

Speak Out

Self Care

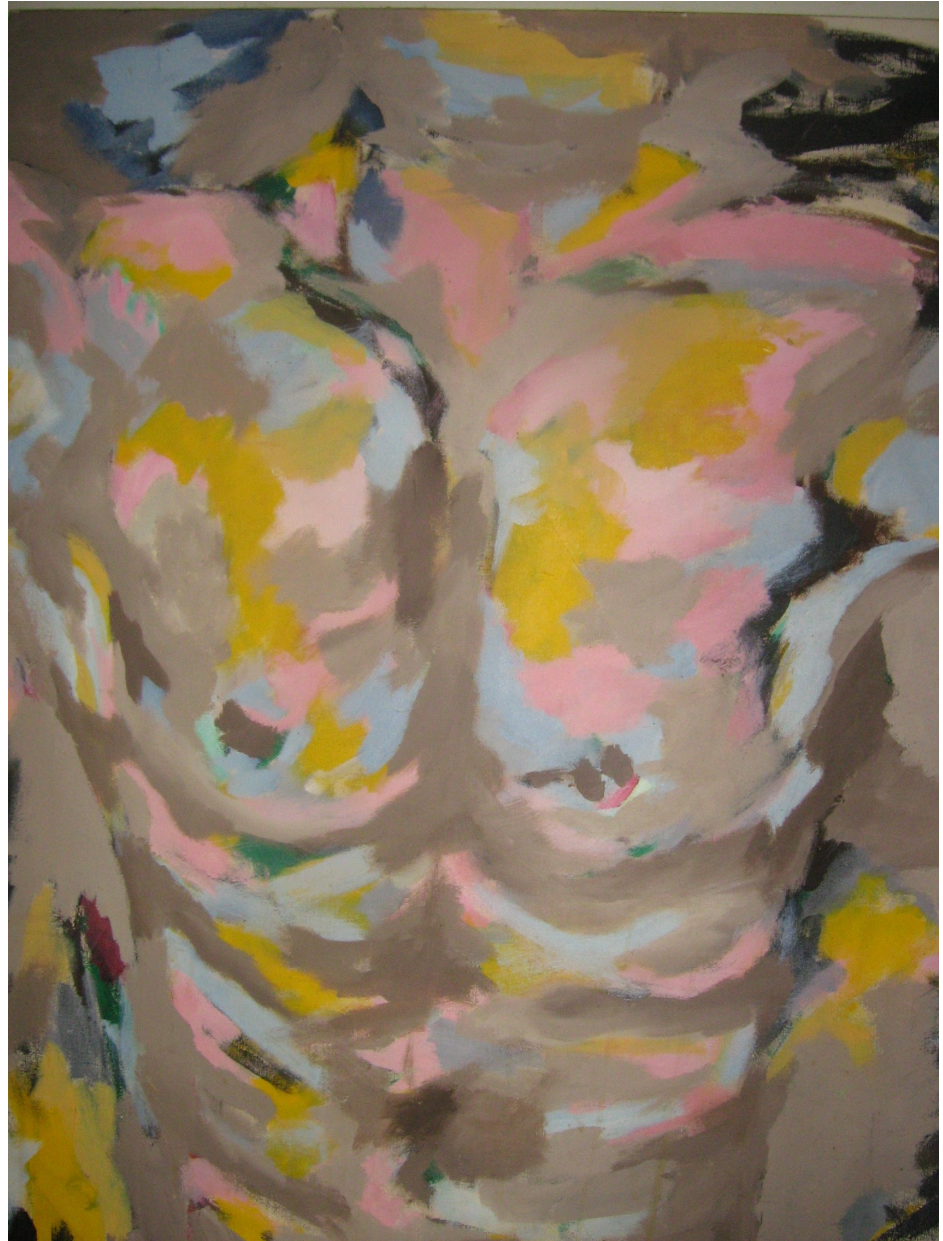
APRIL 2011

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Learn techniques to embrace health and wellness
- Read poetry and see artwork by PHAs
- Understand health from a PHA's perspective



By Lisa W.

A Waste of Time, or Time Well Wasted?

Through the wonders of social networking I was “found” a few weeks ago by an old friend of mine. We hadn’t spoken in 5 years, and I will own that. I had moved, dropped my home phone kept my cell and returned to school. I imagine it was not easy to find me.

I certainly wasn’t hiding; there were no bill collectors or bothersome ex partners. Still I had no desire to connect or re-connect with this person. I was angry with him and instead of saying something; I said nothing for almost six years, and now, before me was my chance.

I let loose with a rant that would have made the strongest blush. I held nothing back and to this day feel no remorse that I severed our friendship that day. I will not hear from him again, and I am ok with that. I am now left with the job of looking within and asking myself what that was all about. Why did I take a 26 year friendship and toss it out the window without looking back? Am I really that cold? Was that really necessary?

Without the details clouding my thought process, I looked at the overall picture. I looked at the progression of our friendship, the good times and the not so good times. From 1979 when we first met at a Supertramp concert through to 2005 when we lost contact. I realized that by about 1990 our friendship was starting to unravel; and more importantly is the realization that I

recognized this back then, but did nothing to stop the slow sinking ship. I saw it coming and slowly welcomed the inevitable. Was that really fair to him or for that matter to me?

To look back at 26 years of friendship and realize that 15 of those years were strained is not a proud moment for me. Why did I / we subject ourselves to that inner mental anguish? Why didn’t someone say something? Why didn’t I say something? I think in short for me, I hesitated to hurt someone’s feelings and in the process of sparing an awkward moment or an uncomfortable conversation I put myself and another through a 15 year span of time that could have been better spent making new friendships rather than ignoring our own. Sometimes we are blessed and have long friendships in our lives and other times we have friends for a long time; and yes there is a difference.

What ended our friendship quite simply was that we grew apart. Our lives went in vastly different directions. As the years went by our ideals changed from a Supertramp concert mentality to two very different people. Sure I was mad at him for an injustice I felt very strongly; but when I look back I quickly understand how something like that was bound to happen, and it did.

I like to think I am still young enough to be able to look at those 15 years as a life

lesson rather than a waste of time. I will be fine and move forward and I truly do wish that for him and his family. I have many good memories and I will remember those. I have also learned a valuable lesson about me and my time I spend on this planet.

I have a few friends, many acquaintances’, and a circle of people I truly care about. My days begin and end taking care of me and because of that I am able to nourish and tend to my family and cherish and enjoy my friends. Self care, be that a mani/pedi, a vacation, a shopping spree, or making sure that the people in your life matter to you and that your life matters to you is what will keep you alive and well inside and out.

On my facebook page right below my picture is the phrase”This is not a rehearsal, this is it”.

Robert Newman



“This is not a rehearsal, this is it.”

“What ended our friendship quite simply was that we grew apart.”

The Sacred Spiritual Art of Reiki

Being a PHA, I have had to learn many different forms of self-care. Due to the fact that people are so incredibly different and unique, one technique may work for a person but may not work for another. Of all the diverse forms of self-care that I have learned ranging from reading a good book, going for a walk along the river, listening to my favourite music, or meditating, there is one form of self-care that I find adds strength to all the others. What I am referring to is the powerful and potent healing modality, Reiki.

Reiki is a healing technique that channels universal (Rei) energy (ki). Energy exists in all things. When you break down our bodies to a molecular level we are actually atoms, molecules and particles that are composed of energy. In the movie "What the Bleep Do We Know," the movie examined an experiment in which words were attached to water bottles, then the water was examined under a dark microscope. The molecular structure of the water that had words like love attached to the bottles appeared beautiful and etheric. The water with the words "I hate you, I want to kill you" appeared distorted and ugly. The energy associated with the words actually changed the molecular structure of the water. Considering much of the human body is made of water, this experiment makes you question how our thoughts can affect our bodies. If you are interested in more reading about this topic, you can purchase the book "You Can Heal Your Life" by Louise Hay. It is a good book that gives positive thinking techniques to help

heal illness. Our thoughts create our environment and affects our body.

Reiki works in much the same way as the words affected the water. As a Reiki practitioner, I am simply a channel. Reiki is learned through the process of attunements by a Reiki Master. I learned my first two degrees when I was 15, and my advanced degree when I was 17. Once attuned, you can channel Reiki Energies to yourself, other people, and even situations. In the many years I have been using Reiki, I have learned that it is helpful in every situation. When I have to write a project for school, I channel some Reiki, and then the project seems to write itself. When I am studying for school, I channel some Reiki, and I find my mind clearing. In the morning, I meditate focusing on the Reiki symbols, and I feel empowered throughout my day. Reiki works for everything, but I find the one area that Reiki is most beneficial is during the treatment of disease and illness. As I have written the word, dis-ease happens when your bodies are out of alignment and you do not feel ease. This could be due to biological factors such as genetics, psychological factors such as personal tragedy, and environmental factors such as living in an abusive situation.

There is a saying that I really connect with. "I am not a human being having a spiritual experience, I am a spiritual being having a human experience." Throughout my life I have struggled with profound personal issues. I inherited mental illness and

addictions from my father and left home at a young age due to personal reasons. There were times in my life when I truly doubted that I was on a spiritual path. There were times when I felt so low, so depressed, that I couldn't image living a spiritual existence. That changed when I came to the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection through the advice of Dr. Margaret Pelz, my psychiatrist. Being in such a positive environment surrounded by profoundly healing energy, my own spiritual path kicked into high gear and

I released much of my negativity although this took time. Our beings are comprised of four bodies: our physical body, our emotional body, our mental body, and our spiritual body. When one of these four bodies falls out of alignment, the rest follow. What Reiki does is bring these bodies back in alignment through the addition of positive healing energy, and removes old negative energy.

As children, we are born with light in our eyes and are spiritually balanced. As we grow older we lose that light when we experience traumatic events such as parental divorce, losing a toy, experiencing abuse or even taunting. I had much of the abuse growing up. Like an onion, these traumatic events left layers of old negative energy in my bodies. This worsened my mental illness and caused me to turn towards my addictions. The process of healing is like peeling back the layers of built up negativity in order

(continued next page)



I am not a human being having a spiritual experience, I am a spiritual being having a human experience.

to reveal and reintegrate our self with our inner light.

Recently, I have come to a new stage in my own development. I have let go of much of my inner negativity, although healing is a constant process: new stuff comes up, and then I let it go. I find now that my addictions have dissipated as I have let go of old patterns. I have found a happy relationship and I am at one with each of my four bodies. Reiki is like a breath of fresh air directly from

the universe and it has given me the strength to overcome many challenges. I now invite you the reader to experience the amazing power of Reiki with me. I will be offering treatments independently and am currently working towards a Master Degree so that I can teach it to others. Whatever your ailment, Reiki can help you even if it is just a little. Every little bit helps in the battle against HIV/AIDS and the heat that comes through my hands when chan-

neling a treatment eases stress and pain and can help you reintegrate yourself if you are open to the energies.

The path of self-care is filled with obstacles and challenges. Getting some help from above can make a world of difference.

With love,
Ryan Handy
Transcendence Healing
Therapy

Chakra System



Contact Ryan for more info on meditation and Reiki

Positive Energy Meditation

Part One

When learning how to mediate, it is helpful to think of your daily life as part of a holistic balance between your mind, body, heart, and soul. By meditating you can bring your body and your energy back into balance.

Begin by sitting comfortably in a chair in a quiet room. With your feet on the floor, image roots growing out of the bottoms of your feet. Send the roots down into the ground going deep into the earth. Visualize all your stress and tension as black and brown energy in your body. While breathing slowly and deeply imagine sending this negative energy down into the ground. As you breath out, send all your stress and tension through your body. Practice this grounding technique for at least 30 seconds or however long as you feel comfortable.

Next image the energy of the earth as white light. Connect with this positive energy through your roots and bring the refreshing and cleansing energy up through your roots into your feet. While continuing to breath slowly, bring the energy up through you calves to you knees and then up through you thighs. Continuing bringing the energy up through your pelvic region up through your solar plexus located about the navel.

Continue brining the energy up through your heart, chest and back then down your shoulders and arms to your hands. Visualize the energy flowing up through your throat into your mouth and jaw, up through your eyes and your forehead, and through your ears, pooling up at the crown of your head. Build up the white light here for as long as you can stand it, then release the energy by imaging it falling down around you in a

shower of positive energy. Feel the white light cleansing your whole body making you whole. Imaging a shield of white light surrounding your body for up to 2 feet for 30 seconds or more.

Practice this mediation as much as possible. If you can manage once a day for 5 minutes, you will notice improvements. This positive visualization will fill your mind with positive thoughts assisting with illness and stress.

Part 2: Manifesting Goals

Once the first mediation is completed, imaging a ball of white light in front of your forehead. If there are any spiritual symbols that have meaning for you, draw them in the white light such as a cross, a star of David, or a pentacle. The visualize a goal happening in the white light. See it being completed, no that it is possible. If you believe in

divine presence say "If the divine wills it let it be true," otherwise you can also say "If it is meant to be, let it be true. Practicing this meditation is very powerful as it fills you with confidence and esteem. I do this four at least 40 minutes once a day. Twice a day is better. Even if you can only manage 5-10 of each mediation that is fine. Repetition is more important than length. Also remember that if thoughts keep coming up this is normal. Just release you thoughts and bring you focus back to the mediation. Patience is very beneficial with mediation!

Good Luck!
Ryan



Artwork by PHAs



By: M. H.



By: Lisa W.



Poetry

OCEAN- By Colin Nickle
 I am the unexpected
 Piece of eggshell
 In your 3 minute
 Softboiled start
 Causing your communication to
 bleed

I am the moist Belgian chocolate
 That parts your lips
 Slowly, sensually,
 Yours with that gift of
 Dove-white voluptuousness
 Now spit upon
 With silver threads

Initially you'd passed me your num-
 ber
 You tell me that this inked upon
 Edge torn paper was once
 A magnificent oak
 Thumb finger
 Pass
 Thumb finger.....

As per this ritual
 I stare through your chocolate eyes
 And am made curiously to feel that I
 am
 Now holding
 The number branded on you
 At Auschwitz
 But of course I call (smoke smoke)

So from infancy you saw
 Love explode and it's
 Miniscule remnants further torn

Sadly, young mindedly
 You fully understood shit streaked
 life.

Don't run
 Let me ride your horrors saddleless
 Subdue the granite nightmares
 Look- totally unabashed light
 Slivers in when you remove that
 stone

From your mind's wall
 Isn't as quick as it is embarrassing
 You won't need that anymore- I'm
 here

Then bolting upright- awake?

With sweat that has seeped
 through
 From your subconscious
 A rabid gypsy moth
 Tearing at the sweater of my skin
 My breaking points fly past me
 Burning through epochs to come

In our bed towards me you fly
 Intuitively singed by what
 Purity of love's light I have left to
 offer
 An immortal, dazzling triumph

Yet soon enough darkness be-
 comes your
 Radiance once again- the stench
 of night
 Soaked alleys made sweet by the
 essence of your hunt

I can only do anything I want now
 Except say "Hello"

The immaculate white horse car-
 ries it's wary burden.

His ultra blue feather reaches for
 the sky,
 His silken cape slithers in the air.

A spec across the boundless hori-
 zon.

A light of a smile.
 She awaits.

Blazen golden hair,
 Chantilly lace,
 Daintily pink,
 Reaches quietly,

Softly,
 Tearfully,
 Thoughts touch,
 Minds ignite,
 Flames reach up

To greet the rising sun.

By Lisa W.

AIDS

It's something I live with everyday

And I deal with it in my own way

It's something that I really don't like

But it's something that I have to
 fight

My parents have it, so do my
 brothers
 Actually there are a lot of others

This virus which I truly hate

Brings us to an awful state

A state in which we try to forget

But it's something that we'll always
 regret

This awful virus is called AIDS

AIDS is called by HIV
 A virus now common to see

And I hope that in about a year

The scientists will find a cure

Now that you know what this virus
 can do

Just remember it can happen to you

Jennifer Newman
 April 11 1993

**Got A Poem?
 Want to
 Share?
 Send It In!**

Blue Pixie Lights: Part 2

By Gaspar Bartko

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The elevator threw him a bit. They trooped in through one door, and exited through a different door: a bit quirky, but as long as it worked. And finally to the suite: number 406. They let Peter in first, and he was struck by the view that was framed by the living room windows. It was stunning: overlooking mounds of green maples, Victoria Lake with its ducks, geese, and swans, and on to the spires of St. Joseph's Catholic Church to the left and St. James' Anglican on the right. He vaguely heard Frank say something about them restoring the original hardwood floors, and repainting the apartment, but Paul was already sold. So were Wilhelmina and Frank. The place was his.

He had his dad, and a couple of friends help him move in, and at the end of the day, June 29, 2009, he started his life anew. There were no noisy neighbours, as the building seemed to cater to old ladies and aged gentlemen. The only racket came on some days from the park across the street, if the weather was nice, by the squeals of children playing at the outdoor pool. But after a couple of weeks of getting used to it, it was fine. He had his music, he had his belonging space, and he had to make dinner for two.

Daniel had been coming over for dinner and goofing around four days, give or take, per week since Peter had moved in. They had settled into a nice pattern: Daniel would stay late, Peter would walk him home and then next morning he would quietly let himself into Daniel's place, crawl into bed with him and snooze until the alarm clock went off. He'd wait until Daniel was showered and dressed and then would drive him to work. On his way back home he'd snag a newspaper and grab a coffee and start his day. It was a pleasant routine that got him up and working at a fairly decent hour.

His reverie was cut short as he rounded the corner by the sight of Frank, the manager, bravely fighting with an old gas lawnmower trying to cut the small square of grass at the front of the building. It was hard to tell who was winning the battle:

Frank or the grass. Frank turned off the machine as Peter came into view.

"Did you see the lights last night?" asked Frank excitedly.

"What lights?"

"The lights in the trees." Frank said. "It was windy as hell and the trees tossed and swayed and you could see the lights between the branches and leaves. They were like little blue pixies darting here and there trying not to get smacked by branches."

"No Frank, I didn't see them. I didn't even know it was windy yesterday. I got to bed pretty early and slept like a log."

"Well stay up late tonight. It's supposed to be blustering outside again. Maybe you'll see them."

"Maybe..."

But he was too preoccupied to give the pixie lights more than a quick passing thought. Daniel was coming over for dinner tonight. While Peter was a fairly accomplished cook, he always became slightly nervous when cooking for others. People are picky. What if his choice of menu, prawns, asparagus, and tortellini with alfredo sauce, might not go over well. But he was too far along with his choice to change now.

"Rats! I forgot the wine." He cursed silently.

Oh well, that's not anything that couldn't be fixed. He made a trip to the liquor store that was 5-minute walk away across the town square. Wine bought, he headed home to do the dinner prep. When he got to his building, Frank was still doing battle with the grass.

Peter let himself into the lobby and involuntarily shivered at the sight of the dusty stuccoed walls. He got in the quirky elevator and went to his floor. He fumbled with his keys – why did he need so many – finally found the one to the apartment and let himself in. Daniel would be coming over in about an hour so he had better get his cooking prep done.

"There, that was easy," Peter said to the kitchen walls. The prawns were deveined. The asparagus trimmed to equal lengths, and the water for the rice was just on the verge of beginning to boil.

"This calls for a glass of wine,"

he said to the pots and pans.

Just as he was pouring the golden liquid into a goblet, he heard Daniel fumbling with the key in the door.

"Hi honey. I'm home. What's for dinner?" That was his usual greeting.

Peter rushed out to the hall and wrapped his arms around the younger man and held him tightly for a moment.

"Dinner you ask?" queried Peter. "It's all ready to go. Here have this." He gave Daniel the glass of wine. "I'll get myself another."

Daniel followed him into the kitchen.

"Oh wow. You're going all out tonight."

"Yeah. I figured that our 3-month-a-versary was kind of special so there it is." Peter beamed. Daniel just smiled, then on his tip toes leaned over and kissed Peter on the cheek.

"Happy 3-month-a-versary then my silly, silly man." He added for good measure. "When do we eat? I'm starving. I work in a hotel and there's never any food. Go figure."

"Everything should be ready in about 20 minutes," Peter said. "Go and sit, watch TV and I'll bring dinner out in a bit. Oh, and please get good and drunk on that wine because I have every intention of taking advantage of you."

"You don't need wine for that," Daniel giggled in response.

"I'll file that in the 'Good to Know' category. Now go relax and amuse yourself for a bit. I'll be right with you."

Dinner was a success. All the ingredients cooperated, and there was a bit left over for a midnight snack.

They were sitting next to each other on the leather settee, feet up on the ottoman, hands intertwined. No words were spoken. They were just to men quite in love enjoying the sound of the wind rustling the leaves in the park across the street. The light was fading to a golden glow as the sun set ever lower to the horizon, soon it had set.

To Be Continued...

"Did you see the lights last night?"

"What Lights?"

"The lights in the trees."

The Importance of Sleep

Sleep can play an important role in helping people to recover from illness, including [HIV](#). Sleep problems can also cause fatigue during the day and affect your quality of life. Most healthy adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night.

Psychological factors, including depression and stress, are considered to be the leading causes of many sleeping difficulties. When depression is treated, depression-related sleep problems usually disappear.

Here are some tips for better sleep:

Go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day

Exercise regularly to improve your sleep and increase deep sleep

If you can't go to sleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy

Avoid heavy meals and sugary drinks before bedtime

Consume less caffeine, or eliminate this substance completely

Dealing with stress

Everyone has experienced some level of stress in their lives. Work, school, traffic jams, money problems, and other aggravations all can cause stress. Stress upsets our bodies, which may then affect our immune systems.

Relaxation allows the body to return to its normal level of functioning. Relaxation therapies, such as meditation, visualization, and yoga, can promote overall health and well-being. Here is a brief description of each:

Meditation is a way of concentrating that allows your mind and body to relax. Most meditation techniques involve deep breathing and focusing on your body and mind. You can meditate by sitting still and closing your eyes, but you can also meditate when you are taking a walk or performing any everyday activity.

Visualization is another method people use to relax and relieve stress. Visualizing and focusing on a safe, comfortable, and pleasant place can help you feel less stress and may lessen pain.

Yoga is a set of exercises that can reduce stress, improve fitness, and increase flexibility. Yoga involves breathing exercises, stretches and poses, and meditation. It can also make your body stronger, improving your overall health. There are different types of yoga and various classes you can take. Check with your doctor before beginning an exercise or yoga program.

Groups at the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection

PHA Café 2nd Thursday of every month; contact Richard (519) 434-1601 / 1-866-920-1601 / rmacdonagh@hivaidsconnection.ca

Women's Group: 4th Thursday of every month; contact Miriam Rivera 519) 434-1601 / 1-866-920-1601 / mrivera@hivaidsconnection.ca

Men's Discussion Group: Contact Kevin to find out when his next discussion group takes place. kmurphy@hivaidsconnection.ca

A little bit of everything

By Kevin Murphy

Self care used to be a foreign term to me. I'm a Cancer. I'm an artist. I am a gay man. These things are qualities of my character that make taking care of myself and putting my health as a priority item on my list of to do's a very difficult thing to remember. In both my work and in my private life, what makes me happiest is interacting and engaging with other people. This makes others the target of all my positive energy and not myself. I have often found myself more concerned about the safety, happiness and general well being of others because helping people be happy makes me happy. I love to see smiles on people's faces when I know I have helped make a difference in their day.

Self care is something that I have had to incorporate into my life. It was an actual skill I had to learn, and there were many times when I was close to the point of burning out before I realized the importance of balance. Too much focus on one particular area of anything tips the scales to one side and leaves other areas unsatisfied or under developed. Too much focus on diet and exercise leaves me longing for the days of beer and fast food. Too much focus on being calm and not over reacting to things can lead me to lose touch with emotions, or even worse, to suppressing them. A healthy balance of helping myself be well while still enjoying a night of indulgence every once in a while not only enables me to have better interactions with people, but it also helps me maintain an awareness about my own boundaries, desires and limitations and directions. Here are my top ten things that I do to help maintain balance in my life, so I can continue to do the things that make me happy.

- 1) Everything in moderation ...including moderation.
- 2) Forgive myself.
- 3) Take time everyday to breathe alone for five minutes.
- 4) If I feel like crying, I cry.
- 5) Try and allow time for a 1k walk at least once a week, where the destination is not work.
- 6) Make time to spend with my friends.
- 7) Try my best to eat fresh unprocessed food whenever I can, but realize that's not always possible and that's ok.
- 8) I play with my dogs. The joyful innocence and unconditional love from pets is very relaxing.
- 9) I try to get at least 6-8 hours of sleep every night.
- 10) I try to use my talents and express things through art and music.

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**Remember we are
looking for
Submissions
—artwork, poetry and
articles—
Have your voice heard!!**

Camp Wendake—A Place Set Apart

Registration for camp 2011 has begun. This year the camp is expanding to 80 participants which will improve peoples chances of getting to experience the Wendake magic. For more information or to register for camp contact Rob—519-434-1601 / 1-866-920-1601 / registrar@campwendake.org

CAMP DATES August 29, - September 3, 2011



Regional
HIV/AIDS
Connection

Community Inspired. Courage Driven.

Who We Are

As of January 1st 2011 The AIDS Committee of London Will be doing business as The Regional HIV/AIDS Connection. We will be providing the same services and programs for people living with and affected by HIV/Hep C.

Our Mandate is to serve the 5 counties surrounding London and to:

- Improve quality of life for those living with & affected by HIV/AIDS
- Reduce the number of new HIV infections
- Increase community awareness about HIV/AIDS

Our service users include thousands of people: those living with HIV/AIDS, their partners, friends and family, and those who are concerned about HIV/AIDS—anyone at risk for HIV, and anyone who provides services to people with, or at risk for, HIV. All of our services are free and confidential.

We are a registered charitable corporation, #11877 9008 RR0001.

Contact Us:

Executive Director- Brian Lester ext. 243

Support Services:

- Director of Support Services- Shannon Dougherty ext. 237
- Case Manager- Miriam Rivera ext. 235
- Case Manager- Richard MacDonagh ext. 228
- PHA Peer Support Advocate- Rob Newman ext. 253

Communications and Partnerships:

- Coordinator of Volunteer Services- Natalie Hebert ext. 257

Events—send us your email or phone # to receive updates about up coming events

This newsletter made possible by the generosity of...



Editor of Speak Out: Ryan Handy
We are looking for feedback
 Contact us at:
speakouteditor@gmail.com

London Pride: July 22—24 , 2011

Camp Wendake : August 29—September 3, 2011

AIDS Walk 2011: Saturday September 17, 2011

**Regional HIV/AIDS Connection Tel: 519-434-1601 or 1-866-920-1601 toll free
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