



# Positive Women's Network



Annual Report  
2008-2009

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## Leadership and Advocacy for Canadian Women

Positive Women's Network views our participation on national and regional initiatives as a responsibility to the many women who can't speak publicly because of the limitations HIV puts on their lives. Women are silenced by stigma, discrimination, fear of disclosure and ostracism, fear of declining health and multiple losses. PWN advocates to improve both social and health environments for women in urban and rural communities.

As a founding partner of the nationally focused Blueprint for Action Coalition on Women and Girls and HIV/AIDS ([womensblueprint.org/en](http://womensblueprint.org/en)), we were part of presenting a report card rating government in/action at the seventeenth International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August 2008. Inspired by the initial 2006 report card, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe joined Canada in presenting report cards of their own. We expect this groundswell to continue as we look to the next International Conference in Vienna in 2010.

As consultants to the federal government in the development of a Status report on Women and HIV, we look forward to its publication in the next year. This report will guide policy, programming and community initiatives. Positive Women's Network is also a leader of the Pacific AIDS Network, serving on the Board of Directors of this coalition of over 40 groups working with HIV-positive populations in BC.

Marcie Summers  
Executive Director

## Message from the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is happy to present this Annual Report of the year's activities. It's been a productive year, as you'll see from reading the departmental narratives. PWN has always been based on a partnership of HIV infected and affected women and the current board is committed to maintaining the goal of having 50% of board members be HIV positive women.

Many things influence health, but a key determinant is secure housing. All AIDS Walk for Life proceeds went to the housing subsidy program, Board members represented PWN at community events, and we have been exploring numerous ways to increase housing options for women. Looking to the future, we developed a new Strategic Plan to take us through the next few years. Our strategic directions enhance some existing directions as well as going into new areas. Building leadership among positive women, enhancing support services, expanding our prevention education into more health promotion, and pursuing our dream of improved housing for positive women will carry us through the next few years. Connections with other agencies will be further strengthened, and our vision of "Action and Leadership on Women HIV/AIDS" will continue to guide us.

In partnership and hope,  
Monique Desroches  
& Kath Webster  
Co-Chairs





"Everyone has really helped me deal with and explore this illness that I have been so blind about." ~2008 Retreat Participant

Thank you PWN for welcoming positive women, allies and community service providers to this annual event. What a neat opportunity to learn, collaborate and celebrate." ~SpringBoard 2009

## Health Promotion

Expanding some of our programs and venturing into new territory, this year was full of discovery and fun for the Health Promotion staff. We created a new website, produced a video, researched where our work needs to go with immigrant and refugee communities, and provided skills enhancement training to many service providers.

Completely revamping our web presence, we redesigned and rewrote the PWN site and incorporated information from our *Women and AID Virtual Education (WAVE)* site. The launch took place in May, and our new look is easily identifiable with PWN resources, and features a weekly blog on issues in HIV communities, treatments, and PWN events. Catch up at [www.pwn.bc.ca](http://www.pwn.bc.ca).

PWN forayed into video production in partnership with students at Emily Carr University. Our short video focuses on HIV awareness and prevention. We learned a great deal in this project, and are thinking about other possibilities. It can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr7-25BpKt4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr7-25BpKt4).

We know from experience that being part of small communities can make it intimidating for women to access HIV-specific services. What exactly are the gaps in service for immigrants and refugees? What's available for women in organizations that are not HIV-specific, and how might we partner with them to ensure women get HIV information? These are some of the questions we set out to answer in a fall research project. The answers will be used to help guide our work in upcoming strategic directions (our new plan is in the final editing phase).

BC's positive women live in Vancouver and beyond, and the goal with educational trainings for service providers this year was to get to the support staff who often meet positive women in different regions. Working once again with BC And Yukon Society of Transitions Houses, trainings were delivered across the Lower Mainland, and in the northern BC communities of Masset and Prince Rupert.

We hosted numerous education events for women and service providers in the Lower Mainland as well. Educational lunches were held for members at PWN, and in the community we presented more events than just our annual SpringBoard conference in March. We coordinated information fairs at the Vancouver Public Library on World AIDS Day and for International Women's Day, as well as participating at the annual Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA) Health Fair, where members and staff worked together to demystify HIV.

Ongoing publication of *The Positive Side*, *Positive Currents*, and *HIV Trends and Women's Sexual Health* continues. Finally, we are pleased to be sitting on a national committee developing pregnancy planning guidelines for positive women and men to use with their care providers.

It's been a great year, and we look forward to beginning work on a project aimed at women in their middle years in 2009.

Janet Madsen  
Communications Coordinator

## Support

How do you support women to improve their health outcomes? Provide opportunities for them to connect, share experiences, learn, and advocate. Peer education, drop-in programs, outreach, and weekend retreats do just that.

Peer education is vital and empowers women to deal with HIV knowledgeable and courageously. Members present workshops to peers at retreats and at special events like our annual SpringBoard conference. In a project partnership with CATIE, two members went to Toronto this year to learn more about a communicative art form called Body Mapping, and returned to offer workshops to women here.

Drop-in programming continues to host a variety of women, from those who are newly diagnosed to long term survivors. The information that gets shared at even one lunch is amazing. Topics include treatment tips, disclosure, recovery from alcohol or drug addiction, HIV prevention, parenting, pregnancy, Hepatitis C .... We continued our partnership with AIDS Vancouver to operate the food bank, a much needed resource for many women and their families. A complementary health program was also offered over the winter months. Our partnership with UBC School of Social Work continued to provide us with an opportunity to educate future service providers in the form of a practicum. Thanks to Alison Timmons, our great student this year.

Members benefited from three weekend retreats, enjoying winter, spring and fall on Bowen Island. Our first aboriginal women and children's retreat was held in June. (Past retreats for Aboriginal women didn't include kids.) Aboriginal women are disproportionately affected with HIV. Fifty percent of new infections in Aboriginal populations are in women, on par with infection rates for women in some African countries.

Stacie Migwans continues with her outreach rounds, seeing women in their homes, in outlying communities, in jails, and in hospital. We've seen an increase in members volunteering at PWN this year, both on the board and in delivering services like the food bank. Sangam continues to facilitate the Thursday night support group, where women are able to connect with peers and focus on healing.

Support strengthens women's lives, and the lives of their communities.

Bronwyn Barrett  
Support Programs Coordinator

*"I've gained so much, health and strength and confidence to carry on a successful life. Thank you." ~PWN Member*



## Financial Statement

	2009	2008
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash	\$91,031	\$115,066
Short-term investments	78,161	75,996
Accounts receivable	5,983	6,958
Grants receivable	5,168	26,222
Prepaid expenses	17,483	15,408
	197,826	239,650
Capital assets	22,458	28,913
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$220,284</b>	<b>\$268,563</b>
<b>Current Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>		
Accounts payable	\$49,814	\$60,038
Deferred revenue	65,192	110,427
	115,006	170,465
Unrestricted Net Assets	15,278	8,098
Internally Restricted Net Assets-Op. Reserve	90,000	90,000
<b>Total Current Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$220,284</b>	<b>\$268,563</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grants	\$626,209	\$617,356
Donations	101,952	69,685
Gaming	38,766	34,001
Other	14,806	17,089
Interest income	3,328	2,832
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>785,061</b>	<b>740,963</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Amortization	8,252	7,893
Audit and legal	5,580	5,254
Bookkeeping and human resource admin	9,235	10,764
Contracts	55,411	40,258
Miscellaneous	1,391	1,081
Office administration	46,460	46,888
Programs	171,009	160,070
Rent	64,224	62,176
Staff development	1,303	1,217
Staff remuneration and program delivery	415,016	370,565
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>777,881</b>	<b>706,166</b>
Excess revenue over expenditures	\$7,180	\$34,797



## Mission

**Positive Women's Network**, a partnership of women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, supports women in making informed choices about HIV/AIDS and health. We provide safe access to support and education/prevention for women in communities throughout British Columbia. The Positive Women's Network provides leadership and advocacy around women's HIV/AIDS health and social issues in the national and local health care communities.

## Funders and Supporters

A heart-felt **Thank You** goes out to our Funders and Supporters:

- Abbott Virology
- BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement
- Below the Belt clothing store
- Canadian HIV Trials Network staff
- Capers Community Markets
- Homewerx on Davie Street
- Lillie & Cohoe
- Lush Handmade Cosmetics
- MAC Cosmetics
- Merck Frosst
- Provincial Health Services Authority of BC
- Public Health Agency of Canada/AIDS Community Action Program
- RBC Foundation
- Sage Natural Wellness on Robson Street
- Shoppers Drug Mart on Davie Street
- Shooting Stars Foundation
- Starbucks on 10th and Valeria Fellini
- Tibotec Pharmaceuticals
- Trigger & Girl Gig Productions
- Vancouver Foundation

And a special **Thank You** to all of the individual volunteers who work in the PWN grocery, speak on panels, participate in the AIDS Walk on our behalf, and help to make all of our events and efforts a success.