



ANNUAL REPORT

2005-2006 fiscal year

(April 1, 2005-March 31, 2006)

HISTORY

Voices of Positive Women was founded in May 1991 by Andrea Rudd and Darien Taylor, both of whom were working on an international anthology, "Positive Women: Voices of Women Living with AIDS." These two visionary women recognized the need for an organization whose sole mandate was dedicated to meeting the needs of HIV + women at a time when services and support for HIV + women were non-existent. Their vision was to build an organization which was directed by and for such women. They approached Health and Welfare Canada looking for funding for their book, and received organizational funding. From these humble beginnings, Voices of Positive Women, the organization, was born.

MISSION

Voices of Positive Women is a provincial community-based non-profit organization directed by and for women infected with HIV/AIDS living in Ontario. Voices aims to empower women living with HIV/AIDS through confidential support, outreach, information and education; represent the issues of women living with HIV/AIDS in order to improve HIV+ women's health and quality of life; and to educate the public by promoting accurate, affirming images of women living with HIV/AIDS.

VALUES

We work from an integrated feminist, anti-oppressive/anti-racist, harm reduction framework. Through our programs and services we reach out to *all* women living with HIV/AIDS, including, but not limited to, women who are pregnant, women who are geographically or culturally isolated, women of colour and Aboriginal women, women who use issues, immigrant and refugee women, woman dealing with violence, bisexual, lesbian and queer women, and transsexual and transgendered women.

BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

Our organization has gone through a lot of changes this year. In June 2005, after almost four wonderful years of working with us, our first Executive Director Janet Rowe moved on to become the program manager at the 519 community centre. Our efforts to fill her position took longer than we anticipated and by October 2005 we decided to hire an Interim Executive Director to keep the organization functioning - the talented Ann Martin. We are now pleased to have Danielle Layman-Pleet, the former Peer Network Coordinator, in the position permanently, as well as all the other staff positions filled. This transitional time over the past months has been very challenging for the Board and staff at VOPW; the challenge for the Board in the coming months will be to support the staff and the organization as it stabilizes once again.

As the Board Chair of VOPW I am proud to say that despite these challenges our programs have grown over the past year and will continue to change in response to the shifting needs of our membership. I congratulate VOPW staff, fellow board members, our engaged membership of women with HIV/AIDS, and our community stakeholders for making this organization what it is today

Hapiloe Byaruhanga

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2005/2006 has been a year of transition at Voices. Over the course of the fiscal year we moved our office at 66 Isabella from suite 105 to suite 104; held the Dialogue Conference IV on HIV and women's health; initiated a new program of theatre-based HIV education; and coped with several staff changes while continuing to meet the needs of our members with our existing services.

Although these changes have presented challenges for our organization, the dedication of our staff, Board of Directors, volunteers and funders has kept our programs on track and are still going strong! Our membership has grown to over 700 HIV+ women living across the province of Ontario. We have nurtured partnerships with more than 30 organizations and programs as we strive to serve the diversity of our membership. We

held our 3rd annual Danceathon event and our 2nd annual World AIDS Day Breakfast in partnership with the Business and Professional Women's Association and Taking IT Global, and raised a record amount of funding for our programs.

On behalf of Voices of Positive Women, I would like to extend a big **thank you** to all of you, the stakeholders of Voices of Positive Women, for your ongoing support. We could not have done it without you.

Danielle Layman-Pleet

BOARD MEMBERS (Since March 12, 2006)

Chair	Hapiloe Byaruhanga
Vice-Chair	Louise Binder
Treasurer	Patricia M. Cook
Secretary	Claudette Samuels
Director	Helen Ndaboroheye
Director	Ronah Luutu
Director	Joanne Schingh
Director	Lillian Magaya

(Pre-March 12, 2006)

Chair	Hapiloe Byaruhanga
Vice-Chair	Louise Binder
Treasurer	Patricia M. Cook
Secretary	Susan McRae
Director	Mary-Elizabeth Gilbert
Director	Tesh Ward
Director	Joanne Schingh
Director	Debbie Farrow

STAFF MEMBERS

Executive Director (until June 2005)	Janet Rowe
(October-January 2006)	Ann Martin
(from January 2006)	Danielle Layman-Pleet

Peer Network Coordinator (until January 2006)	Danielle Layman-Pleet
(from January-August 2006)	Louise Hepburn

Support Coordinator	Kaddu Ndibalwanya
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Community Partnerships Coordinator

(until October 2005) Claudia Medina
(from February 2006) Lindsay Elin

Volunteer Coordinator

(until October 2005) Denise Jackson
(from February 2006) Lindsay Elin

Accountant

(pre January 2006) Linda Martin
(from January-March 2006) Tom Katz
(from March 2006) Amber James

VOICES STUDENT PLACEMENTS

From September 2005-April 2006 VOPW offered placements to four students doing their schools' practicum placements. Louise Hepburn joined us from the George Brown's Assaulted Women and Children's Counselor/Advocate program, and later accepted the job of Peer Network Coordinator. Alex Smith and Amaranta Ng both came from Ryerson's Social Work program and Lauren Moses-Brettler joined us from the U of T's Women's Studies program. The students worked at Voices about two days a week on various projects such as the Theatre Troupe, policy development, the nursing clinic, the *FYI* newsletter, and the Dance-a-Thon.

SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Support Program at Voices is comprised of the following programs and services:

Telelink

A monthly long-distance teleconference facilitated by VOPW that offers support and educational discussions to members across Ontario, in conjunction with different experts in the field of HIV/AIDS. Recently covered topics include: HIV and Pregnancy, HIV and Infectious diseases, HIV and Dental Health. In the future we hope to also hold Telelink sessions in French, to better respond to the needs of our members.

Voices/Hassle Free Monthly Women Support Group

This group has been meeting on a monthly basis, and is held in conjunction with the Hassle Free Clinic. Recently our organizations made a strategic decision to change the mandate of the group from Long Term Support for HIV+ women to a group for newly diagnosed women and/or women newly dealing with their HIV status. This change is due to the following reasons:

- (i) The long term support group no longer draws in or succeeds in holding onto new members.
- (ii) There is growing demand for an agenda-specific group for newly diagnosed women.

- (iii) Many other community services exist for women who are beyond needing basic information on HIV/AIDS, e.g. Bi-monthly Voices Nursing Clinic, African and Caribbean Women's Community Kitchen, Skills Building Sessions for HIV+ Women, and Telelink.

Skills Development Project for African and Caribbean Women Living with HIV/AIDS

VOPW works on this project in partnership with Women's Health in Women's Hands, Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP), Africans in Partnership Against AIDS (APAA), and African Community Health Services. Its goal is to promote the well-being, and foster skills development through increased access to services for African and Caribbean women living with HIV/AIDS in Toronto and the GTA. Activities of the project include 48 skills building workshops to be delivered in 4 years.

Positive Youth Outreach – Young HIV+ women Support Group

VOPW runs this monthly group for women under 30 years of age in partnership with the AIDS Committee of Toronto.

Community Kitchen

VOPW partners with the AIDS Committee of Toronto, Black CAP, APAA, and ACHES to run this monthly social support network for African and Caribbean women living with HIV in Toronto.

Andrea Rudd Treatment Fund

A fund which allows members to obtain, every two months, either a standard package of supplements selected for their role in enhancing immune health or a reimbursement for complementary therapy.

One-on-one Support

Speak to our support worker either by phone or in person about your issues and get some ideas about to tackle your challenges. Our support worker can also refer you to health and social services in your area that will help you to meet your needs.

PEER NETWORK PROGRAM

The Peer Network program is a combination of services and activities that build connections between our HIV+ members living across the province.

Nursing Clinic

This is a bimonthly program in partnership with Casey House hospice. A Casey House community nurse is available for women to consult with and different topics are covered such as kidney health, Hepatitis A,B & C, treatment options, and many more.

Vanier Prison Workshops

VOPW co-facilitates a monthly HIV and Hep C workshop for women housed at Vanier detention centre, in partnership with Prisoner AIDS Support Action Network

Annual Women's Retreat

Our retreat takes place each year at the Mansfield Outdoor Centre near Mansfield, Ontario. The retreat has been such a popular event among members for the past three years that we have to establish a waiting list for the 45 spots. Held this past year in partnership with Casey House, the AIDS Committee of Toronto and 2-Spirited People of the First Nations, activities included arts and crafts, make-your-own natural beauty products, a treatment workshop, a traditional healing circle, and a workshop on art therapy.

Peer Mentor program

This program, which is the heart of the Peer Network Program, matches HIV+ women throughout Ontario together to provide peer support. Two Peer Mentor training sessions are held per year in Northern and Southern Ontario, providing the opportunity for our emerging HIV+ leaders to exchange information and build skills on topics such as Boundaries, Harm Reduction and Women and HIV. Afterwards, Peer Mentors meet monthly by teleconference to connect with and support each other.

Dialogue conference

In 2005 VOPW led the planning and delivery of the fourth *Dialogue Conference for Women with HIV/AIDS and Our Health Care Providers*. This conference aimed to start conversations among women about our health care needs, as well as between women and health care providers, in order to take steps toward improving health care services for HIV+ women. The conference was a success with over 85 HIV+ women and thirty health care and community service providers in attendance. Workshops at the conference covered topics such as Aboriginal healing, complementary medicines, street drugs and our health, prison and health, pregnancy and family planning, new and emerging treatments, Hepatitis C, mental health, and peer support networks. Attendees brainstormed areas to determine where further advocacy is necessary, and identified steps the group might take to address the gaps in healthcare for HIV+ women.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

With over a hundred women in Toronto and across Ontario volunteering their time, passions and energy to Voices of Positive Women, it's clear that volunteers are truly a vital part of the work that we do.

Whether you help out in the office, work on our annual Dance-A-Thon, sit on the Board of Directors, assist with the *FYI* newsletter, act as a Peer Mentor, or contribute your time to any of our activities, events, committees, projects or trainings, *we owe you an enormous Thank You*. VOPW wouldn't be the vibrant community organization that it is without your contributions!

Some of the goals of the volunteer program in 2006-2007 include developing a comprehensive volunteer orientation package and training program including anti-oppression, anti-racism/cultural competency and harm reduction trainings, and training

volunteers to co-facilitate workshops in shelters and areas in the GTA with few HIV/AIDS resources.

Positive Voices Theatre Troupe

From February 2005-August 2006 the Positive Voices Theatre Troupe Voices worked together to develop a performance dealing with how HIV intersects with other realities in diverse women's lives, such as poverty, drug use, race, sexual orientation and immigration. They performed their piece "Don't Tell me Women Aren't Affected by HIV" five times to audiences made up of Voices members and supporters and International AIDS Conference Delegates.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The main goal of the Community Partnerships Program is to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones with AIDS Service Organizations and other community organizations and coalitions throughout Toronto and Ontario. We do this in a number of ways, including working together to offer support groups, participating on advisory committees, offering trainings and workshops on issues affecting HIV+ women, and collaborating on a wide range of projects of common interest to our organizations.

Some of the achievements of the Community Partnership Program for 2005-2006 include developing and strengthening partnerships with the following organizations: the Ontario Aboriginal AIDS Strategy, the Windsor HIV Care Clinic, the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, and the Canadian Treatment Action Council.

A goal for the community partnerships program in 2006-2007 is to continue building relationships with agencies and groups that work with women who face barriers to accessing services (including, but not limited to, street active women, women dealing with violence and poverty, immigrant and refugee women, Aboriginal women, trans women etc.)

For more information about our community partners, please see the *Thank you to our Community Partners and Supporters of 2005/2006* at the back of the booklet.

FYI Newsletter

FYI is Voices of Positive Women's quarterly newsletter that provides information to our members and to our partners on community resources and events, as well as current treatments for HIV, including complementary and alternative therapies. Each issue focuses on a theme and contains articles written by VOPW members, HIV/AIDS experts, and other HIV+ women around the world.

From March 2005-April 2006 four issues of *FYI* were published, and articles focused on themes such as Mental Health & Depression, Spirituality and Lipodystrophy. A special thanks to our communications committee, who played a pivotal role in helping to develop themes and the content of the newsletter.

Communications Committee members 2005-2006

Claudia Medina

Louise Binder

Devan Nambiar

Veronica Cano

Edward Shaw

Design and Layout

Beverly Deutsch

Editor

Kerri LeClair

AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Directors of Voices of Positive Women Support Services (Ontario)

We have audited the balance sheet of **Voices of Positive Women Support Services (Ontario)** as at March 31, 2006 and the statement of revenue, expenditures and changes in net assets for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

Except as explained in the following paragraph, we conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many not-for-profit entities, the organization derives revenue from contributions, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of this revenue was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the organization and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to revenue, excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures, and net assets.

In our opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of the contribution revenue referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at March 31, 2006 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

June 26, 2006

PKF Hill

BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31

ASSETS	2006	2005
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 109,055	\$ 63,192
Accounts receivable	16,609	6,011
Prepaid expenses and deposits	3,414	11,771
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	\$ 129,078	\$ 80,974
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 29,019	\$ 12,907
Deferred contributions (note 3)	58,807	52,487
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	87,826	65,394
Net assets	41,252	15,580
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	\$ 129,078	\$ 80,974
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STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Year Ended March 31

	2006	2005
Revenue		
Grant funding (note 3)	\$ 286,999	\$ 282,647
Corporate contributions	119,862	45,045
General contributions	4,864	7,652
Foundation contributions	1,530	5,875
Fundraising and studies	16,883	4,978
Donated equipment	13,343	-
	443,481	346,197
Expenditures		
Salaries and benefits	146,127	175,922
Contract fees	51,414	12,511
Membership travel and per diems	46,872	32,618
Treatment vitamins and reimbursements	31,689	24,566
Rent	21,115	21,116
Fundraising and administrative	13,515	5,668
Printing	15,146	7,419
Membership child care	14,741	8,847
Donated equipment	13,343	-
Moving	12,357	-
Program supplies	10,007	9,383
Telephone	9,300	11,553
Insurance	6,950	3,974
Office supplies	5,135	6,949
Postage	5,074	5,367
Professional fees	4,437	3,225
Other staff costs	4,220	-
Equipment purchases and maintenance	4,219	3,223
National and provincial dues	1,548	2,369
Staff training	600	771
	417,809	335,481
Excess of revenue over expenditures	25,672	10,716
Net assets, beginning of year	15,580	4,864
Net assets, end of year	\$ 41,252	\$ 15,580

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS OF 2005/2006

gACCESS AIDS Network of Sudbury
ACCESS AIDS Network of Sault Ste Marie
Africans in Partnership Against AIDS
AIDS Committee of Ottawa
AIDS Committee of Toronto
Asian Community AIDS Services
Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention
Bruce House
Business and Professional Women's Association
Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange
Canadian Treatment Action Council
Casey House Hospice
George Brown College
Hamilton AIDS Network
Hassle Free Clinic
Meal Trans
OASIS Community Health Centre
Ontario Aboriginal AIDS Strategy
Peterborough AIDS Resource Network
Prisoner AIDS Support Action Network
Positive Youth Outreach
Regent Park Community Health Centre
Ryerson University
Taking IT Global
The 519 Community Centre
Toronto People with AIDS Foundation
2-Spirited People of the First Nations
University of Ottawa
University of Toronto
Windsor HIV Care Clinic
Women's Health in Women's Hands

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS AND SPONSORS OF 2005/2006

Abbott Virology
AIDS Bureau – Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
AIDS Committee of Toronto - Community Partners Fund
Aventis
Boehringer-Ingelheim
Bristol-Meyers Squibb
Campus Plus
Church and Dwight/Veritas Communications
City of Toronto
CLEAR Research Unit – McMaster University
Deloitte and Touche
Fab Magazine
Gilead
Glaxxo Smith Kline in partnership with Shire Biochem
Levi Strauss Foundation
MAC AIDS Fund
NOW Magazine
Pandor Productions
Pfizer Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
Pur Medical Corporation
Roche
Rx & D
Schering
The 360