



AIDS Committee of Ottawa/Le comité du sida d'Ottawa

Annual General Report, June 22nd, 2009

Our Mission:

The AIDS Committee of Ottawa works to empower people living with HIV/AIDS and the PHA community in Ottawa through promoting the wellbeing and quality of life of persons living with or closely affected by HIV/AIDS. The ACO works to reduce the barriers that foster the transmission of HIV/AIDS and is an active partner in the community wide response to HIV/AIDS.

Our Vision:

Our vision is a healthy community of organized support, advocacy, prevention and research/education empowered by men, women and children living with or closely affected by HIV/AIDS.

A message from our Board Chairs – Randolph Shannon and Lesley Gittings

Forward with a Shared Vision

This last year has been an incredible year of growth and expansion for The AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO). Our space has expanded, our staff increased and our services enhanced. Throughout the challenges of the last year we have seen a collaborated effort from the board, staff and our Executive Director, Kathleen. These efforts have contributed to our status as a well respected AIDS Service Organization in the community.

We, as board chairs, have benefited from working with an outstanding team of board members. From a truly collaborated effort we developed and implemented a board work plan. We also participated in a Native truth circle and enjoyed mingling with staff at a board-staff meet and greet.

Over the past year, our board has continued our development as a policy governance board, benefiting from various training sessions on subjects such as board basics, higher governance, boundaries training, policy writing and strategic planning. We have developed policies on Consumer Driven Boards, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression, and approved the agency's adoption of a Gender Identity / Expression policy. We have constructed Terms of Reference for finance, executive and board orientation committees. In response to the alarming positive obligation for HIV positive individuals to disclose their HIV status, we adopted a position paper on the criminalization of HIV non-disclosure which states that HIV is a public health concern, not a criminal law issue.

As an agency we will continue to work together to move towards a shared future vision. As such, we will be undertaking a strategic planning process in the upcoming year. In doing so, we hope to continue to evolve as an agency, serving the community in which we operate.

We are grateful to be members of the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, as service users and volunteers within a dynamic team.

We are inspired by the dedication and commitment of the staff who go above and beyond their duties—thank you. We are forever grateful for the leadership and positive energy of our Executive Director—thank you Kathleen for all that you do.

We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the board members for their skills and the volunteer hours that they donate. Finally, on behalf of the board, we wish to thank you - the membership of the agency, for allowing us to represent you here.

A message from Kathleen Cummings - Executive Director

Hi there,

I hope this last year was a great one for all of you; it was a pretty crazy one for me here at ACO. There were a lot of challenges and difficulties to overcome, but as the old adage says, “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger” - I can definitely say I am quite a bit stronger than I was at last year’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) and I learnt a lot which is always a good thing.

As each AGM approaches I like to focus on the good things that have happened since the last meeting and this year is no different; so please see below a synopsis of some of the activities that have taken place since our last AGM. I highlighted a few things and the rest of the amazing ACO team also highlighted a few things they wanted to share with you.

Highlights of Activities from Kathleen

Over the last year we received funding from the AIDS Bureau for three new positions at ACO which we are extremely grateful for. These newly funded positions will allow us to better respond to some of the needs within our community. These positions are: Men’s Outreach Coordinator and Nicholas Little has been, and continues, to work in this position but it is now being funded by the AIDS Bureau; Cory Wong moved from his Support Worker position in the Living Room (TLR) to be the new Ethno-Cultural MSM Program Coordinator; and Haoua Inoua has joined our team in the new position of African and Caribbean Support Worker.

Other changes include: the ACAP funded position moving from MSM Outreach to MSM Community Developer and Michael Burtch has joined our team in this new position; Adam Graham left us to move to Vancouver and Mark Lucas joined our team to be the Men’s Health and Wellness Project Coordinator; Heather Money has left us temporarily for a maternity leave and Lee Allard has moved from working part-time in TLR as a Support Worker to now working full-time in TLR as Program Coordinator/Support Worker; and John Sharp left ACO and Kenda Hoffer joined our team in the revamped position of Office Administrator.

It has been incredible getting to know and working with all these amazing people and I really look forward to continuing to work with them and the rest of our great team.

To better support and sustain the growth of ACO we created “team leader” positions for both Support Services/TLR, Khaled Salam, and for our Education and Prevention Programs, Michelle Ball. In these new roles Khaled and Michelle have taken on additional responsibilities, such as, overseeing their program’s budget, stat collection and reporting, speaking with the media and providing support to the staff team of each program. In her role as Office Administrator Kenda has also taken on more responsibilities than were previously part of this position. The three of them are doing a

great job and handling the additional responsibilities and challenges very well and I really appreciate their ongoing hard work and commitment to the growth and stability of ACO.

As some of you know our lease ended in the Fall of 2008 and a lot of time and energy was put into finding ACO an appropriate home – because, amongst other things, we were bursting at the seams in our present space. After lots of exploring it was decided that our present location was the best place for us to be – particularly when we considered things like accessibility and affordability. So, we signed another five year lease and rented additional floor space on the 7th floor and renovated our present and expanded space to better accommodate our needs.

Carrying out, what I consider to be major, renovations while remaining open and still providing services proved challenging at times and I would like to thank all of you who were inconvenienced by this for being so patient and understanding. A special thanks to those of you who were majorly inconvenienced yet remained pleasant, patient and supportive throughout the process – working amidst the “eye of the renovations” for a few months was extremely difficult. Thank you to Cory, Mark and Lee for moving offices with no complaint. Kenda, thank you for moving offices a few times and for working without an office for a month or so, I know how stressful this was because I was in the same position, but you had only been working with ACO for a few weeks when all this started and I really appreciate your humor and easy going nature through such a chaotic and stressful time. Michelle, thank you for moving offices with no complaint too, but also for helping me search for a potential new space and with designing and coordinating all of the many renovations; this was a huge undertaking and I could not have done it without you. I am really glad this is behind us, it was a ton of work and a lot of stress, but I invite you all to look around and enjoy ACO’s “new and improved” home – well maybe not “new”, but “expanded and improved”.

We continued our work around anti-racism/anti-oppression through implementing more inclusive hiring practices; continuing to provide training for the board, staff, volunteers and participants; and implementing changes to programs and services to ensure they are more inclusive and culturally sensitive and relevant.

A number of important training opportunities were provided to staff members, such as: OAN Skills Building; Non-Violent Crisis Intervention; First Aid, and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Training. Staff members were also supported to take other trainings and attend relevant conferences.

Board training and development opportunities were funded and supported, such as, Board Boot Camp; Train the Trainer and HIV 101; Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Training; and in-depth work with OODP continued

Thank You! To all the amazing people and organizations that worked with us over this last year and made it possible for ACO to continue to grow and be accountable to our community.

Our Board

Name:	Position
Randolph Shannon	Co-Chair
Lesley Gittings	Co-Chair
Andrew Parker	Treasurer
Richard Hubley	Secretary
Jennifer George	Director
Tania Dopler	Director
Lynne Cioppa	Director
Brigitte Charbonneau	Director
Sharon Peake	Director
Andre Dupere	Director
Norine Naguib	Director

Thank you to all our Board for your support and thank you to those of you who left the Board over the last year, we miss you: Annette Hollas, Molly Chivizhe and Rick Phillips.

Our Staff Team

Position Title	FTE Status
Executive Director - Kathleen Cummings	Full-time
Office Administrator – Kenda Hoffer	Full-time
Coordinator Education / Health Promotion Services - Michelle Ball	Full-time
Coordinator of Support Services/Case Manager - Khaled Salam	Full-time
Coordinator of Volunteer Resources - Shannon Willmott	Full-time
Program Coordinator/Support Worker – Lee Allard	Full-time
Women’s Outreach Coordinator – presently hiring for this position	Part-time
Gay Men’s Outreach Coordinator - Nicholas Little	Full-time
MSM Ethno-Cultural Outreach Coordinator – Cory Wong	Full-time
Gay Men’s Health & Wellness Project Coordinator – Mark Lucas	Full-time
MSM Community Developer – Michael Burtch	Full-time
African Caribbean Support Worker – Haoua Inoua	Full-time
Living Room Support Workers: Jennifer Clark, Allison Yeatman	P/T Contract
Accountant – Suzanne Wert/Suzanne Rousson	Contract
<i>Heather Money is on maternity leave until February 2010</i>	

Thank you to our staff team, this has been another year of hard work and dedication and I really appreciate all that I have learnt from each of you.

Thank you also to all our amazing volunteers, you are great! Cheers, Kathleen

As this report will be posted online and widely distributed, volunteers, with the exception of board members, have not been named in print to preserve their confidentiality.

An update from Shannon Willmott - Coordinator of Volunteer Resources

The AIDS Committee of Ottawa is entering its twenty-fifth year.

Twenty-four years ago community volunteer efforts began the project of advocacy and support for people living and dying with HIV/AIDS. 24 years ago volunteers began answering questions and dispelling myths about HIV.

As ACO moves into its 25th year as an organization it is time to say THANK YOU to all volunteers and community members who have contributed to ACO and to the AIDS Movement in Ottawa.

In 2008 and 2009 volunteers contributed many hours of service in support of the agency's mandate. In support services, educational outreach or in agency support (administrative duties, board work, etc.) volunteers are continuing to be a source of inspiration in a time when support continues to be needed and questions continue to need answering. Thank you for your dedication and many hours of service. It is because of your efforts that the AIDS Committee of Ottawa is entering its 25th year and continuing to grow.

The calculations below represent the value that is added to ACO by volunteer contributions. To each volunteer who gave time this year – THANK YOU, YOU HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.

Calculating Full Time Equivalents of The AIDS Committee of Ottawa's Volunteer Hours

1. Total number of Hours contributed by volunteers in 08/09: 4795
2. The average number of hours worked in one year for one full time paid staff: 35
x 47 = 1645
- 3. Full-time equivalents of volunteer hours (1 divided by 2): 2.9**

Calculating the Percentage Contribution of Volunteer Hours to Total Labour Contributions

4. Full-time equivalents for paid staff: 12
5. Total full-time equivalents (3 + 4): 14.9
- 6. Percentage of volunteer resources to total human resources – 19%**

Calculating the Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours

7. The total number of hours contributed by ACO's volunteers in the fiscal period: 4795
8. Average hourly rate your estimate for the value of activities performed by volunteers: \$18.00
- 9. Dollar value of volunteer hours (7 multiplied by 8): \$86,310**

Hi again, it's Kathleen, I'd like to thank a few more people who supported us this last year:

Thank you to the wonderful Practicum Students who worked with us this last year

We would like to thank the amazing students who completed practicums with ACO this year; it was a pleasure working with you:

Noor Al-Shaikhly; Jesse Huntus; Dominique Molzan; Algonquin College Massage Students

Thank you to all our Partnerships, Service Coordination & Affiliations

We would like to thank all our partners. We are committed to responding to the changing needs of our community but we cannot do it without your support and collaboration.

When we work together as a community we can create a sustainable continuum of care and promote the health and wellbeing and quality of life of persons living with, closely affected by, and at risk of, HIV/AIDS. We look forward to continuing to work with you to reduce the barriers that foster the transmission of HIV/AIDS and create and implement a community wide response to HIV/AIDS.

Thank you to all our Donors and Funders

Government

- AIDS Bureau – Ontario Ministry of Health
- The City of Ottawa
- AIDS Community Action Program – ACAP

Employee Donation Programs

- Bank of Montreal – Employee Charitable Fund
- IBM – Employees' Charitable Fund
- Bell Canada – Helping Hands Open Hearts
- United Way – Designated Payroll Contributions

Businesses

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Starbucks – at Bank & Slater | • Venus Envy |
| • Bridgehead | • Swizzles Bar & Grill |
| • Cafe Supreme – Bank Street | • Rideau Pharmacy |

- Giant Tiger
- Gowling, Lafleur, Henderson LLP
- Galldin and Liew LLP
- Shoppers Drug Mart- St. Laurent Shopping Centre

Community Groups/Organizations

- The Ottawa Food bank
- Canadian Society for International Health
- Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE)
- Carleton University for International Health
- Kineconcept Massage School
- YMCA-subside gym memberships
- Mr. Leather/ Ottawa Knights
- Statistics Canada Choir (concert donations)
- Ontario Organizational Development Program (OODP)
- Ontario AIDS Network (OAN)
- Toto Too Theatre
- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN)
- The Ottawa Hospital
- Voices of Positive Women

Drug Companies

- Abbott Virology

In Memoriam

- Robert Chisholm
- In memory of Robert Gervais
- In honour of John McLean
- In honour of Tara Rajan
- In honour of Mike Hurley
- In honour of Paramjit Bahniwal
- In honour of Rev. Peter Coffins retirement

Churches/Schools

- Kanata United Church
- City View United Church Women
- Ottawa School of Art

Private Donations

- Thank you to all who donated to us through the Walk for Life and Pride
- Bara Bakhour
- Rosemary Barr
- Dave Biduk
- Dan Marandola
- Blaine Marchand
- Mary & Bruce Marshall

- Lyle Borden
- Patricia Bowen
- Suzanne Bresee
- William Broughton
- Chris Bruckert
- Barbara Buote
- Roger Butt
- Dom Cheng
- Taxearhes Chustas
- Terry Cinkant
- Denis Colbourne
- Maggie Coombs
- Alain Courchesne
- Kim Covitz
- Loren Crawford
- Gino Dorico
- Chistopher Doyle
- Barbara Dransch
- Rolly Durocher
- Alan Edwards
- Brian Fallis
- Kevin & Monique Foley
- Gloria Fox
- Eldred Franks
- Cynthia Gervais
- John Granchelli
- Evelyn Grasley
- Susan Guirey-Pierce
- Marilou Gagnon
- Janet Harrison
- Michael Hicks
- Virginia Hill
- Kevin Hiscox
- Amy Ip
- Khaled Islam
- Joe Jeffries
- Richard Johnston
- Azim Juffer
- Margaret Kasurak
- Pierrette Larochelle
- Philip Loe
- Sarah Little
- Jacquelyn MacDonald
- Heather Mallett
- Janet Matsukubo
- Patrick McCabe
- Pam McElheran
- Shaun McIntaggar
- Vicki Milnes
- Colleen Moffat
- Paul Moses
- Thai-Nguyen Nguyen
- Donna Nixon
- Tanya Noble-Moore
- Thierry Papineau
- Janice Pappas
- Marion Paquette
- Monica Patten
- Deborah Pichie
- Anne Pollak
- Mihaela Popescu
- Chris Prosper
- Sandra Quirt
- David Rettie
- Vicki Robinson
- Wayne Robinson (monthly donor)
- Veronica Michelle Roi
- Jim Scharf
- Andrea Segal
- Mario Seguin
- Gregory & Laurie Snow
- Al Song
- Marietta Stenman
- Dave Stinson
- Alison J Sutherland
- Ariel Troster (monthly donor)
- Mae Tucker
- Mary Turnbull
- Mark Underwood
- Daniel Janse Van Rensburg
- Rose Vandenberg
- Iain Wallace
- Bryan Wannop
- Rosemary Watkins
- Elizabeth & Brad Wiggins
- Chantal Wiggins
- Katherine Wilson
- John Zegers

Collaborations ‘Plus’

These groups contributed in the delivery of specific programs, either by providing facilities/equipment, expertise and/or in-kind prizes.

- POWER
- Divergence Movie Night
- Steamworks
- Babylon
- Breathless
- Stella
- Shanghai Restaurant
- Club Ottawa
- Swizzles Bar and Grill
- Edge Bar & Bath
- The Lookout
- Sauna 63
- Tara Rajan
- Gay Zone Gaie
- Hump Night at Mercury Lounge
- Exile Infoshop
- Two Little Homos
- One in Ten
- Wilde’s
- Squirt / Cruiseline
- Venus Envy
- Centretown Pub
- Disorganized
- Capital Xtra / Pink Triangle Press
- Revolution Rock
- Kathryn Radford

Opening Doors Conference Sponsors

- AIDS Bureau
- AIDS Committee of Ottawa
- Abbott Virology
- HIV/AIDS Regional Services (HARS)

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give” – Winston Churchill

Highlights from Michelle Ball - Coordinator of Education & Prevention

In the last year ACO went through much growth and many changes. Here are some of the highlights from 2008/2009.

- Hired for a number of positions: the Gay Men's Health & Wellness Coordinator; the Ethno-Cultural MSM Outreach Coordinator , MSM Community Developer and Women's Outreach position (Maternity leave coverage)
- Continued to provide an array of trainings which included HIV Awareness, Sex Positivity, Using Drugs more Safely, Harm reduction, HIV and Stigma, HIV and the Determinants of Health etc. These workshops were provided for Volunteers, Community Members, Educational Institutions, Community Health Centres, and other Social Service organizations.
- Continued to coordinate and take the lead role in the HIV Prevention Education Committee – a committee of the Ottawa Coalition for HIV/AIDS
- Coordinated programming for Gay Zone and actively participated on the advisory committee until the appropriate people were hired.
- Coordinated and provided training for anonymous testers in the bi-annual 2 day HIV Testing Sensitivity training.
- Presented at “Celebrating 100 Years of Failed Drug Policy in Canada”
- ACO participated in Pride with our focus being “Trans Rights are Human Rights”
- Coordinated World AIDS Day Event that was very successful and reached more than 1100 people and received lots of media attention.
- Continued to partner with Marie Prevost of Abbott Virology to provide Dinner and Presentations for ACO service users, community members and service providers. Some topics included HIV Treatment and Anti-retro viral medication and recreational drug use.
- Continued to play an active role on the Opening Door Planning Committee and continue to be treasurer for this committee. We had another very successful Opening doors this past April and are beginning planning for the 18th Annual Opening Doors.
- Coordinated and Hosted Charlie Glickman PhD in Sexual Education to come to Ottawa and provide an array of presentations over 5 days. Presentations included “The Physiology of Pleasure” and “Sex and Shame”. Evaluations show that the events were all very successful.

Highlights from Nicholas Little – Men's Outreach Coordinator

With the expansion of the Gay Men's Wellness team from 2 to 4 people, I have had the opportunity to focus my energy on reaching more men who have sex with men in more locations. Some of the highlights of my year include:

- Expanding our bar outreach volunteer roster to 25 active volunteers! This means we are now in multiple bars every week. It also means volunteers can commit to a particular bar. They become familiar faces and are able to develop relationships with men from week to week. It has taken us three years to build 25 committed volunteers so we're very excited!
- Managing the schedule for bath house outreach. Between two ACO workers, two Public Health workers and 3 dedicated volunteers, we are now present in the baths for more hours per week than ever before. The baths have been really supportive of our work and we're proud of our strong collaborative relationships!
- Selected to present a poster presentation at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August 2008. I presented the results of the evaluation of Snowblower 2007 and 2008, ACO's annual winter festival for guys into guys. I was also proud to march with ACO participants in several human and gay rights protests – we had a great time and learned tons over a week of workshops!
- Sat on the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance's work group to develop a provincial manual for online outreach best practices.
- Sit on the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance's Francophone provincial work group.
- When not doing outreach in bars, baths, online chat rooms and parks, I sit on the Ottawa education committee for HIV prevention. I have presented anti-racism and anti-oppression workshops as well as sexual minority sensitivity training to other Ottawa health providers.
- I was also proud to provide administrative support to POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau Work Educate & Resist); a grass roots organization by-and-for local sex workers of all genders. It's a real source of pride to work for an organization that supports marginalized people to *help themselves*.

Highlights from Cory Wong - Ethno-Cultural MSM Outreach Coordinator

Work within Asian Communities:

- Have more than 110 people on contact list.
- Held 21 group events in the past year. Average number of attendant for each group is 15 (doubled compared to last year).
- Increased diversity of group participants (getting more participants from Southeast Asia, such as Thai, Vietnam)
- Recruited a group to walk in Ottawa Pride Parade for the first time.
- Increased visibility of Asian community members at community events, such as Pride events and Snowblower events.
- Created a website by and for Gay Asians of Ottawa group:
www.gayasiansottawa.ca
- Gay Asian Movie night program started at GZG since January 2009. Average number of attendant is 9. It's one of the most well attended programs at GZG.
- Volunteers from Asian communities recruited.

Work within African & Caribbean Communities:

- Created and collected outreach materials targeting African & Caribbean MSM (posters and post cards).
- Improved partnership with African & Caribbean communities' members and/or agencies and projects targeting African & Caribbean communities, such as Public Health, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Black History Month, and African and Caribbean Health Network of Ottawa (ACHNO).
- Increased visibility (outreach) at African & Caribbean community events, such as Jamaican Day (Jam Day), Carib Expo, Reggae Festival, and Black History Month.
- First contacts with African & Caribbean MSM online initiated (emails with info of community event updates and resources directory sent to BMSM online).
- Potential African & Caribbean MSM volunteers identified and contacted
- Member of ACHNO and worked with the network to organize the ACHNO Health Summit

Highlights from Mark Lucas - Gay Men's Health & Wellness Coordinator

Hello All! This project has seen a number of changes over the last year, most notably the departure of Adam Graham in April, 2008 from the position and my arrival as his replacement in October, 2008. Also, the title of the position changed from Gay Men's HIV Prevention Coordinator to Gay Men's Health and Wellness Coordinator in order to better reflect the wider parameters and holistic grounding of gay, bi and trans men's health needs.

During the past fiscal year, I administered the third annual *Snowblower* health and wellness festival for guys into guys, which took place in February of 2009 over 15 days. I would like to thank Nicholas, Michael and Cory who provided integral support on this project. Throughout the year I represented ACO at the Ottawa Gay Men's Wellness Initiative (of which I am co-chair), the Gay Zone Gaie Administrative Committee, the Ottawa Coalition for HIV/AIDS, the Ottawa LGBTQ Youth Services Provider Network (Messages/Promotions committee), the Ontario Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance, the Ontario AIDS Bureau Gay/MSM anonymous testing working group, the Lambda/M-track Ontario Community Advisory Board and the Gay Men's National Health Forum planning committee (CATIE/CAS).

In October 2008, I went to Seattle for the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association 2008 national conference with Kathleen and Cory and in February 2009, I attended the Gay Men's Health Summit in Toronto.

Highlights from Michael Burtch - MSM Community Developer

On January the 5th of this year I undertook the position of MSM Community Developer for the AIDS Committee of Ottawa and took to producing programming for Gay Zone, a men's only sexual health clinic. Diversity in programming has spread the gamut of an ongoing gay men's book club which I facilitate, to improv classes, and body building lessons, to workshops on Homophobia and Gender Socialization. My marketing efforts on behalf of Gay Zone have seen the recognition of the Gay Zone 'brand' increase and the knowledge of the clinic's existence and services grow. Over \$800 has been generated over 4 months to assist in keeping programming free, dynamic, and high quality.

On May 19th I worked with two colleagues to involve the ACO in the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial to honor loss within our community. Pictures from our Memorial service at Minto Park are featured in Capital Xtra. I organized 'Bulletproof Faith: A Spiritual Survival Guide for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Christians' at the Main Ottawa Public Library on May 23rd. This free workshop, featured author Rev. Candace Chellew-Hodge in her first Ottawa appearance, Bulletproof Faith was a thoughtful, practical workshop designed to help Ottawa's GLBTQ Community navigate the condemnation and persecution often inflicted upon them by misguided religious

leaders and communities. The successful workshop addressed a holistic approach to health and recognized that spirituality and spiritual practices can be a vital part of a person's self care.

Highlights for Support Services & the Living Room, from Khaled Salam – Coordinator of Support Services & Case Manager – on behalf of the whole Support Services Team: Khaled Salam, Haoua Inoua, Lee Allard, Jennifer Clark & Allison Yeatman

- Two new staff joined the Support Services Team: Haoua Inoua is the new African-Caribbean support worker and Lee Allard is the new program coordinator/support worker for a one year maternity leave/contract position – Lee was a relief staff in TLR previous to this
- TLR continued to support, sustain and develop peer-programming such as the African-Caribbean Women's Support Group, Positive Peer Youth Group and the Survive to Thrive Support Group
- A number of Health promotion services were provided to participants such as subsidized YMCA memberships (both monthly and annual memberships available), complementary therapies like chiropractic therapy and reiki, distribution of harm reduction supplies and information
- Nutritional services were provided such as healthy meals during socials and peer support groups and monthly community kitchens
- Practical services available to participants included, weekly food bank, access to laundry machines, use of computers, internet and telephones, information and referrals, TV and DVDs
- Educational programs were offered, such as, Back to the Source (a celebration of Aboriginal cultures and traditions), HIV & Disclosure Workshops and many other training and info sessions on various topics
- Housing help provided ongoing housing support to participants, U of O legal students provided relevant legal workshops and lawyer provided pro bono legal services to participants
- A number of fun and social outings were organized, such as, BBQs, movies, museums, boat cruise (for Look Good Feel Good), sugar shack
- Special event and holiday programming were organized such as: Pride, Candlelight Vigil, holiday dinners, food hampers,
- Fun in-house activities included board games, bingo, cards, arts and crafts, video games and karaoke
- Population-specific programming and socials were held for gay men, women, children and families, straight men and also mixed socials where everyone living with HIV is invited – and their closely affected friends or family

- We held regular open drop-in hours four times a week in TLR
- TLR accepted collect calls and provided phone support to PHAs in prison
- Accompaniments were made, when possible, to medical, legal, housing and immigration appointments
- One-on-one support was provided by support staff in TLR as well as ongoing case management work

Highlights for Kenda Hoffer – Office Administrator

I began working as the Office Administrator at the AIDS Committee of Ottawa in October 2008. There was a lot happening at that point in the agency with respect to changes to the physical area. We were in the midst of renovations but with a lot of hard work, cooperation, and determination we were able to move into our new space with positive energy!

There was a telephone system in place that had been with the agency for many years but it was not able to be updated with our ever-growing physical area and staffing personnel. After many consultations with various companies we chose to go with Tel-Harmonics, the same company that our Alarm System contract is with; we also updated our Alarm system to satisfy this increasing growth within the agency. To improve upon our tax-receipting we updated our software to the current year; rather than maintaining an older version with minimal outputs.

Toward the very end of this fiscal year we assessed a huge need to change our current accounting practices. ACO has grown significantly and it was proving difficult to continue outsourcing our accounting. Therefore, we recently secured the services of an Accountant who is able to come in-house to work with us. We are working diligently at creating a system that will best meet our expanded needs and the goal is for the main data-entry to be done by myself and our new Accountant will oversee in order to maintain Accounting and financial accuracy. This is literally in the process of being shaped and will be implemented shortly. This has been a very time consuming process but will be great when it is all set into place!

I have been at ACO for 8 months and have thoroughly enjoyed my experience thus far! This is a great organization that has many wonderful people involved; staff, participants, as well as the Board. I look forward to working at ACO for years to come and am excited for the ever-changing growth and improvement involved!

“Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail...” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

We look forward to another year of always changing adventures at ACO, I hope you decide to join us for the ride, cheers, Kathleen