



NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

Awards Gala Honours Heroes in the BC AIDS Movement

VANCOUVER – On Sunday, May 7th, the BC Persons With AIDS Society (BCPWA Society) and GlaxoSmithKline in partnership with Shire Biochem held its 5th Annual AccolaIDS awards gala at Vancouver's Pan Pacific Hotel. This recognition and fundraising event honoured outstanding achievements of individuals and organizations working in the BC AIDS movement. More than \$80,000 in proceeds generated from the event will be used to support BCPWA Society's programs and services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In his welcoming remarks, BCPWA Society Chair Paul Lewand looked back over the more than two decades since AIDS began. "Over our 25 year history, our rich and diverse community has deepened and strengthened. The AIDS community in BC is made up of countless caring, dedicated, and exceptional people," he said. "AccolaIDS is our tribute to those who have made outstanding contributions in the BC AIDS movement. Tonight we honour them. We honour *you*," Lewand said to those in attendance.

Winners of the 2006 AccolaIDS Awards are as follows:

Service Delivery – Dr. Paula Braitstein

From 1991 and for almost a decade at the BC Persons with AIDS Society, Paula Braitstein distinguished herself as a passionate and brilliant advocate for the empowerment of HIV-positive persons, progressing from treatment information coordinator to founding department head. Under her leadership, BCPWA became a nationally trusted source of treatment information. As senior policy advisor on health promotion, she advocated for organ transplantation for PWAs and for better care and new drugs for PWAs co-infected with hepatitis C.

In BC, Paula studied public health and epidemiology to become a better treatment educator and advocate. Currently, she is epidemiologist and project manager for the Antiretroviral Therapy in Lower-Income Countries Program through the University of Berne in Switzerland. The scope of her work continues to build in influence.

Philanthropy – Fillmore Family Foundation

Each November, the Fillmore Family Foundation serves up a huge turkey dinner with all the trimmings, along with big helpings of tongue-in-cheek entertainment at its annual Prairie Fairies Fowl Supper. The fowl supper is a prairie phenomenon brought to life by church groups and service clubs.

A group of prairie transplants recreated the community fowl supper tradition in Vancouver in 1997. In 2003, Linda and Doreen Fillmore formalized the Fillmore Family Foundation with a mission to provide funding to non-profit agencies that deliver programs and services in the areas of nutrition, housing, and health.

Over six years, the Fillmore Family Foundation's generosity, commitment and imagination has raised over \$70,000 for AIDS organizations including, A Loving Spoonful, McLaren Housing Society, and Dr. Peter Centre.

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Above and Beyond – Karen Muirhead

Karen Muirhead served as Executive Director for ANKORS (AIDS Network, Outreach, Resource Support) for ten years. Under her direction, ANKORS provided support, prevention, and education services throughout the East and West Kootenays, an area of over 200,000 square kilometers.

Karen directed ANKORS with integrity, patience, compassion, and unfaltering dedication. She worked with staff to develop policies and approaches that respected and centred around those affected by HIV/AIDS. She continually challenged staff to maintain integrity and compassion in their work. She provided a phenomenal amount of love and support to PWAs living in the region and worked tirelessly to bring the issues of living with AIDS in rural communities to the table.

Because of her work, rural BC is safer for and more responsive to PWAs and their families. Karen remains a friend and ally and continues to inspire, motivate, and set the standard for work at ANKORS.

Science, Research, and Technology – Dr. Thomas Kerr

Thomas Kerr is a research scientist at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of British Columbia.

As a project manager at the Harm Reduction Action Society, Thomas authored Canada's first supervised injection site proposal. He has also volunteered with VANDU (the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users), the Thai Drug Users Network, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, and many other community-based HIV/AIDS organizations.

Thomas has made a major local and international contribution as a principal investigator of VIDUS (the Vancouver Injection Drug Users Study) and SEOSI (Scientific Evaluation of Supervised Injection). He is highly respected internationally among other injection drug use and HIV/AIDS researchers. Since completing his doctorate in 2003, he has published over 80 peer-reviewed articles.

Social, Political, and Community Action – Tarel Quandt

Tarel Quandt served the BC Persons With AIDS Society from 1998 until her recent death. She directed and shaped the original Advocacy Department and subsequently established and led the Treatment Information and Advocacy Department.

At BCPWA Society, Tarel directed the creation of step-by-step Action Kits, a self-empowerment tool to help PWAs access income assistance benefits. In addition, she refined a legal basis for PWAs to access additional nutritional and health supports (under the famous Schedule C). Her successful training of volunteer advocates led to more than 500 PWAs obtaining provincial funding to purchase food, bottled water, and vitamins.

Tarel's work, in conjunction with BCPWA Society's past Chair Glen Hillson and others, leaves an outstanding legacy. The establishment of BC's Monthly Nutritional Supplement Benefit in 2001—an additional monthly allowance for PWAs and others on income assistance to purchase of essential health-related items—has improved countless lives and will continue to do so.

Innovative Programs – Lucy Barney

Lucy Barney is a model of strong, innovative leadership in the Aboriginal community. As program manager of Chee Mamuk, the BC Centre for Disease Control's Aboriginal HIV/AIDS education program for seven years, she developed a powerful cultural metaphor for wellness, related to the strength of braided hair. The three strands of braids represent the mind—emotions, thoughts, addiction issues, feelings; the body—physical health; and the spirit—Aboriginal spirituality provides a sense of belonging, pride, culture, ceremony, traditional education, medicine, and prayer. Braiding mind, body, and spirit creates a holistic person, less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

Lucy oversees innovative projects, including the Chako Project, a health promotion initiative for youth based on traditional teachings; the Gathering Tree, a children's book about HIV and stigma; and Around the Kitchen Table, a prevention and health promotion project that builds on the strength of Aboriginal women, reinforcing traditional roles as nurturers, teachers, and givers of life.

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Health Promotion – Dr. David Burdge

David Burdge is an experienced and knowledgeable HIV/AIDS doctor and researcher. His non-judgmental and respectful approach ensures women receive medical treatment in a safe, confidential, and woman-centred environment.

As part of Oak Tree Clinic, David takes a consultative approach to health care, education, health promotion, and access to clinical research for women and HIV/AIDS. Through his association with the BC Women's Health Centre, he also works with family doctors across BC who treat HIV-positive women.

David has been medical co-director of the Oak Tree Clinic since 1994, and director of its adult services and research program. He sits on the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS' Therapeutic Guidelines Committee and co-authored provincial and national guidelines for the care of HIV-positive women and pregnant women. In part, due to his efforts, no HIV-positive babies have been born in the past ten years to BC women who have accessed care and taken anti-retrovirals during pregnancy.

Kevin Brown PWA Hero Award – John Cameron

John Cameron stands out because he is one hundred percent upfront about his personal journey with HIV. His example encourages multiple-diagnosed PWAs to take charge of their lives and reminds them that their worth is never diminished.

John founded and facilitates the Carnegie AIDS Support Group and the Carnegie AIDS Day educational event. He co-founded and continues as a Director of the Downtown Eastside HIV/IDU Consumers' Board, and helped to establish its needle exchange.

John brings together community partners and PWAs to focus on important issues. He is a member of the Mayor's Coalition on Drugs (Four Pillars). He has served on the HIV Advisory Committee to the Minister of Health and with the Heart of Richmond AIDS Society, AIDS Vancouver, the AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Vigil Committee, and continues as a Director on the working group of the Pacific AIDS Network.

For his leadership, his determination to educate, organize, and advocate, for his deep commitment, for his vast skills, for his selflessness, humanity, and more, John Cameron is truly a hero.

The British Columbia Persons With AIDS Society is dedicated to empowering persons living with HIV disease and AIDS through mutual support and collective action. Unique among major HIV/AIDS agencies in Canada, the Society's Board of Directors is composed entirely of HIV+ members. The organization provides support and advocacy services, treatment information, and volunteer opportunities for its 4,200 members province-wide. The BCPWA Society is the recipient of the prestigious BC Association of Broadcasters' Humanity Award for the 2006/2007 year.

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