



Victoria's AIDS organizers unite to highlight community heroism

'Super Queeros' poised to celebrate and demonstrate at Pride 2012

Victoria, BC (June 26th, 2012)— Community heroism is alive and well in Victoria with three of the city's AIDS Service Organizations joining forces for Pride 2012. AIDS Vancouver Island, Victoria AIDS Resources Community Society (VARCS) and Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VPWAS) are asking for the community's support to celebrate queer super heroes—or "Super Queeros" and become educated on the biggest issues facing LGBTTIQQ2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning and two spirit) communities.

"The theme of our combined float this year, Super Queeros, is the rich opportunity to raise awareness of several serious social and legal issues oppressing our communities while celebrating the many ways LGBTTIQQ2S people show up for each other as friends and lovers on a daily basis" says Robert Birch who leads AIDS Vancouver Island's Men's Wellness Program. "In the face of homophobia, bullying, and the issues surrounding HIV criminalization, we recognize the need to acknowledge the heroes taking a stand in our communities".

The trio of organizations have set up a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/422182901160280/> where Super Queeros, and their allies can join the discussion about community heroism in Victoria and learn more information about Pride 2012.

"This is a crucial time to highlight heroism in our community, as we continue to face stigma and discrimination as a result of the criminalization of HIV" says Craig Dales executive director of Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society.

Currently non-disclosure of HIV-positive status is a criminal offence in Canada carrying stiff penalties such as extended time in prison. "Our communities are coming together to confront this issue and many other issues while educating the community about the negative impacts of HIV criminalization" says Karen Dennis of VARCS.

On July 8th, the Super Queeros plan to educate pride-goers as well as celebrate community heroism at the annual Pride Parade.

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