



# POSITIVE NEWS!

FALL/WINTER 2016 ISSUES

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I am pleased to announce that Positive Living Niagara is introducing a new website for people looking for information, seeking a referral for service, needing supplies, or to check out the latest in research and news in the sector. This new website features two access points; one for community members and the second for professionals. These options offer plain language information to those in our community and more detail on our programs and services for those working with us in the community. We encourage everyone to check out the updated site at [www.positivelivingniagara.com](http://www.positivelivingniagara.com). We hope this refreshed site will be more user friendly and accessible to all.

Unfortunately our education team will be shrinking in March as funding for one of our education and outreach staff positions will be ending. The funding for this position had come from the Public Health Agency of Canada but we were not successful in securing a five year grant in the latest request for program proposals. However, we have received word that some support will come from Public Health Agency of Canada for 2018 to support our program for one year. As a result we will be looking at restructuring our current team and agency resources to fill the gap created by this change. The agency had anticipated some possible changes like this and a review of our agency programs was laid out in our strategic plan.

As we move forward towards the new year remember to check out our Online Auction in November and share the link to these wonderful items with your friends for this great fundraiser that supports the work of the agency.

Glen Walker  
Executive Director

## 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 STBBIs



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# Our New Strategic Plan

## Vision

Creating an adaptive community that accepts and supports those affected by HIV, HCV and STBBIs

## Mission

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 STBBIs

## Values

- **RESPECT AND DIGNITY**—we treat clients with the utmost respect and consideration while being sensitive to the diversity of their background and experiences in a confidential manner
- **EMPOWERMENT**—to empower our clients to achieve their life goals
- **SUPPORT**—to offer a unique set of individualized supports.
- **MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT**—to promote meaningful involvement of our clients and agency partners within our community and organization
- **INNOVATION**—to continually strive towards providing innovative supports for our clients and community
- **BEST PRACTICE**—we believe in being on the cutting edge of research, current practices in education, and staff development
- **TEAMWORK**—we value collaborative teamwork within our organization and community
- **QUALITY**—to develop and support the highest quality standard of services



# Fundraising Auction

It is almost that time of year again for Positive Living Niagara's annual online silent auction which promises to be the best one yet! We have been working hard in connecting with local businesses and we are very proud of the partnerships established and the contributions we received. All of the items will be up for bidding in the 3rd week of November, so keep tuned for some amazing finds! The final day for bidding and the winners shall be declared on World AIDS Day, Thursday December 1, 2016. All of the proceeds from the auction are for a great cause so all of your support is greatly appreciated! We hope you can contribute and take part in this wonderful fundraiser.

<https://www.32auctions.com/>



INSTEAD OF  
WORRYING ABOUT  
MYSELF, I BEGAN  
TO SPEND MY  
TIME FOCUSING  
ON OTHERS.  
HAPPINESS  
CAME EASILY.  
*Dallas Lloyd*

## Hep C drug approved by Health Canada



TORONTO - Health Canada has approved a drug being touted as a cure for hepatitis C, a disease believed to have infected hundreds of thousands of Canadians, many of whom are unaware they harbour the virus.

The drug, sold under the brand name Eplclusa, is a once-daily pill taken for 12 weeks that can rid the body of all six strains of hepatitis C, a blood-borne virus that can lead to severe liver damage and liver cancer if left untreated.

"This is really a cure," Dr. Jordan Feld, a liver specialist at Toronto Western Hospital, said of the medication, also known by its generic chemical designation sofosbuvir-velpatasvir. One catch, though: Eplclusa is expensive. In the U.S., the drug costs US\$900 a pill — or

almost \$75,000 for a 12-week course.

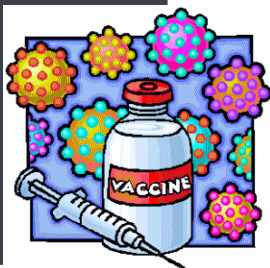
Two other hepatitis C drugs also made by Gilead Sciences Inc. and already approved in Canada — Harvoni (genotype 1) and Sovaldi (genotypes 1, 2 and 3) — also carry hefty price tags: the cost of an eight- to 24-week regimen of the antivirals ranges from C\$69,000 to \$110,000, although several provinces have joined together to leverage their buying power to negotiate better prices. Still, Feld insists the newly approved drug is a "huge advance" in hepatitis C treatment. In a pre-approval clinical trial conducted by researchers led by Feld and published last November, 99 per cent of 624 patients given the drug were virus-free after three months. The study looked at

patients infected with one of five strains, or genotypes, of hepatitis C — 1,2,4,5 and 6. A second study of genotype 3 — an aggressive form most commonly found in people of South Asian descent — found the drug was effective in at least 90 per cent of cases, Feld said. Previously approved treatments for chronic hepatitis C infection are not equally effective in combating the virus' different forms. Testing to determine the particular genetic strain is required before treatment can start. As well, different drug combinations are required depending on whether a person has already developed cirrhosis or has certain other medical conditions.

Excerpt from  
Sheryl Ubelacker,  
The Canadian Press

### POSITIVE NEWS

There are more than 150 strains of HPV



## HPV and Men

### HPV vaccination will be offered free for gay, bi and trans men under 27

80% of people will get a HPV infection in their lifetime.

Men who have sex with men are at increased risk of HPV infection that can lead to penile and anal cancer.

To learn more about HPV see a related CATIE new article here: Vaccines for hpv-results in men

Make an appointment with the Men's Health Clinic, schedule a vaccination or speak directly with your doctor.

<http://www.catie.ca/en/catieneews/2010-05-18/vaccines-hpv-results-men>

[https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health\\_wellness/sexualhealth/sexual-health-centres.aspx](https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/sexualhealth/sexual-health-centres.aspx)

# Add PrEP to Ontario's Public Drug Plans!



Most people and communities in Ontario who might benefit most from PrEP can't afford it. But we can work together to change that.

Certain people and communities are hit hardest by the HIV epidemic. Among new HIV cases in Ontario in 2014:

- 6 in 10 were gay men
- 1 in 5 were women
- almost half were among people of colour
- 1 in 10 were Aboriginal people
- and we still don't have

data on how many transfolks contract HIV in Ontario.

It's clear we need more HIV prevention options. **LIST PREP NOW.**

Right now in Ontario, people who want and need PrEP are being left behind. To buy it at the pharmacy, Truvada costs \$1000 per month. **Can you afford it?**

Some private prescription drug insurance plans may cover some or all of the cost of Truvada for HIV PrEP. But our public drug plan—called the Ontario Drug Benefit—is lagging behind. This means that many low income people, younger people, people on social assistance, people with disabilities and seniors don't have the same

HIV prevention options as people who have generous private insurance plans.

This fall, Minister Eric Hoskins (Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care) will decide whether people should get Truvada for HIV PrEP under the Ontario Drug Benefit. He can ensure broad access to PrEP by listing Truvada on the public drug plan's "general formulary"—so that doctors can prescribe it without the need for pre-approval or a special application.

Help us convince Minister Hoskins to do the right thing.  
**LIST PREP NOW.**  
 PREPONTARIO.ORG

*“when it comes to HIV prevention, we can't afford to leave anyone behind. LIST PREP NOW.”*



Hello! Goodbye

Wishing a warm welcome to Gaudet Rwamakuba, Cathy Overweg, Taneisha Morris and Sharon Gower who have joined our Home Support team. And a sad Farewell to Fernando Ocanas and Ashley Chiarello from our Education team. We wish you well.



## HIV is no match for HERC5ules!

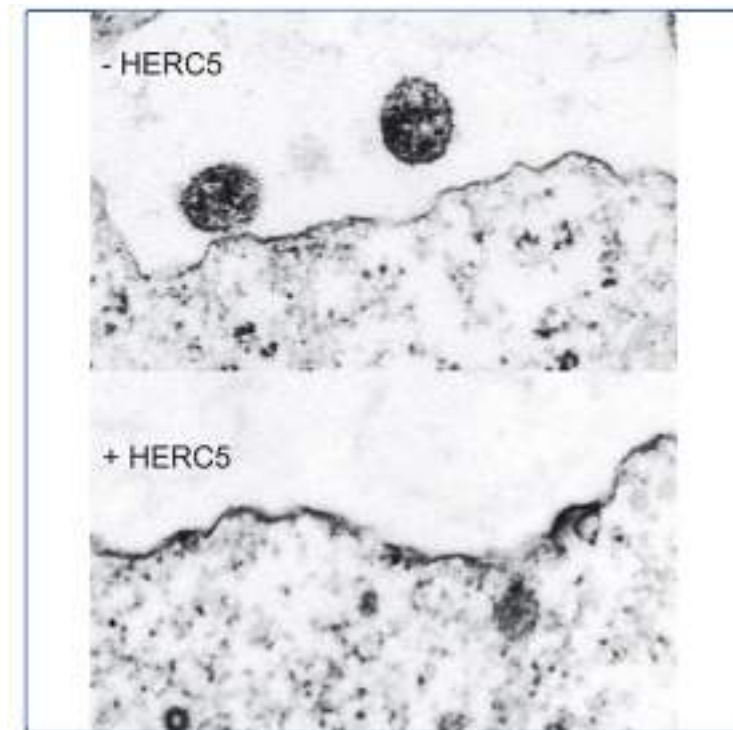
Interferons are proteins produced by our cells in response to pathogens, particularly viruses HIV and HCV. Interferons act by triggering the production of hundreds of proteins that generate a harsh environment for viruses. Restriction factors comprise a small number of interferon-induced proteins that on their own serve as powerful blockades to virus replication. Recently, Dr. Stephen Barr and Dr. Matthew Woods (director of the board at Positive Living Niagara) at Western University discovered antiviral protein called HERC5 traps HIV in infected cells prevent the spread of HIV within the body. The presence of the HERC5 protein may explain the varying rates of disease progression between HIV infected individuals. The discovery of HERC5 could serve as the foundation for drug design to mimic or enhance the antiviral, non-toxic, effects of this antiviral protein improving the lives of individuals living with HIV in the community.

Links to published papers

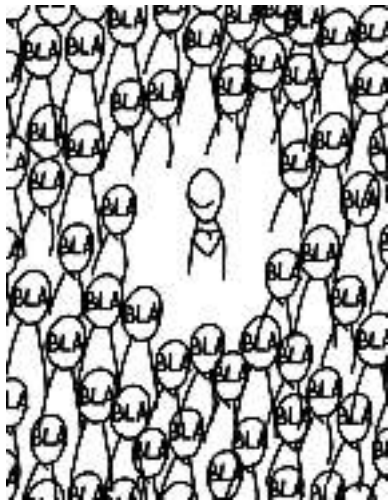
<https://retrovirology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1742-4690-11-27>

<https://retrovirology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1742-4690-8-95>

POSITIVE  
NEWS



Matthew Woods



Thought on Stigma:  
 Most people want to be part of the non-stigmatized group. Everyone, at one point or another will experience stigmatization in their lives. This is apparent when comparisons arise (where one possesses a desired trait that another person is lacking) or sometimes when one may lack a desired trait that another person possesses. Stigmatization is the result of comparison. This inferiority/superiority issue is a social construct by cultures and individuals to designate some human differences (Coleman-Brown, 1997).

Submitted by Ray

# Who Run the World...GIRLS!

Affirmations and Activities is an opportunity for all woman-identified people affected by HIV to get together once a month, have fun and learn something new. The day and the activity changes each month so check your Support Calendar for details.

- Some of the activities coming up include
- Indigenous crafts and traditional teachings
  - Aromatherapy and helping oils
  - Laughter Yoga
  - Reflexology and foot care

Tell us what you want to do. We are always looking for new and exciting ideas! To find out more or to share your ideas contact Linn Purves at [LPurves@positivelivingniagara.com](mailto:LPurves@positivelivingniagara.com) or (905)984-8684 ext. 126.





*“What was meant to be a one day event turned into a week of activities”*

To commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day, multiple events were held throughout the region. A tour of methadone clinics was made in order to promote the Beyond the NOD naloxone distribution project run through StreetWorks.

The following day, an open-mic event was held at Start Me Up Niagara. We were touched by all of the generous musicians who donated their time to entertain the crowd, and by those community members who bravely got up and shared their stories in the form of song and poetry. The night finished with some classic karaoke.

In partnership with Women’s Addiction Recovery Mediation, two community trainings were held in Fort Erie. A total of eight people were trained on how to prevent an overdose and administer naloxone. We are grateful to the women of WARM who approached us to get involved.

What was meant to be a one day event turned into a week of activities thanks to invested members of the community and some great partnerships. Many thanks to those who got involved, and we are looking forward to next year!





# AIDS Awareness Week 2016

Join us in celebrating AIDS Awareness Week and World AIDS Day.  
 If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call our office at (905) 984-8684

Date/Time	Event	Other information
November 25th, 2016 7:00 pm	Niagara Ice Dogs Game Location: Meridian Centre 1 IceDogs Way, St Catharines	Raise awareness about HIV while cheering on the Niagara Ice Dogs!
November 25, 2016 9:00pm (show starts at 10:00pm)	An Evening of Burlesque Location: Tickets: \$5 at the door	Paint the town red for AIDS Awareness! Featuring Burlesque performances by Lilianna as well as live performances by: Arianna, Felton B. Bender, Chantel Cartier, Beth LeVasseur & Claudia Silva.
December 1, 2016 10:00pm	Annual Lighting of the Falls	Come out and see the falls lit up red for World AIDS Day.
December 1, 2016 11:00am-2:00pm	Partners in Prevention Luncheon Location: Hilton Hotels and Suites 6361 Fallsview Boulevard, Niagara Falls Register on Eventbrite	This event is for health care and community service providers seeking to build their knowledge of Harm Reduction and Treatment as Prevention. It will include tabling and networking opportunities
December 1, 2016	World AIDS Day Services Please watch for the list of faith based services taking place throughout Niagara.	A time to Remember, Reflect and Celebrate people affected by HIV.
December 1-5, 2016	Observance of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness	
December 3, 2016	Stephen Lewis Benefit Concert Location: First Grantham United Church 415 Linwell Road, St. Catharines	

## LOOK FOR THE RED SCARVES!

To learn where the Red Scarf Campaign will be during AIDS Awareness Week follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



Visit your local library to learn the facts about HIV and visit Positive Living Niagara's displays during AIDS Awareness Week!

- Fort Erie Public Library Centennial Branch 136 Gilmore Road
- St. Catharines Public Library 54 Church Street
- Niagara Falls Public Library 4848 Victoria Avenue
- Grimsby Public Library 18 Carnegie Lane

# Looking to Get Involved in Your

There are plenty of opportunities available through Positive Living Niagara for clients and volunteers to get involved with events taking place in Niagara. Are you interested in providing information at display booths, distributing condom packs with the Prevention Posse or helping to plan an event? Maybe you just want to know what going on in your community so you can join in?



Here's a list of some of the community initiatives where you can find the team from Positive Living Niagara.



- November 21-30-**AIDS Awareness Week**
- November 25<sup>th</sup>- **The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**
- December 1<sup>st</sup>-**World AIDS Day**
- December 1-5-**Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week**
- December 17<sup>th</sup>- **March of the Red Umbrellas**
- February-**Black History Month**
- February 14<sup>th</sup>- **Love Positive Women**
- March 8<sup>th</sup>- **International Women's Day**
- June- **Pride Celebrations in Niagara**
- June 21<sup>st</sup>- **National Aboriginal Day**
- July 28<sup>th</sup>- **World Hepatitis Day**

To learn more about these initiatives and how you can get involved, contact the Education & Community Development team at Positive Living:

Sarah Burtch, **Women's Community Development Coordinator**

[SBurtch@positivelivingniagara.com](mailto:SBurtch@positivelivingniagara.com)

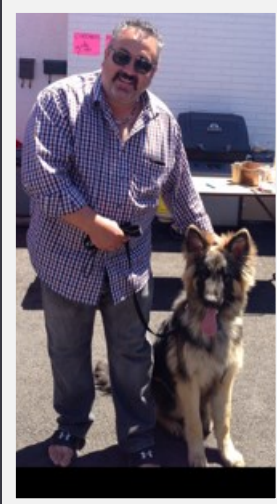
Winnie Murombedzi, **African Caribbean and Black Strategy Coordinator**

[WMurombedzi@positivelivingniagara.com](mailto:WMurombedzi@positivelivingniagara.com)

The New and Improved  
**www.positivelivingniagara.com**  
is *HERE!*



**Check Us Out!**



Our Third Annual Pet Pawlooza fundraiser was held on Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Dave McMahon's Dog Academy in Niagara Falls. It was a free admission event, so money was raised through vendor booths from Scentsy, Pampered Chef, Pet Food Outlet (Welland) and Positive Living Niagara. As well, people had the opportunity to take part in games, a penny sale and a raffle, with many nice prizes that were won by those

who attended. We also offered lots of food choices, including a barbecue where people could buy hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, water and pop, and a bake table that included such goodies as muffins, cupcakes, and cookies. At 1:45

p.m. staff of the Academy provided a dog training demonstration which was enjoyed by all.

We would like to thank everyone who attended this event, but special thanks is offered to all individuals, community agencies and stores that donated items that we were able to use for game prizes, the penny sale, and for the raffle draws. It was a wonderful day and all seemed to have a delightful time.

Tim Morgan

## New Client Orientation Package

A Client Orientation package is coming soon to Positive Living Niagara. This document is designed to provide new clients with information on everything from Support Services, agency policies regarding transportation services, client

rights and expectations, information about social, wellness and group events, as well as pertinent information regarding disclosure. It is a living document that will be continuously updated and provide new clients with a reference

guide to Support Services. Even if you've been with the agency for a while, if you would like to have a look at the new Orientation Package, contact your case manager!

An infographic with a light blue, textured background. In the center is a large light blue circle containing the text "5 Ways to Stay Healthy this Winter". Surrounding this central circle are five smaller circles, each containing a number and a tip. The tips are: 1. Move More (top center), 2. Wash Your Hands (left), 3. Get more rest (right), 4. Drink Plenty of Water (bottom right), and 5. Eat More Fruits and Vegetables (bottom left).

**1**  
Move More

**2**  
Wash Your Hands

**3**  
Get more rest

**4**  
Drink Plenty of Water

**5**  
Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

**5**  
Ways to Stay Healthy this Winter



# CONFIDENTIALITY IS A BIG DEAL!

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Here at Positive Living Niagara we face many issues of stigma, prejudice, fear, misinformation, judgement, and so forth. When you deal with this much negativity, confidentiality can become very important to a person we support. And if it is important to people we support, it is important to us as staff and to volunteers. Also, confidentiality has to be remembered and respected between clients themselves. So we try our best to work on things and need to re-visit them. One definition of Confidentiality: "Information about someone will not be shared with other people without their approval or consent".

One thing to remember is that we all have **choice** and should never have that taken away from us; not even by one individual. Whenever choice is taken away, it is a bad scenario; people get hurt.

Confidentiality is very different from one person to the next. Some people go out and educate and do public speaking and presentations. They are a public voice and face for HIV/AIDS awareness and education and we are grateful to them for doing this important work. But there are other people in different positions that cannot be this "out." One instance is the **family or culture** you come from. Some families are very strict, don't deal with facts, are not compassionate, make very strong judgements and even disown their children. So these families likely won't be made aware of their family member's living situation, sexual orientation, health issues, etc. If we make them aware by being careless or flippant, we can hurt individuals that trust us to care.

Another situation could be that a person we support has **children** that don't know her or his status yet. Perhaps they can't handle that, they are an only child, they aren't old enough or emotionally stable enough to know about their parent, and what if they only have that one parent? They may fear that their primary life support person has a higher chance of passing away and leaving them all alone. No matter how founded or unfounded their fears are the choice and reason to disclose lies with the parent.

Some clients **work** in an environment where they will be harassed, feared or even fired for their HIV+ status. I don't think anyone would want to be the cause of that. These things seem old fashioned and some people are disbelieving that they still happen, but they do. It is sad, but real. So please always try to be respectful, mature and mindful of what you are saying when it concerns people living with HIV/AIDS. It's especially easy to forget that everyone is in a different situation when we're at agency events



that feel safe. But in order for these events to remain safe for everyone, we must remember not to make comments that reveal another person's status when you are around other people. We don't know how everyone in the room will take our comments and the repercussions of that. Let's remember when we get together that "what happens at Positive Living events stays at Positive Living events!" Along the same lines, it is never up to us to tell for someone. To make the judgement about what they *should* do, or if

they are afraid and *shouldn't* be, or they *should* be an activist, etc. The only person we have the right to judge and control is our self.

We are all in this together; most times trying to help out, it would be a shame to hurt someone by falling short with what we say later.

Val-Ann Stepanchuk

# **B**ecome a **V**olunteer!

We are seeking a few dedicated volunteers who can commit themselves to our bingo program. The shifts located in St. Catharines are 2 hours in duration and 1-2 times a month.

Our bingo volunteers represent the agency and act as an ambassador welcoming patrons, answering questions and offering information about Positive Living Niagara. We also help keep the bingo hall tidy by cleaning off used bingo cards and wiping down tables. You do not have to sell cards, count money or do any card inventory.

If you can dedicate yourself to our bingo team then we are looking for you!



**To apply:**

Contact Val-Ann Stepanchuk,  
Volunteer Co-ordinator, at  
valanns@positivelivingniagara.com  
or call 905-984-8684 x 115.  
Visit [www.positivelivingniagara.com](http://www.positivelivingniagara.com)



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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 .