



PWA Newsletter

Making a posi+ive difference



Since 1987, PWA has been serving people living with HIV/AIDS. 2012 marks PWA's 25th anniversary. Please accept PWA's gratitude for giving this grassroots agency the support we've needed to serve Toronto's HIV/AIDS community for 25 years. Thank you to our many donors, sponsors, Friends For Life Bike Rally steering committee volunteers, riders and crew, community groups, clients and board members past and present who have helped us serve the community.

New Directions

PWA's recently completed **strategic planning**, has framed how the whole agency plans to execute our work within the community in the coming years. The resulting strategic directions are: **capacity building, creating a welcoming and healing space, being a creative connector as well as a health and well-being champion and providing practical and therapeutic program delivery.**

PWA has transformed its mission as well: **We engage people living with HIV/AIDS in enhancing their health and wellbeing through practical and therapeutic support services and broader social change, and we inspire them to live into their dreams and discoveries.**

Our strategic planning allowed PWA to develop a vision: We live in affirming, sustaining communities where we find inspiration and support for our dreams, health, well-being and meaningful contributions. We invite you to view an electronic copy on our website at: www.pwatoronto.org/stratplan or pick one up at our office, 200 Gerrard St. East, 2nd Floor (at Sherbourne.).



Client Story

‘Healing yourself is connected to healing others’

Richard is a PWA volunteer and client and he most recently assisted in the collaborative strategic planning process that involved community members, staff, clients and board members. Richard’s story is particularly representative of one of PWA’s strategic planning directions in which we intend to further focus on engagement.



Before contracting HIV, Richard fled a verbally abusive and homophobic stepfather for the big city, Vancouver. He struggled with homelessness and unemployment. Eventually, he was able to get himself established in a successful retail position. During this secure stage of his life, Richard’s mother died. He coped by working and partying hard. The resulting substance addiction of this loss frames the point in time when Richard contracted HIV. Ironically, having had a roof over his head, a career and financial stability, Richard found himself at a new low as an HIV-positive man. Soon after his sero-conversion, he became very ill and was unable to continue working.

Facing incurable illness, career loss, financial hardship, stigma and isolation accompanying the HIV infection, Richard moved to Toronto and encountered the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation. He became a client of PWA because he was struggling to survive. “I came in for a bag of food’. Initially he was afraid to visit PWA’s office and the elevator to our second floor office was a particularly anxious hurdle to tackle. Richard says “pressing the button was the best decision I ever made”. Like many of our new clients, Richard left our office holding his head high.

Because of the programs and services he accessed at PWA, Richard says he has “had the opportunity to rebuild my confidence and work skills”. In addition to food he first came to PWA for, Richard found much needed peer support and opportunities to be engaged.

At PWA, “I met people who got it. I felt understood, heard’. He was invited to hear a speaker “...and I listened. And it got me thinking, if they could do it...survive all that, why couldn’t I?” Shortly thereafter he became a volunteer and a speaker with PWA’s Speakers Bureau. “I connected with a PWA staff member who became a mentor for me. I attribute my going back to school to his support”.

Richard is one of 12 volunteers with the Speaker’s Bureau. He speaks about HIV prevention to university, college and high school students and about how they can protect themselves from HIV. Community services are the bridges that help people find their way out of crisis, out of the poverty cycle, and out of homelessness.

I’ve found that helping others and, being in service, has been very healing. I’ve been able to make a positive impact on the way health care is delivered as a result of being meaningfully engaged.



Ted and Duncan Minnis at
Timothy's World Coffee



New Owners, Old Traditions

Timothy's World Coffee at 500 Church Street has had a few owners over the years but their passion for coffee and support for the community has remained the same. Ted and Duncan Minnis took over the Timothy's World Coffee Church Street location in May of 2011. Since then, PWA has been proud to have them continue the fine tradition of acting as Agency Partners. Ted and Duncan, through Timothy's, generously provide ground coffee for a fresh brew at PWA's office, for clients to enjoy during their visits year round . Timothy's World Coffee is committed to social responsibility and continues to generously support PWA and our Annual Friends For Life Bike Rally with a reassuring hot cup of coffee.

On Your Bikes! Get ready, set, GO!

The **Friends For Life Bike Rally** is getting into full swing with educational sessions taking place weekly for registrants that include session topics for new participants, fundraising 101 and cyclist shopping guides. Many thanks to the dedicated 2012 Bike Rally steering committee and co-chairs, for their hard work to support participants and make the 14th annual bike rally a success. The first training ride is scheduled for April 14th at 10am from Finch Station, anyone is welcome to join.

For more information on the Friends For Life Bike Rally or to join the 260+ already registered Riders, Crew or to pledge a Rider or Crew member, please visit www.bikerally.org.

The third annual **PWA LOVE BOWL** took place **on February 4th** at a new location (Bowlerama West). Thanks to the Toronto Historical Bowling Society, our sponsor Bristol-Myers Squibb, participants and their sponsors, \$10,300 was raised for PWA. Congrats to Nora Axbey for winning the Top Female Bowler award and Gary Hesselwood for being the Top Male Bowler! Patrick Mathieu took home the Top Fundraising prize of a trip for two on VIA Rail 1 to Montreal. The Toronto Historical Bowling Society is a few years older than PWA, created in 1983, by a small group of gay people looking to have fun and socialize. To join their gay positive bowling league visit: thbs.ca

PWA's Holiday Program

The community's support of the Holiday Hampers is representative of the phenomenal in-kind support that PWA has received over the past 25 years. A big thanks to all the contributors of the 2011 Holiday Hampers, BookAIDS, Coach House Cookies, Daniel et Daniel, Johnson & Johnson, McGregor Industries, New Leaf Florist, Proctor & Gamble, Starbucks Coffee and TIFF. A special thanks to Proctor & Gamble and staff volunteers who helped assemble the hampers.

CHUM Children's Foundation made PWA's children clients holiday season a brighter one by donating \$4,000 for PWA's Children's Holiday Program. Thanks to Spearhead and TORN community groups for their fundraising and food donations over the holiday months and to **Whole Foods Market**, Yorkville location at 86 Avenue Road (wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/Toronto/), for choosing PWA as the recipient of their BAG HUNGER program for the second year in a row (over **\$10,000** was raised for PWA's Food Programs from customers giving donations during their checkout).

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Toronto People With AIDS Foundation
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PWAtoronto.org
200 Gerrard St. East, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5A 2E6
416-506-1400 info@pwatoronto.org

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