



Regional
HIV/AIDS
Connection

Community Inspired. Courage Driven.

Serving Perth, Huron, Lambton, Elgin,
Middlesex, and Oxford Counties

ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14



Mission:

We are a community inspired organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals and diverse communities at risk for or affected by the challenges associated with HIV/AIDS

VISION: Voice Knowledge Hope

VALUES: The courage to do what is right

Guiding Principles:

Harm Reduction
Honouring Culture
Responsiveness
Staff
GIPA
History
Enriching
Accountability
Collaboration
Inclusion
Organizational
Dignity
Valuing
Volunteers



Highlights of Year in Review:



IDU Outreach continues to grow



Launch: Naloxone Partnership Project



Leadership in Data Management for Needle Exchange



Full-scale Review and Revamp of Presentations



Presentations to over 6000 people



Over 22,000 publications distributed



Record Breaking Volunteer Hours



HIV clinics and presentations in Perth, Huron, Lambton, Middlesex, and Oxford



Host of Opening Doors Conference



Host of Women and Harm Reduction Forum



New fundraising partnerships are formed.



Open Closet and Country Cupboard receive major support from Green Shield and London Potter's Guild respectively



Preparations Begin for Scotia Bank Walk for Life 25th Year (2014)



Integration with John Gordon Home reaches half-way mark



Schulich "Tachycardia" raises largest amount ever



A Taste for Life celebrates its 11th year





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"We believe in actively pursuing partnerships and collaborative initiatives that enhance both access to resources and the quality of services and supports available to individuals affected by HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C."

The Impact of Collaboration

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection operates within a set of ten guiding principles that speak to the values we uphold as we engage in the social justice work associated with supporting marginalized populations. These include but are not limited to; **Dignity, Inclusion, Collaboration, Harm Reduction, Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) and Accountability.**

Given the expansive partnerships emerging between RHAC and other key service providers we wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on the broad impact of collaboration.

Our guiding principle of collaboration states that "we believe in actively pursuing partnerships and collaborative initiatives that enhance both access to resources and the quality of services and supports available to individuals affected by HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C."

RHAC cannot effectively deliver on its mission without strategic partnerships that enhance the service experience of the people we serve. In the past year we have participated in and benefited from the strengthening of many of our existing collaborations.

For numerous years we have witnessed an increase in demands for services related to our Counterpoint program. The individuals we serve remain vulnerable to HIV/HCV and many other health issues, such as endocarditis, abscesses and death by overdose. Because of our collaboration with the **London Intercommunity Health Centre (LIHC)** many of these individuals now have direct access to health care services such as abscess care, nursing consults, HCV/HIV testing and referrals to medical services where they are treated with dignity and respect.

Our recently launched overdose prevention partnership between the **Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU), LIHC and London Area Network of Substance Users (LANSU)** will reduce the number of overdose deaths in our area. Overdose deaths in our region are disproportionately high when compared to the rest of the province and this dynamic partnership will save valuable lives and reverse this concerning trend.

Finally, our successful collaboration with **John Gordon Home** has led



us down a path of pursuing a legal amalgamation. We are approximately mid-way in the process and we are excited to potentially chart a new course that will improve services, create efficiencies and strengthen our position to weather unpredictable political and funding environments. Ultimately the amalgamation is about providing an **unparalleled level of service to those who rely on us for care and support.**

Effective collaboration creates opportunities, builds relationships and inspires great work, all which leads to making a positive difference in the lives of individuals and the broader community. The difference we can make is wonderfully articulated by client and volunteer Andy "the people within this agency have literally, physically and emotionally saved my life and many like myself".

It has been another dynamic, transitional, challenging and profoundly rewarding year at RHAC. Without the commitment and dedication of our amazing staff, Board and volunteers, RHAC would not continue to function as a thriving and respected organization known for making a difference.

Thanks to each supporter for your collaborative commitment to RHAC!

"The people within this agency have literally, physically and emotionally saved my life and many like myself"

CLIENT AND VOLUNTEER ANDY



Brian Lester

Brian Lester
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Mana Khani

Mana Khani
BOARD PRESIDENT





Client Services

2013 – 2014 was an exciting year! This was our first full year of providing an integrated approach to Client Services. It is with great success, we were able to offer a number of services to our clients living with HIV/HCV.

We had many highlights in HIV Client Services. Numbers were up in our social groups, specifically the **PHA Café** and **Winners Circle**. **Quarterly Client/ED Feedback** lunches were highly attended and provided a wonderful opportunity to hear from PHA's about their thoughts and ideas to increase participation in agency and community involvement.

We were thankful for the food donations so generously provided by the **London Area Food Bank**, **St. George's Presbyterian Church** and the **Metropolitan Community Church**. This peer-led service provided access to basic food items through our **Country Cupboard** program.



In line with our values, **RHAC remembered, honoured and celebrated clients' past and present through our participation in AIDS Awareness Week**, including the annual Vigils – which took place both in London and Stratford. Our holiday dinner was the highlight of client involvement this year with attendance of just over 120 friends, families and volunteers.

RHAC continued our effort to bring together organizations for improving knowledge and sharing experiences; hosting the **Opening Doors conference** in March with a participant list pushing 130 people! That's a 17% increase from last year.

Counterpoint Services was very pleased to announce the launch of the Naloxone Program, a partnership between **London Intercommunity Health Centre, London Middlesex Health Unit** and RHAC. London is the only area in the province launching Naloxone as a partnership model to ensure multiple accesses to this much needed resource.

The **Needle Exchange** has successfully completed one full year with a new data base and has begun the transition of incorporating the Outreach data into the system. We are now able to quickly access information about trends, product demands and service outcomes.

The **Hepatitis C team** continues to successfully manage a Peer team, where 12 individuals are engaged in multiple roles of education and support for people with or at risk of Hepatitis C. Through our partnership with **London Intercommunity Health**, we have been able to successfully negotiate having Nurse Practitioners at RHAC two days a week to provide wound care and Hep C testing.

Our **IDU Outreach** has continued to grow reflecting 18 – 19 deliveries a day with distribution being 772,074 syringes and 891,300 syringes returned, a 115% return rate for the IDU Outreach program. While our fixed site has a lower return rate, it is recognized that many individuals return syringes through the mobile outreach.



2,800
unique
individuals
served through
Counterpoint



20,925
individual
visits through
Counterpoint



1,866
IDU outreach
deliveries



100 +
social/educational
support groups held



120
people attended
Annual Holiday
Dinner



\$10,160
– clients'
Wellness
Assistance Fund





"The work of the Education Department extends well beyond the walls of the organization..."

Education

The Education Department strives to keep pace with the rapidly-changing developments, trends and innovations that characterize the HIV/AIDS sector. Not only is it important to ensure that the information we share is both current and accurate, it is also essential that we offer key messages in relevant and engaging ways that resonate with the community members with whom we connect. With this goal in mind, members of the Education Department took on a full scale review and "revamp" of our HIV Basics and Hep C Basics presentations in the 2013-14 fiscal year.

However, the work of the Education Department extends well beyond the walls of the organization and encompasses a variety of activities in addition to "behind-the-scenes" curriculum development.



RHAC raised its profile through many events and educational awareness campaigns such as:

World Hepatitis Day

Red Scarf Campaign

Are You Doin' It Campaign

Large-scale community events such as Sunfest, Pride, and others.

Aids Awareness Week

World Aids Day



171
presentations



6,014
people reached



35,000
condoms
distributed



22,000
brochures
distributed
throughout the
community

More specifically, representatives from the Education Department and the Client Services Department participated in a sexual health-focused Motivational Interviewing pilot project for MSM developed by the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance (GMSH).

Our **Multicultural HIV Prevention Coordinator** developed an article for the **Life Resource Centre's** seasonal newsletter, based on RHAC's participation in an annual, multicultural **International Women's Day** event. This opportunity allowed us to raise awareness about HIV and related issues among several hundred of the affiliate church's diverse congregants.

A collaborative campaign launched for **World Hepatitis Day** provided additional opportunities for Hep C testing in London and raised community awareness about Hep C and associated resources/supports through a social media campaign and display in the CitiPlaza atrium.

Also included in our proactive, educational strategies was a workshop on harm reduction for women aimed at local service providers. Co-ordinated by the **Women's HIV/AIDS Community Development Coordinator**, we are pleased to report this was a very successful event, with 130 service providers in attendance.





Community Relations

Both fund-raising and friend-raising were high priorities for RHAC this past year. Events such as **A Taste For Life**, and **Tachycardia** saw the highest participation rates ever. ATFL raised over \$48,000 with the support of lead sponsor **TD** and other partners such as **Pinpoint Publications** and **Bell Media**. From their annual stage production, **The Schulich School students** donated a record-breaking \$28,000! Spirit and fund-raising were evidenced at our **Annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life** last fall. We are forever appreciative of all our donors – such as the Sisters of St. Joseph's – and excited to have received new donations from groups such as the **London Potter's Guild**.

Volunteerism soared this past year with an unprecedented **8,507 volunteer hours being recorded. That equals 4.6 full-time staff!** It is no surprise that four RHAC volunteers were recognized at the provincial level, including **Leisl Biebesheimer, Russ LeBrun, Frank Robidoux** and **Lilka Young**.

Ensuring we deliver on our regional mandate was strengthened by our lead position as host of the **Opening Doors to Positive Change** conference. HIV Testing clinics and presentations were made in each of the counties we serve including Huron, Oxford, Perth, Elgin, Lambton and Middlesex.

Over 500 scarves and 3000 ribbons were given out during our Annual Red Scarf campaign last year! The Red Scarf campaign continues to be an impactful awareness campaign that punctuates the events held during AIDS Awareness Week.

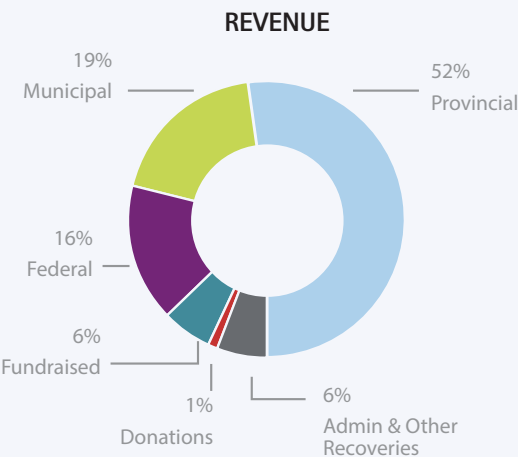
Putting people first remains our priority, but RHAC is fortunate to have built a robust web-site and social-media platform which allows us to reach many stakeholders in different ways. RHAC's social marketing strategy was determined by one of our funders to be a best practice in the HIV/AIDS sector.



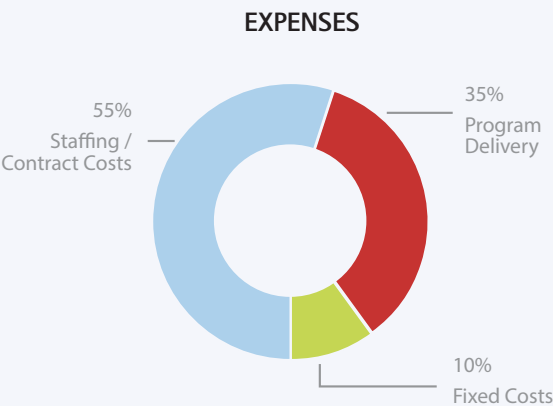
Financials

The year ending March 31, 2014 was a year in which RHAC continued to increase funding across several sources. Financial reporting in this publication includes the funds administered for both the **Ontario Organizational Development Program** and **London CArES** Coordination funding. RHAC has made a commitment to ensure our services remain sustainable and so we continue to diversify our funding sources through project specific grant seeking and successful fundraising events. As indicated, the Community Relations team continues to nurture relationships with individual and corporate supporters of the agency, easily demonstrating the needs being experienced by our clients and how we attempt to meet those needs. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we continue to maintain our contingency fund and end this year with a balance of \$67,236. We have again ended the year with a modest surplus demonstrating responsible financial practices by all members of RHAC's team. We extend a heartfelt thank you to our supporters.

Your contributions to RHAC, financial or otherwise, allow us to continue to be strong leaders in delivering services within our community and ensuring our mission, values, and vision remain in the public eye.



TOTAL \$2,204,868
Total does not include in-kind donations



TOTAL \$2,156,974
Includes OODP and London CArES



The past has brought us to **this place** where we can anchor, look out, and clearly see the **wonderful change** we are about to experience...

RHAC staff at team building event, 2014.



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TBD*

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COORDINATOR TBD*

HEPATITIS C EDUCATOR

Zach Templeman



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www.hivaidsconnection.ca

*TBD – to be determined or announced