



POSITIVE NEWS!

SPRING 2017 ISSUE

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Executive Directors Report

The agency has been very fortunate to have received a bequest from the estate of John Walker. John had been a supporter of the agency for many years and sponsor of the Walk for AIDS. In this challenging era of fundraising this donation to the agency is most welcome. It will go a long way to support Positive Living as we continue our work of education, prevention and supporting individuals affected by HIV and HCV in Niagara. We extend our sincerest condolences to the family at the loss of their loved one and a person who was so committed to supporting his community. The entire Walker family has such a strong sense of community involvement and support that they make Niagara a better place for all.



I would like to announce that we have been successful in receiving funding to continue with our Public Health of Canada funded Community Development and Education worker. This position will allow us to continue the current level of education and prevention work across the region. Unfortunately the funding is extended for only one year as opposed to five year grants that have been awarded across the country. Our community activities that engage the residents of Niagara are crucial to keep people aware of HIV and HCV prevention, testing and in fighting the stigma that is still so prevalent in our community. Over the course of this year we will be trying to seek ongoing funding to continue this program at Positive Living Niagara that has supported our community for over 10 years.

In our strategic plan we identified as one of our objectives the consolidation of our Support program. I am pleased to announce that we now have moved our home support staff into our main office and we are now one team in one location serving all the residents of Niagara. This new space consisting of a community room, meeting space and offices allows us to offer more programming on site. More importantly with the entire team in one place we are focusing on offering more integrated services to the people we serve. We have been conducting a client survey to see how we can improve our service but welcome any input from you. Please feel free to contact my office with any thoughts or ideas.

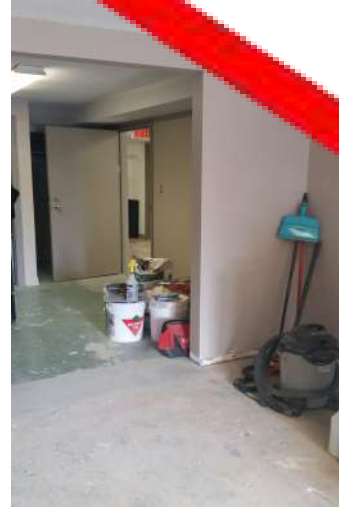
Glen Walker

Mission Statement

Providing a continuum of innovative and proactive approaches to harm reduction, prevention and a person-centered focus on support and education for those at risk and affected by HIV, HCV and STBIs

New “Home Support” Home

Before



New Offices



The Red Scarf Project goes on and on!

This year for our Red Scarf Project we changed it up a little and decided to find some space in St. Catharines to drape our scarves in order to raise awareness about HIV in Niagara. Starbucks generously donated tea and coffee to keep us warm while we were there to take pictures and answer questions.

Some highlights include a woman who came over only to admire the wonderful craftsmanship of the scarves, and found out we were there for HIV awareness. She had lost someone close to her in the early years of the epidemic and expressed her thanks to us for the work we do.

You can find many pictures of the day on Facebook. We are also recruiting knitters for scarves for next year's event. Contact Val for more information at 905-984-8684 ext 115

Hailea Squires

Client Satisfaction Survey

The time has come and gone once more for you, our valued clients, to let us know how we are serving you. Throughout the month of February, Positive Living Niagara's students Hannah and Josh contacted each of you for your voluntary participation in our Client Satisfaction Survey. Your responses to the survey questions provided us with the information we need to ensure that we are providing you with the highest quality of services. Here at Positive Living we feel that your success is our greatest accomplishment, so thank you for assisting us in making sure that goal is met! We would like to once again remind you that your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Your participation was greatly appreciated and we look forward to further improving our services to better meet your needs. By working together, we are able to ensure that our services remain client centered, timely and appropriate.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Hannah and Josh at:

joshl@positivelivingniagara.com

Josh Lewaskewicz



Community Fund

Positive Living's Community Fund is supported by our fundraising efforts throughout the year. Money that is raised throughout the year is to help support the vision and mission of supporting our clients in maintaining their health and wellness.

2016 Fundraising Highlights



One of our big fundraisers, The Rocky Horror Show, is performed at Oh Canada Eh? in Niagara Falls and is entering its 14th year.

This event helped raise

\$14239.00 last year for the fund. Our 2017 dates have just been announced and the show will be running October 27th through November 4.

This is your chance to attend a fun, entertaining, and interactive show while supporting Positive Living Niagara. Tickets can be purchased through Oh Canada Eh?. <http://www.ohcanadaeh.com>



POSITIVE
NEWS



2016 was a great year for our annual Silent Auction. Positive Living raised almost \$2000.

This is an enjoyable way to help support us from the comfort of your couch! Items are donated from local businesses and then either auctioned individually or as a fun themed package. The auction usually opens the third week in November and closes World AIDS Day, December 1st. This is a great way to shop for yourself or for others (don't forget Christmas is just around the corner from December 1st) and help a great cause. Keep an eye on our website for this year's Silent Auction announcement.



The Sex You Want

The sex you want is a new resource created by the Gay Men's Sexual Health alliance. This website has been over a year in the making. During the past year, GMSH has consulted numerous groups and individuals to better understand the unique sexual health challenges that gay men face today. The results is what you find at www.thesexyouwant.ca where you can find information about PrEP, condoms, lube, what it means to be undetectable. The information is displayed in different and interesting ways – through videos, comic-book style designs, and infographics. The idea is to answer one question; how do you get the sex you want?

Check it out! There is also a comment box on the bottom left of each website page, giving you the ability to provide feedback to the website creators.

Hailea Squires

Pride Dances

Great news groovy people! Pride Niagara has secured a commitment from the management at Detour Music Hall and they will be hosting dances there every month! Each dance will have Drag Performances and of course music to get your booty shakin'. Getting out and being part of your community is a great way to feel connected to those around you. You can follow Pride Niagara on Facebook to find out when each monthly dance will be scheduled. Dances have a \$5.00 cover and are 19+ events.

And don't forget to Save the Date! Pride Niagara's Pride Week festivities run June 3rd to June 10th this year. More details to come.



Hailea Squires

Beyond the N.O.D. Naloxone

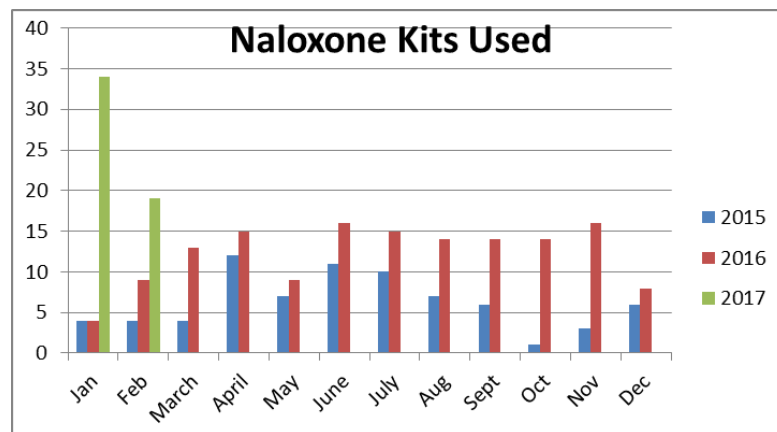
Distribution Program Update

Beyond the N.O.D. Opioid Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution Program started in August 2013. The program seeks engage with people who use drugs, family and friends, and others who are in contact with a person who may be at risk of an opioid overdose. Curriculum covers how to prevent, recognize, and respond to an opioid overdose using naloxone.

To date a total of 456 people have been trained and given a naloxone kit, and 331 kits have been reported as being used to successfully reverse an opioid overdose.

There was a significant spike in the number of naloxone kits that were reported being used at the beginning of 2017, with the majority of overdoses occurring in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. Heroin continues to be a key factor in most overdoses reported. There is speculation that the majority of the heroin in the region is cut with fentanyl.

“Heroin continues to be a key factor in most overdoses reported”



If you are interested in obtaining a naloxone kit, please contact Talia at tstorm@positivelivingniagara.com or 905-984-8684 ext 128

Talia Storm

Getting Involved!

Asunta Wagura!

I just love saying her name, Asunta Wagura! And besides having an awesome sounding name, Asunta is an astounding woman. She has done amazing things in her other life in Africa. Against all odds and with great tenacity, she got her education, learned to live with HIV, co-founded the Kenya Network of Women (KENWA) in 1993, a support group for women, and occasionally men, to get together and talk to help each other financially and emotionally, obtained government support, and wrote a book. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Now she is in Canada and volunteering for Positive Living Niagara. Asunta is a soft-spoken woman and sometimes I have to bend my ear down close to hear her! She does not say a lot, never blows her own horn, she just goes quietly about her business and the next



Quiet woman moves mountains.

thing you know, she is on our committees, attending displays for us, presenting at AIDS Awareness Day, presenting at Opening Doors, serving on our Board of Directors and probably doing other things that I don't know about yet!

From Heartbreak to Daybreak : my journey with HIV is the name of Asunta's book. I have read it and will never forget it.

I just want to say thank you to her and I hope she stays around a long time.

Val-Ann Stepanchuk

"Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient."
— Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*

Goodbye/Hello

Goodbye

Sadly, we said goodbye to Tim Morgan just before Christmas. We wish Tim well in the next chapter of his work and life. As well we will be saying a short and temporary goodbye to Keira Knowles as she leaves on maternity leave at the end of April.

Hello

We would like to welcome Josh Lewaskewicz, who will be joining our Support team as a Client Services Coordinator; Kaitlin Labatte, who will be joining our Education team as a Community Development; and Education Coordinator and our newest member Adrianna Cervoni, who will be joining StreetWorks as an Outreach Worker.



what we do



Client Services



Education & Prevention



StreetWorks Needle Exchange



Volunteer

Introductions

Greetings! Allow me to introduce myself: my name is Josh Lewaskewicz and I am the newest addition to Positive Living Niagara's Support Staff team. I will be taking on the role of Client Service's Coordinator, a role formerly held by Tim Morgan. As I am currently finishing up my Bachelors of Social Work degree I will only be in the office Monday morning, Wednesday morning, and Friday all day. When I have completed my studies at the end of April I will be in the office full time.



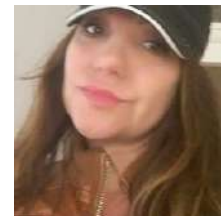
Along with my new role I will remain a student with StreetWorks and the education and community development department. I am honored to have been chosen both for a student placement and a career with Positive Living. I hold our clients in the highest regard and am endlessly grateful for the relationships I have already formed and excited for the ones still to develop. I look forward to growing professionally within the agency and community and welcome the opportunity to represent a force for positive change.

If you find yourself around the agency during the week, please stop in and say hello! I will be glad to meet you.



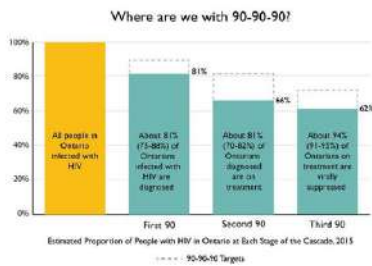
Hi there, my name is Kaitlin Labatte. I'm the new Community Development and Education coordinator, here, at Positive Living. I've been a volunteer in the Streetworks van and office for the past year, so you my face may be familiar to some of you. I'm excited to continue the great work done before me in education, prevention and community connections. If you'd like to say hi, or pop by with any questions, ideas or concerns, my door is always open. I look forward to working with everyone.

I was originally from Toronto, and moved to St. Catharines 5 years ago after attending George Brown College, and continuing my education in Addiction studies at McMaster University. Upon graduation I worked at the YWCA emergency shelter for women and children for a few years and then spent a year with Start Me Up Niagara where I enjoyed getting to know the community even more. Now, I am excited to join the passionate team at StreetWorks who work hard to ensure all clients are treated with respect and that harm reduction services are available to all who need it.



The Ontario HIV/AIDS Strategy to 2026

The Ontario HIV/AIDS Strategy will guide the work of Positive Living Niagara and other provincially funded HIV/AIDS service organizations in Ontario until 2026. Its focus is on “changing the course of prevention, engagement and care in Ontario.” This will largely be done by putting evidence and research into action. The creation of this strategy was guided by formal research, surveys from people with lived experiences, professional consultations, and regional community consultations. The vision is that by 2026 “new HIV infections will be rare in Ontario and people with HIV will lead long healthy lives, free from



stigma and discrimination.”

The strategy’s major focus is on the creation of an “integrated model of care” and monitoring this success through UNAIDS 90-90-90 measures. The 90-90-90 targets strive for 90% of all people with HIV to be diagnosed, 90% of those diagnosed to be on HIV treatment, and 90% of those

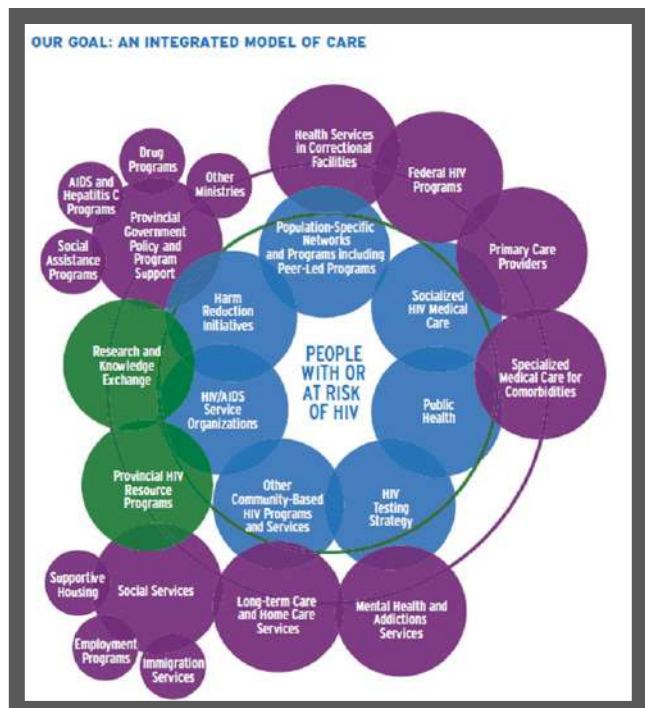
people on HIV treatment to have an undetectable viral load. As you can see in the attached image, Ontario is slightly off from those goals, however by establishing an integrated model of care there is an opportunity for goal achievement. The integrated model of care works from the knowledge that there are many factors affecting people’s risk of acquiring and experiences of living with HIV/AIDS (syndemics) and that all these factors must be worked on to truly improve the prevention, engagement, and care of those affected by HIV/AIDS.

- ◆ Prevention includes a focus on both people at-risk and people with HIV with a shared responsibility by all;

- ◆ Engagement focuses on ensuring responsive services that speak to the larger aspirations of people with HIV for health and quality of life beyond just treatment;
- ◆ Care acknowledges that treatment is only one aspect and that a holistic understanding of care is needed to ensure everyone will benefit from their HIV treatment.

As a result, this model looks to have all community and social services, including housing, health, education, social services, immigration services, and corrections services working together to meet the complex needs of people living with or at risk of HIV.

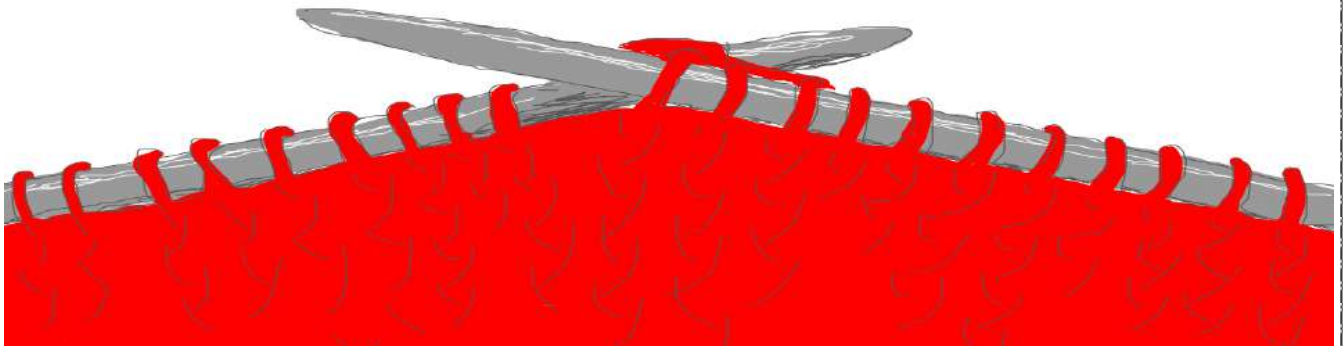
Kaitlin Labatte



Calling All Knitters!

WE NEED NIMBLE KNITTING FINGERS!

Our fabulous , annual Red Scarf Campaign will happen again this year, during the last week of November 2017. It takes us all year to gather enough scarves to make this amazing, thoughtful event happen. If you are a knitter or know a knitter please knit us a scarf. We even have yarn for you. Give Val (ext. 115) or anyone here at Positive Living a shout 905-984-8684. Thank you to so many of you for the support you have already given.



Upcoming Events

May 7-**International Harm Reduction Day**

June- **Pride Celebrations in Niagara**

June 21st- **National Aboriginal Day**

July 28th- **World Hepatitis Day**

***Reminder that the office will be closed April 14 & 17
for Easter and May 22 for Victoria Day***



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Creating an accepting and supportive community

In 1987, we started the AIDS Committee of Niagara. We were an advisory committee to the Niagara Regional Public Health Service's AIDS Program. We evolved from a committee to a not-for-profit, community-based AIDS service organization (ASO).

In 1990, we incorporated as AIDS Niagara and became a registered not-for-profit. We are proud of our evolution and our long history of serving the Niagara Region. Over the years, we have been guided by our vision, mission and beliefs.

In Oct. 2014 we officially changed our name to Positive Living Niagara. We are proud to announce the launch of our new agency name and logo as part of the ongoing evolution of our service to the Niagara Region in Ontario. Our HIV/AIDS service agency has grown and evolved over the last 24 years, and we felt it was time for a change. We have refreshed our logo to reflect who we are today and to symbolize our dynamic future. This new name and symbol are more uplifting and reflective of all the people we serve who are at risk and affected by HIV .

Looking for a rewarding place to volunteer your time?

From **bingo** to **special events** to
reception to **knitters** to **drivers**,
Positive Living Niagara has many
rewarding volunteer positions available.
We are seeking long term committed volunteers.