



**POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014**

# Positive Women's Network challenges HIV and changes women's lives.

As a community living with and affected by HIV, we provide leadership on the complex realities of HIV-related health and social issues for women.

Cover photo: Bowen Island retreat by Sangam.



## Positive Women's Network

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Bowen Island retreat. Photo by Sangam.

REPORT FROM  
**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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*The strength of Positive Women's Network is realized through the combined work of women at all levels of the organization.*

The Board of Directors takes the lead on establishing the long-term balance of PWN through financial management, strategic planning, policy development and review, and fundraising.

This year the board has managed a strong financial performance, reaching year end in a solid financial position. We participated in three fundraising events: the AIDS Walk for Life, a pub night, and the Bob Ross art show. Funds received will go to our Poverty Relief Fund, which assists PWN members in various ways.

Executive Director Marcie Summers has announced she will be retiring from her position in the coming fiscal year. Given that Marcie has led the organization for 22 years, we know this change will be huge for the organization and the community of which we're a part. We have developed and started to implement succession planning that will carry us through this important transition. A Transition Committee will take on the tasks associated with reviewing the Executive Director's roles and responsibilities and carrying out the search for the right candidate.

To ensure we have a solid foundation for the work of the board, we need board members eager to take on the job. To attract new and diverse members for the Board of Directors, we have updated recruitment materials, producing a video and new application and interview process.

We are making good progress on our strategic plan (2013–2016). In the fall of 2013 we worked with staff to conduct a Member Engagement Survey to better understand how PWN members interact with services. The results were presented at the Canadian Association for HIV Research Conference in May.

We look forward to the coming year with energy and hope. We thank all board and staff members for their work: in making our goals a reality: *Challenging HIV. Changing Women's Lives.*



**Jennifer Keefe**  
BOARD CO-CHAIR



**Laura Brown**  
BOARD CO-CHAIR

REPORT FROM  
**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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*A life with HIV can be a healthy one—  
what great hope this statement can  
give women living with HIV.*

We are seeing this play out as PWN members access treatment and support. Life with HIV can still be difficult, and this is true for our members who have to deal not only with health issues, but also the complexities of disclosure and privacy. HIV is becoming more manageable medically, and yet the stigma and discrimination associated with it are still challenges.

You will see from the reports from both the Support and Health Promotion Programs that our work in the past year reflects both of these truths. Members thrive at Support Program events that offer vital peer connections and information about living with the demands of HIV, how to manage their health and health care relationships, and how to navigate the social waters of disclosure and stigma with family, partners, and community. Health Promotion staff educate on HIV basics, the negative impacts of stigma, HIV treatment, and other health- and social-related issues that affect women's health choices.

I am grateful for a strong team of staff, volunteer, and board members who address the issues of positive women in all they do. Community partnerships, long-term collaborations, and the shared passion to improve conditions for women with HIV is an ongoing gift of the work.

To our colleagues, funders, partners, and especially the PWN membership, thank you for the enthusiasm, honesty, and involvement that make our organization unique.



**Marcie Summers**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## SUPPORT PROGRAM

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*Our Member Engagement Survey confirmed that by accessing PWN services, women experience decreased social isolation, stigma, and loneliness, along with an increased connection to peers and knowledge of medical information.*

Members noted that meeting other HIV+ women, feeling a sense of belonging, and accessing resources and referrals to other services were essential. The survey revealed that women feel great value in being PWN members.

The Support Team continues to provide comprehensive support, information, and referrals to women living with HIV in BC. Our program components range from direct one-to-one support, advocacy, and outreach to training and leadership opportunities for members. Our women-only drop-in offers a safe space for women to connect with peers, have a hot meal, and access information. Weekly outreach visits to hospitals, community services, and connections with women over the phone or email allow members who are not able to physically come into the drop-in to still experience support and connection.

Partnerships are key, and we value our work with diverse community-based

organizations. We continue to partner with AIDS Vancouver to provide a women-only food bank program, and with the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre to facilitate greater access to the food bank for the most marginalized women.

Success in our partnership with the Pacific AIDS Network resulted in five women being recruited and supported to attend comprehensive leadership development training, and nine women being recruited and supported to attend communications skills training. Last year, two members were mentored to co-facilitate a women's reunion, Encouraging Our Hearts, which 17 graduates attended. As a follow-up, 13 women attended the event Positive Leadership Reunion: I Am A leader, Now What?

This year we were able to facilitate Peer Support Training for PWN members. In partnership with WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) and peer guest speakers, and with PWN

staff planning and delivering the curriculum, eight PWN members graduated from the four days of training on topics ranging from keeping confidentiality and maintaining boundaries to being an ally and engaging in active listening. We have seen the great value of providing this training and supporting women in their personal growth and peer connections.

We continue our partnership with Oak Tree Clinic to provide outreach counselling for members and to facilitate the Aboriginal women's support group, Strong Women in Numbers. The group is funded by Oak Tree Clinic and co-led by two peers to offer HIV+ Aboriginal women a safe, supportive, and healing place to meet and share ideas.

Committed to connecting women from all over BC, we facilitated a Wellness Retreat in September and a Skill Enhancement and Wellness Weekend in May. Retreat

opportunities were offered to 46 PWN members, and women from all parts of the province attended.

We recognize the importance of continuing to reach out to vulnerable and isolated HIV+ women who are dealing with multiple barriers to accessing services. We offer outreach to the Fraser Valley Institution through a monthly support visit and contribution to the education of women trained as Peer Education (Health) Counsellors.

Along with direct support and connection for HIV+ women, we also focus on education and information. We have presented best practices at conferences (including CAHR) and offered practicum opportunities for professionals in training.

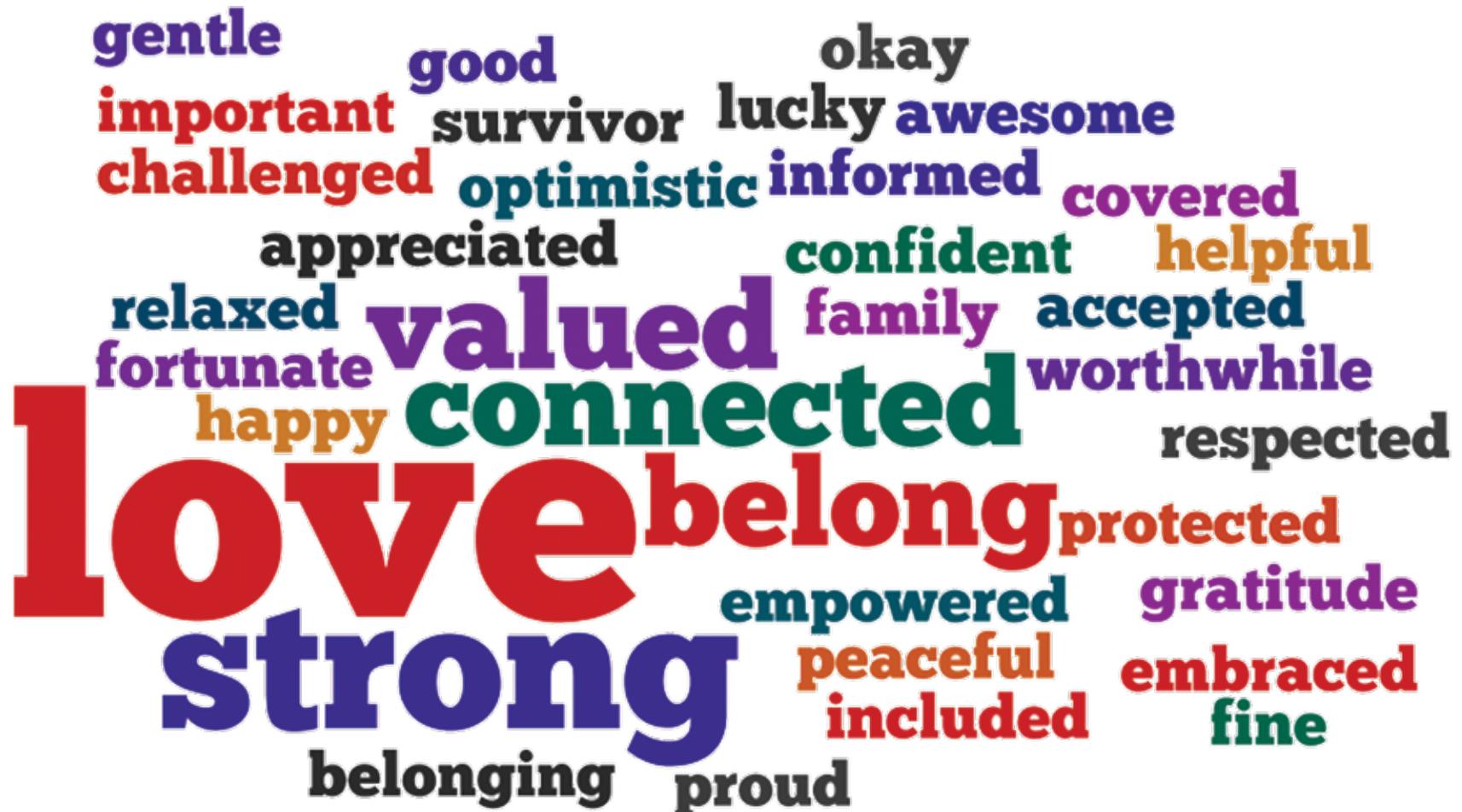
Respectfully submitted,



**Bronwyn Barrett**  
SUPPORT PROGRAM COORDINATOR

## MEMBER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Coordinated by PWN member Monique Desroches, the 2013 Member Engagement Survey provided an opportunity for members to share their experiences with the organization and offer feedback. Members of diverse ages, ethnicities, and regions in British Columbia responded. Overall the feedback was encouraging and constructive. One of the most important survey findings was the importance of peer support – women want to see more positive peers involved, and they want continued leadership training.



*The word cloud represents how women said they feel about their PWN membership. The larger the word, the more often it was said.*

## HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

### *Educating people about the intricate issues of HIV is a foundation of our work.*

We deliver this education through two websites, social media channels, student and service provider education, health fairs, hard copy resources, and consultation.

Our two websites – Positive Women's Network ([www.pwn.bc.ca](http://www.pwn.bc.ca)) and You Should Know ([www.YouShouldKnow.ca](http://www.YouShouldKnow.ca)) – offer information to different audiences. The PWN site provides post-diagnosis information about HIV for women and is also used by service providers working with positive women. It has sections on physical and psychosocial aspects of HIV as well as weekly blogs on current affairs, offering readers a variety of resources. You Should Know focuses on HIV prevention, sexual health (especially for women entering or post-menopause), parenting, and sexual health education resources.

Social media conversations on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube strengthen the community response to HIV, share resources, and educate associated disciplines on health and social issues. We engage with organizations

and individuals around the world about HIV and related challenges such as stigma and legal issues, sexual and reproductive health, social determinants of health, human rights and related concerns that influence health outcomes.

Staff members travel around the province to train people working in transition houses, addictions and mental health, and health care. They offer mentorship to future health care providers and advocates, as well as community education through post-secondary course presentations, outreach at health fairs, and conferences. Our ongoing print resources provide in-hand information on current research and programs to help women with HIV.

It's been a year of great connections—a number of our blog entries have been reprinted on The Huffington Post and Positive Lite, a national site for people with HIV. Education requests for basic HIV information continue to indicate that there are still many people to reach as we challenge misinformation.

### YOU SHOULD KNOW

245



Number of  
Facebook likes

1,843



Number of  
Twitter followers

### POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK

597



Number of  
Facebook likes

4,028



Number of  
Twitter followers

PWN continues to be a great community force in BC. Thanks to everyone who is part of it.

Respectfully submitted,

**Janet Madsen**

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

### FIND US ONLINE



Positive Women's Network  
You Should Know



PWN\_BC  
YouShouldKnowCA



March to the canoes. Wellness retreat.

WHAT DOES PEER SUPPORT MEAN TO YOU?

**POSITIVE ACTION SHARED**  
HELPS THE MEMORIES BE LESS LONELY.

PWN member

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PWN STILL FEELS VERY  
**GRASSROOTS.**

IT FEELS LIKE  
**WOMEN**  
**REALLY LEAD.**

**WOMEN WITH HIV**  
ARE REALLY PART OF  
MAKING THINGS WORK.

AND I SEE A  
**REAL**  
**COMMUNITY**

EVERY TUESDAY WHEN I GO THERE.

Andrea Pinochet  
HIV Outreach Worker  
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

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## WHO WE ARE

### STAFF

Marcie Summers, Executive Director  
 Donna Tennant, Director of Development  
 Nancy Hoo, Bookkeeper  
 Aretha Munro & Monique Desroches, Administrative Coordinators  
 Bronwyn Barrett, Support Program Coordinator  
 Sangam, Support Worker and Educator  
 Melissa Medjuck, Support Worker and Retreat Coordinator  
 Valerie Van Clieaf, Outreach Support Worker  
 Janet Madsen, Communications Coordinator  
 Erin Seatter, Resource Coordinator

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laura Brown	Negar Hooshmand-Mozaffar
Christina Chant	Ryley Humphry
Carly Daoust	Jennifer Keefe
Mary Formby	Margaret Lau
Brittany Graham	Virginia Le
Healthier Holroyd	Surita Parashar

### VOLUNTEERS

Celeste Seiferling, UBC BSW practicum student  
 Angel, Corrine, Lyanna, and Lora, support program volunteers  
 Darlene Hegedus, shiatsu masseuse  
 Amanda Khorsandi and Bonita Nath, outreach volunteers  
 Complementary health volunteers

## APPRECIATION

Our programs are supported by the generosity of many individuals and institutions. Thanks to all who contributed to our weekend retreats and workshops. We also thank our sponsors for their continued support.

### SPONSORS

- Abbvie • BC Gaming • Deloitte • Valeria and Les Finnigan
- Gilead • Janssen • Lush Fresh Handmade Natural Cosmetics (Robson Street) • MAC AIDS Fund • Merck • Public Health Agency of Canada • Provincial Health Services Authority of BC • RBC Foundation • Shooting Stars Foundation • Starbucks • Trigger & Girgig Productions • Urban Fare (Davie Street) • Vancouver Coastal Health • Vancouver Foundation • ViiV Healthcare •

## FINANCIALS

	2014	2013
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$192,290	\$165,238
Term deposits	80,872	80,635
Accounts receivable	23,308	33,062
Prepaid expenses	17,946	19,848
	<b>314,416</b>	<b>298,783</b>
Capital assets	10,648	14,890
	<b>325,064</b>	<b>313,673</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$60,098	\$69,418
Deferred revenue	111,111	87,292
Deferred gaming revenue	43,447	44,001
Deferred contributions related to capital assets	781	1,114
Total liabilities	<b>215,437</b>	<b>201,825</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Invested in capital assets	9,867	13,776
Internally restricted	90,000	90,000
Unrestricted	9,760	8,072
Total net assets	<b>109,627</b>	<b>111,848</b>
	<b>325,064</b>	<b>313,673</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grants	\$726,841	\$687,628
Donations	48,229	70,151
Gaming	40,554	36,279
Other	10,807	18,591
Amortization of deferred contributions	333	476
	<b>826,764</b>	<b>813,125</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Wages, benefits and contractors	\$567,552	\$544,487
Programs	92,050	102,096
Rent	80,739	77,851
Office and other	60,897	49,836
Bookkeeping	11,996	11,996
Utilities	6,709	8,281
Amortization	4,242	7,836
Professional fees	4,800	5,300
	<b>828,985</b>	<b>807,683</b>
<b>Excess of revenue (expenses) for the year</b>	<b>(2,221)</b>	<b>5,442</b>



Challenging HIV.  
**Changing women's lives.**