 Wonderland tickets this summer. In addition, our theatre access program has distributed over 1000 tickets so far this year to venues across the city. Our 3rd annual community summer picnic was once again a great success. More of our community partners joined us this year making it a truly community event. Our partners included: ACT, Black CAP, Casey House, Fife House, Latinos Positivos, Two Spirited People of the First Nations and Voices of Positive Women. Our student massage clinic in partnership with Kikkawa College has started again with client demand already filling up 3 of the 5 clinics being offered until April of 2009. We also have a new Reiki clinic and of course all the individual volunteers who donate their professional services, including massage and haircuts.

## Income Support

Financial security remains the most predominant presenting issue our clients face. Yet financial security is rarely a single issue; it often impacts almost every aspect of a person's life – their housing, health care, food access, immigration status, to name a few. This is why PWA's strategic direction, to be a point of access, is so critical. Our Benefits and Assistance Case Managers help people navigate available income support services and the broader support services available to people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs).

To strengthen our role as a point of access, the income support team has made community development with other service providers a priority this fiscal year. Practically this means strengthening relationships with other service providers so to leverage our collective strengths and provide better service for our clients. Our team has helped to create a newly formed PHA Support Network made up of staff from across different ASOs. The network meets monthly to discuss client needs and service coordination across agencies. The team is also building stronger relationships with individual programs like ACT's Employment Action and Fife House's Homeless Outreach Program, and forming new relationships with agencies that offer services our clients need. These community development efforts will help to make PWA a point of access to services across Toronto.

## Treatment

PWA's two treatment programs – treatment access and treatment resources – continue to expand and grow. Our treatment access program has been focusing on community development particularly with black PHA communities. Access to treatments remains important for all PHAs and especially those who face several forms of discrimination, including HIV stigmatization, such as PHAs from black communities. To make our services more accessible, we have been working with community agencies who serve black PHAs. PWA is actively involved in the planning of the first black PHA summit being coordinated by the African and Caribbean Council of HIV/AIDS in Ontario. PWA is also involved in the development of po2 prevention resources for Black MSM (men who have sex with men) PHAs being developed by Black CAP.

Our treatment resources program continues to produce and facilitate access to important HIV

treatment information through the treatment topic of the month and the monthly treatment workshop series "Lounge and Learn". These initiatives, in addition to one-on-one treatment counseling, provide opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS to access information about their health and well-being. Additionally, the program has also conducted important harm reduction work. PWA views harm reduction as disease prevention and seeks to reduce the harm associated with drug use by providing needle exchange and crack kits, and a drop-in, in partnership with Voices of Positive Women, where substance users can learn more about using drugs safely. The program has also initiated a community group called the crystal meth coalition to help address the gaps in harm reduction resources for crystal meth users.



## Interested in Volunteering?

Please join us the first Wednesday of every month from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

No need to sign up.

During this session we will introduce you to the volunteer opportunities available, explain the process of becoming a volunteer and answer any of your questions.

Spanish translators are available for this session.

For further information contact Darryl Ramsey at 416 506-8606 x622 or [dramsey@pwatoronto.org](mailto:dramsey@pwatoronto.org)

## Have you considered a Giving Certificate?

What a great idea for those very special people. The Holiday Giving Certificate is an ideal way to celebrate the Holidays or just to show you care. Or you can make a memorial tribute. You will be providing much needed support for men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS who are facing many struggles and difficulties in their lives especially during the Holiday Season.

Send or phone in the information on the Giving Certificate and we will mail the recipient a card indicating that a donation has been made to PWA in their name. You receive a charitable income tax receipt in the amount of your donation. The Giving Certificate is the perfect opportunity to honour someone special while providing much needed support to those living with HIV/AIDS.

Please send in the information below, or call 416 506-8606 x630.

## Mission

The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation exists to promote the health and well-being of all people living with HIV/AIDS by providing accessible, direct, and practical support services.

## Board Directory 2008/2009

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Helen Daley, Vice President  
Annie Thomas, Treasurer  
Aubrey Sherman, Secretary  
Mina Hunt  
Andrew Baldwin  
Scott Morrison  
Deborah Randall-Wood  
Ken King

Murray Jose, Executive Director

### Toronto People With AIDS Foundation

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## PWA HOLIDAY GIVING CERTIFICATE

Enclosed is my gift in the amount of: \$25    \$50    \$100    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed my cheque made payable to the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation.

I prefer to charge a donation to my credit card:

Credit Card (please circle one):    VISA    MASTERCARD    AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Send Card To:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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