

## JOINT STATEMENT

Updated February 14, 2018



Many of us who knew and worked with Andrew Kinsman continue to be devastated by his death and the confirmation that his remains have been identified.

As individuals and communities, we continue to be deeply impacted by the ongoing events related to the tragic deaths of Andrew, Selim Esen, Majeed Kayhan, Soroush Mahmudi and Dean Lisowick as well as the missing men we know of, Skandaraj “Skanda” Navaratnam and Abdulbasir “Basir” Faizi, in addition to the deaths of Alloura Wells and Tess Richey. THN and PWA send our deepest sympathies to those who knew and loved these individuals.

All of this has left many across the community dealing with multiple and often conflicting emotions including shock, grief and fear. Yet, as our history demonstrates, we are resilient in our support for each other and our advocacy for change. Space and time to come together has been reflected in small groups and in Vigils.

Additionally, THN and PWA are actively working with the 519 Community Centre and other community partners to highlight systemic issues within police relations and procedures when working with marginalized communities.

We also want to take the time to acknowledge in more detail who Andrew was and what he meant to many of us in the community.

Andrew has been a valued and dedicated staff member with the Toronto HIV/AIDS Network and both a contract staff and long-term volunteer at the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation.

We will remember Andrew, our colleague, volunteer, neighbour, helper, brother, and partner on shared commitments he took on to make life better for others. We are hearing more of Andrew’s personal impact, whether by people knowing him a little or those very close to him.

Beautiful, strong Andrew, who encouraged, challenged and inspired us. A wonderful wicked sense of humour, he would get frustrated and angry too - anger at hypocrisy, pettiness, meanness and injustice. Andrew had fire and gentleness. A presence when he entered a room. You knew when Andrew was here. Let us fill our hearts and minds with memories of what he means to us, his booming voice, his soothing voice, his laugh, his smile. Let’s try to be more attentive to each other, kind to each other, to keep Andrew in our hearts and honor his life.

We are being asked when there will be a community memorial for Andrew. When appropriate, and in collaboration with those closest to Andrew, THN and PWA will assist in planning a public Celebration of Andrew’s life and we will share information as decisions are made through our usual communications. Individuals who wish to receive information directly about any details may send an email to [thncoordinator@torontohivaidnetwork.org](mailto:thncoordinator@torontohivaidnetwork.org).

We appreciate the extensive efforts and support of the LGBTQ communities in response to this investigation and the work of the front-line detectives on the police task force. THN and PWA will continue to distribute information as released by the Toronto Police Services.

We will need to draw from our strengths to support each other through the long path ahead to a resolution of the investigation. We invite individuals to share with each other your stories, your strategies of resilience, your tears, and your anger in these difficult times. Possible support in the community includes:

- Drop-in counselling:
  - ACT – available Monday-Friday. Please call in advance to determine the drop-in schedule: (416) 340-2437
  - Family Services Toronto – available on Wednesdays from 3:30-7:30 at 128A Sterling Road, #202 (Bloor St W/Dundas St W). First come, first serve. Registration opens at 3pm and ends at 6:15pm
- Phone hotlines
  - Gerstein Centre – available 24/7 by calling (416) 929-5200
  - Progress Place’s Warmline – available daily from 8pm – midnight by calling (416) 960-9276 or texting (647) 557-5882;
  - Toronto Distress Centres – available 24/7 by calling (416) 408-4357

Thanks to everyone for your words of comfort. We cannot fully express how deeply your help and kindness is appreciated. With our deepest condolences to all who are now grieving.