



AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan

2014/2015 Annual Report

**“Working towards zero transmission of HIV & HCV,
and optimum health for people living with and
affected by HIV & HCV.”**

June 2015

AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan

Our Mission

- To provide relevant and accessible services and programs, and foster connections for individuals, families and communities affected by, living with, or at risk of HIV/AIDS/HCV.

Our Vision

- To be a trusted leader in HIV/AIDS and HCV education, prevention, support and care.

Our Values

- We are **respectful** – recognizing the worth and dignity of each person
- We are **confidential** – respecting each individual’s right to anonymity
- We are **accountable** – transparent in all interactions
- We treat people with **integrity** – acting in an honest and ethical manner, doing what we say we will do and following through on commitments
- We respond to people with **compassion** – we treat everyone with empathy, gentleness, acceptance and kindness
- We strive for **excellence** – we provide reliable, quality service as informed by the people we interact with and through self-reflection

Board of Directors

Co-Chair	Michelle Bilan
Co-Chair	Dr. david Gregory
Secretary	Syd Bolt
Treasurer	Mewael Eyob
Director	Christine Chang
Director	Jon Claggett
Director	Leo Kaiser
Director	Heather Temple

Staff

Executive Director	Brian Wiens
Client Care Coordinator	Morag Hurn
Drop-In Coordinator	Sarah Wood-Gagnon
Needle Exchange Coordinator	Michelle Brass
Education Coordinator	Tom Janisch
Voices of the People	Keitha Kennedy
Circle of Courage Facilitator	Krista Shore
At Risk Support Group Elder	Norma-Jean Byrd
At Risk Group Facilitator	Dan Lindsay

Message from the Co-Chairs

We are very pleased with this year's Annual Report highlighting the hard work of the community, the Staff, the Executive Director and the Board of AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS).

Over the past two years, the Board has stabilized and developed internally, allowing us to make significant strides in terms of our skills, insights, structures, governance approaches and roles. Last year, we conducted a workshop to address basic strategic planning elements including mission, vision and values. This year, as the Executive Director has been working on increasing our ability to measure outcomes and plan strategically, our Board has been directing energy into the adoption of a policy governance model.

The new Bylaws being proposed at this Annual General Meeting are the result of many hours of research, education and hard work by the Board. The new Bylaws will be closely followed by complimentary Board Policies to promote a smooth and efficient governance process and administration. The new governance model will encourage innovation while increasing accountability, reporting, and outcomes-based strategic planning and programming. We are already seeing the benefits of this approach in some of the newer programs offered by APSS including Voices of the People and a renewed Education and Outreach program.

We would particularly like to thank the Staff and the Executive Director for their work toward increased strategic programming and outcomes measurement. Their engagement in the process is a testament to their dedication to the Organization and to their clients.

Michelle Bilan and david Gregory

Message from the Executive Director

This has been an eventful year for AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan. In the fall we initiated a new multi-year program called Voices of the People that will work toward mobilizing the resources of people who use injection drugs in order to reduce the rates of HIV and HCV infection in those communities. At the same time we were fortunate to hire an experienced education and outreach consultant who completed a needs analysis of HIV/HCV education needs in southern Saskatchewan and is developing a new education strategy. Following the purchase of a new database, a client care module was developed that allows our Client Care Coordinator to track interactions with HIV+ clients, and will increase our capacity to better serve clients in the years to come. The Jerome Nagel Wellness Fund, which provides practical helps for HIV+ individuals, was accessed more in 2014-15 than any previous year. Over \$25,000 was invested to provide counseling, nutritional help, transportation, assistance with prescription costs and more, to clients who would otherwise have great difficulty accessing those services. This was also year that saw a record number of visits to the needle exchange with approximately 20,000 unique interactions. While it is not encouraging that there is such a great need for the needle exchange, it is encouraging that individuals who use injection drugs are aware of the needle exchange, are accessing its services, and using clean supplies.

Another highlight from the year was the excellent progress that has been made by the Board of Directors in establishing a streamlined policy governance process that is already increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Thank-you to the board for their commitment to the organization and for their hard work through the year.

It seems to be the case that a certain amount of staff turnover is to be expected in the non-profit sector. Such has been the case at AIDS Programs this year. Thank-you to outgoing staff for your excellent efforts on behalf of those we serve. Thank-you as well to long term staff who continue to grow in their roles and contribute to the efforts we make as a team to reduce the influence of HIV and HCV.

The need for HIV/HCV education and care is not diminishing, and although we will have work to do to raise funding to maintain and even increase our efforts, we ended the year in a strong financial position. Thank-you to all of our funders, donors and volunteers for trusting us as an organization and supporting this work. Please see the last page of this report for a list of our primary funders and sponsors.

Brian Wiens

Education & Outreach

This was a year of development for our education and outreach program. Having recognized the limitation of providing HIV and HCV education to southern Saskatchewan with one education staff person, a new approach was required. An education consultant with considerable experience in program development was hired to conduct a needs analysis and develop a new strategy. Tom Janisch began work in late November, and considerable progress has been made to date.

- school presentations were updated to include the Saskatchewan Health education curriculum outcomes for each grade, and to incorporate an evaluation component into the presentations. Topics include: HIV 101, Hep C, sexual health, and stigma.

- progress was made on a partnership with Corrections Saskatchewan to initiate a pilot HIV/HCV education initiative in the Regina Correctional Centre in 2015-16.

- the needs analysis revealed an opportunity for AIDS Programs to step into a gap in the public education system. Work is being done to put together a proposal to provide age-specific and classroom based online learning resources for grades 4 to 9—province-wide. Our intention is to take this proposal to Saskatchewan industries and businesses in order to secure funding.

- new or renewed connections have been made with schools in North Central Regina, with the Queer community in Regina, and with the Regina Open Door Society (a gateway for many new Canadians).

Education Outputs for the Year

Community Outreach Events (primarily information booths at health-related public events)

- 821 people contacted

HIV/HCV workshops and education seminars (primarily public school classes- grades 5 to 10)

- 1,027 participants

Awareness activities with people from ethno cultural groups

- 515 people contacted

HIV/HCV workshops and seminars for Health Care providers (nursing students)

- 236 participants

Additional public events, and fundraisers that include an education component
-607 participants

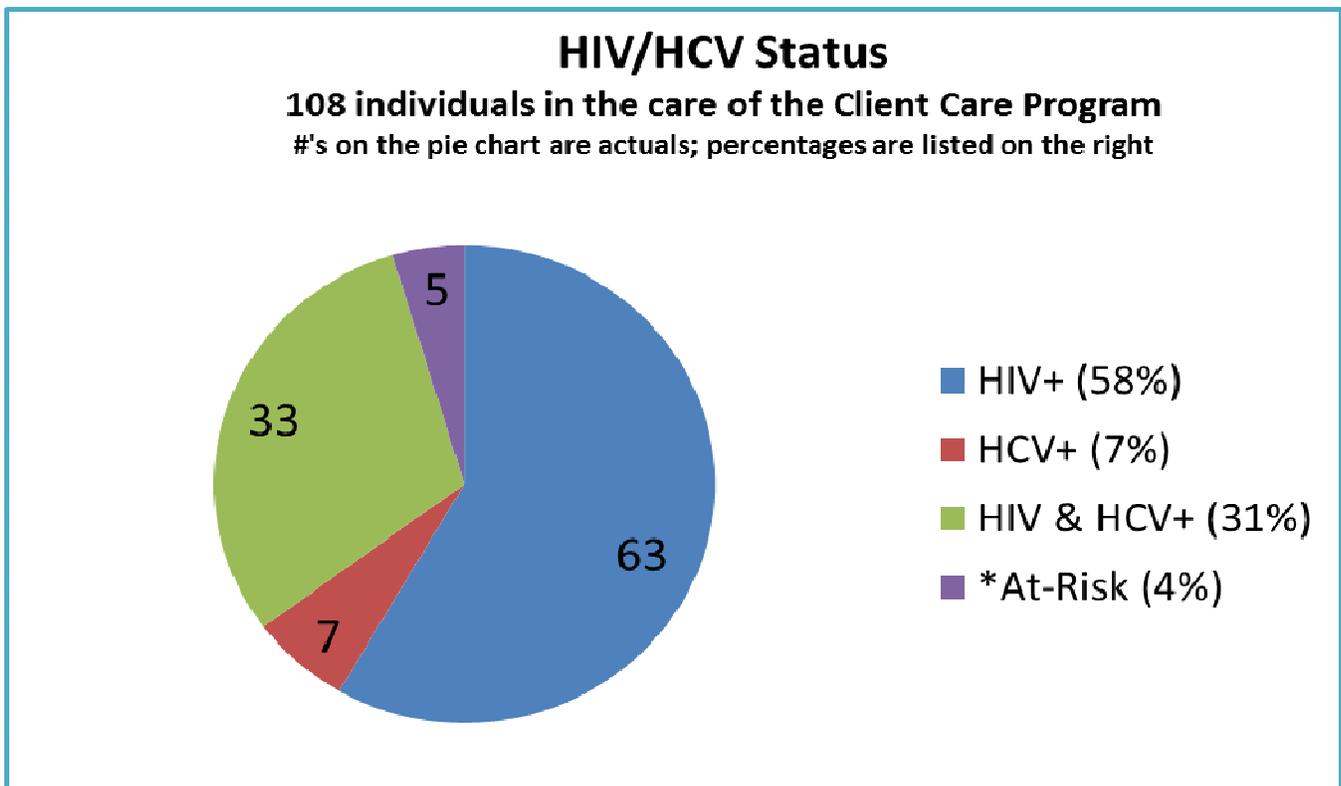
Public advertising and media events

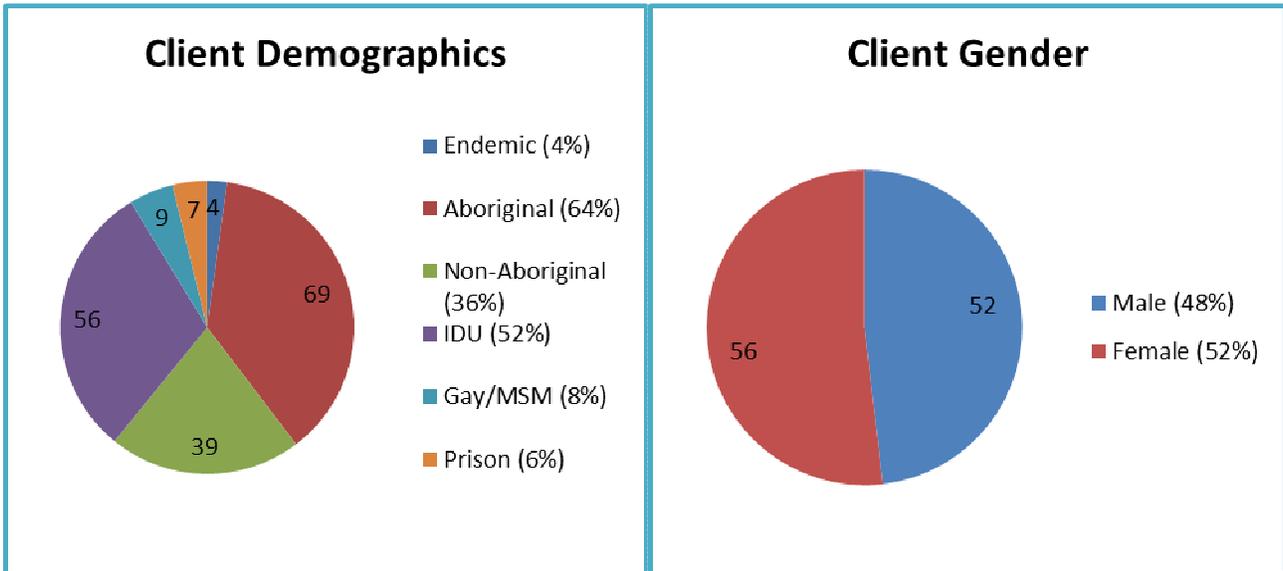
- World AIDS Day (Dec.1/14) “Talk to the Experts” show on Rawlco Radio
-audience of approximately 50,000 Saskatchewan listeners
- World AIDS Day “Are You Positive You’re Negative” billboard advertising in Regina

HIV+ Client Care

The goal of the Client Care Program is to assist HIV positive individuals in self-care so that they experience optimum health. Services provided include transportation to appointments, nutritional support, counseling with a psychologist or social worker, financial assistance with prescription costs, food bank deliveries for those needing assistance, one-on-one HIV and Hep C education and support, and referrals to other agencies that provide care to HIV+ individuals. Our Client Care Coordinator works closely with the Regina Qu-Appelle Health Region (RQHR) case management team to provide integrated care.

The client care management database was implemented in late fall, and the following data represents client information and interactions from the first three months of 2015.





Client Interactions (January – March 2015)

144 appointments

- 17 ID (Infectious Disease Clinic) appointments
 - 16 attended/1 missed
- 110 client care appointments*
- 17 other agency/medical appointments**
- 28 harm reduction conversations
 - 19 reported intention to change behavior
 - 8 reported change in knowledge
 - 1 reported behavior change

* “client care appointments” refers to face to face services provided to clients by the Client Care Coordinator.

**”other agency/medical appointments” refers to appointments with doctors-other than the ID Clinic doctors, dentists, and other agencies that provide services to clients.

Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund

Jerome Nagel and Ric Ranger left a legacy to assist individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Each year AIDS Programs, through external fundraising, raises money to maintain that fund for HIV+ clients. The Wellness Fund provides assistance to clients who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS for healthy living related expenses not covered by the provincial health plan or any other agency.

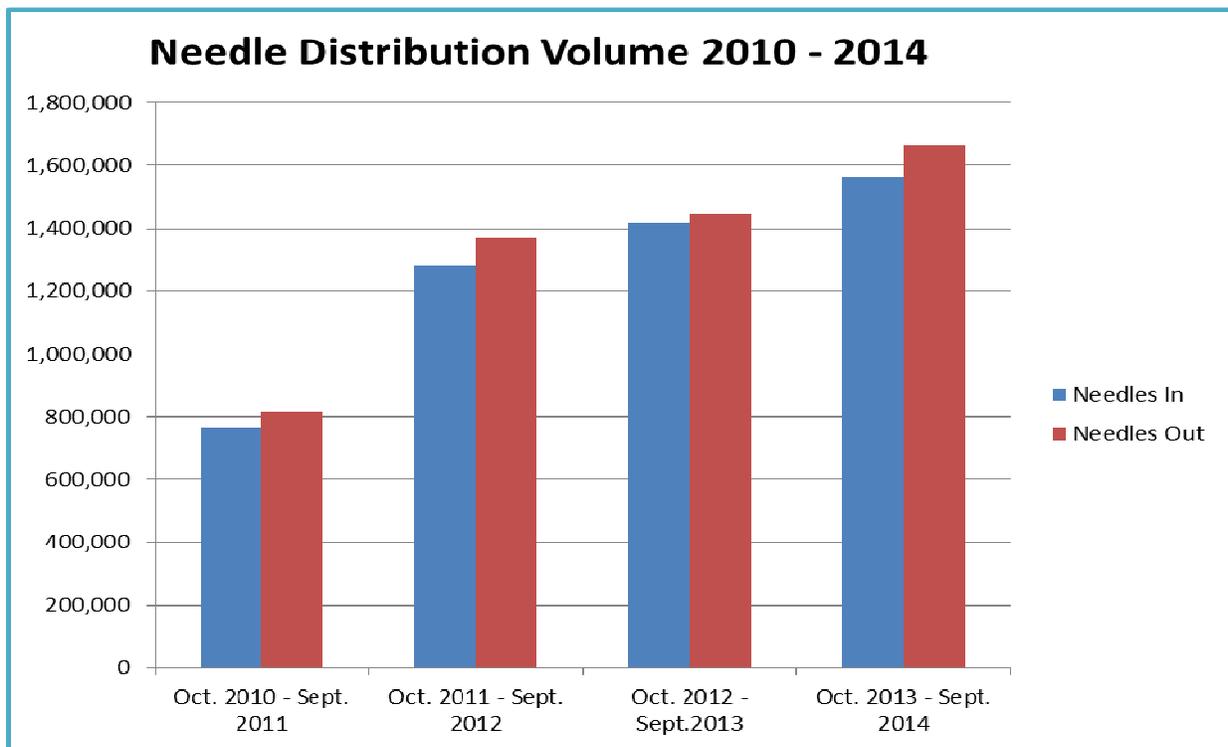
During the past year, AIDS Programs spent \$25,000 from this fund to support client care activities. Of that total \$2800 paid for mileage for the Client Care Coordinator, \$840 was spent on cell-phone charges for the Client Care Coordinator, and the remainder paid for services provided directly to clients.

Queen City Exchange

Needle Exchange Program

AIDS Programs, in partnership with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR), and Saskatchewan Health, operates a very busy needle exchange program at 2911 5th Avenue. Currently in Saskatchewan the highest risk factor for infection with HIV is injection drug use (needle sharing). The needle exchange seeks to reduce the harmful consequences associated with high risk injection drug use by providing clean rigs in exchange for used rigs. Clients are encouraged to return their used needles and are provided with clean supplies in an environment that seeks to accept people were there at without judgment. We hope to get to know clients by name, and to be a safe place where they can talk about their lives, and find the hope and support they need to take next steps if and when they want to. As individuals enter the needle exchange they are surrounded by messaging and brochures that provide helpful information to reduce the risk of HIV and HCV infection. *Each exchange is recorded. The return rate for the AIDS Programs needle exchange continues to be above 95%.*

In the fall of 2011, AIDS Programs expanded the operation of the needle exchange from Monday to Friday to Monday through Saturday. The following chart shows the number of needles distributed since that time.



The chart above can also be expressed in terms of unique “visits” to the needle exchange. Over the last year there were over 21,000 visits to the exchange. The increased use of the needle exchange raises some important questions:

-is a greater percentage of the total population of people who use injection drugs in Regina accessing the needle exchange?

-is the APSS exchange being accessed by an increased percentage of people in relation to the other needle exchanges that operate in Regina (2110 Hamilton Street, Carmichael Outreach, the mobile van)?

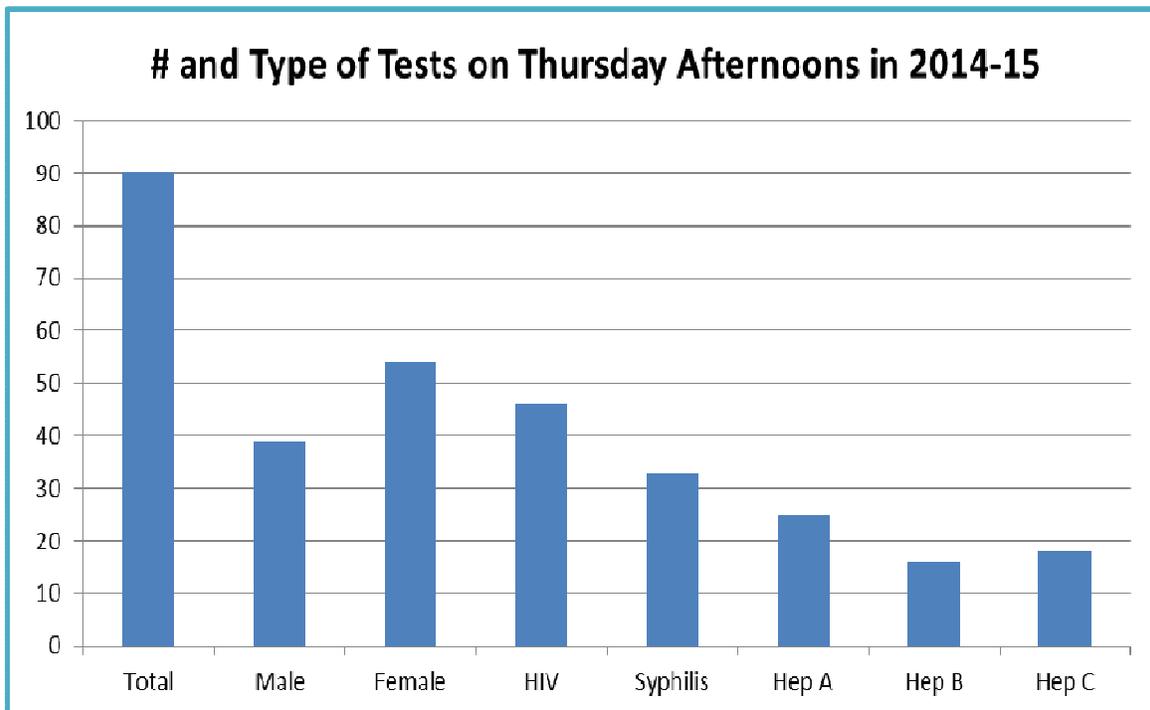
-is it possible that more people are using injection drugs in Regina and as a result the demand is rising due to increased drug use?

AIDS programs is developing the capacity to track individual usage patterns of people who access the exchange which will help us begin to answer these questions in the coming year.

The sheer volume of injection drug use in Regina points to the ongoing need for excellent harm reduction services, and for community development that reduces the social and personal factors that make people susceptible to life-controlling addictions.

Drop-In Center

The Drop-In Center continues to be a gathering place for people from the community. Fresh coffee is served daily along with bread for toast with peanut butter and jam. A highly visible resource center offers many brochures that provide helpful answers to questions surrounding HIV and HCV. An Addictions Counselor from RQHR is available to consult with clients on Tuesday afternoons. The HIV Strategy Housing Coordinator from Carmichael Outreach is available to consult with clients on housing issues on Wednesday afternoons, and a Public Health Nurse from RQHR is available on Thursday afternoons and provides testing and consultations as needed. A significant number of people were tested on site as illustrated by the following chart.



Community Development

Voices of the People – Participant Group for People who use Injection Drugs

The Voices of the People (VOP) initiative began with a funding application to the MAC AIDS Fund in the spring of 2014. MAC Cosmetics provided one year of initial funding, and the Public Health Agency of Canada has provided additional funding until March 2017. Keitha Kennedy was hired last fall to coordinate the program.

This initiative is unique in that it seeks to give a voice to people who use injection drugs in North Central Regina. A group has been created that meets weekly with the long-term goal of developing strategies to serve North Central Regina in order to reduce the spread of HIV and HCV among people who use injection drugs and the broader community.

The VOP participant group has been meeting weekly since February 3rd with 5-15 participants per week and two elders in attendance each week. There have been 38 visits from newcomers to the group and approximately 46 repeated visits from 8 individuals. The group has its own space in the suite next to the Queen City Exchange, and will soon be occupying the larger commercial space next door that has been rented by AIDS Programs to accommodate community groups.

A Needs Assessment Survey for people who use injection drugs was developed and completed with the assistance of a community advisory team, an external advisory team, and two part time survey staff. 150 individuals who use injection drugs were surveyed on site at the Queen City Exchange over a 2 month period (March-April) and the data has been entered into a data-base for review. In the coming months the data from the survey will be evaluated, and the group will begin to work on developing initiatives to reduce the risk of HIV and HCV infection in the surrounding community.

Anyone At Risk Support Group

Funded by the RQHR HIV Strategy, the “Anyone-at-Risk” support group meets in the Queen City Exchange each Thursday evening starting at 5:00 p.m. Participants are provided with a meal and childcare is provided. Elder Norma-Jean Byrd and Dan Lindsay facilitate the group. The group functions in a talking circle format which allows participants to share where they are out on their journey and find encouragement and support. The group continues to draw both regular attenders and newcomers. Over the past year the group averaged an attendance of 9 individuals not including the facilitators, and approximately 60 newcomers checked out the group. The group is open to anyone from the community who wants to participate.

Circle Of Courage Support Group

The Circle of Courage support group (COC) is a bi-weekly group funded by the RQHR HIV Strategy that is facilitated by Krista Shore. The group supports HIV infected and affected mothers and their children and provides resources, skills, and relationships so that they can adhere to HIV treatment and live healthy lives. Education and support outings and guest speakers are a regular part of the program, and an Elder is normally present for each session. A long-term goal of this program is for participants to become mentors to other HIV-positive women. Weekly attendance for the group averages five women and draws on a community of about 15 HIV+ women.

Fundraising Activities

AIDS Programs and All Nations Hope AIDS Network once again partnered in the annual **Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life** which took place on September 21st. Total income for the event was \$6,270. Expenses were minimal and proceeds were divided between the two organizations. AIDS Programs used its portion to support the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

AIDS Programs was again one of the charities selected by the **Regal Social Association of Regina (RSAR)**. In November the RSAR presented AIDS Programs with a cheque for \$3000, all of which was designated for the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund. Thank-You!

World AIDS Day was commemorated on Dec. 1st. The **Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR)** hosted a fundraiser and raised \$2884.00 in one evening for the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

The 2015 **Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards** took place on March 28th at the Conexus Art Centre. Founding and primary sponsor, Dr. Roberta McKay, and her husband, Elmer Brenner, were gracious hosts. We were pleased to have in attendance the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, her Honour the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield. The event raised a little over \$10,000.

The Regina Police Service (RPS) hosts an annual spring marathon and we have been fortunate to operate a refreshment station. For our involvement in the event the RPS provided AIDS Programs with a cheque for \$500.00.

Volunteers and Students

Students and volunteers continue to make significant contributions to this agency, and we appreciate their enthusiasm, fresh energy, and innovative approaches. This past year we had several rounds of nursing practicum students and a health sciences student complete their placements with AIDS Programs. A number of students from other programs also completed short-term work projects, and we welcomed a handful of new volunteers who regularly help out in the needle exchange

During their time with us, students and volunteers are welcome to be involved in the following areas as needed:

- Administration
- Client care
- Education & Outreach
- Fundraising
- Public events
- Needle Exchange Program

From our staff, students, volunteers and clients, thank you to the following groups and individuals for their support over the last year!

Our Funders:



Agence de la santé
publique du Canada



Dr. Roberta McKay

Our Partners:



Community Partners:

- All Nations Hope Network
- Andrew Huculak
- Carmichael Outreach
- Gay & Lesbian Community of Regina
- Moose Jaw HIV Strategy
- Newo Yotina Friendship Centre
- North Central Community Association
- North Central Family Centre
- Orange Boot Bakery
- Planned Parenthood Regina
- Regal Social Association of Regina
- Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
- Regina & District Food Bank
- Santa's Little Elves
- Scotiabank
- SIAST Nursing Program
- Street Workers' Advocacy Project
- University of Regina Social Work Program
- University of Regina Nursing Program
- U of S Nursing Program
- UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Diversity
- Western Litho

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