



# **AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan**

**2012/2013 Annual Report**

**Supporting people living with HIV/AIDS**

**June 2013**



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our dedicated and hard working Board of Directors has given superb direction and support throughout this past year. Under the Board's direction, APSS continues to grow and meet the needs of people with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

Wes Peace – Chair  
Lana Krogan-Stevely – Vice Chair  
Jennifer Martuo - Treasurer  
Tami Huber - Director  
Bob Morin – Director  
Shauneen Pete - Director  
Mirtha Rivera - Director  
Brian Wiens – Director  
Ezra James - Director

## APSS STAFF

The APSS staff brings energy, commitment and a can-do attitude to the organization and the people we help.

Bobbi Gelsinger, Needle Exchange Coordinator  
Morag Hurn, Support Services  
Dan Lindsay, Needle Exchange Administrator Saturdays  
Doreen Lloyd, Empowering Women Life Skills Coordinator  
Kasey Mahnic, Needle Exchange Administrator – Saturdays and Education Facilitator  
Cindy O'Connor, Administration Coordinator  
Laurie Pellerin, Needle Exchange Administrator  
Laurie Sampson, Executive Director  
Whitney Sanders – Education Facilitator  
Krista Shore, Circle of Courage Peer Support Coordinator  
Alicia Slywka, Outreach Coordinator  
Danita Wahpoosewyman, Needle Exchange Coordinator and Peer Support

Thank you to our committed volunteers and students who help to ensure the continued operation of our office.

**The Red Ribbon is the global symbol for solidarity with HIV-positive people and those living with AIDS. APSS is pleased to provide red ribbons to individuals and community agencies.**



## Message from the Board Chair – Wes Pearce

This is the last time that I will be representing Aids Programs South Saskatchewan as my term on the board and as chair comes to a close with the end of the AGM. Bob, Mirtha, Lana and I all arrived on the board at a time when the stability and viability of the organization was very much in doubt and I hope that as we leave the board, we have left the agency in a slightly better place than when we arrived. That being said, I had hoped to be able to write a slightly different report for this year's AGM but if this year proved anything it was prepare for the unexpected!

Last year, I wrote "Our 26th anniversary was not without several challenges and some substantial changes" and I can confidently write that our 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary year was not without several challenges and some substantial changes as well! Many of the challenges that we face are not dissimilar to those faced by a growing number of not-for-profit organizations: we've already outgrown our space at 2911 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, securing enough funding for operations (as opposed to programs) is increasingly complex and difficult, there have been inevitable staffing changes on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and all the while more people need our services; the services and supports that they are requesting are rapidly changing as well.

Change, as they say, is never easy and this has been a year of much change. As many of you are aware, Laurie Sampson left APSS at the end of October and I think we have all felt her absence at various times throughout the year. I do want to again thank Laurie for her many years of dedication to ensuring that APSS remained a vital and healthy organization and for shepherding the agency through some very dark times; sadly as our financial picture improved Laurie felt the need to move on and we all wish her well.

Also in early October, it was also with very mixed emotions that the board learned that Lana Krogan-Stevely had been appointed to the bench and as a result had to step down from the board immediately. Lana had served the board tirelessly and had done really great work in reviewing and revising our bylaws. Her expertise has been deeply missed this year but again we wish her well.

It is easy at times, to get discouraged and forget to count the success stories and the very positive events that have taken place this year. Many of those achievements are highlighted throughout this Annual Report but I would like to highlight a few:

- we were very fortunate to receive a sizeable one time grant from the Federal Government (ACAP) which allowed us to stabilize some of our operations, invest in some much needed capital around the office and offer support to the Rainbow Wellness Resource Centre as well as Trans-Sask.
- we have noticed a dramatic increase in both registrations, and more importantly, successful completion of our Empowering Women Life Skills Program(s);
- the drop in centre continues to be a hugely popular place for residents in the neighbourhood that it is sometimes a challenge to keep up with the demand for coffee and snacks (which is both good and bad news);
- our ongoing collaboration with the SHEA awards proved to be the most successful event ever! Much thanks to the SHEA committee, to Jeffery Straker (whom people can't stop talking about), to the nominees (and just as importantly the nominators) and especially to Dr. Roberta McKay for her continued support, encouragement and enthusiasm for this very important event;
- our major fundraisers this year: the annual Gerbera Daisy Sale, the annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life, and the GLCR AIDS Day benefit were again successful campaigns for us;

- we were again very honoured this year when APSS (Wellness Fund) was named one of the charities being supported by the Regal Social Association of Regina. The court has worked tirelessly throughout the year and in September presented APSS with a cheque for \$15,000. We are deeply grateful for the Court's continued support of APSS.

As we continue to be asked to do more for less it is important to thank over and over and over our tremendous staff who repeatedly strive to ensure that our clients are supported and cared for, our communities are educated and comforted and that no one is left behind. APSS could not fulfill its mandate without our dedicated volunteers (including students from a variety of post-secondary programs in Regina) who are all committed individuals AND who are never thanked enough for their work.

Finally I would like to thank the current APSS Board members who are continuing on for the upcoming year and on behalf of the board I would like to thank Bob Morin, Mirtha Rivera and Lana Krogan-Stevely for their 4 years of work with the APSS Board.

I hope everyone connected with APSS has a most enjoyable summer!

Get Tested -  
Knowing is  
better

## EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS) works with people living in North Central and surrounding areas in Regina. Empowering Individuals and Families was designed to assist individuals and families who are faced with a multitude of problems, living high-risk lifestyles and living with HIV/Hepatitis C. The duration of Life Skills-Group Therapy sessions are twelve weeks. The program runs Monday to Friday from 1:00 - 4:00.

The majority of participants are self-referrals (word of mouth) and government and community agency referrals. However, crisis intervention is needed for a number of individuals who are utilizing the drop-in and needle exchange living in unhealthy environments such as drug and gang affiliated residences and clients that were chronically ill and close to death.

In twelve weeks program sessions focus on self-awareness/self-worth, problem solving, goal setting, values and beliefs, healthy lifestyles, healthy relationships/sexuality, family problems-abuse, addictions, grieving-loss/separation. Participants were able to obtain eight certificates: Train the Trainer – HIV/Hep C; Assertiveness Training; REACH Certificate-cooking/budgeting; Employment Workshop; Circle of Life Teaching-Parenting; Safe Talk-Suicide Alert Training; Stilettos to Moccasins and Life Skills.

Participants are also, offered the opportunity to tour S.I.A.S.T, S.I.I.T. and are introduced to other agency's programs and supports in the community and around Regina. Many are involved in one-on-one counseling at APSS or other agencies. All participants have the opportunity to meet with elders and or work with traditional healers. Participants in need of specialized programming and supports are introduced to appropriate services and agencies in Regina.

Program participants attending the program have been able to achieve stability and a better quality of life. They have been able to obtain safe, adequate housing and address addiction problems and are in recovery, abstaining from using drugs and alcohol. Many have sought medical help addressing life-long health concerns such as HIV/Hepatitis C, diabetes, cancer, and mental health diagnosis. Several participants have gone on to further education or have obtained employment.

To date, there have been two big graduations with approximately 70-80 people in attendance, where community and families have come out to celebrate. There is another one at the end of this month and intakes are being completed for September programming

## Support Services

2012 was a year of growth for support services. We were able to, under support services, introduce a program for support for family and care givers of HIV Positive clients. This program got off to a slow start but now we are having a least 2 meetings per month and we are able to answer many questions family members had about HIV. These meetings were not just requested for newly diagnosed clients but also for some of our existing clients and their families/friends. The main question is how do I protect my family and is their loved going to die. It is nice to be able to alleviate their fears.

Our "Circle of Care" we develop for each individual client provides wrap around care for the client. We connect them with all services that they require to help manage their HIV, from the ID clinic, find a regular

doctor/dentist, see a psychologist and also something as simple as just someone to talk to about issues that affect them.

We would like to share a story about one of our clients. This client was admitted to the Regina General Hospital (RGH) Emergency on September 2011 with health issues. He was admitted and discharged within a week. During the next 3 months this became a revolving door type of treatment, in for a week or two and then out for a few days. In January of 2012 he was admitted into to the RGH with breathing problems and remained there until May 2012. At that time he was transferred to the Pasqua Hospital to await long term care. We continued to work with him while he was in hospital and try to find a solution to his situation. In April of 2013 we were able to coordinate with the HSUI at Pioneer Village and have him transferred there. After more than 16 months in hospital he is now in a place that he can call his own and still has the supports required for his day to day living.

We were invited to be on the Moose Jaw HIV Strategy Committee, which is a great opportunity for APSS to connect with clients and health professionals in Southern Saskatchewan. It also gave us the opportunity to connect our Education Coordinator with the Moose Jaw Board of Education to develop presentations for all of the Moose Jaw School Division. Being part of the Moose Jaw Strategy Committee is an open door to many exciting new opportunities for APSS.

Also RQHR has recognized the work we do and invited us to attend bi-weekly case management meetings regarding HIV+ clients they are dealing with and that has been a great benefit to our clients.

## **Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund**

The Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund was started to provide financial assistance for health care related expenses to people living with HIV and AIDS. The Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund is supported by many fundraisers hosted by community agencies and businesses.

APSS is very pleased that the fund continues to provide financial assistance to pay for medications, massage therapy, medical/occupational therapy, transportation to doctor visits, baby formula, psychologist services and other needs directly related to HIV positive status. We are very delighted and so very grateful for the tremendous support received from the Regal Social Association of Regina, Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life and the Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina's annual AIDS Benefit. Their support allows us to continue to assist our clients.

## Harm Reduction Program

AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS), in partnership with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR), operates one of the busiest Needle Exchange Programs (NEP) in the Province. The NEP distributes clean needles, ties, spoons, water, alcohol swabs, condoms and provides information about harm reduction, HIV and Hepatitis C prevention and resources. We also collect used or discarded needles from the community and return them to the office for a safe disposal.

APSS received additional funding from RQHR, through the Provincial HIV Strategy, to extend our hours of operation. We are now open Monday through Friday from 9am – 5pm and on Saturdays from 10am – 5pm.

The additional funding provides the opportunity to offer peer support as needed and requested. Clients and guests may be referred to All Nations Hope AIDS Network for spiritual guidance from Elders and Healers, to Detox for addiction treatment, to the Regina & District Food Bank, or to Carmichael Outreach and the North Central Task Force on Housing for help in finding housing. Our Peer Support Coordinator is available to speak with anyone whether HIV+ or not

Supported through the Provincial HIV Strategy, RQHR provides funding to APSS to initiate a weekly "Anyone-at risk Support Group" which averages 10 participants each week. Each group begins with an Elder smudging and offering a prayer, followed by a talking circle. The Elder is the spiritual guide for building a solid foundation so participants are equipped with the tools to effectively cope with day to day issues. Group discussions include new HIV and Hepatitis C treatments, living a holistic/balanced lifestyle, dealing with the stigma and discrimination around HIV, and issues of poverty and homelessness. Cultural activities include going to sweats, pow-wows, picking sage and going on a medicine walk. All participants share a meal at the end of the group session.

APSS began offering a bi-weekly support group called Circle of Courage. This unique program focuses on HIV-positive women with children who may or may not be HIV-positive, women who are caring for adopted and foster HIV-positive children and HIV-positive women who are considering pregnancy. This peer-based support group focuses on empowering, encouraging, supporting and educating the participants about HIV, HIV medications and side effects and provides a safe and confidential place for people to share. The group explores issues of isolation, discrimination, stigma and depression. Participants determine what direction each session takes. The group meets two times per month. The long-term goal is for the participants to become mentors to other HIV-positive women who may be considering pregnancy or who are already pregnant.

### **APSS Needle Exchange Program 2012/13:**

APSS distributed 1,468,453 new needles, an increase of 72% over 2011/2012

1,407,782 needles were returned – a rate of 95%

NEP contacts between the ages of 15 – 45+ included 8,340 females; 9,582 males and 46 contacts identified as "other".

18,097 condoms were distributed.

## Drop-in Center

The APSS drop-in centre is a safe, comfortable, non-judgmental and welcoming place for clients and guests to socialize, relax and provide and receive support in times of need. Guests may enjoy a snack, coffee and juice and nutritional workshops. There is a telephone available to make appointments or to connect with family and friends.

Through APSS's partnerships with RQHR, people can receive an HIV or HCV test, access information about HIV/AIDS, HIV and the Law, healthy living and services available in the community. We also provide emergency services such as bus tokens, hygiene items, referrals and information on available housing.

In partnership with the RQHR, APSS has a health nurse on-site for a half day each week to perform blood tests, talk with clients about their health, and offer counseling to clients and guests about HIV and Hepatitis C.

Also in partnership with RQHR, an Addictions Counselor visits APSS for a half day each week to counsel and refer clients and guests to treatment programs.

APSS sees an average of 2,400 guests each month (this number does not include the people who visit only the needle exchange).

## Education and Outreach

Education, prevention and outreach continue to be a key focus of APSS. This last year education really flourished as we expanded throughout Southern Saskatchewan. In September letters were sent to all the schools in Regina and Southern Saskatchewan to offer educational presentations for their classes. We received a great response from these letters and travelled to many schools both out of town and within Regina to do presentations. We will continue this method in years to come as it is a great way to offer what we do to the education system in Saskatchewan. It is, and will continue to be, a great way to develop relationships with teachers who will hopefully continue to use our services for years to come.

We continue to not only give presentations to schools but also to Post-secondary schools such as SIAST, the University of Regina and the First Nations University as well as Community Agencies and other businesses throughout Regina. In the last fiscal year the Education team was able to give 49 presentations to 949 people attending those presentations. We have been able to make a good connection with the Nursing Program through SIAST, through an employee who is a recently graduated registered nurse, and provide presentations to the students in the program. We have also been able to develop a relationship with Addictions Services to go in once every month to provide a presentation to the Adult Day Detox Program.

In March, Alicia Slywka, Outreach and Education Coordinator, was asked invited to take part in International Women's Day and was honored to be the main guest speaker at an event that happened at the University of Regina. She was able to talk about HIV in Saskatchewan and how it is affecting people here and how APSS is helping and supporting these people. It was a great event to be a part of.

In addition to presentations, we have also been involved in events where we were able to set up information booths and provide information to volunteers, prospective students, youth at risk and the general public on

what we do and who we are. In the last fiscal year we had 12 information booths and gave out a wide array of APSS brochures, brochures about HIV/AIDS, and brochures about Hepatitis C. Through these information booths we were able to connect with over 1000 people.

We continued to develop our relationship with Regina Open Door Society both for Client Support Services, as well as for Education and Outreach. Education was able to provide a couple presentations in their English program in the last year, as well as in their summer program for children. They have invited us multiple times to set up information booths at their events which we have done. This is a great way to keep the relationship going and hope to provide support services and education to them in the future.

As part of Outreach over the last year, Alicia Slywka along with the Public Health Nurses and the Regina Food Bank, developed a Health Fair as a pilot project. These Health Fairs were intended to provide people with access to HIV testing and other health services at a convenient location. We also had the intention of helping to normalize testing and reduce the stigma and discrimination around HIV and getting tested. It was a good initiative that will hopefully continue throughout the years.

Whitney Sanders, previously one of our nursing practicum students, developed the Tender Loving Care Program (TLC Program). The TLC program is a program which runs one day per week and was created for our nursing practicum students to familiarize themselves with the community and assess their needs. This program hopes to provide a friendly, relaxed environment for people to learn, interact and ask health related questions. The program also offers free blood pressure, blood sugar testing, nutritious snacks and distributes a current list of doctors who are accepting new patients.

## Fundraising Activities

APSS celebrated the 12<sup>th</sup> annual **Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards** on March 9, 2013 at the Conexus Art Centre. Founding and presenting sponsor, Dr. Roberta McKay and her husband, Elmer Brenner, were once again gracious hosts. We were extremely pleased to have in attendance The Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, her Honour the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield. The event featured a live performance from Jeff Straker with accompaniment from his sister and guitar player. Over the years the SHEA has raised over \$289,000.

The recipients of a 2013 SHEA were: Dr. Mohamed Moolla, Golden Mile Medical Clinic RQHR; Aaron Cross, Youth for Christ Regina; Dr. Jill Blaser, Family Physician Westwinds Primary Health Care Saskatoon; Dr. Malcolm Warburton, Family Physician Onion Lake Medical Centre; Dawn McNeil, Executive Director Homecare and Palliative Care RQHR; Dr. James Irvine, Medical Health Officer Family Medicine Athabasca Health Authority MCCRHA, KYRHA; Cheryl Hand, Brenda McAllister, Heather Trischuk, Charlotte Greenall, Pamela Woodworth, Oasis Team Westside Community Clinic Saskatoon and Cornelia Manea, Regina General Hospital SICU Housekeeping RQHR

APSS annual **Gerbera Daisy** sale was held May 17th and 18th in Regina. Thanks to the support of the Wascana Flower Shoppe, the Regina General and Pasqua Hospitals, Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, Scarth Street Mall this event was a success and raised \$3,100!

APSS and All Nations Hope AIDS Network once again partnered in the annual **Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life** and raised a total of \$ 12343.95 which was split between the two organizations. These funds were deposited to our Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

The **Gay & Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR)** hosted the annual AIDS Benefit on Friday November 30, 2012. which entertained 200 people and raised \$2,918.00 for our Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

**December 1 marked World AIDS Day.** The development of a partnership created and maintained with Starbucks South Regina raised funds through their A Capella group which they donated to our Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

The Regina Police Service (RPS) hosts an annual marathon and we have been fortunate to man a station to provide Gatorade and water to all participants in the event. Leading up to and during the event, APSS works strongly as a team and promotes the agency at the event. For our involvement in the event the RPS provided us with \$500.00.

Thank you for your support!!

## To our funders

 Public Health Agency of Canada Agence de la santé publique du Canada

**Canada**



**Regina Qu'Appelle**  
HEALTH REGION



**MAC AIDS FUND**

*Mrs. Claire Kramer*

*Dr. Roberta McKay*

## Our Partners



## Community Partners

- A1 Rentals
- All Nations Hope AIDS Network
- Blue Mantel
- Carmichael Outreach
- City of Regina
- Gay & Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR)
- Miss B Haven
- Andrew Huculak
- Newo Yotina Friendship Centre
- North Central Community Association
- Parliament Community Church
- Pine Grove Correctional Centre
- Regal Social Association of Regina (RSAR)
- Regina & District Food Bank
- Regina Rent-it Centre
- Santa's Little Helpers
- Sask Energy
- Dion Schlosser
- Scotiabank
- Starbucks
- Street Workers' Advocacy Project
- Track and Trail
- UR Pride
- Wascana Flower Shoppe

# AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan

## **Mandate**

APSS will engage the whole community to stop the spread of HIV

## **Mission Statement**

APSS will support community health and well-being through sharing HIV/AIDS information and resources

## **Vision Statement**

HIV infection will be prevented through an effective educated response to HIV and AIDS in our community through promoting behaviour change, risk reduction and creating changes that impact on society.

**Education is the key to preventing the spread of HIV**

## **GET TESTED**

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