



ReCharge

for positive youth by positive youth

Winter Edition 2010:

Keeping Warm with a Focus on Africa

PYO
Positive Youth Outreach

2009 PYO Holiday Party!

On Thursday December 17th, PYO hosted its very first dance party in its brand new PYO room. So many members showed up that we ran out of chairs! I guess no one wanted to miss the ultra-fun, holiday festivities. Even Santa and his lovely Mrs. dropped by to celebrate at the evening's hotspot. Our secret guests didn't come empty handed; they came bearing gifts for everyone in the room. In addition to the holiday bags, everyone got a chance to eat great food, hang out with friends and dance the night away. It's a good thing that the music was so bumpin' that we didn't even notice the lack of seating.

Thanks to all those who attended, it was a smashing success! Special thanks goes out to the PYO baker who made all of the fabulous cookies, cakes and pies. PYO has never been so spoiled. Here's to a fantastic 2010.



Upcoming Drop-Ins:

How to Combat Negative Self-Talk Workshop with Anne Shaddick

Thursday, March 18th, 2010

Welcome to the African Edition with a focus on Young HIV/AIDS Activists doing great work in their region.

Highlights are:

An update on the super fun things that are happening at the PYO Thursday night drop-ins.

A chance to meet a young doctor that is a true ally to us.

Youth for Community Development Services in Liberia.

An interview with GYCA East African Regional Representative Bwiza Hippolyte

And as always wicked art work by the fabulous PYOers.

Ps- The zine is always looking for any type of contribution from young people living with HIV. You name it we'll publish it (well as long as its not crazy hate propaganda, because that don't fly here).

Articles

Poems

Letters

Statements

Photos

Pictures

Use your imagination to tell others what's going on.

Andrew put the poster here

Project funding provided by the ViiV Healthcare – Shire Canada HIV/AIDS 2009 Community Innovation Program.

Si oui, nous voudrions t'inviter à notre évènement d'une journée "Vivant Nos Vies", un satellite pour des jeunes vivant avec le VIH/Sida étant tenu le jeudi 4 mars 2010, à Montréal, juste avant le 6ème congrès canadien pour bâtir les compétences au sujet du VIH/Sida.

Ce satellite pour les jeunes vivant avec le VIH/Sida inclura des sessions pour bâtir des compétences qui te donneront les outils nécessaires pour créer un changement significatif et positif. Le satellite sera également une occasion pour que tu mets tes connaissances en traitement de VIH/Sida à jour et de t'engages entièrement dans le 6ème congrès canadien pour bâtir les compétences de VIH/Sida.

Pour t'enregistrer, envoi simplement un courriel à:
pyo@actontario.org ou appelez le 416-340-8484 x 281.
Enregistre toi dès maintenant pour joindre d'autres jeunes vivant

avec le VIH/Sida et pour apprendre à faire une différence.

Youth For Community Academic And Development Services
(YOCADS)
How We Get Here, A True Story

In 2000 some innovative youth who saw the need to recognized the potential of young people in war ravaged Liberia gather in one of Liberia slum community called St. Paul Bridge to form a youth led organization called Youth For Community Academic And Development Services(YOCADS). These were all young Liberian who survived one of West Africa brutal civil war. Their community was infected with injustice and lack of basic social service. The primary objectives for establishing YOCADS were to empower young people in slum community in taking decisions that will improved their live and lobby with policy makers and development partners in delivering the UN Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) www.millenniucampaign.org .with gigantic dreams and mountain of challenges, YOCADS members were all lacked up in poverty, sleeping on mats, using their elbows as pillows. Despite these obstacles all of YOCADS members have one of the greatest weapons, they were all students at the University of Liberia.

An organization can't operate can not operate without a legal documents in Liberia, YOCADS needed these documents. So YOCADS had no option but embark on taxing its members in paying dues, each member contribute at \$25:00 Liberian Dollars each month. These documents cost more than 200.00 USD. It took YOCADS more than two years to generate 200:00 USD to get all of it Legal Documents. During this process YOCADS members met in public facilities, homes, street, to discuss issues regarding the up lifting of YOCADS and how its can implement it objectives with out favor or fear.

YOCADS members begin implementing YOCADS objectives by walking long distances to hold open discussion with community leaders and youths on how they help achieve the MDGs and take a more proactive role in leadership in their community.

After nearly three years with supports from any sources, YOCADS took the initiatives to established local MDGs in schools and local communities- the first of its kind in West Africa. In these MDGs Clubs students and youth were given the opportunity to meet with policy makers and development partners and discussed issues affecting their communities, the MDGs achievement, their role, leadership, and other issues. In recognition of YOCADS advocacy over the past years, the millennium campaign extended its hand of partnership to YOCADS to coordinate all of its activities in Liberia, since then, YOCADS had been coordinating MDGs activities in Liberia among students and youths, mobilizing thousand of people to participate in the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and other MDGs related activities in Liberia.

YOCADS also received another hand of partnership from COOPERAXION www.cooperaxion.org, a Swiss based organization. Presently YOCADS implemented a project for Cooperaxion called KICK for Your Future in Liberia. This project recognized the potential of young people and is empowering them using culture performance and soccer to take actions in improving their communities. As a founding member of YOCADS, I bring to PYO all of these challenges I faced. In short, YOCADS started from ground zero and is now one of Liberia reputable Youth organization. **Persistence** overcome **Resistance**. Please help YOCADS reach millions of young people they have not met yet. YOCADS doors are open to all, one to get first hand experienced working with youth organization in Liberia, contact me. Remember I am a member of Positive Youth Outreach.

Zolu

UNESCO Intergenerational Leadership Regional Training in Kigali, Rwanda

January 1, 2010 marked the first day very first regional forum hosted by the UNESCO Chair of Comparative Human Rights in Kigali, Rwanda. I was selected to be one of around 60 participants to attend the forum because of the alumni status that I gained by going the the 5th Annual Intergenerational Leadership Training Program in August of 2009 in Connecticut (I highly recommend that PYO members apply for the next one). Basically the forum was a chance for young people, under 30 to hang out, go to lectures and do on the ground community work in order to build our capacity as human rights leaders.

The issues that the forum focused on were varied, from gender-based violence to the environment; genocide to right to education. Basically anything goes at these forums. I have to admit that there were some clashes with participants to what constitutes human rights. There were many debates on the issue of sexual diversity (started most of the time by yours truly), due to some controversial legislation that has been being passed recently in the region. But from the horses mouth the president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, said that he did not think that there should be laws that discriminate against the already marginalized group. So hopefully he does not fall victim to peer pressure from his neighbors.

In all I felt that the experience was really beneficial to me in my development as a young HIV/AIDS activist. I was able to meet with a number of other youth from across the global to share knowledge and stories of what's going on where we live. What I learned is that young people living with HIV have many of the same core issues no matter where they come from or what background they have. Don't get me wrong though, I am not trying to by pass the huge discrepancies that are very visible between regions or even pretend that poverty doesn't add to increased challenges. What I am saying is that there are some challenges that are unique to young people living with HIV, and most of them have to do with stigma.

But don't get discouraged PYOers, there are lots of people who are actively fighting the oppressive forces that violate the human rights of others. I highly recommend that you have a glance of the Universal Declaration of Human Right so you know what everyone is entitled to, most of all you. But be warned, that once your eyes become open to some of the injustices that happen in the world, you might never be the same...in a good way.

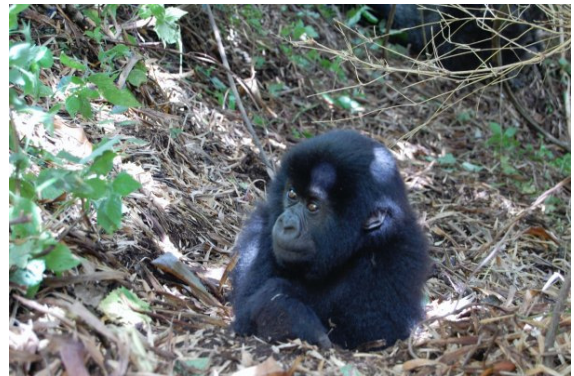
Jessica Whitbread



Jessica taking time off from the UNESCO Intergenerational Forum to track the endangered Mountain Gorillas in Rwanda.

It took over 7 hours of hiking under the hot African sun, being attacked by biting ants and pricked by stingy needles (which hurt like crazy) to find them. It was well worth the hike to sit with those majestic creatures for an hour of my life.

Thanks PYO for supporting me through the application process for the forum in the first place.



If anyone is interested in applying for the 6th UNESCO Intergenerational Forum in August 2010 go to their website for more details: <http://www.unescochair.uconn.edu/upspecialevents.htm>

Worldwide there are **22.4 million** People Living with HIV/AIDS

There are **5.4 million**
young people world
wide living with
HIV/AIDS.

3.2 million of those young people are living in Sub-Saharan
Africa

In some parts there are 3 young women infected with HIV for every 1 young man.

*91% of all new HIV infections
amongst children occur in
Sub-Saharan Africa*

*More information can be researched at: www.UNAIDS.org **Young People refers to youth between the ages of 15-24.

GYCA Actions in West Africa

For those of you who don't know there is a really cool international organization called The Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA). Young people are leading the way to breakdown stigma and provide support and services for other young people living with HIV/AIDS.

GYCA is structured so that there is a secretariat in both the global north and global south. Each country has a national focal point (NFP), that gets direction from a regional focal point (RFP), but most of the grassroots participation is by young people trying to push back HIV in their communities. In January 2010, I had the opportunity to meet with the Central Africa RFP in Rwanda, Hippolyte Bwiza Muhire.

The countries that he focuses on are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Cameroon and of course Rwanda. Being in school to be a doctor full time, as well as working on many human rights issues, Hippolyte is a busy young man but luckily I had a 45 minute bus ride to get some goods out of him. These are some of things that I found out:

GYCA in Central Africa focus on HIV prevention, working with at-risk youth in rural areas, youth engagement and advocating for the rights of YPLHIV. Many of the programs seemed somewhat similar to ones that exist in Canada, but there were a couple really big differences:

1. the LGBTQ community is not supported by the main stream culture and in some countries it is illegal, therefore advocacy work, support and outreach are challenging to say the least, and
2. sexual violence against young women continues to drive up HIV rates in conflict areas in Burundi and the DRC.

One very interesting program that Hippolyte spoke about was an orphanage in Rwanda that housed 108 children, with a majority of them living with HIV. GYCA raised funds to get necessities such as school supplies, healthy food, uniforms and anti-retrovirals for those living in the orphanage.

Another program targeted at-risk youth in rural areas and provided them with training on sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The young people were given the opportunity to create programs that would give them different forms of income generation to break the at-risk cycle. In this project there was apparently a lot of involvement from YPLHIV, though I was not directly able to speak to them. Hippolyte said that he felt that the testimony from YPLHIV was incredibly meaningful to the process of educating the youth in this initiative.

**For more information about GYCA visit : www.youthaidscoalition.org
Or to contact Hippolyte email him at: hippolyte@youthaidscoalition.org**

 **act** offers a FREE

Income Tax Clinic for People with HIV/AIDS



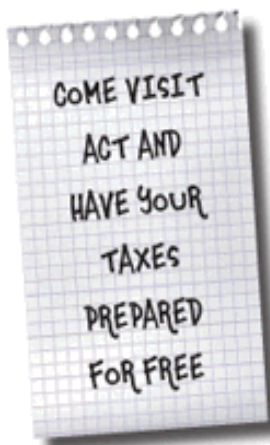
Filing your personal 2009 income tax return can be overwhelming especially when dealing with ODSP and other health-related deductions.

Let ACT's qualified income tax consultants take the stress and strain away and complete your tax returns.

Please call for an appointment if you meet the following guidelines:

- HIV-positive single persons with a total income not exceeding \$45,000
- Spousal couples
- Single or multiple years

Please collect all your paperwork, T4 slips, income slips, rent receipts or a letter from your landlord saying how much rent you paid in 2009, then give us a call to set up your appointment. Make sure you inform us when making the appointment if we will be completing forms for more than one year.



Unfortunately, we are unable to complete the following:

- Self-employment income
- Rental income (i.e. no one pays rent to you)
- Bankruptcies
- Business returns
- Capital gains
- Out-of-province or taxes for other countries

Clinic bookings are available in 2010 from February 23 to May 15.

For more information or appointment
bookings please call 416-340-2437

AIDS Committee of Toronto
399 Church Street, 4th floor, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6
T 416-340-2437 F 416-340-8224 W acttoronto.org

 @ACTToronto

 [facebook.com/ACTToronto](https://www.facebook.com/ACTToronto)

 **act**

Amazing Allies in Rwanda

This is a profile on an amazing young man who has been affected greatly by HIV/AIDS. Ambrose Rutarama is a self declared HIV/AIDS activist in Rwanda. Though he is not himself living with HIV, his life has been touched by its devastating affects.

In secondary school, Ambrose started an Anti-AIDS Club with a group of friends, with the main purpose of raising awareness among his fellow students. Early in University, the affects of HIV touched home when he lost both his brother and sister to AIDS. These experiences lead him to advocate for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS in his community, where it is highly stigmatized.

As this is being written, Ambrose is graduating from medical school at the University of Rwanda. He is also the elected Director on the Standing Committee on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS in Rwanda.

In addition, him and his wife, have adopted 2 young women who had been orphaned by AIDS because they were pushed out of their homes by families who were not able to deal with the stigma and social implications. He provides them with a sense of security and supports their well being, and makes sure that they are able to enjoy all that life has to offer. All this before the age of 30.

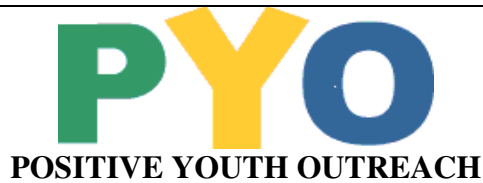
As a true friend in the movement Ambrose said,

“Think Positive, Stay Negative!”

“This is important because if you are living with HIV and you think positive you can stay negative from opportunistic infections...at the same time if you are negative and you think positive you can help yourself make more informed choices to stay negative.”

It is very important to remember that there are amazing allies in the HIV/AIDS movement. Ambrose is just one of many that is using there voice and actions to further our battles.

Thank you Ambose. xx



Who is Positive Youth Outreach (PYO) – you may ask... We are a peer driven program of the AIDS Committee of Toronto dedicated to providing peer based support services and programs to young people under the age of 30 who are living with HIV.

One of the services PYO offers is a weekly SOCIAL SUPPORT DROP-IN for any HIV positive youth under 30. We share experiences, information and support each other. There is always a meal and we have weekly activities such as workshops, art or movies.

The DROP IN happens EVERY Thursday from 4pm to 8pm @ PYO.

PYO also offers a Women's Social Group, held in partnership with Voices of Positive Women (VOPW). This is open to all ladies, including Trans-women under the age of 30. It's a place for young HIV positive women to chill out, share experiences and connect with each other. There is always food and fun activities like workshops, art or movies. A childcare subsidy is available. For more info call PYO at 416-340-8484 x 281 or VOPW at 416-324-8703 x 32.

The YOUNG WOMEN'S SOCIAL is held on the second Tuesday of the month from 4pm to 8pm @ PYO.

TTC tokens are available for both programs.

If groups aren't your thing – PYO also offers one on one peer support with an HIV positive peer.

To find out more call 416-340-8484 ext. 281 or visit PYO's website at www.positiveyouth.com.

Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)
399 Church Street, 4th Floor (at the south east corner of Church Street and Carlton Street)
Toronto, ON M5B 2J6
Phone: 416-340-8484 ext. 281, Fax: 416-340-8224
E-mail: pyo@acttoronto.org
Website: positiveyouth.com



