



BREAKING FREE

ISSUE NO.

01

FALL '17

YOU DID IT!

A GAME-CHANGER IN SEXUAL HEALTH

▶▶▶ Thanks to your support, and after many years of community education and advocating first the Federal, then the Ontario Government, residents in Ontario finally have access to a highly effective HIV prevention strategy known as PrEP.

As a pill that you can take daily that prevents HIV, PrEP is proven 99% effective. Until now, PrEP was too expensive for most people to afford. Now PrEP will be covered by Ontario's Health Insurance plans and any qualified health care provider will be able to prescribe it.

People who are caught up in violent relationships or those who have multiple sex partners are now empowered to protect themselves from HIV. For everyone else, PrEP is a good addition to condoms, which we know are not 100% effective.

These changes would not have occurred without your support. For close to thirty years you and many others

like you have been walking, dancing, advocating and donating so that ACT could be at the forefront of demanding these changes to Ontario healthcare. You did this: Thank you!

Thanks to your support we were able to systematically show the provincial government the economic benefits AND the moral case for covering PrEP for everyone, regardless of gender, income and where people live. It was a long slog but we got our way.

While this is a huge milestone, the work isn't over. On your behalf, ACT will continue to demonstrate leadership on this front, not just in Toronto or Ontario but across the country. Together we will work toward a day where there are ZERO new infections. And that day is getting closer and closer thanks to you.



TOTALLY OUTRIGHT

Fostering Future Leaders

»»» **“Adulting” is hard enough for most young people. Finishing university, worrying about the future, and struggling to pay rent without your parent’s help can be overwhelming changes for anyone. Layer onto this the pressure of being a gay man (possibly HIV positive) and life suddenly gets very complicated.**

Add to these challenges a fractured society; hook up culture and dependence on online forms of socializing and making real connections can be very difficult. Finding a mentor you identify with who can help you carve a successful path forward, personally and professionally is near impossible. That is why your support of our Totally outRIGHT program so very important.

Totally Outright is a FREE four-week leadership program for gay/bi/queer guys age 18-29, including queer trans guys, where participants are able to have candid conversations about their personal experiences, both emotionally and physically. This program goes beyond a supportive nurturing environment. Your donations empower participants to also learn leadership skills, life skills and often enable them to carve a path toward a meaningful career.



“ Learning about HIV, sexual health, body image and overall well-being for young queer guys was great, and helped me improve how I relate to my body, and how I understand my sexual health, ”

said David Arron, a recent program graduate who has transferred his knowledge into his role as Policy Researcher at the Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC).

Together we are building people up and creating a future where young gay bi/queer/trans men take their rightful place as successful respected leaders in their community. Thank you for helping change lives and helping young gay men to be the best possible version of themselves.

SAVE THE DATE

1. Community Health Forums – Taking place monthly until March 2018, Forums provide current health and wellness information to people living with HIV, and those at increased risk by bringing together professionals and community experts. Visit www.actoronto.org/forums for upcoming Forum topics and dates. RSVP’s encouraged.

2. Volunteer Appreciation Party – Thursday, November 9, 2017 (6 – 9 pm). If you’re an ACT Volunteer, join us for our Masquerade themed party to celebrate the amazing contributions of over 500 volunteers. RSVP to Nicole at nmalatesta@actoronto.org or **416.340.8484 x238**

3. Together Towards Zero Luncheon – Friday, December 1, 2017 (11:45 am – 1:30 pm), Delta Hotel. Join us in celebrating our collective success, and the work still to be done on our journey together towards zero. Featuring Bruce Richman (New York), Founder of Prevention Access Campaign and U=U. Tickets \$100. Contact Jason at jpatterson@actoronto.org or **416.340.8484 x268**

4. SNAP 2018 – Thursday, March 22, 2018, Toronto Reference Library. In its 17th year, SNAP is Toronto’s premier photographic art auction. Grow your art collection while supporting ACT’s important work. Tickets: \$125. VIP Tickets: \$175. Contact Joelle at jferreira@actoronto.org or **416.340.8484 x279 – www.snap-toronto.com**

We are here for you. Stay informed and up to date with ACT’s online resources and social channels:

A LEGACY FOR HER SON

▶▶▶ When Pam's eldest son David was diagnosed with HIV, Pam was pretty surprised. You see, David was a doctor and in a long-term relationship. It never occurred to his mother that he was at risk. But, as you know, HIV doesn't discriminate. Upon diagnosis and with his mother's help David immediately reached out to ACT and got to work right away.



Sadly, David was already pretty sick and his viral load numbers were really high. It wasn't long before he passed quite suddenly in his mother's arms.

When the time was right, Pam started thinking about her estate plans and ACT was top of mind.

“ ACT does a grand job. They did so for David, and they continue to help so many people. HIV is preventable. I believe that together we can eventually get to zero transmissions. But, there is a lot of work to do. When I'm gone, I want that work to continue. ”

Pam, thank you for including ACT in your estate plans. We are deeply grateful. You can trust that David's legacy, and all those before; will live on in your gift.

WHEN YOU ARE READY - WE ARE HERE

▶▶▶ When you include a gift to ACT in your Will you are leaving a legacy of respect and dignity for everyone living with or at risk for HIV.

In addition to working towards a day when there are ZERO new transmissions, we remain committed to being here to help confront the stigma that still exists for those who are HIV positive. We must take a more holistic approach to Gay men's health and we can't do it without you.

Your legacy can provide a sanctuary, a community and a hopeful future for gay men and everyone living with HIV. Thank you.

If you have chosen to include ACT in your Will, please let us know. We would love to thank you personally.

When you are ready to talk about your end of life plans, we are here. Jason Patterson (he, his, him) is available to confidentially discuss your legacy. Please don't hesitate to contact him directly at:

ACT

543 Yonge Street, 4th floor
Toronto, ON, M4Y 1Y5

Direct: 416-340-8484 ext. 268

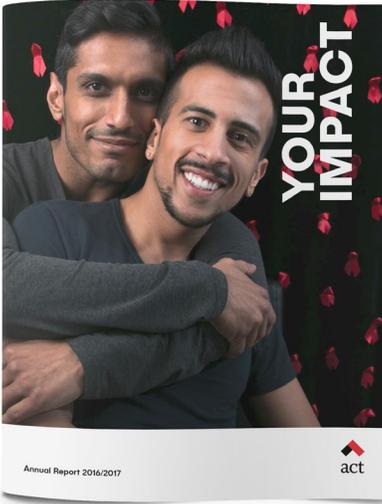
Cell: 647-261-6470

jpatterson@actoronto.org



For more information visit:

<http://www.actoronto.org/support-act/build-a-legacy>



The Annual General Meeting held September 29th capped off a wonderful year at ACT. Members, Volunteers and Staff shared a delicious meal, acclaimed three new Board Members, and awarded 'Years of Service' awards to six staff, 34 volunteers honoured with awards from five to 20 years of service. We are grateful to all members, donors and volunteers for their dedication of time, talent and treasure.

Looking for more? If you would like to read the 2016/17 Annual Report please visit: <http://www.actoronto.org> or call our office at **1-416-340-2437** and we would be happy to mail a hardcopy to you.

JOHN'S CORNER

▶▶▶ **As someone who has been living with HIV for 27 years, I know first hand that if HIV positive people have social support, and if they have physical support, they can live long healthy productive lives with HIV. That's what your gift does. Your gift helps people like me live healthy productive lives. Thank you.**



Because of you, we have been able to:

- ▶ Influence the accessibility of PrEP across Ontario.
- ▶ Respond to the needs of our service users with innovative new programs to help with body image, mental health and anxiety, drug use and sex addiction and living with HIV-related stigma.
- ▶ Be there for men and women, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation or country of origin.

And, we can only do those things, and many more, because of your ongoing support.

Anxiety, depression, bullying, substance use and abuse, stigma, domestic violence and homelessness are issues that we are now able to help with. For people living with HIV

and those at risk, we have a big job to do and these new programs are a big part of our new approach to gay men's health.

As an ACT donor, you understand the importance of all this work. We appreciate you. You are a vitally important part of our community and we remain committed to making sure you know that every penny you donate has a positive impact on helping people who are living with HIV and helping prevent more HIV transmissions.

The harsh reality is that without your support HIV rates would once again be through the roof! And, people living with HIV wouldn't have the kind of quality services and professional counselling that we offer. Our community is strong, because of your support and we are very grateful to you for that.

If at anytime you would like to discuss our work or your donations I encourage you to phone me on my private cell phone: (416) 573-6996. I would be very happy to talk with you.

Thank you again for making all of this work possible. We are all very grateful. Yours in Health,

John Maxwell, Executive Director