

ACT

AIDS Committee of Toronto

tel 416-340-2437
fax 416-340-8224
tty 416-340-8122
hotline 416-340-8844
web www.actoronto.org

399 Church Street, 4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6

monday to thursday 10 am - 9 pm
friday 10 am - 5 pm



newsletter

spring 1999

Moving Forward: New programs and services at ACT

Staff have just completed plans for the upcoming year, devising a number of new and/or expanded programs. The AIDS Committee of Toronto's (ACT) education and outreach work in the gay community will continue. In addition, staff and volunteers will develop an Internet outreach program to answer questions about HIV/AIDS and safer sex through on-line gay "chat" rooms. We will also explore outreach to deaf gay men in consultation with organizations serving the deaf community.

ACT's women's programming will expand to include a women-specific "Ask your Questions" series in which knowledgeable experts will answer the questions of women living with HIV/AIDS. ACT is also working in partnership with a variety of community agencies to hold a retreat for HIV-positive women in June, an undertaking similar to our popular 'Camp Jayne'.

We will also produce a revised version of the Living Guide, a popular resource and referral guide for people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs). Our ongoing commitment to respond to the needs of PHAs will include helping to organize a network offering social and recreational activities to PHAs.

Making our services more accessible to a variety of communities remains a priority at ACT. For example,

our consultations with Spanish-speaking agencies, groups, and individuals will help us to determine an appropriate way for ACT to help to provide services to this community. In addition, ACT is responding to a request from the Portuguese-speaking coalition, VIVER. We are seeking funding for two new ACT positions - a community development coordinator and an outreach worker to work with Portuguese-speaking men who have sex with men. This project will increase access to services for Portuguese-speaking people.

We are hiring a staff person to oversee ACT's youth programming, and we have submitted a variety of proposals to private and public funders to develop HIV prevention outreach programs for young gay and bisexual men and young at-risk women. Much of this work will be done in partnership with community organizations that work with youth.

The work that ACT plans to carry out over the next year shows our commitment to provide relevant services to diverse communities that have been affected by HIV and AIDS, a resolution outlined in our Strategic Plan.

Copies of ACT's current Strategic Plan can be obtained by visiting our Access Centre at 399 Church Street, fourth floor.

in this issue: New Programs and Services  ACT Website  ACT's Drives Program  Leaving a Legacy of Hope

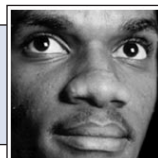


Young. Proud. Safe.

ACT's new safer sex campaign for gay and bisexual youth.

Earlier this year, ACT produced its newest safer sex campaign directed towards young gay and bisexual men, "Young. Proud. Safe. A safer sex guide for young gay and bi men." This campaign builds on ACT's past HIV-prevention initiatives for gay and bisexual youth. It was developed through a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews conducted last year.

*Find out what you can
do to have safer sex*



The campaign information responds to questions and concerns raised by young gay and bisexual men. The campaign materials (poster, information booklet, postcards, and a small insert in condom packets) are bright, colourful, and upbeat designs. The brochure contains: basic information about HIV transmission and safer-sex practices, information about 'coming out,' myths and realities about HIV/AIDS, and tips for a healthier sex life. It also provides referral information to a variety of community organizations. Campaign materials are distributed through ACT's Information Boards (found in a variety of venues) and by outreach volunteers in our Gay Men's Outreach Program. These resources have also been made available to youth-serving organizations, and campaign materials are available at our offices at 399 Church Street.

*Just because you're young
doesn't mean you're immune*



This undertaking is just one part of ACT's response to the rise of HIV infections among young people. ACT is currently working with Central Toronto Youth Services (CTYS) to provide a support group for young, HIV-positive gay and bisexual men. ACT and CTYS are also developing other programming for at-risk young gay and bisexual men. Furthermore, ACT offers counselling services at SHOUT Clinic, an organization which provides health services to street youth. We have asked for government and private financial support that would enable us to increase our capacity to respond to the needs of young gay and bisexual men and young women who are at risk for HIV infection. With a decrease in the median age of those newly infected with HIV in Canada, (a decrease from 32 to 23 years of age), it is crucial that ACT work in partnership with youth-serving agencies so that young people have the information and skills necessary to protect themselves from HIV.

ACT welcomes its newest Board Member:

At the March 1999 Board meeting, Dean Behrens was appointed to the Board of Directors of the AIDS Committee of Toronto. Dean is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto where his research focuses on the coping skills of people living with HIV and AIDS. Dean has been involved in the community-based AIDS movement for over seven years, as a buddy, team leader, and group facilitator at the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force. We welcome Dean to ACT's Board!

Support ACT by attending

**FASHION
CARES**

May 8, 1999



September 26, 1999

**DANCERS
FOR LIFE**

November 19, 1999

ACT Spring 1999 Newsletter

Editor: John Maxwell Contributors: Dave Doig, Greg Lichti, John Maxwell, Bridget McFarthing, Alex Nazados, Lee Zaslofsky Graphic Design: Ryan Lapidus

Women

Caregivers, Sisters, Mothers and Friends
Women Living With HIV/AIDS
Lesbians, Bisexual and Straight Women

399 Church Street Has Many Services For You!

The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), 4th floor

We provide these services to all women:

- other women to talk to: women counsellors and women's support groups
- information on HIV/AIDS, about women, by women, for women
- referrals to women-serving organizations
- HIV/AIDS trainings for clients, volunteers and staff of women-serving organizations

We provide these services to women with HIV/AIDS:

- drives to and from your HIV-related appointments
- help moving
- furniture
- medical equipment
- someone to help you with housework and shopping
- health workshops
- help understanding your insurance coverage
- help completing your income tax forms
- a phone at our offices that you can use to make local calls
- a computer workstation that you can use at our offices
- a computer at our offices that you can use to access the Internet
- help advocating for your needs

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The HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic (Ontario) (HALCO), 3rd floor

We offer help with AIDS-related legal issues

The HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario
399 Church Street, 3rd floor, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6
Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 6 pm
Closed Friday
Tel 416-340-7790
Toll-free in Ontario: 1-888-705-8889

The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA), 2nd floor

We provide the following services to women living with HIV/AIDS:

- referral to welfare and disability income benefits
- help getting access to drug cards and Trillium coverage
- direct financial assistance for women in need
- referral to subsidized housing
- treatment counselling and information
- food bank
- massage therapy
- health and nutrition workshops
- access to veterinary services
- cooking classes
- theatre ticket access
- social and recreational events

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399 Church Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6
Monday to Friday, 10 am to 6 pm
Tel 416-506-1400

ACT provides counselling services at Voices of Positive Women



Since March 1998, ACT counsellor Bridget McFarthing has been spending two half-days each week at Voices of Positive Women (VOPW), a Toronto organization that provides support to HIV-positive women throughout Ontario. "Voices", as it's often called, has a membership of over 325 and offers a range of practical supports to its members. As a small organization with a provincial mandate, staff at VOPW often find themselves doing two or three different jobs at the same time. Because VOPW has only one part-time staff person to provide support to members, staff from ACT approached the Personnel Committee of VOPW in 1998 to offer assistance. Both agencies agreed this would be an excellent partnership opportunity.

Bridget's experience confirms the value of the partnership: "Throughout my time there I have had over 260 contacts with women. Most of these were done in a walk-in basis, much like our 'on call' counsellor does at ACT, but I also provide support over the phone. Being at the agency gives me a chance to provide ongoing support, counselling and advocacy to members." During her time at VOPW, Bridget has counselled women on a variety of

issues including: feeling isolated and depressed, being in a relationship with someone who is HIV-negative, disclosing one's HIV status, coping with drug-use, deciding whether to take anti-HIV drugs, managing pregnancy and HIV, and responding to the news that one is HIV-positive. These are just some of the many issues that women living with HIV/AIDS are facing.

Because VOPW is a peer-based agency, Bridget helps to connect women so that they can provide mutual support to one another. In this way, HIV-positive women from across the province can connect with other women within their communities. "I do a lot of referring to ACT, other ASOs, and HIV clinics, and I provide much needed advocacy to help women get connected to services," says Bridget.

In addition to counselling and providing support services at VOPW, Bridget has also offered information and support to midwives and other social workers seeking to learn more about women and HIV/AIDS. Bridget's work with VOPW has meant that women call her at ACT for counselling and connections to ACT's practical assistance services. "We have seen a steady increase in HIV-positive women accessing our practical assistance and counselling services at ACT since our partnership," says Bridget. In this past year, the number of HIV-positive women coming to ACT for services has increased by over 80 per cent.

Knowing more about the needs of HIV-positive women has made it possible for ACT to increase access to services for HIV-positive women. This is just one way that ACT ensures that its services meet the needs of the many communities affected by HIV/AIDS.

To speak with an ACT counsellor, call the ACT Hotline at 416-340-8844, or you can drop by our office at 399 Church Street, 4th floor, and ask to speak with the counsellor-on-call available Monday to Thursday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Friday 10:00 am to 4 pm.



www.actoronto.org

ACT's website now extends our first contact services out into the virtual world!

Hook Up to the Services You Need

ACT's website makes it easy to learn about ACT's services and to find other services and agencies in the Toronto area. The online database lists AIDS service organizations, HIV/AIDS programmes at other service agencies, hospital HIV clinics, community health centres, and more. You can view the entries sorted by agency name, service name, language, target group, and location.

The agency and services information can be found at <http://www.actoronto.org/services>

Browse the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Are you looking for basic information on HIV and AIDS? Are you looking for information on HIV/AIDS-related events that are happening throughout the city? Look no farther than the FAQs section on the home page!

Find Information

ACT's library is the largest publicly accessible collection of books, videos and periodicals on HIV and AIDS in North America. And now you can look through its online catalogue and read abstracts to find what you need before coming to the offices.

Our online records are at <http://www.actoronto.org/library>

Elsewhere on the website you can find ACT's programme and agency information including our needs assessments and project reports, our policies and procedures manuals, the careteam manual (Living with Dying, Dying at Home), and the National Volunteer Training Kit.

Get Involved

The web site lets you become involved with ACT online. Learn more about volunteer opportunities currently available. Advocate for social change. Become a member. Make a donation.

Don't have access to the Internet?

Not a problem – you're welcome to use ours. Our Access Centre, on the 4th floor of 399 Church Street, has a computer workstation hooked into the World Wide Web. Use it to connect to ACT's and other HIV/AIDS web sites.

Don't know how to use the Internet?

Don't worry, we'll help show you how. Our Internet Clinic will match you up with one of our computer-savvy volunteers. You can learn the basics about the Web and Web browsers, as well as discover the wealth of HIV information available online.

To make an appointment with the Internet Clinic, call 416-340-8844 or 416-340-2437.

ACT's Drives Program: Practical assistance in motion

Recently, staff from several local AIDS service organizations (ASOs) met at the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) to talk about practical assistance services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs). Attendees heard about a dynamic network of services meeting the diverse needs of Toronto PHAs. The ASOs represented at this meeting serve diverse communities and offer a range of services that effectively meet the various needs of PHAs. These agencies work together to complement each other in a network of practical assistance services in Toronto.

These service providers recognize the fact that, though all practical assistance users are living with HIV or AIDS, individual needs are quite diverse. The variety of needs reflects the many distinct and overlapping communities affected by HIV/AIDS, including: gay men, youth, people of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, the deaf community, women, recent immigrants, and drug users. Other factors, like individual health status and income level, have a bearing on the nature of practical assistance services. ASOs work to respond appropriately to this wide spectrum of needs.

ACT's practical assistance services are integral to this needs-sensitive network. Every day, ACT's Practical Assistance Coordinators confer with other ASOs. Often PHAs first make contact with other ASOs which may, in turn, put them in touch with important services provided by ACT. For example, nearly all those present at our meeting identified transportation as a practical need for PHAs. ACT's Drives Program is one key way in which ACT contributes practical assistance to PHAs in Toronto. While other ASOs also offer assis-

tance with transportation, limits of human and financial resources may necessitate referrals to other agencies, like ACT, to help meet transportation needs. As a result, PHAs experiencing mobility and/or financial restrictions are often referred to ACT's Drives Program.

ACT's Drives Program depends upon an excellent team of volunteer drivers who assist people who are unable to walk or take public transit to medical appointments. Thanks to an arrangement with the Red Cross, ACT has access to a vehicle which the majority of our volunteer drivers use. Generous volunteers with their own cars meet other requests for drives. Through this program, ACT is able to fulfil requests for drives to medical and HIV-related appointments within Toronto during business hours as long as adequate notice is given. PHAs who are able to use public transportation to travel to their medical and HIV-related appointments but may have trouble affording it can get TTC tokens from ACT through this program.

In many cases, first contact with ACT's wide range of services is made through the Drives Program. To make initial contact with ACT a positive experience, we always strive to ensure that the individual needs of each of our diverse service users are met. By networking with other ASOs and seeking the input of various communities, this service, as well as other practical assistance services at ACT, will continue to remain responsive to the needs of PHAs in Toronto.

For more information about ACT's Drives Program, or any of our other practical assistance programs, please call 416-340-8844.

Let's make sure HIV/AIDS is an issue in the Ontario election

Health care is sure to feature as one of the top issues in the coming provincial election. But will HIV/AIDS be lost in all the debates about hospital closures, home care, cutbacks and "restructuring"? Will the politicians talk about their plans to fight AIDS and to assist people living with HIV or AIDS? Or will these concerns simply disappear?

The fact that health care is such a big issue this time around makes it easier to get AIDS on to the election agenda. That's because every single health care issue — from hospital closures to home care — relates to HIV and AIDS. As these issues come up for debate, it's important to make sure that the connection to HIV and AIDS is made.

How do hospital closures relate to AIDS? Two words: Wellesley Hospital. Here was a major teaching hospital that had developed an excellent, community-based AIDS treatment and support program. But then it was closed, and its programs were handed over to St. Michael's Hospital, a very different organization.

Home care is a growing issue for people living with HIV or AIDS (PHAs). Many find that while they need assistance some of the time, at other times they are well enough to do without it. The current home care system can't deal with that. All too often, a person needing home care is cut off after a period of good health — and is not allowed to resume home care if his or her health worsens again.

Last January, many PHAs lost their access to food supplements they need in order to maintain their weight. This was the direct result of a mean spirited decision by the Health Minister to insist that only people who use supplements as their "sole source" of nutrition could have the cost covered by the Drug Benefit plan. It doesn't matter if your doctor prescribes a supplement for you — you must pay the full cost yourself unless it is the ONLY food you can eat.

Many other aspects of health care and social services policy have a direct impact on people living with HIV or AIDS. Welfare cutbacks and tightened criteria apply to everyone, but they strongly impact PHAs. Women often are tested for HIV when seeking prenatal care, without their informed consent and without considering their need for confidentiality.

Don't let the politicians ignore HIV and AIDS in this election. Contact your candidates, go to all candidates meetings, contact the media. Ask these questions:

- How will you and your Party ensure that services for PHAs will be maintained and developed in spite of the closure of the Wellesley and other hospitals?
- How will you and your Party make sure that home care programs are adequately funded and flexible enough to address the needs of PHAs?
- Will you and your Party move immediately to make medically required food supplements avail-

able to those who need them, by including them in drug benefit plan coverage?

- How will you and your Party overhaul social assistance so that it offers a decent income and reasonable access to those who need it?
- How will you and your Party ensure that women seeking prenatal care are tested for HIV only after giving their informed consent, and while fully respecting confidentiality by ensuring access to anonymous or non-nominal testing?

The 2nd Canadian HIV/AIDS Skills Building Symposium

Getting Together, Sharing Together, Learning Together

The 2nd Canadian HIV/AIDS Skills Building Symposium: Getting Together, Sharing Together, Learning Together will be held Friday, November 12 to Monday, November 15, 1999 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Health care professionals, such as doctors, nurses, mental health workers will join policy advocates, PLWHIV/AIDS, researchers and staff and volunteers of AIDS Service Organizations to learn new skills, network, analyse and evaluate best practice models in HIV/AIDS work and share perspectives on current critical issues in HIV/AIDS work.

This year's Symposium will feature learning streams in prevention, integrated care: allopathic and complementary/alternative therapies, organizational development, public policy, legal and ethical issues, care/counselling/support, and international issues. Pathways will offer participants an opportunity to specialize in HIV/AIDS issues relevant to diverse social identities.

For further registration information, please contact the Events Team at the Canadian AIDS Society at 613-230-3580 ext. 500.

People Living With HIV/AIDS

Men, Women, Youth and Transgendered People

399 Church Street Has Many Services For You!

The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), 4th floor

We provide these services to people living with HIV/AIDS:

- someone to talk to: counsellors, support groups, Hotline
- drives to and from your HIV-related appointments
- help moving
- furniture
- medical equipment
- someone to help you with housework and shopping
- information on HIV/AIDS
- health workshops
- help understanding your insurance coverage
- help completing your income tax forms
- referral to other services you need
- a phone at our offices that you can use to make local calls
- a computer workstation that you can use at our offices
- a computer at our offices that you can use to access the Internet
- help advocating for your needs

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We offer help with AIDS-related legal issues

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- referral to subsidized housing
- treatment counselling and information
- food bank
- massage therapy
- health and nutrition workshops
- access to veterinary services
- cooking classes
- theatre ticket access
- social and recreational events

The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation

399 Church Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6

Monday to Friday, 10 am to 6 pm

Tel 416-506-1400

All services at 399 Church Street are free, confidential and accessible*

*Wheelchair-accessible building including: main entrance and barrier-free washrooms; braille elevator with lowered buttons; lowered light switches; limited meter parking near entrance; and visual alert fire alarm system.

leaving a legacy of hope

Ten Things You Can Do Today to Leave a Legacy

Making a Difference Through Your Will

Your will is more than a legal document. It can be one of the most powerful tools you have to help the fight against HIV/AIDS. Through a bequest in your will to the AIDS Committee of Toronto, you can leave a legacy of hope.

Such a bequest would help ensure that information needed to avoid HIV infection will continue to be available. Your gift would help to secure the health and social services needed by the gay and lesbian community far into the future.

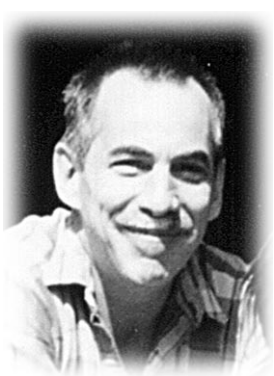
You would join Wendy Storey and 25 other donors who have told us of their planned gifts to ACT. Wendy has lost friends to AIDS and says "the need to do something hits really hard when you know someone who has died." As a nurse at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital, she knows first hand how the disease is spreading to new groups including women and young people. She realized that a bequest to ACT could be a gift larger than she ever thought possible, one that she could make without harming her present financial situation.

Your gift could help secure the long-term future of ACT through our Legacy of Hope fund at the Toronto Community Foundation. Through this arrangement the principal gift will remain intact in perpetuity, while the interest will be used to support ACT's important work. For gifts of a sufficient size, ACT will create a fund in your name or the name of a loved one. Your gift could make a difference for many years to come.

For more information about leaving a gift for ACT in your will, please contact either Greg Lichti, Development Officer (416-340-8484 ext. 265, glichti@actontario.org) or Ann Rosenfield, Director of Development (416-340-8484 ext. 268, arosenfield@actontario.org).

Joey Shulman's Story

Joey Shulman is a 48 year old man who has been living with HIV for the past 18 years. Joey has been a long-time supporter of the AIDS Committee of Toronto. He knows the support, advocacy and education that ACT provides is essential to the community. In fact, Joey has seen ACT's responsive services in action and has promoted ACT through his freelance writing. Since he lives on a limited income, Joey decided to make a bequest to ACT in his will. In this way, he is able to make a substantial contribution to support, education and advocacy for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS without changing his present financial situation. Joey is pleased that he will be leaving a legacy. And he is proud to be an example of one way that people can support their community. *Thanks Joey!*



Legacy of Hope Club

Thank you to the following persons who have confirmed legacy and planned gifts to ACT as of March 1999:

Joan Anderson	Nicola Clayton	Mark Deacon	Maureen de Sorcy
Karsten Kossmann	Geoff Lawrence	Greg Lichti	Michael McKerihen
Ron Rosenes	Ann Rosenfield	Charles M. Roy	Joey Shulman
Wendy Storey	and 13 anonymous donors		

If you have included ACT in your estate plans, please let us know so that we can thank you. In addition, we would like to give you appropriate recognition (including the option to remain anonymous).

To inform us of your plans, please contact either Greg Lichti, Development Officer (416-340-8484 ext. 265, glichti@actontario.org) or Ann Rosenfield, Director of Development (416-340-8484 ext. 265, arosenfield@actontario.org).

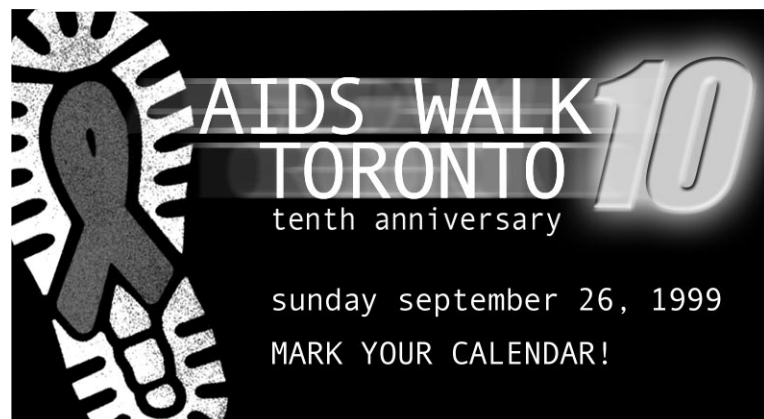
Leaving a Legacy of Hope

The Nuts and Bolts of a Will Gift

Providing for a gift in your will is the easiest way for you to leave a legacy to ACT. You could leave ACT a percentage of the assets in your will, a specific dollar amount, or the residue of your estate after fulfilling all other bequests. The provision can be part of a new will or added to your existing will as a codicil.

ACT suggests the following language for use in your will, but you should choose language in consultation with your lawyer:

"My trustee shall pay to the AIDS Committee of Toronto, currently of 399 Church Street, 4th floor, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6, _____% share of my estate (OR \$_____) (OR "residue of my estate")."



ACT: Legacy of Hope

Please send me a free copy of:

- "Youth and HIV"
- "Planning Your Will, Planning Your Estate, Planning Your Life"

Please send me more information about:

- Making a bequest through my will
- Gifts of insurance
- Gifts of appreciated securities (stocks, mutual funds, etc.)

In confidence, please be advised of the following:

- I have already remembered the AIDS Committee of Toronto in my will.
- I will include the AIDS Committee of Toronto in my will.
- I would consider including the AIDS Committee of Toronto in my will.

Name _____
Address _____
City/Province _____ Postal Code _____
Telephone _____

Please send to: AIDS Committee of Toronto, Attention Greg Lichti, 399 Church Street, 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 2J6, or by fax to 416-340-8224.

FASHION
CARES

a tribute to film & fantasy
MAC viva glam



The 13th annual benefit for
the AIDS Committee of Toronto

Saturday, May 8, 1999
Metro Toronto Convention Centre,
South Building

Tickets on sale now

Gala Tickets \$300 + gst*
reception, dinner, show & party
Call Creeds Concierge Service
416-923-2500 fax 416-923-5975
www.creeds.com

General Admission Tickets \$75*
reception, show & party
Call Ticketmaster 416-870-8000

or visit

www.toronto.com/fashioncares
* plus service charge, if applicable

Disclaimer This information is provided for the benefit of ACT supporters and should not be considered legal, accounting, or other professional advice. You should consult with your own professional advisors to determine the applicability of information in this newsletter to your personal circumstances.

- 1. Prepare a will.** Fewer than 50% of Canadians have one. Without a will, you lose control of the possessions you worked a lifetime to acquire.
- 2. Leave a gift in your will for the charitable organizations that made a difference in your life.** Only about 10% of all wills settled in Canada contain a charitable provision. Imagine the positive impact on our community if everyone made even a modest donation to a favourite non-profit organization.
- 3. Leave a specific dollar amount or a percentage of the assets in your will to your favourite charity.** The provision can be part of a new will or added to your existing will as a codicil.
- 4. Consider using assets for your charitable gift.** For example, such a gift might include securities, stocks, bonds, real estate, art and/or jewelry. Gifts of these or other assets may even provide tax savings.
- 5. Name your favourite charity as the beneficiary of your RRSP or pension plan.**
- 6. Purchase a new life insurance policy naming your favourite charity as the beneficiary.**
- 7. Name your favourite charity as the beneficiary of an existing life insurance policy.**
- 8. Remember deceased loved ones with memorial gifts to charities.**
- 9. Encourage family members and friends to leave gifts to charities in their wills.**
- 10. Ask your financial advisor to include charitable giving as part of their counsel to other clients.**