

101 - 1139 Yates Street
Coast Salish Territory
Victoria, BC
V8V 3N2

VPWAS Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, November 14, 2018

VPWAS AGM

NOVEMBER 14, 2018 - 6:30 PM

AGENDA

**Welcome - Moment of Remembrance
Territorial Acknowledgement**

Guest Speaker: Nathan Lachowsky, PhD
Assistant Professor, School of Public Health & Social Policy,
University of Victoria

**CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2017 AGM MINUTES**

REPORTS:

Financial - TJ Furlani, Bookkeeper
Reporting on financial year ending March 31st, 2018

**Board Chair - Piotr Burek
Executive Director - Craig Dales**

**Election of Directors
(the following all stand for re-election)**

**Piotr Burek
Charlene Anderson
Anne Bonner**

Adjournment

Vancouver Island PWA Society acknowledges the territory of Esquimalt and Songhees Nations (their ancestral families consisting of the Teechamitsa, Kosampson, Swangwhung, Chilcowitch, Whyomilth, Chakonein, Kakyakaan, and Chewhaytsun). 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, Nuu-chah-nulth and Metis Ancestry.



Territorial acknowledgment generously written and provided to VPWAS by:
William A. White, *Kw'ám Kw'un sulitst HIV/AIDS Project Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre, Cowichan Tribes*



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**COMPASSION |
COURAGE |
COMMUNITY |**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Members 2017/2018

Piotr Burek - Chair
Antonio Marante - Treasurer
Charlene Anderson - Director
Anne Bonner - Director

***Dawn Cloutier** - Rejoined VPWAS board at September 27, 2017 AGM and was appointed to the Board Chair. Dawn resigned her position, March 8, 2018 due to health concerns.

STAFF

Craig Dales,
Executive Director /
Peer Navigation Coordinator

Penny Bradford,
Peer Navigation

Michael Yoder,
Peer Navigation

Sarah Wilson,
Support and Advocacy

TJ Furlani,
Bookkeeper/Office Manager

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear VPWAS members and community,

Another year has passed and with it, another year of VPWAS supporting HIV and HCV positive individuals on the island. The organization continues to advocate alongside people living with HIV and HCV with the desire to create a strong and resilient community based on compassion, support and action.

As always, we continue to work in the honor of all those who have come before us, and those who will come after. We remember those who are no longer with us in our grief, with gratitude and a commitment to action. VPWAS was founded by a group of incredible individuals, who through their hard work and time, developed a strong support network for people living with HIV/HCV. Furthermore, the group that formed and the subsequent membership have challenged structures and in doing so, ensured better outcomes for PLWHs here in our home communities and abroad.

Following the footsteps of the founders, the organization is committed to the ongoing work that is required to continue improving outcomes for our membership and all people living with HIV/HCV. It has been an honor to continue serving the community with an amazing board of directors who donate their time to ensuring a smooth operating platform for the organization.

I'd like to finish off by thanking the amazing individuals who make VPWAS such an incredible organization. I'd like to give my heartfelt gratitude to the amazing staff, volunteers and board members of VPWAS. Without them, surely, the organization would not be able to do the important work that it does. I'd also like to thank our community partners, supporters and funders who are critical in ensuring the survival and continuation of the organization. Finally, I'd like to give my never ending love and gratitude to the membership of VPWAS, our *raison d'être*.

With a new year comes new beginnings, and I am excited to see what will come out of the following year.

With so much care and gratitude,

Piotr Burek
Chair of the Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society



“The class feedback was universally, and quite emphatically I might add, appreciative – not just regarding the pathology, facts etc. but in the humanism of the way you both presented the subject matter – no longer ‘just a stigmatized text book subject’ but real faces, emotions and connection.”

***George Hleboff
HeartSafe EMS***



What’s in a year in the life of PWA Society. Loss and grief? Once again, we have had our fair share. Joy and achievement? We’ve celebrated that too! Health and wellness ... we’ve seen both sides.

I have seen both sides.

This year I made my own foray into the realm of hospitals and medical procedures. For the most, the health care workers I interacted with were kind and supportive, knowledgeable and nurturing. There were a few times, however, when I needed to become my own advocate, a skill I acquired from engaging with my positive peers.

I found myself teaching health care providers about being HIV positive and undetectable (no, it does not mean I’m cured!) and enlightening on concepts of TASP and U = U, PEP and PreP.

I dealt with an incidence of homophobia. However subtle, NOT acceptable in this day and age. And NOT acceptable in a vulnerable position in a supposedly safe space of healing.

This past year we have seen a significant increase in new diagnosis of HIV on the island, approximately ten new each quarter. This trend is continuing.

Through VPWAS Peer Navigation program, and partnering with Island Health, Cool Aid - Access Health and the Victoria Health Unit - STI Clinic we have been able to connect with a majority of these people, to support through this life change, create connections and to ensure timely access to healthcare and in some cases support through refugee claims.

It is my hope that the work we do at VPWAS, through outreach and education, being involved in working groups and advisory boards, that we can educate and change the mindset of those who look after us.

I thank all the staff and volunteers for the support you have given me, the support you give to those who walk through our doors, and the support you give to all in our community who seek compassion.

Craig Dales

Executive Director, VPWAS

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

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Community Education and Outreach

International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Victoria

RED: VPWAS Annual Silent Auction/Fundraiser at Fernwood Inn

World AIDS Day

World HEPC Day

Harm Reduction Awareness Day

Recovery Day

Vining Street Party on the Plaza

Gay Men's Health Summit

Positive Gathering

Pacific AIDS Network

Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network's Annual General Meeting

Victoria Native Friendship Centre

CDI College

Our Place Society

VIRCS Multicultural Food and Health Fair

West Coast College of Massage Therapy

PEERS

AVI

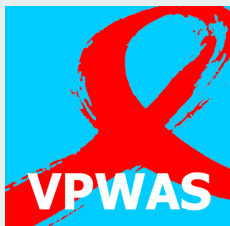
Heartsafe EMS

Pride Parades and Festivals

Victoria

Salt Spring Island

Nanaimo



A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO ALL OUR FUNDERS, SUPPORTERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Island Health Authority | STOP HIV Project • ViiV Healthcare•
- Victoria Foundation – “Vital Victoria Fund” • Sara Spencer Foundation•
 - Island Health Community Wellness Grant Program 2017/2018•
- CANFAR • YouthCo • Resist Stigma • Sukhi Lalli - Lalli Care Clinic •
- Community-Based Research Centre for Gay Men's Health (CBRC) •
 - Level Ground Trading Ltd. •
- The Fernwood Inn • Thrifty Foods (James Bay) •
- Victoria Pride Society • University of Victoria Students Society •
 - Copper Owl • CRUSH Collective • PLUR Collective •
- HEPC BC • AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI) • The Men's Health and Wellness Program - (AVI) • Men's Trauma Centre • S.O.L.I.D. • TAPS •
- Umbrella Society • Our Place • VARCS • VIRCS • Pacific AIDS Network •
 - Victoria Cool Aid Society • Positive Living BC • PEERS •
- Anti.Violence.Project • UVIC PRIDE • Camosun College Pride •
 - Victoria Native Friendship Centre •
- CDI College • Greater Victoria Public Library • Victoria Event Centre•
 - City Studio - Victoria •
- Dr. Mark Hull - BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
- Jodi Jollimore (Community Based Research Centre (CBRC) •
- Nathan Lachowsky, PhD (School of Public Health & Social Policy) •
 - Nathan Lachowsky, University of Victoria •
 - Wendy Stark (STI/HIV Clinic Cook Street) •
 - West Coast College of Massage Therapy•
- David Fredbjornson RMT, Soma Active Health •
 - Victoria Mayor, Lisa Helps and Council •
- Esquimalt Mayor, Barb Desjardin and Council •
 - Murray Rankin MP • Randall Garrison MP •

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 !



Artwork created by VPWAS Volunteer Bruce B.



POSITIVE YOUTH CALL ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO CREATE NATIONAL HIV STRATEGY

June 9, 2018 (LANGLEY, BC) This past week saw 28 HIV-positive, Hepatitis-C positive, and co-infected youth aged 18-32 (hereinafter referred to as ‘positive youth’) converge for 4-day national meeting to discuss gaps in care resulting from the lack of a coordinated national HIV strategy.

The event, Youth Unleashing Power: a Positive Youth Symposium, now in its 3rd year, provides an opportunity for positive youth to share stories, gain knowledge, and create a national network for movement building and support.

The symposium is unique in that it is entirely created and implemented by positive youth, including the facilitation of workshops, presentations and talking circles. Session topics this year included discussions around the impact of HIV criminalization, the history of HIV activism, movement building and national strategies to improve the lives of positive youth.

Youth Unleashing Power was initiated by the Vancouver Island Persons living with HIV/AIDS Society with the generous support of YouthCO, Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research and ViiV Healthcare.

In Canada, youth aged 15 – 29 accounted for 25% of all new HIV diagnoses in 2016. The rates of diagnosis continue to rise amongst youth, with a 13% increase between 2012 and 2016.

An estimated 65, 040 people in Canada are currently living with HIV, and of those, approximately 20% (or 12, 820 people) are unaware of their status.

Saskatchewan is currently facing an unequal burden of the HIV epidemic, with the highest rates of HIV in the country – a rate as high as some countries in sub-saharan Africa. Doctors have called on the government to declare a state of emergency in the province.

The opioid crisis continues to claim lives across the country. HIV and HCV positive youth face disproportionate levels of substance use issues, mental health issues, and criminalization.

According to the HIV/AIDS Legal Network, some 104 million dollars has been cut from national HIV funding since 2004, with current funding levels at the lowest they have been in over a decade. There is currently no commitment from the government to address the chronic underfunding of a national HIV strategy.

Positive youth across the country continue to face barriers in accessing treatment, from medication costs to unequal access to care.



From the time a person makes a connection with VPWAS they enter an environment where they're warmly greeted by VPWAS volunteers or staff and are introduced to a very welcoming space. The reception/drop-in area provides a community atmosphere, refreshments, reading materials, music, and a place to sit and feel like you belong. The shared life experiences of VPWAS staff and volunteers living with and affected by HIV helps create that extra sense of connection, healing and belonging. Our healing space helps fuel the mind, body, heart, and spirit that allows you to take care of yourself and connect with others.

Complementary Health Care – Wellness Room

VPWAS has been able to expand our Complementary Health Care Program which provides complementary holistic therapies such as massage, acupuncture, counselling and more to promote well being while living with HIV. Practitioners are professionals who understand needs of people living with HIV.

96
**Massage/
Counsel-
ling**

21

**Peer
Navigation
Participants**

Support Services and Peer Navigation

VPWAS Peer Navigation program, working in close relationship with **Victoria Health Unit - STI Clinic** and the **Cool Aid Community Health Centre**, has been able to meet with people in the settings where and when they are being tested, to offer information and support when they learn of their HIV status and to help to navigate the sometimes complex environment of treatments, doctors, pharmacies and other allied health services.

Positively Connected

Social and Support Networking for POZ Gay/Bi Men in Victoria continues to create social connections with Espresso Yourself a weekly coffee gathering, as well as monthly 'POZluck' dinners and 'Suits', a monthly dinner club for HIV Poz guys at various Victoria area restaurants.

72
**Positively
Connected
Gatherings**

Outreach/Education

28

**Outreach
Events**

We continue to participate in many community events, Pride Festivals and health/community fairs such as VIRCS annual Multicultural Health and Food Fair where we get to interact with the public, promote our services and HIV awareness, testing and prevention. Community education events such **"What does U=U Mean for You"** in partnership with YouthCo (Vancouver) brought Sarah Chown and William Flett from Vancouver to speak to community members about Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (also know as PrEP) for HIV.

We are proud to partner with Jonathan and Nathan from The Men's Health and Wellness Program - (AVI) to facilitate a **Basics of HIV Workshop** with various community groups.

Lunch and Learn

The **Lunch & Learn Program** at VPWAS is a series of training and presentation workshops offered to VPWAS members free of charge. Invited community presenters/facilitators offer a variety of practical and educational sessions. Topics have included: Telling Tales; Telling the story of your life Changing Your Mind - How to explore and improve your mental health; HIV, Aging and Advanced Care Planning; Caregiving.

12
**Lunch &
Learn
Workshops**

In 2017/2018, VPWAS drop-in was **open for 254 days** and we provided **Over 1200 Individual Peer Navigation and Support Sessions**. Supported by over **3500 volunteer hours by 40 PLHIV volunteers and allies**. Over **1270** sandwich lunches were provided through Our Place. On Social media we have **991** Twitter followers; **721** followers on our various facebook pages



Selected Highlights from 2017/2018



Creating Community Alliances and Partnerships

This year saw the strengthening of bonds with our supporters and community partners. The Sister of Perpetual Indulgence—Order of the Moist Brollie is one such caring group who have been present at many of our events, the sisters also hold fundraising events with proceeds benefiting VPWAS.

World AIDS Day 2017

VPWAS partnered with **Open Space** (gallery) and **Visual AIDS, New York** to present **ALTERNATE ENDINGS, RADICAL BEGINNINGS** for the 28th annual Day With(out) Art on World AIDS Day on December 1, 2017

The screening was followed by a panel discussion with Alicia Chalifour from HEPBCB, Kemi Craig from Students of Colour Collective UVic, and ~birch an artist and community activist.



REPORT On: The BC People Living with HIV Stigma Index Project

The **Stigma Index** is a dynamic research project in British Columbia born out of a community-identified need to turn the tide against persistent HIV stigma and discrimination.

Presented by:

Antonio Marante, Stigma Index Project, Knowledge Translator
Pacific AIDS Network & VPWAS Board Member

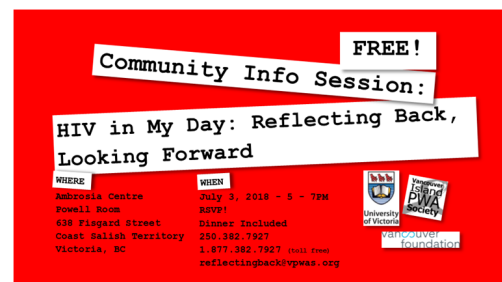
Catherine Worthington, PhD

Professor - School of Public Health and Social Policy, Faculty of Human and Social Development

HIV in my Day - Reflecting Back, Looking forward

HIV in My Day: Reflecting Back, Looking Forward is an oral history project based out of the University of Victoria and the School for Public Health and Social Policy. The project team includes researchers from three universities (SFU, UBC, and UVic), YouthCO HIV and Hep C Society and Vancouver Island PWA society (VPWAS) representatives, and community leaders and members.

VPWAS is excited to partner in bringing this project to Victoria and Vancouver Island.



Continued from page 5

Stigma ensures that positive youth continue to face discrimination and violence: at home, in school, in the workplace, in the court system, and in public.

Due to the impacts of the HIV epidemic, youth are coming together to demand that more be done from both the federal and provincial governments. With a desire to ensure better health and social outcomes across the country, Canada's positive youth call on the Federal and Provincial governments to meet the following demands:

- The immediate end to the criminalization of HIV non-disclosure in Canada.
- Free and universal access to Anti-Retroviral Therapies across the country, including Post Exposure Prophylaxis and Pre Exposure Prophylaxis.
- The creation of a national strategy to curb infection rates amongst youth in Canada.
- More funding specifically allocated for HIV and HCV youth services and programmes. In addition, more funding allocated to all HIV and HCV services and programmes across the country.
- The development of educational materials and campaigns that focus on HIV and HCV youth in ways that are culturally relevant, including the dissemination of the Undetectable = Untransmittable campaign.
- An end to the war on drugs, and immediate access to a safe drug supply.

Positive youth across the country continue to be leaders in their communities. Programs like Youth Unleashing Power create spaces that not only provide a platform for national organizing, but also provide a space where positive youth can create community and be supported to find healing and rest.

As one participant put it, "YUP was an amazing retreat. It taught me that through the power of telling your story and connecting with peers that have experienced the same thing as you, healing is not only possible, but probable."

Similarly, another participant stated: "I got to talk about issues I have that people in my everyday life do not understand with people that do. It was a safe space to unwind and recharge. It was something my spirit needed and I'm so blessed that I got to attend and be apart of [the symposium]."

Looking at years to come, Youth Unleashing Power will continue to provide a space for national movement building among HIV/HCV positive youth.

VANCOUVER ISLAND PERSONS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS SOCIETY (VPWAS)

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