

**Vancouver Island Persons Living
with HIV/AIDS Society**

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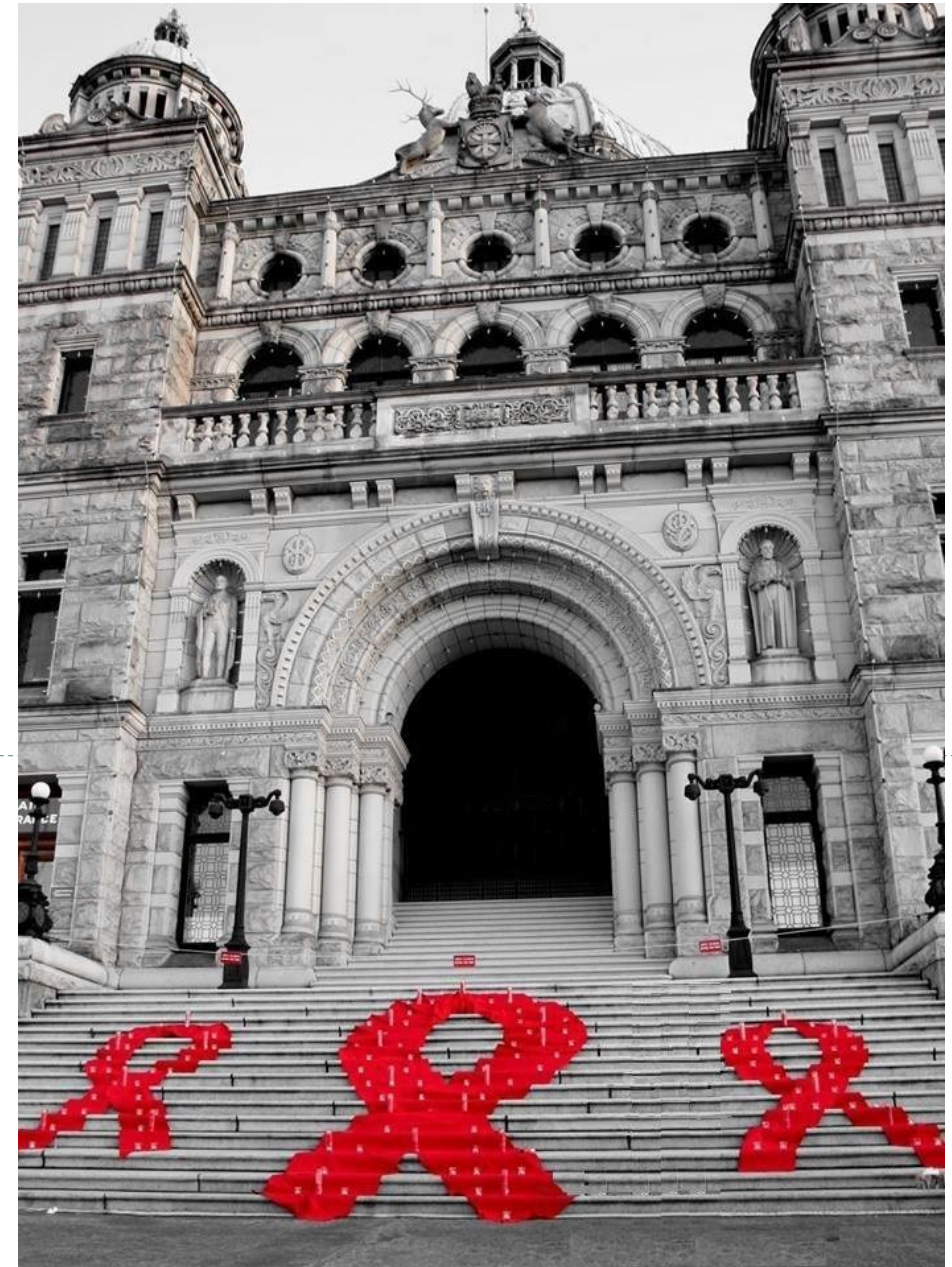


Vancouver Island PWA Society AGM 2015

July, 23 2015
James Bay New Horizons
234 Menzies Street
Victoria, BC



Compassion Courage Community





Vancouver Island PWA Society AGM 2015



**Respect, Equality, Compassion,
Honesty, Trust
and Human Potential**
VPWAS guiding principles

Date:

July 23, 2015 - 6:30 pm

Location:

James Bay New Horizons Centre,
234 Menzies Street, Victoria, BC

AGM 2015 - AGENDA

Welcome - Moment of Remembrance

Guest Speaker:

Sophie Bannar-Martin, MPH
STOP HIV & BBD | Island Health

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda
**Approval of March 25, 2014 AGM
minutes**

Reports:

Financial - TJ Furlani
Board Chair - Piotr Burek
Executive Director - Craig Dales

Election of Directors

Adjournment

Refreshments/Social

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Members 2014/2015

Piotr Burek
Robert Birch
Ryan O'Neill
Antonio Marante

STAFF

Craig Dales,
Executive Director and
Peer Navigation Coordinator

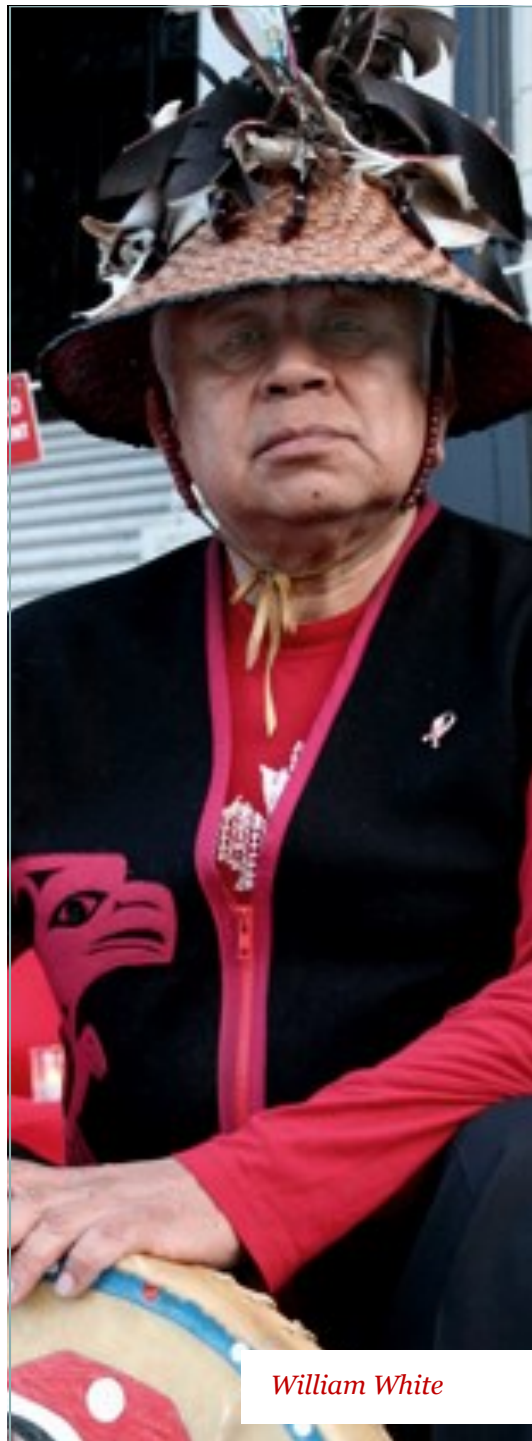
Sarah Wilson,
Support and Advocacy

Michael Yoder,
POZitively Connected Facilitator and
Peer Navigation

TJ Furlani,
Bookkeeper/Office Manager



Victoria Pride Parade 2014



William White

Territorial Acknowledgement

The Vancouver Island PWA Society acknowledges the territory of Esquimalt and Songhees Nations (their ancestral families consisting of the Teechamitsa, Kosampson, Swangwhung, Chilcowitch, Whyomilth, Chakonein, Kakyaakan, and Chewhaytsum).

It is these families who had established villages and used the territory for hunting, fishing, berry picking, and ritual and cleansing sites prior to Captain Vancouver's arrival in June of 1792 and later James Douglas' establishing a colony in 1849. As Victoria is a large urban centre VPWAS also recognizes families with Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuuchahnulth and Metis Ancestry.

**Generously written and provided to VPWAS by:
William A. White,
Kw'am Kw'um sulitst HIV/AIDS
Project Ts'ewulhtun Health
Centre, Cowichan Tribes**

FROM THE BOARD

Dear members of the VPWAS community,

First and foremost, we express our gratitude for your participation in this year's AGM. A lot of exciting, frustrating, empowering and saddening events have taken place since our last meeting. We mourn for, and celebrate, the lives of members lost over the last year and continue to remember the lives of many more, lost since the beginning of the AIDS crisis. In addition, we remain dumbfounded by the incredible work done up until now by the hard-working, compassionate and awe-inducing activists and supporters of the community, some who are in this room, some who couldn't make it, and many more who continue to exist in our dearest thoughts. It is in their memory and for their foundational work that we strive to actively take space in ameliorating the lives of those in our communities impacted by HIV/AIDS and HCV.

Since our last AGM, we have continued to embark on, and support projects with the other inspiring organizations and initiatives in town. We give our thanks to the great connections and partnerships we have with POSITIVE LIVING BC, SOLID, PEERS, AVI, COOL-AID, HEPCCBC, OSHIO COLLEGE, LALLICARE and all the others we have failed to mention here.

As many of you know, our core-funding model was changed this past year to incorporate the Province's STOP AIDS program. Within the neo-liberal conditions of systemic and chronic underfunding of service providers and peer-based organization, we have been able to secure some extra funding to expand and solidify our peer-navigation process. We thank those who put a lot of time and energy in making our Request For Funding Proposal successful. This success, however, comes with an unfortunate caveat; while we have secured funding to expand our programming and service deliveries, there continues to be significant challenges for our partners and other community organizations in securing funding. We acknowledge their struggles and express our desires to support their ongoing actions to ensure the delivery of services, programming and support does not get impeded by funding cuts and a provincial system that refuses to adequately fund social programs and services. With this in mind, we remember our partnership with VARCS and express gratitude to the organization that has since, been defunded.

As many of you know, we make mistakes and sometimes fail in that which we try to achieve and we acknowledge the benefits of doing so. We will continue to make mistakes and continue to fail with the acceptance and impetus of such acts being transformative. In developing and solidifying our peer navigation program, we invite you to come make mistakes and fail with us. It is our failures and mistakes as individuals, organizations and movements that are the moving catalysts for change; they inform our responses, they provide contexts to our lives and they allow us to envision alternatives and acknowledge our successes. Our biggest failures can potentiate our biggest successes. With this in mind, we will strive to ameliorate our own expressions of community and commit ourselves to centering the voices that, in our work, are most often left in the margins, this includes, but is not limited to women, trans, indigenous, people of color, queer, undocumented, co-infected, people who use drugs, sex workers, poor, and migrant communities. We hope that our failures in centering their voices gives us the motivation to come to our work in a better way.

On behalf of the board of VPWAS,
With Care, solidarity and brilliant extravagance,
Piotr Burek, Acting Chair



Teri Mersky, Volunteer

Peer Support/Navigation can be one of the most significant tools a person can use on the journey to positive living / living positive. This model relies on individuals who live with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) to provide peer-to-peer support to others.

- Over 1200 Individual Peer Counseling & Education Sessions
- Over 350 hours Peer facilitated Group Counseling & Educational Sessions

Over 3500 volunteer hours by 45 PHA volunteers and allies

Over 35,000 condoms handed out in Victoria, Nanaimo and Salt Spring Island

Over 65,000 people were reached by our Community Education and Outreach initiatives through various community events, public speaking engagements, educational opportunities and media outlets, raising public awareness of the realities of living with HIV and stigma reduction within the community.

Social media reach

- Facebook 246 “likes” with average daily post “reach” of 106
- Twitter has 677 followers with average 1664 “impressions” weekly

During 2014 VPWAS and the Poz community made our presence know at various events in and around Victoria, here are a few highlights:

Events

- ⇒ International Candlelight Memorial 2014
- ⇒ Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life 2014
- ⇒ World AIDS Day
- ⇒ ‘we are here’ partnering with AVI
- ⇒ World HEPC Day
- ⇒ Harm Reduction Awareness Day
- ⇒ Stigma Stomp Day

Pride Parades and Festivals 2014

- ⇒ Victoria
- ⇒ Salt Spring Island
- ⇒ Nanaimo

Community Education and Outreach

- ⇒ Prime Timers Club
- ⇒ Camosun College
- ⇒ CDI College
- ⇒ Sandy Merriman House
- ⇒ Our Place Society
- ⇒ PEERS
- ⇒ CFAX Radio
- ⇒ Monday Magazine
- ⇒ Victoria Times Colonist

... As well as attendance and presentations at conferences and educational venues from Victoria and Vancouver to Ottawa



Piotr Burek proving that self-care is sexy!





Buttons created by VPWAS members

PEERS SHOW WHAT IS POSSIBLE

While the type of HIV services available has changed since the early days of the HIV epidemic in Canada, programs like Peer Navigation Services on Vancouver Island show us that peers are often an important part of effective initiatives.

Peer Navigation Services are a partnership between the Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society and the Vancouver Island STOP Project. Peer navigators offer the expertise of trained peers to people newly diagnosed with HIV and those who may have been living with HIV for a long time but who are currently not accessing healthcare. The peers use their lived experience with HIV to support the client in understanding that they can live long, fulfilled and healthy lives with HIV. Peer navigators also support clients to improve their ability to manage their own health and care.

Peer Navigation Services is a unique partnership between VPWAS and the community. At this point, the program offers peer navigation in two distinct settings: one in the STI/HIV Clinic (Cook Street) and one in a community setting (VPWAS). Peer navigators working out of the VPWAS office typically work on outreach. At the clinic, peer navigators work alongside healthcare professionals, bringing their knowledge and training into the clinic setting.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This last year once brought again many changes, most notably with our new contract with Island Health and the STOP HIV/AIDS Program.

Throughout this process, with a huge thank you to Ashley Mollison, we were able to demonstrate not only our relevancy as an agency but position ourselves as a necessary part of the cascade of care for people living with HIV/AIDS and HEP C co-infections. As a peer run organization for over 25 years, we have learned how to grow and adapt. Through the hard won efforts of many visionary volunteers, we have survived as a much respected agency all the while looking after our own health.

Navigating such intense complexities comes with vital experience and produces much needed transferable skills. We have achieved all of this while actively supporting the well-being of others.

We are in a unique position to contribute to STOP HIV/AIDS goals. Not only will we continue to offer

evidence-based programming, vital resources and most importantly lived experience to those with these blood borne diseases, we are, with Island Health's valuable support, in a position to help prevent our local and regional populations from contracting these challenging, highly stigmatized diseases. As people living with HIV/HCV, we help our society see beyond the stigma to one of stamina and leadership.

Thanks to the support of Island Health, our community rooted, non-institutional approach provides deep psychological and structural relief and support to encourage those at risk of harm to ask for, and eventually offer help through peer support and navigation.

As leaders in the community, we are in a strong position to influence the culture of prevention, treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS and/or HCV based on our own experiences of receiving and negotiating these services.

Craig Dales
Executive Director/Peer navigator

A debt of gratitude to all our funders, supporters and community partners

Island Health Authority | STOP HIV Project
Province of British Columbia, Community Gaming Grant
M.A.C. Cosmetics and the M.A.C. AIDS Fund
Sukhi Lalli - Lalli Care Clinic
SoftCorp | Web Design
Provincial Employees Community Service Fund
Level Ground Trading Ltd.
TheFernwood Inn
Thrifty Foods (James Bay)
James Bay New Horizons Centre

- HEPC BC • AIDS Vancouver Island • S.O.L.I.D. • TAPS • Umbrella Society •
- Our Place Society • VARCS • Victoria Cool Aid Society • Positive Living BC •
 - Anti Violence Project • UVIC PRIDE • Camosun College Pride •
 - Victoria Native Friendship Centre • CDI College •
 - Greater Victoria Public Library • The Belfry Theatre •
- Ashley Mollison • Proma and Oshio College of Acupuncture •
- Terry Howard (Positive Living BC) • Wendy Stark (STI/HIV Clinic) •
 - Micheal Vonn, BC Civil Liberties Association •
 - Rolland "Rolly" Barrett •

To the many Volunteers who help every day and at all our special events
you are the life line of VPWAS

And of course the many private individual and anonymous donors and
supporters who have contributed so much over the years.

THANK YOU



AIDS Candlelight Memorial Prayer

*"...We thank you for the songs
that protect and surround..."*
Great Creator, we thank you for
this day

*We honour all of the Ancestors
from this great land
We honour the Ancestors of those
who have come to witness
(or stand with us) for this work
We thank you for the songs that
protect and surround
Our old people said we would hear
their songs,
prayers echo long after they are
gone.*

*We thank you for the teachings of
the old people
We thank you for the prayers given
by our old people.*

*We ask for blessings, healing and
strength for the families,
brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles,
lovers who stand here today
We ask for blessings and a time of
healing*

For today is a New Day!

For today is a New Day!

William A. White, Halkomelem
translation by **Andrew Cienski** –
**Kw'am Kw'um sulitst HIV/AIDS
Project Ts'ewulhtun Health**

