



**Annual Report
2018-2019**





727 

of ACT service users identified as HIV-positive
AND an additional 727 service users identified
as at-risk of HIV

877

number of new service
users in 2018-19

“ ACT’s support teaches us how to
connect with other people. It teaches
us how to love ourselves. They teach
us how to respect each other. ”

— ACT service user



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& Board Chair



HIV TESTING & COUNSELLING

**IT'S MORE
THAN
KNOWING
YOUR STATUS**



◀ Tyler Morden, Manager of Gay Men's Health Programs with Mike Smith, Gay Men's Health Systems Coordinator.

▶ Clarence McCorkle, ACT Volunteer with Eric Rogers, Community Counsellor.

▶▶▶ **Anxiety. Shame. Homophobia. These are some of the challenges that guys into guys face when getting tested for HIV, as uncovered through consultation work led by Mike Smith, ACT's Gay Men's Health Systems Coordinator.**

With over 50 community members and service providers participating in the process last year, the community consultation identified health care barriers to HIV and STI testing, treatment services, as well as primary and mental health care for gay men.

"HIV-related anxiety is very common and can be very intense for people," said Mike. "There are so many barriers that people face when getting tested. They often feel like their privacy is violated and conversations about specific gay, bi, queer (GBQ) issues and topics such as HIV, PrEP, PEP, U equals U and condom use are not being had."

That experience is mirrored by one of ACT's HIV testing patrons. Paul* came to the weekly anonymous and rapid HIV testing clinic offered every Wednesday evening from 4 – 8 pm. When it was time for Paul to get tested, he was anxious and felt sick to his stomach.

Paul had never been tested before and heard horror stories from friends about shaming, judgment from health care practitioners, testing sites refusing to do their test, and the homophobia they had to go through. But he knew he needed to do it, so despite all these fears, he came to ACT because the timing was convenient for him.

"The guy who tested me talked to me like a human being. He wasn't judgmental or condescending; he was friendly and professional," said Paul. "I really liked how he walked me through the steps of the test and that he did it in front of me."

The whole experience was not what Paul expected. While he was relieved by his negative test result, he was even more relieved that he chose a safe space and he mustered the courage to get tested.

"I felt a massive feeling of relief for a negative result, but I also felt like it is okay for me to have sex with who I want, and that my sex life is nothing to be ashamed of," said Paul. "I'm a decent person who likes to have sex with guys and there is nothing wrong with that. I never expected that from an HIV test. I felt comfortable and I was able to talk to a counsellor about my anxiety. I wish more guys could have that experience. Because of that, I'll get tested more regularly at ACT."

28%

of guys who present at ACT's HIV testing clinic are first time testers

51%

of guys tested are from racialized communities

Counselling is a big part of providing a holistic approach to gay men's health. Eric Rogers, ACT's Community Counsellor and Program Coordinator believes that the support he can offer for guys into guys is vital to the HIV testing experience.

"It's important to have an integration of services, which is what we have here at ACT," said Eric. "Conversations I've had with guys start with mental health and talking to me about anxiety. Some conversations will lead to deeper issues of trauma, childhood sexual assault, substance use, internalized homophobia, negotiating safer sex practices, race and stigma."

For Eric, he feels that service users keep coming back because they have a good experience and ACT looks at guys' social, emotional, physical and mental well-being.

Empowered by the support of community, ACT is approaching health and overall wellness as a combination prevention strategy. For Tyler Morden, ACT's Manager of Gay Men's Health

programs, it is crucial to offer sexual, mental and emotional needs supported in one place.

"A lot of times, the testing experience is pretty stressful for people; a lot of emotions come up during testing and you may have to disclose experiences around sex and substance use for the first time with a complete stranger," said Tyler. "It's important to verbalize this and be connected to the proper support immediately instead of waiting for a referral, which is what we do when someone gets a reactive HIV test; we refer them to physicians within 24-hours of being tested HIV-positive."

Because of you and your support, guys like Paul can comfortably get tested for HIV, feel supported, and get the access to mental health and social support services they may need.

*To maintain anonymity, Paul's real name has been changed for this story.

“ A lot of times, the testing experience is pretty stressful for people; a lot of emotions come up during testing and you may have to disclose experiences around sex and substance use for the first time with a complete stranger. ”

— Tyler Morden

Give HIV the finger!

Free and anonymous rapid HIV testing for
cis and trans guys into guys.



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- Counsellors available on site
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HARM REDUCTION

CREATING CHANGE

▶▶▶▶ **Having a medical background and being in a 16-year marriage, you would never guess that Scott* would be accessing the free Meth & Sex program at ACT. Being married to a woman, Scott wasn't being his authentic self; he wasn't out.**

And his only way to meet other guys was through anonymous sex. It was during those encounters that he was introduced to crystal meth.

"At the time, my wife didn't know about the weekends I would book away from home to have sex with other men, and my meth use. I was hiding that part of my life from her and everyone else around me because I wasn't ready to deal with the issues I needed to face."

Coming from a small town in Saskatchewan, Scott moved to Vancouver and then to Toronto in 2012, after his marriage dissolved. Being diagnosed with HIV a year prior, he sought counselling services at ACT. While helpful, Scott realized he wasn't ready to create changes in his life and deal with the issues he faced, particularly his meth use. As a result, he stopped attending sessions.

More anonymous sex and prevalent meth use coupled with being restructured from his job of 25 years caused Scott to hit rock bottom last May. After seeing his family physician and being diagnosed with general anxiety disorder, he decided it was time to make that change.

"For the longest time, I tried to keep parts of my life separate. I didn't realize that everything was linked – my feelings of loneliness and isolation and sexual addiction evolved into sex and meth use. It wasn't until I truly hit rock bottom that I was realized I was ready to seek the help I needed and ACT provided that safe and comfortable space for me."

Programs offered at ACT like the 8-week Meth & Sex Support Group allow guys like Scott to approach their health holistically and give them the opportunity to be their authentic selves without judgment, while holding themselves accountable to make more positive choices.

For Scott, it was helpful to be with others who are experiencing the same journey and breakthrough. That's what happened when an alum from the Meth & Sex group, who had been meth-free for 9 years, was brought in to speak to him and the rest of the participants from his group.

"The Meth & Sex group made me learn so much about myself. My cohort and I supported each other. What I was going through, struggling with crystal meth and my addiction to sex was something that other people were



224 number of service users identified as substance users



42 number of service users who participated in the Meth & Sex Group

“ I'm glad to see ACT is offering more groups for gay men that deal with drug use and other issues. These are important. ”

— ACT service user

also dealing with. Being able to share my experiences with other people made me feel less isolated and alone."

Drew* is an ACT service user who participated in SPUNK, another harm reduction program offered at ACT.

In his forties and in a loving long-term relationship as well as working a successful career in his field, Drew seemingly has it all. But even a person like Drew can need some support with his substance use.

"What I liked about SPUNK is the fact that it was free and accessible. It was a diverse group of people from different ages and backgrounds experiencing the same struggles with substance use. Everyone was professional, compassionate and welcoming."

It was important for Drew to make small goals and reach them. Attending SPUNK for six weeks allowed him to do that.

SPUNK is a group that explores substance use from a non-judgmental point of view and looks at how it impacts sexuality and daily living.

"Groups like SPUNK are important because it allows your voice to be heard; for someone to acknowledge you and what you're going through. There are many topics that people don't want to confront but even if you are hesitant to get involved, I suggest trying. It's so powerful when you can speak freely, when people listen and you're in a safe space with people who genuinely want to help you make positive change in your relationship with substances."

*To maintain anonymity, Scott and Drew's real names have been changed for this story.

▶▶▶ **When it comes to talking about emotions, many of us are not comfortable to speak openly about how we feel. But talking about our feelings can help us maintain positive mental health, and deal with more troubling times. This is especially true when we're focused on creating intimate relationships with others.**

That is why Aaron* signed up for PEACH, a 10-week program introduced last year at ACT for gay, bi and queer guys interested in building the skills that they need for healthier relationships with other men.

"The subject of online dating was really interesting for me and is one of the struggles I have been dealing with. I'm fairly shy and thought it would be great to talk to other guys about navigating relationships, whether online or in the community."

Some of the topics group participants discussed in PEACH include developing stronger communication skills, negotiating the kind of sex and relationships you want, and how to navigate the complicated digital and social landscape of online dating.

Aaron discovered ACT's programs and services in 2017 when he registered for the Body Image Support Group. As a gay man who has battled with anorexia and bulimia in the past, that group helped him improve his self-esteem as it relates to his body image. That would prepare him for the conversations at PEACH about dating apps and what is sometimes an over-emphasis on physical appearance where negative self-talk can result.

"For me, I keep coming back to ACT because health is looked at holistically," said Aaron. "Mental health is important to gay men, and the groups focus on mental health, sexual health and emotional health – something that is often overlooked when discussing our well-being. ACT's programs also offer social support. I've worked on my relationship with myself, now I want to know how I can build relationships with other people."

Creating a group that was diverse and inclusive and allowed guys to be open and speak freely about relationships was important to John Power, ACT's Manager of Support Services. He wanted to have a group for service users that looked beyond condom use, HIV treatment as prevention, PrEP and PEP, to focus on dealing with dating, long term relationships and negotiating what a healthy relationship would look like for the participants.

"I wanted to make sure that we would have a group that would fill the gaps that service users felt were not being focused on," said John. "After a lot of conversations with service users, topics such as online dating, hook-up culture, monogamy versus polyamory, emotions and relationships came up. The way that gay, bi and queer men experience relationships is different from how everyone else experiences relationships. We have to look at other factors like HIV, internalized homophobia, sexualized racism, substance use, safety and pleasure, as well as intimate partner violence; I wanted it to be a combination of fun and serious topics."

PEACH became an instant hit, with the group registration filling up immediately and drew people from all backgrounds and age groups. The oldest among them is 77-year-old Robert, a married gay man who has been involved in the LGBTQ community for years, with PEACH being his first time participating in ACT programming.

Being in a 42-year relationship, Robert found the group program valuable and he gained a lot of knowledge and new skills to have a healthier relationship with his partner.

"The knowledge to develop and nurture a relationship is very important. I felt like my relationship with my partner contributed to the conversation and I benefited from the group," said Robert. "As the oldest person in PEACH, I was happy to see that not only was the group diverse, there was no ageism. I felt welcome and accepted and it helped me be better with my partner by being able to express my emotions."

Because of people like you and your generous support, ACT is able to provide a support group for all gay men to have meaningful conversations about their emotions, build a support system so they don't feel alone and isolated, and to start fostering healthier relationships with not only themselves but with other men.

*To maintain anonymity, Aaron's real name has been changed for this story.


2,746 total number of counselling sessions held either at ACT, in community medical clinics or in the bathhouse



PYO
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or 416.340.8484 ext 265 to register

act

support?
**DY
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- Commit to the greater involvement of people living with HIV and AIDS (GIPAMPA). GIPAMPA is at the center, and it is grounded in human rights.
- Aim to transform all who live with, work with, and care for people living with HIV and AIDS.
- Commit to personal and social transformation.
- Value community expertise in embracing change.
- Value inclusion over exclusion; a quest for self-determination.
- Promote the evolution of thought, action, and leadership.

Because GIPAMPA is about human strength and accountability are its foundation.

We acknowledge that GIPA is never achieved and a commitment that must be continually renewed and is similar to all other accountabilitys of our profession. Our practices in AIDS service organizations must be in light of the changing realities of HIV and AIDS.

ACT is committed to adhering to the principle of meaningful engagement of people living with HIV and AIDS. It must be at the center of our work if we are to address the challenges associated with

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

**PASSION
TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

◀ Mark Bhola, ACT Volunteer.

▶▶▶ **Prior to finishing his master's degree in Public Health, Mark Bhola was always interested in HIV. Through his program, Mark learned a lot about social determinants of health – factors such as socio-economic status, sexual orientation and ethnicity that may reduce someone's ability to live in optimal health.**

While HIV does not discriminate, it disproportionately impacts gay, bi, queer and trans men, injection substance users, and African, Caribbean and Black communities in Toronto. Volunteering at ACT, Mark sees that social determinants of health are more than a classroom concept.

"As a health issue, HIV is something that is very specific and can go under the radar," he said. "There's a lot of false information out there about HIV."

At the Access Centre, Mark's face might be the first you see arriving off the elevator. Making sure service user questions are answered and that they feel supported is a big part of his role.

"You always remember the last bite of a steak," Mark muses. "It's critical that each service user leaves satisfied. If they don't feel supported, they may not come back and may feel that there are no other resources out there for them."

Some vital resources include other programming like ACT's anonymous HIV Testing Clinic, offered each Wednesday evening. To boost his confidence in supporting people for their HIV test, Mark decided to put himself in their shoes.

"I went through the testing experience to see what it was like. The testers are sweet and very kind. If you want to talk, they'll talk to you. If you just want them to prick your finger, they'll do that too."

Being a gay man who has dealt with anxiety himself, Mark is an empathetic ear to those who seek support at ACT. That's especially true as people come for their HIV test.

"I try to be light and talk with them about other things unrelated to sexual health or HIV. It could be as simple as music or the weather. We want to make it comfortable and for it to feel less like a clinic."

Prior to choosing his volunteer roles with the Access Centre and anonymous HIV Testing Clinic, Mark went through an intensive, 20-hour training called *Core Skills*. Offered each year, *Core Skills* is peer-led training that provides both volunteers and new staff important knowledge about HIV and how it's transmitted, HIV-related stigma, and offers practical skills to support them as they navigate conversations with service users who may be vulnerable or going through a difficult time.

While Mark knows that his experience at ACT is part of growing and learning as he steps into his Public Health career, it's the people that keep him coming back.

"Everyone is very kind and sweet. I think the people are what keeps the organization successful. The fact that service users feel comfortable asking difficult questions that involve sexual health shows me that ACT is doing something right...we're doing our job."



493 active ACT volunteers this year



10,806 work hours contributed by volunteers this year

\$232,637

value of volunteer hours contributed this year



DONOR PROFILE

TURNING TOUGH LOVE INTO SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY

▶▶▶ **Gaelen Patrick has been entrenched in the gay community most of his adult life. Moving to Toronto from Hamilton in 2001, he managed Fly, a popular club in the community for over a decade and remembers having ACT Outreach Volunteers occupy space in the club to hand out condoms and other sexual health and harm reduction information.**

While Gaelen understood the value of the Outreach Volunteers being at Fly, he admits to not really paying attention to their importance.

"I allowed the volunteers there because it obviously served a purpose, but I didn't really give it much thought." Gaelen said.

It wasn't until he left Fly that he realized he didn't know enough about HIV... to learn this came with some tough love.

On a short three-week adventure through Italy in 2012, Gaelen would fall in love. They met early on and would become inseparable day and night. Towards the end of their time together, his lover would share his HIV status – he was undetectable.

"I shriveled up like a raisin. My reaction to him telling me about his HIV status hurt him deeply... that someone had the courage to point out my ignorance helped me see that I had a lot to learn."

In this moment, Gaelen engaged more in the work of ACT with financial support, but also learning about the issues such as HIV stigma and what it means to have an undetectable viral load.

"Having been shown a mirror to my own stigma, I felt more comfortable engaging people in conversations about HIV. When people used words like 'clean' or 'DDF' (drug and disease free) to describe their sexual health, I would use that as an opportunity to educate them."

Now 40-years old and the owner of a successful real estate business, Gaelen has grown his annual donations and his relationship with ACT. He's particularly interested in the agency's holistic approach to gay men's health and plans to grow those programs.

"When I moved to Toronto, it took me 18 months to find a gay doctor. I've been with that doctor ever since.

“ Having been shown a mirror to my own stigma, I felt more comfortable engaging people in conversations about HIV. When people used words like 'clean' or 'DDF' (drug and disease free) to describe their sexual health, I would use that as an opportunity to educate them. ”

— Gaelen Patrick, ACT Donor

Nobody should have to struggle to find a doctor they're comfortable with. It's one of the things ACT is working to tackle for gay, bi, queer guys."

Gaelen encourages others to consider how they can support the work of ACT and make a difference, even if it starts with a small monthly donation. He sums up in three words why he's happy to provide financial support. "It feels good," said Gaelen. "My reward is knowing things are getting better."

We are grateful to Gaelen and the thousands of donors like him who invest their financial resources as partners in our collective effort to end HIV and AIDS in Toronto.

“ I shriveled up like a raisin. My reaction to him telling me about his HIV status hurt him deeply... that someone had the courage to point out my ignorance helped me see that I had a lot to learn. ”

— Gaelen Patrick, ACT Donor

A close-up portrait of a middle-aged man with short, graying hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a light blue V-neck shirt. He has a friendly smile, showing his teeth, and a light-colored goatee. The background is a dark, slightly out-of-focus interior space.

GAY MEN'S COFFEE NIGHT

REDUCING LONELINESS AND ISOLATION OVER COFFEE



◀ David McClure, ACT Volunteer and Gay Men's Coffee Night attendee.

▶▶▶ For someone who has been accessing programs and services at ACT for over 20 years, David still finds ways to be involved with the agency and be engaged with his community. When Gay Men's Coffee Night (a social program for gay, bi and queer men over the age of 40 who are living with HIV) was introduced in the fall of 2018, he signed up.

As a single 64-year old gay man, David has had an interesting and often challenging journey. Being diagnosed with HIV 33 years ago, he now finds himself at an age that he, for the longest time, could not have anticipated attaining. He first accessed ACT's counselling services 20 years ago, and then later participated in one of the support groups offered for long-term survivors. Attending the long-term survivor support group proved to be beneficial as it sparked a focus and a sense of purpose for him.

"I wouldn't say I am overly anxious about the aging process, but I am mindful of keeping my body and mind active now and in the future," said David. "I try to stay involved with my community through volunteer work and enjoy the opportunity to share memories, stories and concerns with my peers who are going through similar things. I think this is the best way to fight isolation and loneliness".

With Gay Men's Coffee Night being a new initiative for ACT, David is excited to see how the program will continue to grow and knows that the feelings of isolation are a prevalent issue for gay men – both young and old.

"I've seen the agency evolve over the years as it responds to the many and new needs for those who are concerned about, at increased risk or living with HIV", said David. "I've seen staff and volunteers come and go over the years, but the one constant is the desire to provide real and meaningful support to service users".

Thanks to your support, David is among many of the service users here at ACT that have safe spaces for social support like Gay Men's Coffee Night.

“ I've seen the agency evolve over the years as it responds to the many and new needs for those who are concerned about, at increased risk or living with HIV. ”

— David McClure



21

unique service users participated in Gay Men's Coffee Night



59

sessions held with 22 unique service users in ACT's Buddy Program

“ I feel tremendous gratitude for ACT. It's like my second home. ”

— ACT service user



WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING

COMMUNITY, DIVERSITY AND UNITY

▶▶▶ **Shona* and Aisha* are two women who have had different journeys. What links them together is the fact that they both attend Women's programming at ACT.**

Originally from Zimbabwe, Shona is a mother of two and a grandmother of three – something she never thought she would live to see. She and her husband were diagnosed with HIV in 2001. Shortly after being diagnosed as HIV-positive, her husband passed away.

"I didn't take HIV medication until I came to Canada with my kids in 2008," said Shona. "The stigma back home was really bad, and I just suffered in silence and endured for my children."

Unfortunately for Shona, that stigma followed her to Canada when she was hospitalized, and the health care providers found out that she was HIV-positive. What shocked her the most was the fact that one of the health care providers she saw was also an African woman, who made her experience horrible.

"At first, I thought that she would understand me, because we came from the same country. I thought there would be sisterhood because we were both African, but she treated me badly."

That same stigma prevented her from telling her two daughters about her HIV status. She wanted to protect them from her struggle, but as time went on and she got sick again, she eventually decided to share her secret.

"Letting my daughters know about my status was not easy," said Shona. "If I don't open up to them, how will they ever know? My hope was that they would understand me."

Luckily for Shona, her daughters and even her grandchildren didn't react negatively the way that she had feared and are supportive of her going to ACT and seeking sisterhood with other women who are also living with HIV. She's confided with her family that she's experienced loneliness because no one else, aside from them, knew about her being HIV-positive.

"ACT is like my home. I've met new people and made friends with so many of the women and it's such a welcoming space."

Shona has been a service user with ACT for over five years, accessing the Income Tax Clinic, and social-educational programs like Women's Coffee Night and Women's Zone. She enjoys learning new things like candle and soap-making and the cooking sessions, something that Aisha also enjoys, echoing similar feelings of love and support that she feels at ACT.

"I feel like I'm going to my family's house when I come to ACT," Aisha exclaimed. "I've met so many friends from the program and they put a smile on my face!"

It wasn't always all smiles for Aisha. She faced similar feelings of isolation as Shona, after following her diagnosis as HIV-positive in 2004, after finding out that her then-husband had had sex outside of their marriage.

Having moved to Canada from Cairo in 1985, Aisha started her new life in a new country, ended up working in the finance industry and became a mother to two boys. When she found out that she was HIV-positive, her world came crashing down. To make things worse, her ex-husband tried to blackmail her to not disclose their status.

"Stigma in my community is very bad. At the time, I knew nothing about HIV, and I was shocked when I was diagnosed. I didn't start taking medication until 2014 because I had no health insurance."

It was that same fear and stigma that prevented her from telling her kids about her HIV status. Because she had no one to confide in, Aisha started to feel depressed, but she eventually heard about ACT and in 2016, she started accessing programs for women.

"When I was diagnosed with HIV, I had no support," said Aisha. "Since coming to ACT, I feel a sense of relief being around other women who welcome me with open arms, know about my status and support me. The sisterhood is beyond the walls here at ACT because some of the women and I spend time together outside programming hours. And Savannah treats me and the rest of the women like family."

Savannah, ACT's Women's Support Coordinator wanted to make sure that she created a space for women to go and be safe.

"Women's Zone is more community-related and we get to do things like go out and explore the city. We also get to cook and learn new skills like how to knit. Women's Coffee Night is more educational in its focus as well as a place to be able to relax from their day-to-day lives."

➤ Continued from page 19.

With over 135 women living with HIV attending women's programming, Savannah expects more growth in the next year.

"The space here at ACT for women's programming is one of comfort and self-care. It's also about representation and since we rebranded and included our women's programming logo, diverse groups of women feel represented. It shows community, diversity and unity between the women."

Thanks to you, women like Shona and Aisha are among the many women who have formed friendships and experience sisterhood as part of the women's programming here at ACT.

*To maintain anonymity, Shona and Aisha's real names have been changed for this story.

“ There is a lot of empathy and extra support for immigrants from under-developed countries and this helps them adjust faster than immigrants who are not part of ACT. ”

— ACT service user


11%
of ACT service users identify as female

135

unique service users participated in Women's Coffee Night and WomenZone



ACT's Women's Logo



ROLL CALL

THANK YOU TO ACT'S COMMUNITY OF DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

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(CAF), Public Health
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(CSP)
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COMMUNITY EVENTS

Canadian Gay Open Tennis Championships
Kyle Mack Photography Show
Oasis Aqualounge Car Wash

AIDS WALK 2018 SPONSORS

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AIDS Walk 2018 Top Walkers

Top Walkers (\$2,000 +)
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John Maxwell
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Litsa Skrivanos
Kevin Robitaille
Michel Rondeau
Mikah Styles
Phillip C. Ing
Robert Sharp
Ronald H. Rosenes
Sante Tesolin
Sergio A. Martinez
Sheila Chevalier
Tamryn Jacobson

Tom Hutchinson
\$1,000 – \$1,999
Adam Busch
Cathy A. McKim
Daniel b. Tewolde
Elyse Hill
Grace Chiutsi
Japneet Kaur
Jo-Anne Kennedy
Joe Rocha
John Larsson
Joseph Montemurro
Kiran B. Dogra
Mark Malinowski
Mhairi L. Cumming
Mike Ho
Norman Sobel
Owen Milburn
Pieter Huisman
Rachel Fine
Stefan Wypchol
Timothy Prentice

\$500-\$999

Aaron De Sousa
Amy Fedrigo
Alexander Venditti
Anna Yeung
Calvin Bill
Cayla Bliss
Chelsea Haskell
Chloe Villeneuve
Elise Tremblay
Gary W. Robinson
Gilles y. Bourque
Jason Oord
Jennifer Gillis
Karam Al Saeygh
Leah N. Spicer
Marc Lipman
Mario Medeiros
Matthew H. Armstrong
Michael Fanous
Michael Burtch
Naresh Patel
Patrick N. Dator
Randy McPhee

Rupert Hon
Savannah R. Nast
Tamara Milicevic
Taposhi Gandhi
Vincent Francoeur
Zahid Somani

ESTATES

Estate of Cora Maria Moore
Estate of Donald McLeish
Estate of James Drewry Stewart
Estate of Lilian Eileen Currie
Estate of Lynne D. Jeffrey
Estate of Uncle of Mary d'Entremont

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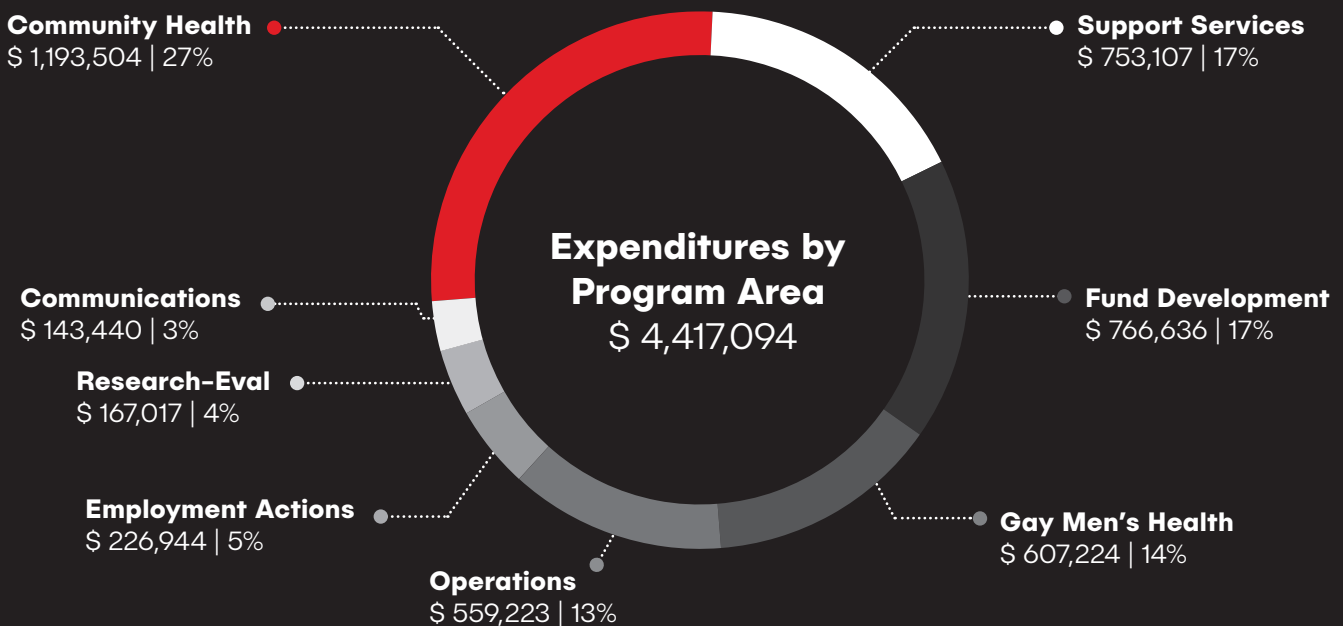
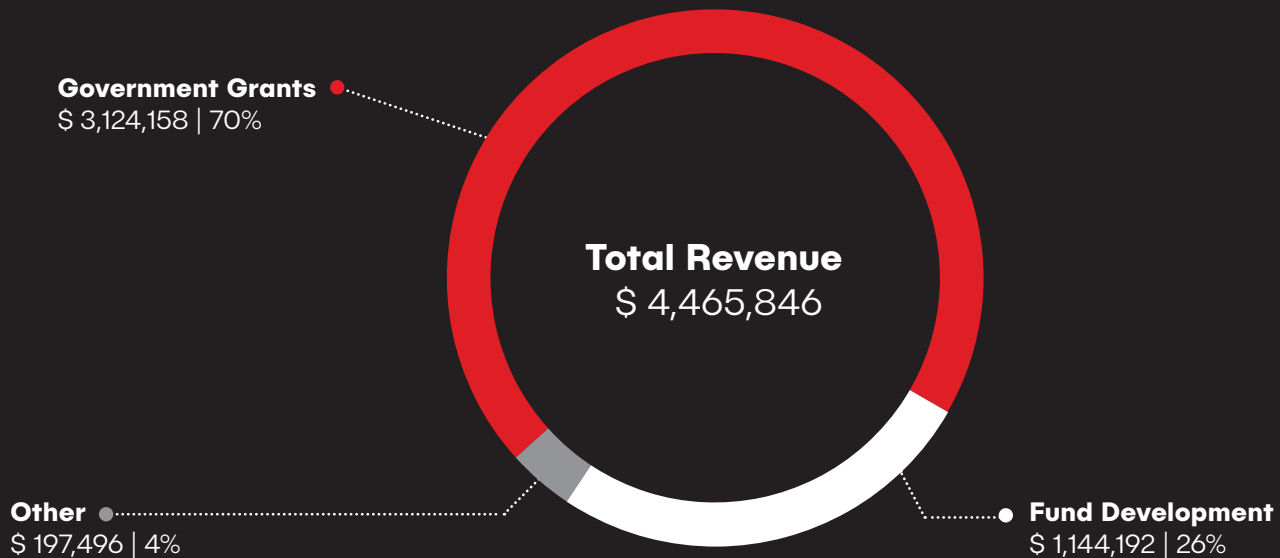
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SNAP 2019 Adopt-A-Lot
Brad E. Berg and Brian Rolfes
David DesLauriers and Nicolas Diaz
Robert Howe and Curtis Edwards

FINANCIALS

2018—2019





2018—2019

ACT EVENTS

◀ A 'SNAP' Transformation

Change is never easy. It's certainly never done in a SNAP... but that's exactly what we did.

With the thoughtful feedback of long-standing supporters like you, SNAP took on a completely new look in 2019: new venue and ticketing options, more food, live entertainment, and a super cool lounge to socialize and connect. The one thing that remained constant was the amazing collection of photographic art up for auction.

When the last work was sold and the lights dimmed, your support resulted in an increase in overall revenue to the tune of **\$175,000** (net of expenses). Highlights include performances from RuPaul's Drag Race winner Aquaria, and a Live Auction interruption from the incomparable Mango Sassi. Your support helped push Live Auction revenue to over 100% of value!

Thank you to **TD Ready Commitment** for 15 years of supporting SNAP and to all the sponsors, artists, art buyers, donors and volunteers who made the SNAP transformation such a success.

See you on March 26th, 2020!





◀ An Award to Remember

With the support of Gilead Sciences, ACT held a contest open exclusively to HIV-positive artists and designers. The challenge: create an indelible award design that helps honour long-standing donors who have made an impact on the HIV movement through their support of ACT.

ACT honoured the commitments of **Brad Berg & Brian Rolfes** and **TD Bank Group** with this amazing design from an ACT service user.

During a period of isolation after being diagnosed as HIV-positive, this person honed their skills in 3D design (pictured bottom right) to create this inspiring award featuring a 'Zero' made with stainless steel and the iconic AIDS Ribbon.

The designer joined for the **Together Towards Zero Luncheon** on November 30, 2018 having received the wonderful news from a judge the day before, granting them permanent resident status in Canada... something else worthy of celebration.

Together Towards Zero Luncheon Award, designed by a person living with HIV. ♡



◀ AIDS Walk Toronto Turns 30

Last year, the AIDS Walk celebrated its milestone anniversary by returning to Nathan Phillip Square, where the first AIDS Walk took place in 1989. Walk participants and fundraisers celebrated and walked along Yonge and Church Streets, with an important stop at Barbara Hall Park and the AIDS Memorial.



WITH GRATITUDE

YOUR SUPPORT CREATES CONNECTIONS

➤➤➤ **The generosity and support of donors and people like you allows communities and connections to happen at ACT. We are proud to share that these communities continued to thrive and grow last year.**

Because of you, the programs and services you support are helping people living with HIV and those at increased risk to make connections with other people and break free from feelings of isolation and loneliness – something that can come with being diagnosed with HIV, or feeling as though it is difficult to cope.

With access to HIV testing at ACT comes more integrated ways to connect people to other ACT services as well as those in the community. Through conversations about anxiety, counsellors such as Eric can have deeper discussions with service users about trauma, loneliness, isolation, depression, substance use, homophobia and HIV stigma.

Guys like Scott and Drew can create the changes they want regarding their substance use and get the support they need. Your generosity allows them to find a space where their voices are heard and acknowledged within a place where they felt supported.

For Aaron and Robert, your support of groups like PEACH helps them to learn more about themselves and how to deal with their feelings and emotions. You empower them to have meaningful conversations, build support systems and establish healthier relationships not only with themselves, but with other men.

Women like Shona and Aisha who immigrated to Canada to start a new life and find new opportunities can feel connected with other HIV-positive women who understand their shared experiences of isolation and how important it is to have a community both within the ACT walls and beyond. Your support to has empowered them to find sisterhood.

Volunteers like Mark and David contributed firsthand to the amazing work that is done here at ACT and how the programs and services connect people to the support they need, including sexual, mental, emotional or social health services.

They contribute to an agency that continues to grow and adapt to the rapid changes are happening in our

“ **Because of you, the programs and services you support are helping people living with HIV and those at increased risk to make the connections with other people.** ”

— John Maxwell

community. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are often common for diverse groups of gay men, and because of you, we're able to adapt and create new programs and services to address these unmet health needs.

Our work, and the connections and communities that are made at ACT are only possible by the support of people like Gaelen. Having dealt with his own stigma about HIV, we are grateful to Gaelen for his efforts in educating other gay men about HIV stigma, U=U and for his continued generosity as an ACT donor.

On behalf of the individuals and communities we serve, thank you for your unwavering support as we work together to promote health, build strong, connected communities and end HIV and AIDS in Toronto.



John Maxwell
Executive Director



Enrico Mandarino
Chair, Board of Director

“ **With access to HIV testing at ACT comes more integrated ways to connect to people to other ACT services as well as those in the community.** ”

— John Maxwell

THANK YOU

▶▶▶▶ **We are here for you.**

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online resources and social channels:**

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