



## Annual General Report

# 2014



*"Members of AIDS Action Now Protest government inaction in making test drugs available by taking four of two dozen drugs that are available elsewhere in the world." Image circa 1988*

AIDS COMMITTEE OF OTTAWA  
29 years of serving the community

## GIFT LOVE

Acts of kindness freely given  
 Creates an incision  
 Into the hearts of the lost  
 Providing them with a vision  
 When positiveness flows  
 We see a deeper identity  
 Transforming our inner soul  
 Giving us dignity

Gift love heals  
 Jealousy, hatred and bitterness  
 Done solely  
 By expressing kindness  
 Humans have a common bond  
 The ability to share gift love  
 Through kind words or a simple smile  
 Our grace like that of a dove

The value of gift love is priceless  
 It enriches our spirit  
 Without any elusiveness  
 Gift love that is cultivated  
 From our deepest inner soul  
 Creates an abundance of wealth  
 Growing from the day it takes hold

Creating peace and love  
 Is an individual's choice  
 It's as simple  
 As spreading our gift love with our voice  
 No matter what your life has seen  
 Sharing gift love with others  
 Will give you back your self-esteem

The power gift love brings to the giver  
 Can undo the gravest of circumstance  
 Motivating us over hills of turmoil  
 Beginning with the taking of a chance  
 Jesus dispensed gift love  
 In hopes of bettering mankind  
 It's up to us to finish his dream  
 By making everyone's life shine  
 In the indulgence  
 Of our good nature  
 I wish everyone a prosperous  
 Gift loved future.

By Robert Pottie



# Table of Contents

---

<b><u>FUNDERS &amp; DONORS</u></b>	<b><u>3</u></b>
<b><u>MISSION, VISION &amp; VALUES</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
<b><u>BOARD CHAIR REPORT</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT</u></b>	<b><u>7</u></b>
<b><u>COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES REPORT</u></b>	<b><u>13</u></b>
<b><u>NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
<b><u>AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL</u></b>	<b><u>15</u></b>
<b><u>THE ONTARIO ACCORD</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>
<b><u>ACO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART</u></b>	<b><u>20</u></b>
<b><u>ACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>
<b><u>ACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS PHOTOS</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>
<b><u>ACO STAFF TEAM</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>

## Funders & Donors

---

The AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO) is a community-based, non-profit organization providing free, confidential services for people living with, affected by and at risk of HIV in the Ottawa area. Starting from a small group of gay men and lesbians in 1985, ACO has grown to include a broad cross section of volunteers, participants and staff members who come together to reduce the barriers that foster HIV infection, their causes, and negative consequences through advocacy, education, outreach and support services.

The AIDS Committee of Ottawa gratefully acknowledges funding provided by:



The AIDS Committee of Ottawa gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our community donors, as well as the many individuals who donate each year:

The Estate of Peter Carter



# Mission, Vision & Values

---

## Our Mission

To provide support, prevention, education and outreach services from an integrated anti-racism/anti-oppression social justice framework that promotes the holistic wellbeing of those living with, affected by, impacted by and at risk of HIV/AIDS in Ottawa.

## Our Vision

A world in which the human rights and dignity of people living with, affected by, impacted by and at risk of HIV/AIDS, are respected and realized; and where societal attitudes, laws and policies facilitate HIV prevention efforts, holistic care, treatment and support.

## Our Values

ACO is a learning organization that operates within an integrated anti-racism anti-oppression social justice framework. We achieve our mission through the following values:

- Accountability
- Meaningful Involvement of People with HIV/AIDS (MIPA)
- Health Promotion
  - *Harm Reduction*
  - *Sex Positivity*
  - *Client-centered holistic approach to health*
  - *Self determination*
- Community Engagement
  - *Volunteerism*
  - *Collaboration and Partnerships*

June 2014

## Board Chair Report

---

It has been another busy year at ACO. We have found and lost a new home; we have taken a company to court; we have had an Executive Director resign; we have hired a new Executive Director; we have been working on the process of transitioning to the new “Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act”.

Now that I’ve grabbed your attention with exciting headlines, I will go into a bit of detail. Last year at our AGM we announced our move to 240 Bank Street, on October 1, 2013. When we went to get keys we were told that the owner had decided not to allow ‘our use’ in their building. The Board immediately decided that this action needed a legal response and could not go unchallenged. ACO had already invested a large amount of money in this move and more importantly, our participants and ACO had been, in our opinion, the victims of discrimination. We spoke with a lawyer and were advised that this would be a long process and that the best way to proceed would be through small claims court. At this point in time we are in the process of seeking an ‘out of court settlement’ and I hope to share the outcome with you in the near future.

We continued to search for a new home and began negotiations on several possibilities. At this point in time we are very close to reaching a deal on one property.

Last fall, Kathleen Cummings, our Executive Director at that time, resigned after almost two years of being on medical leave. We wished her, and continue to wish her, all the best in her future endeavours. The Board immediately posted internally for the position. Khaled Salam, who had been in the ‘Acting Executive Director’ position since Kathleen’s departure, applied for, was interviewed and was offered the permanent position. Khaled has worked hard along with this Board, all staff and volunteers as well as participants to bring stability and a sense of ‘normalcy’ to ACO. We have also had quite a few staff changes in the last year. Khaled will fill you in on these in his report.

As I mentioned earlier we have been working on the process of transitioning to the new Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act. Part of this transition is to re-write our Bylaws. Last year I asked for help and suggestions from the Membership on what our new Bylaws should look like. We received input from only a couple of you. To those few, I say thank you. To the rest of you, I can only assume that you trust us to do a good job. Well, we have worked very hard on this. Soyini Cornette resigned her position as Board Secretary to devote her time to this and has done a wonderful job. This evening we will have a presentation on the process of transitioning to the new Act. We have decided to hire Carter’s Professional Corporation, whose area of expertise is “Not for Profit law”, to give our Bylaws a final polish and to make sure we are 100% compliant with the new act.

This evening you will hear from Jennifer Leddy of Carter’s who will explain the process much better than I can. We will be holding a ‘Special Members Meeting’ in September at which time you will be asked to approve the new Bylaws as well as the ‘Articles of Continuance’. This will allow us to be fully compliant with the new act by the deadline of October 17, 2014.

The Board also helped organize a day long get together for staff and Board with our sister organization in Gatineau, Le Bras. This event was well attended by both organizations and lots of information and ideas were shared. I wish to thank Le Bras for being such wonderful hosts and I look forward to our turn to host this event in the near future.

The Quarterly Members Meetings continue to be poorly attended. It is normal to have one or two members attend. I can only assume that this is because of our openness and transparency as well as the well-attended “Board Liaison Meetings” (we have to come up with a better name) and the monthly contribution to the ACO Newsletter have answered most of the questions that you would have of us.

As we have just completed the 4<sup>th</sup> year of our 5 year Strategic Plan the Board has decided to hire Beth Jordan to help us work on our new Strategic Plan. Beth, as some of you may recall, has a long history with ACO and in fact was the consultant hired to help us with the current Strategic Plan. There will of course be consultations with, participants, members, staff as well as other stakeholders. Stay tuned for announcements on how you can be involved.

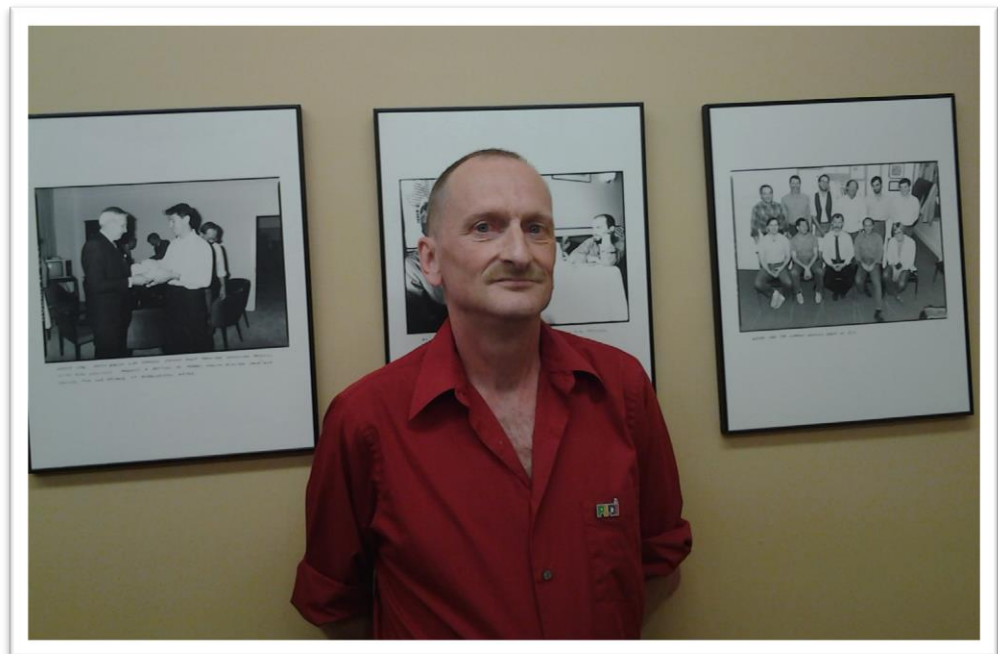
In the next fiscal year, we **will** finalize the transition to the new Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act; we **will** find a new home for ACO; we **will** complete a new Strategic Plan; we **will** also work on a special way to commemorate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our annual Board retreat is only a couple of weeks away. Part of the work at this retreat **will** be to develop our “Work Plan” for this year.

I am proud to say that your Board of Directors contributed over 2000 hours in the last fiscal year. This is equivalent to almost two full-time staff positions. I wish to thank each one of them for all they have contributed.

As there is a lot of overlap in my report and the ED’s report, I will end here and let Khaled cover the rest, as well as elaborate on things I have mentioned.

Thank you,

Gord Asmus  
Board Chair



June 2014

## Executive Director's Report

---

Dear ACO Community Members,

Good Evening. Thank you for attending our Annual General Meeting. It is my pleasure to present you with our annual activities report. As I reflect on this past year, I can say that it has been a challenging year but also a very rewarding one. A quote from Henry Ford comes to mind... "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success". I sincerely feel that after everything our organization has been through in the last three years, this past year our staff and board team and all of our incredible volunteers and participants collaboratively achieved many successes for ACO, which speaks volumes about the character of our organization being revealed when faced with adversity.

As you all know, a tremendous amount of work was invested into finding ACO a new home last fall. Unfortunately, the ownership group of 240 Bank Street were not amenable to our use, and took this stance on our first day of occupancy. As a result, we were unable to move into 240 Bank Street. Our immediate concern and priority was to ensure that ACO would continue to be housed at our current location, and there would be no impact to our services and programs to our participants and community members. We sat down and negotiated with our current landlords and remained business as usual with no disruptions to our programs and services. Next, we retained legal counsel with Caza Saikaley to ensure we are fairly and properly compensated for the damages caused, as we firmly believe that we owed it to our community to respond and stand up for ourselves.

The legal matter is still ongoing, and if we are unable to reach an out-of- small claims court settlement, we will head to pre-trial hearings in the fall of 2014. One of the key things we have asked for is a letter of acknowledgement from their end stating the work that ACO does in educating and supporting people living with/closely affected by/at risk of HIV/AIDS in the Ottawa region. We feel this piece is particularly important given the stance they took against us. We are confident that this matter will be resolved favourably for us. Lastly, we hired agents from Avison/Young to assist us in securing a new home for ACO. We have worked tirelessly with our agents in exploring various office spaces over the past few months. We are currently negotiating for a space on Main Street and it is looking very promising at this point. Our fingers and toes are crossed that a lease will be signed in the very near future.

This past year, ACO also retained the services of Carters Professional Corporation, a law firm that specializes in Not-for-Profit and charitable law. The new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (CNCA) comes into effect on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. All Not-For-Profit organizations have to be compliant with the CNCA in a timely fashion to retain their charitable status and avoid dissolution.



The key areas of compliance are up-to-date Bylaws in accordance with the CNCA and Articles of Continuance. ACO was proactive in hiring Carters to ensure proper and timely compliance. We have worked with their lawyers in regards to the CNCA, and will continue to work with them to have a legal “check-up” done of our organization. Carters will basically provide us with a legal risk management analysis. Our sincere appreciation to Carters for providing all of you with an information session on the CNCA tonight.

Next I would like to talk about funding. We completed all AIDS Bureau funding requirements, including the submission of our 2014-15 organizational program plan and proposed budget, as well as OCHART statistical information. We successfully reapplied for our City of Ottawa municipal funding, which was renewed this year with a 1.5% increase from last year. We received a \$10, 000.00 increase in our MAC AIDS funding which supports the harm reduction program at ACO. All of our fiscal year-end responsibilities were carried out, which included the completion of our annual financial audit. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the work of Suzanne Rousson, who is our accountant/bookkeeper. Suzanne has played a pivot role in assisting ACO with year-end financials and helping prepare ACO for the audit, particularly given the fact that the Office Administrator position was vacant at ACO for the last two months of the fiscal year. Our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Suzanne for all her hard work and commitment to ACO.

In terms of our staff team and HR changes, we have welcomed back Heather Money, Fred Chabot and Sonya Sole from their maternity leaves. We have lost a few staff members due to other employment opportunities to further develop their careers or their contracts coming to an end. The staff members who left ACO this year are Sarah North, Nick Valela, Caleb Chepsiuk, Zaheen Karim, Elysia Sugden and Ayan Jama. We wish them the very best in all their future endeavours and they continue to remain friends and allies of ACO. We are delighted to have a new face in the Living Room, our Support Worker - Mireille Cadet. We are also very pleased to have Valerie Bennett join ACO's Management Team as the Office Administrator. We have also had a few internal changes in positions. Cory Wong is now our Manager of Support Services, Sonya Sole is our Program Coordinator and Claire Touchette is our Women's Outreach Coordinator. I'm proud of our staff team and feel privileged to be part of such a dedicated and inspiring team. To all of you, I quote “Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision; the ability to direct individual accomplishments towards organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results”. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, to each and every one of you for inspiring me every day and helping me keep my eyes on the prize. I firmly believe that the achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.

Now segue to the highlights of all the amazing work of our staff team and volunteers this past year. The highlights are broken down in 3 different areas - volunteer resources, support services/living room, and education/prevention.

## Volunteer Resources

It's been a busy year for the ACO volunteer program with some exciting new programs and great success stories:

### SPOT

- We were very excited to see the revival of ACO's bar outreach program this year in the form of SPOT (the Safer Partying Outreach Team). Our volunteer team is outfitted with resources and information about safer sex and safer drug use (and how to do both while still having a great time), so look for them in a bar, club, or at an event out in the community!

### Snowblower

- Snowblower 2014 was a huge success this year, and we couldn't have done it without the army of volunteers that helped to make all the events so great. The festival set a new standard for peer involvement in ACO programming, which we hope to replicate in other areas of the agency. Snowblower also saw lots of community members come forward to volunteer for the first time, which is a great example of ACO's renewed presence in the gay community.

### Gay Zone

- Gay Zone has seen a revitalization of its programming in the past year, all of which is volunteer run! We now have gay men-focused yoga, cooking classes, book club, movie night, addictions support, youth programming, and dance classes. Gay Zone is an excellent example of meaningful volunteer engagement and we are very grateful for the time, energy, and skills that these guys give back to their community.

### New Trainings

- In the past year, we've recognized the need to expand the training opportunities that we provide to our volunteers. We've continued to evolve our Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression training to provide a workshop that's able to meet the unique needs of our agency and our volunteers, and have also added Emergency First Aid and Adult CPR certification to the regular rotation of trainings. This has been very popular amongst volunteers and provides a great opportunity for skills development, as well as making ACO a safer environment for staff, volunteers, and participants.

## Support Services/Living Room

### Drop-In Activities/ Events

- Acknowledgement of cultural and social justice days: Black History Month cooking and story sharing, Asian Heritage Month documentary movie screening, AIDS Awareness Week video screening, etc.
- Fun activities: bingo games, monthly birthday celebration, neon party, Halloween party, aboriginal art workshops, TED Talks video viewing, holiday cards making, Valentine's Day cupcake making, making bath salt workshop, pool game with straight men, HIV improv workshop

### Practical Services

- Bus tickets, food bank, over-the counter medications, laundry services, personal hygiene items, subsidized YMCA memberships, protein drinks, clothing and access to computers, fax, photocopying, stamps, etc.

### Holistic Health & Wellness Workshops/ Programs

- Eat healthy with Susannah, community gardening, complementary alternative medicine workshops 2.0, men's fitness program, acupuncture workshop, aging positively presentation, laughter yoga workshop, body mapping workshops (artworks were displayed at International AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2014), flu shot clinic, chiropractic care, student massage clinic

### KTE and Educational Workshops

- Pep/Prep presentation, HALCO presentation on ODSP and RDSP, monthly University of Ottawa Legal Aid Clinic presentations, computer skill workshops

### Peer-Led Programs/ Services

- Monthly haircuts, Dance to Live, yoga, bike clinic, soup/ sandwich/ salad/ dessert program, cuisine class

### Annual Events

- One Day Fun Day (Ottawa River Boat Cruise and BBQ at Mini Golf Garden), Holiday Hamper, Holiday Dinner, Bowling, Sugar Shack Outing, March Break Family Event (Clip & Climb)

### New Initiatives/ Programs

- Pet Food Bank, Vet Clinic, CHEO Support Outreach (agreement signed)

### Research Involvement

- "Comparing models for engaging marginalized populations in the conduct of HIV Community Based Research", "Exploring the Perceptions of Gay and Bisexual Men about Public Health Counselling and Follow up Post-HIV Diagnosis", "Let's Talk Side Effects", "HIV, Health and Rehabilitation Survey", "PHA Drug Users Access Hospital Care", "Effects on HIV on Cognitive and Mental Health Functioning", "The Experiences of African Women Accessing Reproductive Health Services in Ottawa", "A Case Study of Week Long Recreational Camp for PHAs", "Post -Immigration HIV Infection in ACB Population", "Understanding the Experiences of Pregnancy in Women Living with HIV", "People on the Move", "AC-Track Research", "Developing a Stigma Reduction Intervention for ACB Women", "Think Tank - Support the Supporters", "Think Tank on Disclosure", "Think Tank on ACB Research", "HIV testing in a ACB population in Ottawa.

Overall, program attendance has increased by 18% (from 7349 to 8697). Significant increase in Women(31%) and Trans(5.7 times) populations.

## Education/Prevention

### Women's Community Development and Outreach

- Supporting Sex Trade Workers in their response to the changes to the sex work legislation. Providing/supporting capacity building and law reform.
- Supporting the conceptualization of a clinic modeled on Gay Zone for ACB Communities.
- As a member of HIV/AIDS Education Prevention Committee (HPEC) creating training modules for a service provider focused training day
- Providing education and outreach to OCDC following a 6 month period where we were barred from providing this service
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Voices for Women's Health Forum was a huge success incorporating new topics and more peer-based education.

### Harm Reduction Program

- The Harm Reduction Program/Tool Shed has seen an impressive increase in Tool Shed contact over the year; particularly for women and trans people.
- The Tool Shed Operator position has been staffed by 3 different peer operators over the year bringing a diverse set of skills and knowledge to the staff team.
- We have been very fortunate to have a full roster of Tool Shed volunteers whose dedication is critical to the harm reduction programs success.

### Gay Men's Community Development /Outreach/Ethno Cultural Specific Programming

- Hosted a successful Gay Men's Forum in November to launch and introduce the Our Agenda Let's Get Fresh report and campaign.
- We have increased the amount of and diversity of community programming provided at Gay Zone, including: cooking club, movie nights, yoga, NA group, book club.
- Annual Snowblower Festival was fierce this year and saw the introduction of many new events including the launch of Mz. Snowblower (2014-Dixie Landers) and Mr. Plow (2014- Mike Laframboise) as annual events.
- Provided continued capacity building within non-conventional stakeholders to ensure that ACO has a presence in diverse community venues.
- Distributed more than 35,000+ condoms to bars, bath houses, local business and events such as Pride

As I look at the year ahead, I feel excited about tackling some big projects that are in front of us. Next year will be a milestone year for ACO, our 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday! WOW! We are all looking forward to celebrating three decades of ACO's rich history in the Ottawa community and honouring the incredible and indelible memories over the last 30 years. Stay tuned for this special anniversary recognition and celebration. The year ahead will also bring a brand new strategic plan for ACO. We have hired Beth Jordan and Adobe Consulting Services to help facilitate this process. All our diverse stakeholders will be consulted in this participatory process, as we envision ACO's strategic directions over the next five years. We will begin the work in early January and rollout the finished product to our membership at the AGM in 2015. Last, but not least, we will secure a new home for ACO, one that will enhance the quality of services and programs that we provide to our communities and help us grow as an organization to the evolving needs of the populations that we serve.

In closing, I would like to thank our funders at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - AIDS Bureau, City of Ottawa and MAC AIDS. I would also like to thank all the donors who have contributed financially to ACO throughout the year, and to everyone who helped raise money for ACO through the annual AIDS Walk. We are in gratitude of your generosity.

Have a good evening, merci et bon soir, thank you for your continued support.



Khaled Salam

Executive Director



# Coordinator of Volunteer Resources Report

It's been another awesome year for the volunteer program at ACO and I know I speak for the staff team and all the participants when I say we are all so grateful for all the time, energy, and commitment offered by ACO volunteers over the past twelve months. We've welcomed close to 50 new faces to the volunteer team during the last fiscal year, all of them bringing their own unique contribution to the agency, and we look forward to watching the program grow even more this year.

Volunteers contributed close to 6500 hours of their time this year in a variety of roles ranging from food bank to reception, harm reduction to childcare, outreach to cooking. This works out to almost four full time staff positions, or roughly \$148,000 in salary money saved by the agency. Volunteers contribute so much more than financial savings to the organization, though. Each person comes with individual experience and individual passion that help make ACO the diverse, collaborative organization that it is.

We are also incredibly indebted to all of our participants who also give their time as volunteers. Involving PHAs in a meaningful way is one of the most important things we can do to ensure that our programming remains relevant and effective, and it's a privilege to get to hear your ideas and thoughts and do what I can to help make them happen.

Stay tuned in the coming months for information about new and exciting programming and events coming up, including the annual volunteer appreciation party in the fall! Also, please never hesitate to get in touch if you would like to get involved as a volunteer, or have any thoughts about the volunteer program that you'd like to share. Your feedback is always welcome and makes my job so much easier in the long run.

To close, please join me in thanking all of ACO's volunteers for their contributions and commitment

Thank you,

Leslie Wells  
Volunteer Coordinator



## Nominations Committee Report 2014

---

Thank you for your time. Our present Board Members remaining this year and continue to serve are Soyini Cornette, Richard Hubley, Kevin Hall, Jean Chenier, Greg Whitelock and Mylan Ly.

We have had a couple of departures since our last AGM, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Luc Parasiene and Ashley Gaskell for their volunteer commitment and wish them well in all their future endeavours. Irving Brugada and Caroline Meguerditchian were appointed to complete the terms for Ashley and Luc, which are coming to an end at the AGM today, and therefore will be on the slate to be voted on this evening.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the entire Board of Directors for their dedication and commitment to the values and mission of ACO and caring for the well-being of all our participants. In the last fiscal year, the Board of Directors have devoted over 2000 hours of their time to ACO.

We will be presenting a slate of six candidates to be elected this year, all six are returning Directors:

<i>Gord Asmus</i>	<i>Irving Brugada</i>
<i>Laura Conroy</i>	<i>Caroline Meguerditchian</i>
<i>Kevin Hatt (KRH)</i>	<i>Charles Anyali</i>

The election of this slate will result in a complete Board of twelve Directors. In keeping with ACO's commitment to the GIPA/MIPA principles, again this year, we will be exceeding the By-Law mandate to have a minimum of four seats designated for HIV Positive individuals.

This is an ideal opportunity to remind all members in good standing, they may apply at any time of the year to sit on the Board or Committees or to put a name forward to the Nominations Committee as a potential applicant to contribute your talents and passion for the success of the agency. We currently have a pool of two individuals on our reserve list, who already have been vetted and will be appointed to the Board as the need arises.

Thank you,

Kevin Hatt  
Chair of Nominations Committee

## AIDS Candlelight Memorial



### *“Remembrance and Hope”*

HIV/AIDS has been one of the most disastrous diseases in modern times. Since HIV was discovered in 1981, more than 20 million people around the world have died from AIDS and 40 million people are estimated to be infected with HIV today, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Of those infected more than 17 million are women and 2 million are children. Nearly every corner of the world has felt the impact of HIV/AIDS, but mostly in poor regions, where people have little access to health care. Sub-Saharan Africa has been particularly devastated by the pandemic, accounting for 25 million people currently infected. The disease has wrecked economies, orphaned children, widowed parents, exhausted health systems, strained education, and deepened poverty. Social stigma and discrimination against those with HIV has only made matters worse, and continues to be our greatest challenge in fighting HIV/AIDS.

We emphasize the need for people living with and affected by HIV to join hands and work together in the response to HIV. Solidarity in communities is essential to reduce stigma and promote the involvement of people living with HIV in order to ensure a more effective HIV response. Only together as communities can we advocate for universal access to quality health and social services.

With millions of lives lost and millions of people currently living with HIV, HIV remains a challenging reality. While for many people HIV has become a manageable disease, many others lack access to treatment and experience HIV-related stigma, discrimination and human rights violations on a daily basis



## One Voice

When we talk about HIV/AIDS, we express ourselves in millions of diverse voices; voices of the dying; voices of the living, voices of the family; voices of the mourning, voices of those at risk, voices of caregivers, and voices of those fighting for justice. Regardless of the voice, language, or dialect - we are the Once Voice of HIV/AIDS.

*We light this candle in memory and as a symbol of remembrance to honour those who have gone before us, as a symbol of support for those who are Living With HIV/AIDS and for the families and friends of those who have died and those who are Living With HIV/AIDS for the endless love, support, care and compassion they have shown and continue to show.*

## Many Faces

There is no singular face to HIV/AIDS, as the pandemic has spared no country, no community and knows no borders. We must not focus solely on the disease, but on the faces of the people it affects - the face of the orphan in Beijing, the face of the mother in Kampala, the face of the friend in New York, the face of a partner in Toronto, the face of the person living with HIV in Ottawa, and the face of the person you may not have met yet. HIV/AIDS is not a disease of numbers and statistics, but one that has affected millions of families, communities and nations world wide - every face, every individual counts.

*We light this candle to acknowledge those who have put aside fears, ignorance and prejudice by fostering a better understanding of HIV/AIDS and in working towards more care, compassion and support for those Living With HIV/AIDS. We acknowledge all volunteers within the AIDS Movement for their compassion, commitment and endless gifts of time.*

## United for Life

With the strength of one voice and the experience of millions of faces and individuals, we can join together to let our neighbours, communities, nations, and the world know that the lives of the 40 million people Living With HIV/AIDS and the lives of the over 20 million who have died are valued, priceless and irreplaceable.

Researchers are continuing to search for a cure for HIV/AIDS, and are conducting trials and research all over the world. Leaders are coming together around the world to fight the AIDS pandemic; however, there is still a long way to go to reduce the costs of medicines, educate communities and health-care workers, improve health systems that facilitate prevention and treatment, and motivate political leaders to enact effective policies that address the scourge of AIDS.

*We light this candle to acknowledge all those who provide education and community programs around HIV/AIDS, the researchers, scientists and medical professionals who continue to search for a cure for HIV/AIDS, those governments and communities who continue to provide funding and support for those Living With HIV/AIDS and for all who are working towards a day we live in a world without HIV/AIDS.*

Globally 7 million people living with HIV are on treatment, while 15 million people are in urgent need of HIV treatment, prevention and care services. Even in places where basic HIV services are available, social and structural barriers such as poverty, marginalization, stigma and discrimination all influence the access of communities and individuals to these services.

We urge leaders to ensure all communities have equal access to HIV treatment and testing; evidence-based prevention; and care and support. Specific attention should be given to the needs of young people, men who have sex with men, sex workers and people who use drugs.

Communities around the world face HIV-related stigma, discrimination and human rights violations, particularly people living with HIV and key populations such as men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, sex workers and young people.

We urge community, faith and political leaders to fight discrimination through protecting the rights of affected groups and individuals, and fostering a supportive legal and policy environment.

The needs of communities affected by HIV far outpace the current resources allocated to meet them. We urge leaders to scale up their commitments to adequately address the scope and depth of HIV, including other burdens accompanying or enhancing its spread such as TB, malaria, sexually transmitted diseases and opportunistic infections, and other contributing social and economic challenges.

Communities of people living with and affected by HIV are often neglected in the decision-making processes that aim to assist them in the first place. The GIPA principle calls for the Greater Involvement of People living with HIV in decisions and policies, which influence their lives, and has been internationally recognized since the Paris Summit of 1994.

We urge leaders to incorporate the voice of people living with and affected by HIV in the formulation of policy, as well as in the design and implementation of programmes. Their experience and opinions are essential to the local, national and global HIV response. This includes promoting the empowerment of women, young people and key populations.



Mz. Snowblower

Mr. Plow



*I stood before the NAMES and did not see a monument of gloating death. I saw a measureless garden of imperishable, multi-coloured blossoms. I saw richly textured, seamless fabric - a living tapestry uniting friends, lovers, and families, with handiwork proclaiming undiminished love, commitment and dedication. I saw survivors weeping, embracing and scattering flowers upon finely embroidered affirmations to conquer this epidemic, vanquish bigotry and overcome ignorance - the sermon the NAMES Project is preaching held me in its grip and overwhelmed me.*

*Only by healing can we be healed.  
Only by loving can we be loved.  
Only by caring can we be cared for.  
Only by reaching out can we be touched.*

We now ask that you take a few minutes to reflect and remember (aloud or privately) someone in your thoughts and in your heart who has been lost to AIDS - or, if not, someone who continues to live with its challenges. Think of them with fond memories -- with a tear in your eye, or with laughter in your heart. If you wish place a flower in his or her memory during the ceremony following this meeting, please complete the card attached to one of the flowers at your table and come forward and place it in the basket at the front of the room.

After our meeting today you are welcome to join us at Riverrain Park at the corner of MacArthur Rd and River Rd., where these flowers and remembrances will bear witness to people who remain alive in our hearts. The AIDS Committee of Ottawa would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous donation of flowers from the Fresh Flower Company, 150 Albert Street, Ottawa.

## The Ontario Accord

A statement of solidarity with GIPA/MIPA

We, people living with HIV/AIDS and allies in the community:

- Commit to the greater involvement and meaningful engagement of people living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA/MIPA); GIPA/MIPA puts PHAs at the centre and is grounded in human rights and the dignity of the full human being
- Aim to transform all who live with, work in, and are affected by, HIV/AIDS in Ontario
- Commit to personal and social transformation
- Value community expertise in embracing the challenge for the betterment of society
- Value inclusion over exclusion, a quest for integrity at all times and the embodiment of self-determination
- Promote the evolution of thought, action and collaboration among us and with our allies

Because GIPA/MIPA is about human struggles and aspirations, ethics, empowerment and accountability are its foundation.

This Accord was created by representatives of Ontario organizations at a Living and Serving 3 consultation meeting in July 2011

### The Living Room

*The stigmatization of a human life  
Leaves a lasting impression  
Not seen by the naked eye  
Fueling the spiral of depression*

*At The Living Room  
We find a glimmer of hope  
With people who will boost our moral  
And not treat us  
Like herded sheep in a coral*

*When we give of ourselves  
Our spirit is brightened  
We see the results  
With the moments  
That are enlightened*

*As my health and bones grow old  
I will always remember  
The Living Room  
For the inspiring stories  
Where my hope, took hold*

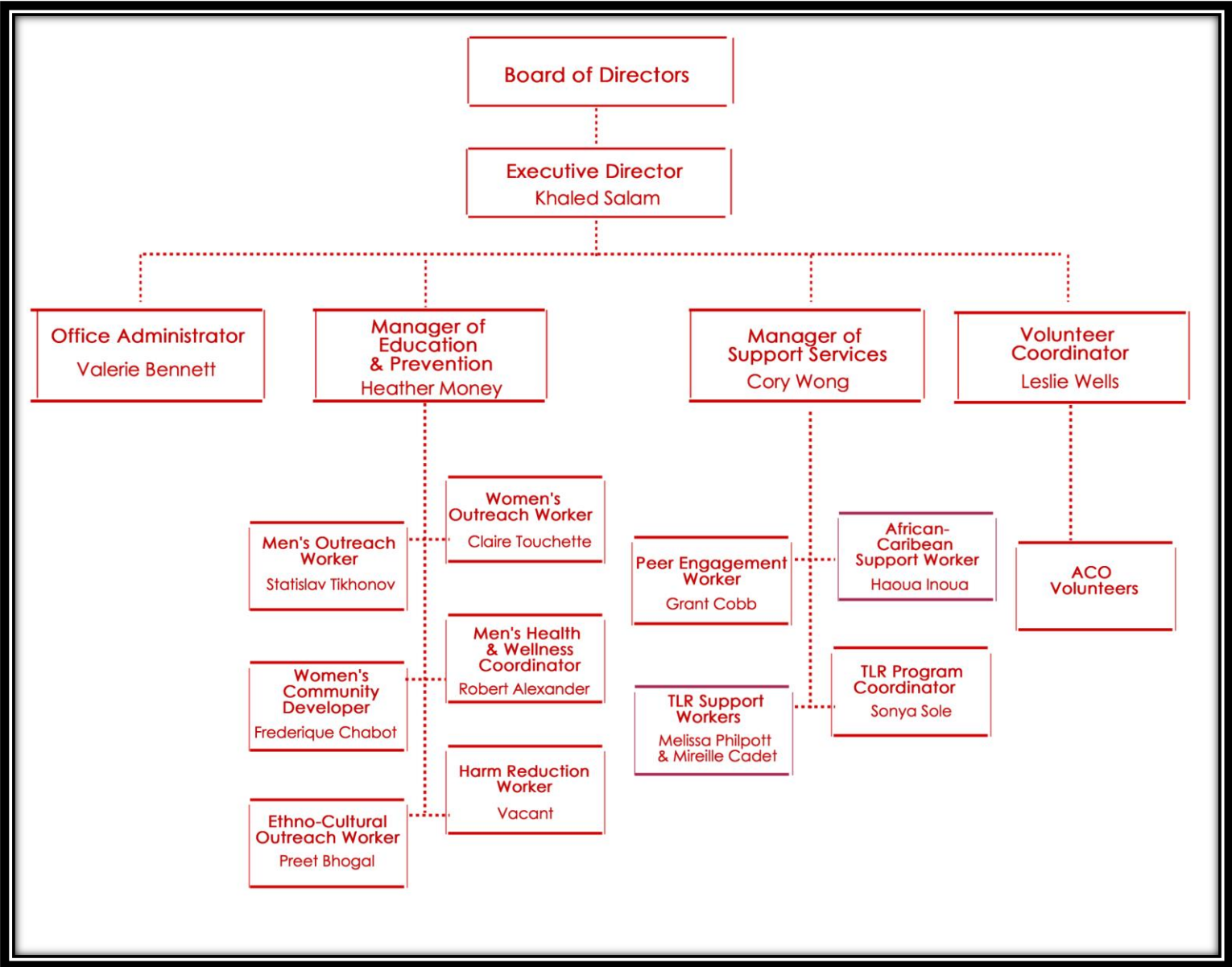
*The depth of my gratitude  
I give to the staff and volunteers  
But most important  
My fellow clients, for without you  
I would not have been able  
To see, through my tears*

*We are all guardians of hope  
With or without a cure  
So I give to you my heart  
A heart that is filled with l'amour*

*By Robert Pottie  
August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012*



# ACO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



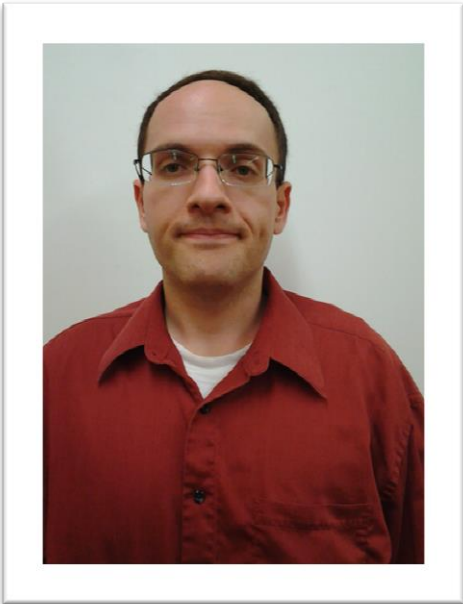


# ACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair	Gord Asmus
Vice-Chair	Kevin Hatt
Secretary	Caroline Meguerditchian
Treasurer	Richard Hubley
Director	Mylan Ly
Director	Irving Rosas-Brugada
Director	Jean Chenier
Director	Kevin Hall
Director	Greg Whitelock
Director	Soyini Cornette
Director	Charles Anyali
Director	Laura Conroy



# ACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS





# ACO STAFF TEAM

<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Khaled Salam</b>
<b>Office Administrator</b>	<b>Valerie Bennett</b>
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	<b>Leslie Wells</b>
<b>Manager of Support Services</b>	<b>Cory Wong</b>
<b>Manager of Education &amp; Prevention</b>	<b>Heather Money</b>
<b>African-Caribbean Support Worker</b>	<b>Haoua Inoua</b>
<b>Harm Reduction Coordinator</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>Men's Health &amp; Wellness Coordinator</b>	<b>Robert Alexander</b>
<b>Men's Outreach Coordinator</b>	<b>Stas Tikhonov</b>
<b>MSM Ethno-Cultural Resource Coordinator</b>	<b>Preet Bhogal</b>
<b>Peer Engagement Worker</b>	<b>Grant Cobb</b>
<b>TLR Program Coordinator</b>	<b>Sonya Sole</b>
<b>TLR Support Worker</b>	<b>Melissa Philpott</b>
<b>TLR Support Worker</b>	<b>Mireille Cadet</b>
<b>Women's Community Developer</b>	<b>Frederique Chabot</b>
<b>Women's Outreach Coordinator</b>	<b>Claire Touchette</b>

