

# The Sacred Fire



**2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations e-NEWSLETTER**



# **Message from the Executive Director Art Zoccole 2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations**

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Message from Executive Director

I would thank the marchers who marched with us in this year's Gay Pride Parade! You can see our float and marchers on youtube.....look for Toronto Gay Pride Parade 2009 number 56.

2 Spirits is providing trans(gender) workshop training in Thunder Bay, London, Windsor and Kingston, for these events, check out our web site at [www.2spirits.com](http://www.2spirits.com) for announcements.

The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network held their Aboriginal people living with HIV/AIDS Caucus, skills building and annual general meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba from June 22<sup>nd</sup> through to June 25<sup>th</sup>. Several resolutions were passed by the membership to provide direction for CAAN for the coming years, resolution one was for moving the office to Vancouver and another resolution addressed the need for 2 Spirits Trans training throughout Canada. The 2010 APHA Caucus, skills building and annual general meeting will take place in Alberta.

Have a safe summer!



## **Percy Lezard** **HIV/AIDS Educator**

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Percy Lezard  
HIV/AIDS Educator

Aanii, Sago & Wai community!

Its summer time or the creator is giving the illusion that is summer (wet, cool & heat & cool weather). Oh well, gifts come in many shapes and sizes and not always when we want or expect them. I have been busy in spurts this summer, I was able to organize (successfully), a 2 Spirit women Drag King show fundraiser and with that money was able to take 6 women (2 at the last moment were not able to come), and 1 went in the place of (so 5 women), to the Ottawa Women's Gathering. It was an amazing experience; the Toronto convey of 2 Spirit women arrived and were anxious about it being accessible and friendly to 2 Spirit women. Once we arrived we had just made it to circle (where elders were opening with a prayer and the whole gathering went to the sacred fire), once the circle was finished all of us went to registration and saw a large Pride flag and our tensions were put to rest. We were invited to a 2 Spirit women sweat that evening. For each section of the weekend they had 2 spirit women specific programming! We were very happy and really were able to enjoy the weekend. We look forward to raising money next year to send twice as many 2 spirit women from the GTA. We were able to meet and connect with the 2 Spirit women's Counselor Elena Abel with Minwaashin Lodge, we are looking at trying to connect the women from the Ottawa area; they are very excited to have their own Drag King show in the Ottawa area in the next year! I will keep you posted of any events or outings we may be collaborating with the organizer and women in Ottawa!

The 2 spirit women still meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday (and the time alternate between 1 pm or 6 pm). So if you are able to join our group on facebook (group name; 2 spirit kwe, this is not an exclusive group, its open but you do have to identify and live your day to day life as a 2 spirit woman) or send me an email to work [percy@2spirits.com](mailto:percy@2spirits.com) and I can give you the details for the next lunch or dinner.

We also were able to have some of the money from the Drag King show sent over to Toronto Rape Crisis Centre for Dyke Day (they have an annual Dyke brunch just before the Dyke March), and we were able to support them to create space for 2 spirit women to be at the Brunch.

Summer time in terms of trainings is quite sporadic (agencies and organizers are usually on summer vacation or do not have fiscal year dollars to spend). It will begin to pick up in the fall time! I will be attending a wide variety of academic institution settings (classrooms, seminars, panelist for a conference or a keynote speaker).

Personally I am very excited, two weeks from today on July 23<sup>rd</sup> I will be flying to represent Canada in women's fastball and attending the Copenhagen Outgames in Denmark! I will be there for a week playing against other countries of queer athletes! I am looking forward to that opportunity!

Stay cool, drink fluids and I look forward to the change of season for the GTA (and further), community members who receive our agencies newsletter!

In solidarity

Percy Lezard

## **Springwater Hester- Meawassige Coordinator of Volunteer Services And Development**



Dear Members:

This year's Pride was yet another success! I would like to say thank you to all of the volunteers and members who braved the rain and came out and participated in this year's festivities. Also, I would like to thank the volunteers who sat on the Pride committee and those who have helped with the designing and creating the float. A big thank you goes out to Thomas Lazore and Garfield Constant for all of their time, energy and dedication. We could not have done it without you two!





The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual AIDS Walk for Life will be held on September 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. 2-Spirits is asking all members to please come out on the day off and show your support. Please visit our website @ [www.2spirits.com](http://www.2spirits.com) for updates!

**When:** Sunday, September 13th, 2009

**Where:** Corner of Church and Carlton Streets

**Walk Distance:** 5 km

**Registration Open:** 11:00 a.m.

**Walk Start Time:** 2:00 p.m.



## Lesley Boulrice

Good day, boozhoo!

I am pleased to inform all of 2-Spirits members and associate members that, our Support Service Worker Program has been successful!

We now have a YMCA special rate for 2 –Spirits clients, please contact Lesley at extension 225 for a needs assessment for membership on eligible clients.

IMPORTANT information for clients in housing that requires cable television to operate their security channel. O.D.S.P will provide the minimum cable fee on your cheque to those who qualify. (Provided you have cable television in your name)

Please submit a letter from your landlord stating that your unit requires cable television for security purposes and attach a copy of your cable bill, to your O.D.S.P, worker your worker will provide the amount on your next payment!

### **CATIE News - Not so symptom-free after all**

If left untreated, HIV infection inevitably degrades the immune system, leading to the development of life-threatening infections—AIDS—about 10 years later. The time between initial HIV infection and the development of AIDS is commonly referred to as the symptom-free, or asymptomatic, period. The reason for this is that during that time life-threatening infections are uncommon. The idea of dividing the stages of HIV disease into these specific periods occurred early in the course of the AIDS pandemic, when the medical focus was on delaying the appearance of severe infections and the always-looming spectre of death.

In 1996, highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) became available in high-income countries. As a result, for the first time in the history of AIDS, HIV positive people were able to recover from and resist life-threatening infections. Today, the benefits of HAART are clearly prolonged and so immense that researchers increasingly expect that some HIV positive people may live near-normal life spans.



### **Symptoms at all stages**

As mentioned earlier, the period between initial HIV infection and AIDS is referred to as the symptom-free, or asymptomatic, period. However, this idea may be changing. Researchers in Norway, South Africa, Taiwan, Kenya and the United States have been surveying HIV positive people about their health status. Their findings suggest that during the so-called asymptomatic period, HIV positive people may have symptoms after all.

### **Study details**

In total, 1,992 HIV positive people were surveyed. Their average profile was as follows:

- \* 35% female, 65% male
- \* age – 42 years
- \* 55% had been diagnosed with AIDS
- \* 70% were taking anti-HIV medicines
- \* 60% had serious co-existing health conditions

The study team divided participants into three groups based on their CD4+ cell counts, as follows:

- \* 0 to 200 cells
- \* 201 to 350 cells
- \* 351 or more cells

The survey asked questions about participants' health status, particularly about a wide range of symptoms covering physical and mental issues.

### **Results**

In general, after assessing the number of symptoms reported, there were no significant differences among the three groups of people. This suggests that even at modest or high CD4+ counts, HIV positive people experience symptoms of illness.

Participants who were taking anti-HIV drugs tended to report less-intense symptoms than people who were not taking HAART.

### **Symptoms**

Commonly reported symptoms included the following:

- \* fatigue
- \* depression
- \* muscle aches

- \* worry
- \* difficulty concentrating
- \* memory loss

For some participants, regardless of CD4+ counts, these symptoms were intense.

Some of the above-listed symptoms could occur as isolated problems or as part of many other health conditions, including but not limited to anxiety, depression and hormonal deficiencies. Although none of the study participants were experiencing life-threatening conditions, even those who had more than 350 CD4+ cells were experiencing symptoms of illness, perhaps unrelated to HIV.

The international study team suggests that doctors and nurses carefully interview their patients about health-related issues regardless of CD4+ counts. In doing so, health care professionals may uncover underlying conditions that are reducing their patients' quality of life, which would allow them to provide relief.

—*Sean R. Hosein*

## HIV AND SYPHILIS

### **How is it transmitted?**

Infection occurs when the bacteria found in syphilis lesions penetrate a mucous membrane (anus, vagina, penis, head, mouth) or a cut in the skin anywhere on the body. The lesions can be very discrete or not visible at all.

**Syphilis is spread during sexual activities:** oral sex (mainly mouth, penis and also, possibly, mouth-vulva or mouth-anus), penetration (penis-vagina or penis-anus) and, rarely, frottage (rubbing against each other's naked skin). A pregnant woman can spread syphilis to her unborn baby, which can cause severe birth defects. In rare cases, syphilis can be spread if contaminated materials are used to inject drugs.

**Syphilis is infectious** (able to be passed from one person to another) in the first year to two years after infection, unless successfully treated. At some point, it goes into a dormant, or noninfectious, state and is no longer able to be transmitted. The bacteria that cause syphilis can be transmitted even if the infected person has no apparent symptoms.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Syphilis**

Not all people with syphilis develop symptoms. Syphilis evolves in 3 stages:

**Stage 1 (or "primary" syphilis):** One or more lesions (usually painless) appear at the spot where the bacteria entered the body. At first, pimples appear and evolve into ulcers (large lesions causing the loss of the surface layer of the skin or mucous membrane). These ulcers are called syphilitic sores, or chancres. Lesions appear between 9 and 90 days after having sex with an infected partner. In most cases, the lesions are on the penis or vulva, and inside the mouth, vagina or anus. Lesions inside the vagina or anus can easily go unnoticed. These chancres last for 1 to 5 weeks and heal on their own, but the bacteria remain in the body. You are especially infectious when you have a chancre. To help you distinguish between syphilis and other common STDs: Syphilis sores aren't usually sensitive (lesions in the mouth, anus or vagina wouldn't necessarily prevent a person from having sex because of pain) as herpes sores tend to be. Genital warts usually do not form ulcers.

**Stage 2 (or "secondary" syphilis):** Flu-like symptoms (fatigue, fever, swollen glands, muscle and joint pain) may appear anywhere from 6 weeks to 6 months after the initial infection. An outbreak of rashes may appear on the palms of hands, soles of feet or elsewhere on the body. When the rash is present, you are highly infectious. These symptoms may last from 2 to 6 weeks. As in stage 1, they may disappear on their own, but the bacteria continues to evolve inside the body.

Note: After stage 2 and before stage 3, syphilis goes "latent." During this time, the amount of syphilis in the blood often drops, but the syphilis still remains in your system. Though you're generally not infectious at this point, you are at risk for the organ damage that can occur in stage 3.

**Stage 3 (or "tertiary" syphilis):** If left untreated for years, syphilis can cause serious damage to the heart, brain, bones or skin. It can cause blindness and even death.

## **SYPHILIS AND HIV**

In some people with HIV/AIDS (PHAs), syphilis can advance to stages 2 and 3 more rapidly and can be more difficult to treat than in HIV negative people. PHA's, especially those with lower CD4 counts, may need more intense treatment to successfully get rid of syphilis. They also need more rigorous follow-up, as the risk for treatment failure is greater among PHAs than HIV negative people. PHA's who may have had syphilis for a longer period of time, and/or have a poor treatment response, and/or have very few CD4 cells should have a spinal tap to rule out neurosyphilis (syphilis in the central nervous system). If the test is positive, IV (intravenous) antibiotics are required to successfully get rid of syphilis.

Thanks to The Positive Side for their information regarding Syphilis and HIV Retrieved from:

<http://www.positiveside.ca/e/V6I4/pdf/syphillis%20%5Bp17-19%5D.pdf>

## HIV and Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus, commonly referred to as [diabetes](#), is very common among the general population; hence patients with HIV may also develop diabetes.

People living with HIV who take [antiretroviral medications](#) may be at greater risk for type 2 diabetes. Diabetes can be present with no symptoms for years. If the person is co-infected with hepatitis C, the risk appears to be greater. For a person living with HIV, body weight and family history are also considered possible risk factors. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or is unable to use it properly. Common symptoms include a thirst that you cannot seem to quench, blurred vision, and the need to urinate constantly.

Diabetes can be managed with diet, exercise, and medication. If left untreated, diabetes may lead to other more serious conditions, such as heart disease - a key reason why it is so important to have routine blood tests if you are HIV-positive. These tests include liver function tests, which can assess the presence of liver damage (a possible factor in HIV-related diabetes) and a glucose test to assess whether you may develop, or in fact have, diabetes.

### **Insulin resistance and diabetes**

Some studies have suggested that people with HIV on HAART have a higher risk of developing *diabetes* or its precursor, *insulin resistance*. These are conditions that occur when the body is unable to process blood sugar properly and the level of sugar in the blood remains high for long periods of time. If not treated, this can cause serious damage to the blood vessels.

The kinds of food you eat can have a huge impact on what happens to blood sugar levels, and so nutrition can play a significant role in helping insulin work properly and keeping blood sugar in the ideal range. Carbohydrates, especially simple carbs, affect blood sugar levels quickly. Proteins and fats tend to slow down the digestion and absorption of carbohydrates, and so will slow changes in blood sugar levels.

Anyone who has been diagnosed with diabetes should attend a diabetes education centre to get as much information as possible on the management of this disease.

## Food-drug interactions

The interactions between you, HIV, medications and nutrition are complex. Nutrients and substances in foods can interact with drugs—both your anti-HIV meds and other meds—either enhancing or diminishing the effect of the medication. In addition, some foods can change the absorption of drugs. This is why following food requirements for certain drugs is so important. By not following recommendations, the level of the drug in your blood may decrease to the point where it is like missing a dose. This can lead to viral resistance and the need to change therapy.

Generally, having something to eat when taking medications, as long as this is allowed, can improve tolerance and reduce side effects.

## Bone health

In recent years, low bone mass and density, called *osteopenia* or *osteoporosis*, has become a widespread problem among people with HIV. Osteopenia is an early stage of bone mineral loss in which the bones become less dense and weaker. This condition does not cause pain or limit movement and is usually treated with diet and exercise rather than medications. Osteoporosis, the more advanced form of the disease, results in fragile bones that can fracture easily. The fracture causes pain, limits movement and reduces quality of life. Osteoporosis is sometimes treated with medications as well as diet and exercise. Note that osteoporosis medications may not be suitable for all people, especially women of childbearing age.

It is still not clear whether bone problems are caused by HAART or by the virus itself. However, many other factors are well known to increase the risk of developing osteopenia or osteoporosis. These include genetics (e.g. your mother had osteoporosis); getting older; low physical activity; being underweight; malnutrition; not enough calcium, vitamin D or protein; poor absorption of nutrients; diseases of the liver, gut or kidneys; and low levels of hormones such as estrogen or testosterone.

Getting enough calcium, vitamin D and protein helps to keep your bones healthy.

Some doctors recommend that people with HIV should have their bone density measured every two years by a special X-ray technique called a DEXA scan. The DEXA compares bone density to standards called T-scores. If the T-score is -1.0 to -2.5, it is considered osteopenia; if it's below -2.5 (for example, -3.2), it is considered osteoporosis.

Nutrition is always the first line of treatment for osteopenia or osteoporosis, and studies have shown that increasing calcium and vitamin D can restore some bone mineralization.

Retrieved from: [http://www.tibotec-hiv.com/bgdisplay.jhtml?itemname=other\\_conditions\\_diabetes](http://www.tibotec-hiv.com/bgdisplay.jhtml?itemname=other_conditions_diabetes)

[http://www.catie.ca/ng\\_e.nsf/toc/DB7F2652FD215D8E85257377005ABE69?OpenDocument](http://www.catie.ca/ng_e.nsf/toc/DB7F2652FD215D8E85257377005ABE69?OpenDocument)

# Planet IndigenUs

 Harbourfront centre

Woodland Cultural Centre



An international, multidisciplinary and contemporary arts festival celebrating innovation, adaptability and the evolution of Indigenous peoples.

## What is Planet IndigenUs ?

*"We are all from somewhere, a place on this earth from where we trace our ancestors. Indigenous people trace ancestry back through time immemorial to places of origin; places where they are rooted; and places that brought forth a unique culture, language, spiritual framework and environment."*

- Maestro John Kim Bell appearing with the Planet IndigenUs Festival Orchestra. Featuring Sopranos Melody Mecredi and Mavis Callihoo Friday, August 14th at 8:00pm at Sirius Satellite Stage, Harbourfront Centre.
- Crystal Shawanda will be gracing the Sirius Satellite Radio Stage, Harbourfront Centre on Saturday, August 15th at 9:30pm
- Faithfully Yours, E.Pauline Johnson is August 15th- December 24, 2009 at the Woodland Cultural Centre
- Northern Cree will be performing Sunday, August 16, 2009 at 3pm at Sirius Satellite Stage, Harbourfront Centre
- ArtCirq will perform Friday, August 21st at 9:30pm on Sirius Satellite Stage and Sunday, August 23rd at 3pm on the Sirius Satellite Stage
- Halau I Ka Wekiu will perform Friday, August 21, 2009, at 7:00pm at the Woodland Cultural Centre

Planet IndigenUs Aug. 14-23, 2009 FREE

 Harbourfront centre

Woodland Cultural Centre



[harbourfrontcentre.com](http://harbourfrontcentre.com)  
[woodland-centre.on.ca](http://woodland-centre.on.ca)



# Planet IndigenUs

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(continued)

- King Kapisi will be performing Saturday, August 22, 2009 at 1pm in the Brigantine Room at Harbourfront Centre
- Shane Yellowbird will be performing Sunday, August 23, 2009 at 4:30pm at Sirius Satellite Radio Stage, Harbourfront Centre
- Halau I Ka Wekiu will perform Sunday, August 23, 2009, at 4:00pm at Ann Tindall Park, Harbourfront Centre.

## **Pow! Wow! We've Got Talent Contest!**

**August 16 & 23, 2009**

**Location: First Talents Tent - East Lawn**

**Start Time: 3pm-6pm**

The First Talents Tent is a space that allows the community to mark its "x" and have its say at the festival. This will be done through craft demonstrations, art workshops, dance and singing contests with community members incorporating the word "Indigenous" into the lyrics, as well as providing a platform for emerging artists to perform at the festival. The First Talents Tent is a place *for* the community *by* the community.

Planet IndigenUs Aug. 14-23, 2009 FREE

 Harbourfront centre

Woodland Cultural Centre



harbourfrontcentre.com  
woodland-centre.on.ca

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

## NOT A MEMBER YET?

Please fill out the following application to receive our quarterly newsletter and many other benefits! Bring or mail in your completed application with corresponding payment. Chi-meegwetch for supporting 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations!

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

All information is strictly confidential—our membership list is not shared with anyone.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (month/date/year)

First Nation/Reservation Affiliation:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check one only:

## FULL MEMBERSHIPS

(are available to people who are Native and two - spirited gay/lesbian, bisexual, transgendered):

Regular \$10.00 \_\_\_ & you are a student and/or unemployed and/or on disability or

receiving social assistance \$5.00 \_\_\_ and you are a U.S. resident \$20.00 \_\_\_ and you are

a resident over seas \$35.00 \_\_\_

## **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS:**

are available to people who are not native and/or not two -spirited:  
regular \$10.00 \_\_\_ & you are a student and/or unemployed and/or on  
disability or receiving  
social assistance and/or a person living with HIV/AIDS \$ 5.00 \_\_\_ and you  
are a U.S.  
resident \$20.00 \_\_\_ and you are overseas \$35.00 \_\_\_

## **ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS:**

organizations in Canada \$25.00 \_\_\_  
organizations in the USA \$35.00 \_\_\_  
organizations overseas \$45.00 \_\_\_  
YES! I WILL SUPPORT 2-SPIRITS AND WOULD PREFER TO DONATE \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

## **MEMBERSHIP POLICY:**

Full membership is open to all members of any Aboriginal person  
who defines themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered.  
Associate  
membership is open to any individual who wishes to support TPFN and its  
objectives. All  
members receive regular updates and The Sacred Fire newsletter.

**ONLY FULL MEMBERS  
MAY VOTE AT THE TPFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

# Map



## Staff Includes

**Art Zoccole**  
Executive Director  
[art@2spirits.com](mailto:art@2spirits.com)

**Springwater Hester-Meawassige**  
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[springwater@2spirits.com](mailto:springwater@2spirits.com)

**Corena Ryan**  
Client care Coordinator  
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**Percy Lezard**  
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Lesley Boulrice  
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[Lesley@2spirits.com](mailto:Lesley@2spirits.com)

## Our Board of Directors

**Sue Lamure**  
President

**Ed Bennett**  
Vice-President

**Gary Pheasant**  
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**Tobi Caribou**  
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