



YOUR PLACE.
YOUR *Voice.*



**Annual Report
2019-2020**



◆ A scintillating performance from **Leah Canali** and dancers at **FLUID**, an immersive, sex-positive event experience (November 7, 2019).

700 

of ACT service users identified as HIV-positive AND an additional 765 service users identified as at-risk of HIV.

61%

of people served were new service users in **2019 – 2020**

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GAY MEN'S HEALTH HUB

CHANGING THE *Game* FOR GAY MEN'S HEALTH

▶▶▶ One would be hard pressed to explain why there hasn't been a one-stop shop to support cis and trans gay, bi, queer guys with their sexual and mental health needs.

"Being the most populous city in Canada with the largest population of gay, bi, queer guys who continue to be the most vulnerable to adverse health outcomes, whether HIV-positive or at increased risk, a centre of excellence for gay men's health is long overdue," stresses John Maxwell, ACT Executive Director.

With the support of donor community, ACT has played a significant role on the journey towards making the future "Health Hub" for gay men a reality. Beginning in 2015, various support groups were established to help guys manage challenges with substance use (including Crystal Meth, loneliness, anxiety and trauma to name a few), with complimentary community counselling available in clinical settings to address these same issues.

With the addition of Anonymous HIV Testing in 2018, these are some of the programs set to expand to meet increased demand as part of bringing these vital services under one roof.

Despite the pandemic that has sidelined many projects and parts of our community in many ways, HQ as it is affectionately been named has been moving full steam ahead. Located on the 8th

floor of 790 Bay Street (at College), HQ is slated to open in 2021.

"ACT has worked collaboratively with other partners to establish goals and shared values for HQ, including what programs and services each organization will bring to the space," says Tyler Morden, Director of Gay Men's Health Programs. "We're excited for the future of this space and ACT's contribution to the programming."

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) is among the project partners and is playing a big part in its coordination. Jay Katz, Senior Lead on the HQ development with the OHTN shared his excitement with what is to come for this important health centre.

"The space will be welcoming to all, the services supportive and non-judgemental," shares Jay. "It will also feel warm and not very clinical, something that was extremely important to the partner agencies," he adds.

"A clinic like 56 Dean Street in London UK is an incredible model of success, reducing new HIV-infections by 75% since opening," John Maxwell says. "A project like this is truly going to be transformational for gay guys in our community. We are honoured and privileged to work alongside other partners and the OHTN to bring it to life."

Projects like HQ can only happen with support from community and donors like you.

Should you wish to learn more about HQ and the opportunities to lend financial support for capital, equipment, technology or program needs, please contact Jason Patterson, Director of Development at jpatterson@actoronto.org.

In addition to ACT, the following agencies and service providers will act as program partners within HQ:

- » 2-Spirited People of the First Nations
- » Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
- » Asian Community AIDS Services
- » Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention
- » Hassle Free Clinic
- » Maple Leaf Medical Clinic
- » Ontario HIV Treatment Network



“With *Folks Like Us*, I was able to share what I know regarding programs and services in the GTA with other folks in the trans and non-binary community and empower them to take ownership over their health.”

— Ezra, Volunteer, HIV Intake Coordinator

HIV TESTING

HIV TESTING FOR *Folks* LIKE US

▶▶▶ Creating a space that is safe and inclusive for trans and non-binary people, especially when it comes to HIV testing, is important for Ezra. As a queer, non-binary Torontonion who has been volunteering with ACT since 2017, they have contributed meaningfully in various roles including *Totally outRIGHT*, and co-facilitating *PEACH*, a program for gay, bi and queer guys into guys to talk about relationships, sex and their emotions.

Currently volunteering at ACT as its HIV Testing Intake Coordinator, Ezra has also gotten tested at ACT's Anonymous HIV Testing Clinic (currently closed due to COVID-19). They recall that it was a very comprehensive experience, and appreciated that mental health services were offered, including on the spot post-test counselling.

“It's important to have trans and non-binary HIV testing days to let folks know that this is a service that ACT is offering and is catered for them,” says Ezra. “Trans and non-binary folks have reservations coming into medical and communal spaces due to discrimination and being misgendered. Having a day that is just catered for people like me, even if it's once a month at ACT, makes us feel comfortable.”

With trans and non-binary inclusion being an emerging and important topic in sexual health services, Ezra is happy to see that ACT is letting service users know that it is working on making sure this service is accessible for everyone.

“Visibility is important in any situation. So is safety. The trans and non-binary community is so underserved, so having this service available is very much needed,” says Ezra.

“It also provides many guys into guys the quick, anonymous and rapid HIV test that they need in an environment that is judgement-free. It's a holistic way of handling sexual health.”

Aside from being the HIV Testing Intake Coordinator, Ezra also was a program lead for *Community ACTivators*, where they created and facilitated a community project aimed at fostering meaningful social and cultural connections for cis and trans gay, bi, and queer guys into guys. Affectionately named *Folks Like Us*, Ezra created a weekly games night and social for trans and non-binary folks, allowing people to play board, table and video games while talking about health and social issues.

“With *Folks Like Us*, I was able to share what I know regarding programs and services in the GTA with other folks in the trans and non-binary community and empower them to take ownership over their health,” says Ezra. “Trans and non-binary folks are hesitant to seek out services because organizations are not trans-inclusive. I was able to reassure them that programs and services are available to our community, including services at ACT.”

Ezra shares their appreciation of ACT and the many services it offers by adding, “My experience with ACT has been amazing. They are open to all members of our LGBTQ2+ community and it's a great place to be. Thanks to community support of ACT programs, I feel valued here, not only as a volunteer, but as a service user who accessed HIV Testing and other services.”

Once our community's COVID-19 challenges are under control, ACT's Anonymous HIV Testing Clinic can resume.

317 Anonymous HIV tests were offered last year.

63 unique service users accessed drop-in counselling in connection with their Anonymous HIV test.



ADDRESSING TRAUMA & RECOVERY

LIVING IN THE PRESENT THROUGH Recovery FROM PAST TRAUMA

At the age of nine, Santiago* did not think about becoming an astronaut or becoming a rock star like the kids his age. Rather, he thought about ending his life.

He knew that he was different from the other children and often felt alone knowing that he was gay. He would constantly hear his staunchly conservative, religious family talking about homosexuality as a sin, and this was reiterated in school teachings.

"When I was a child, I had many things happen to me that were traumatizing," sighs Santiago. "It wasn't until I was older that I realized that these past traumas were affecting how I was living my life and how I was moving in the world. I often thought about suicide when I was a kid."

In 2002, to get away from the homophobia he faced back home in Colombia, Santiago decided to move, by himself, thousands of kilometres away to Canada.

"Moving to another country was hard. At the time, I didn't speak any English," Santiago recalls. "The cold weather, the culture shock, and being alone and away from my family was very difficult. However, whatever hardship I dealt with was worth it because I was safe and could truly be myself as a gay man."

Soon enough, Santiago was free to live his life on his terms. He changed his career after returning to school for social work. He also found ways to become more involved with his community.

Ten years ago, Santiago and his lesbian friend took an incredible step in their friendship. They decided to have a child together. Santiago agreed to be the sperm donor and booked an appointment to get a physical to ensure his health was in order. To his surprise, and despite having always practiced safe sex, Santiago was diagnosed with HIV.

Santiago admits that after receiving his HIV diagnosis, he felt alone. "I accessed the Newly Diagnosed support group at ACT and was around people who gave me the support I needed," he says. Newly Diagnosed helps people to talk about the new experiences and life changes resulting from an HIV diagnosis.

With the support of the donor community, ACT programs are always there when someone like Santiago once again needs support. Santiago would return for support in 2019, this time accessing the Addressing Trauma & Recovery (ATR) group, a one-year trauma therapy

program for cis and trans gay, bi & queer men who are survivors of childhood physical and/or sexual abuse that focuses on trauma recovery. It was through his friend, an ACT volunteer who had shared a Facebook post, that Santiago learned about the program. Unsure if he qualified for this group, Santiago felt that it was important for him to have a safe space to talk about the things he went through as a child. He picked up the phone and spoke to Vincent, ACT's Gay Men's Group Programs Coordinator. He was "very welcoming" and informed Santiago that he did qualify.

The ATR program has allowed Santiago to be vulnerable and to heal from the traumas of his childhood. He learned how to cope with the triggers of his past traumas. Thanks to the support of donors like you, he gained strategies to take better care of and learn how to forgive himself for what he went through.

"I'm happy that I signed up for this group," says Santiago. "It gave me the chance to work on and fix things for myself. We cannot change the past, but we can guide our future and make sure we live in the present."

Further sharing his appreciation for ACT and its services, Santiago adds, "I would recommend this program because a lot of people don't talk about traumas they faced as children, the discrimination they faced for being gay, or the pain they felt and continue to feel for being gay and being HIV-positive. We need to break the cycle and remind ourselves that it is not our fault. We can fix these cycles of abuse and heal ourselves; Addressing Trauma & Recovery was a great experience and makes you live your life in a better way."

*To maintain anonymity, Santiago's real name has been changed for this story.

Addressing Trauma and Recovery (ATR) is a new group that supported 10 service users attending eight sessions followed by one-on-one counselling sessions.

189 total counselling sessions were offered to the 10 service users within the ATR program.
73% of ACT service users identify as gay or bisexual men who have sex with men.



WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING

BORN TO BECOME AN HIV Advocate

▶▶▶ You could say that 27-year-old Muluba was born to become an HIV activist. With both her parents being HIV-positive, she herself was born with HIV. At the age of two, she began taking HIV medication.

As a woman, Muluba has been a familiar face and strong voice advocating in the HIV sector, working with The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), being the CANFAR National Youth Ambassador and sharing her experiences and talking about HIV advocacy with the Sheridan Alumni magazine and CBC News. Muluba accesses ACT programs such as *Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)* and Women's Programming, which provides her with the support she needs as a young woman living with HIV.

"My mom put me through support groups as a child, but as an adult, I felt like no one could tell me what to do," Muluba recalls. "Aside from doctors and my family, nobody knew about my HIV status because I was scared of the discrimination I would face."

After losing her father in 2007 to a HIV-associated heart condition and pneumonia, and her mother in 2012 to HIV-associated cancer, Muluba fell into a deep depression. She stopped attending support groups and

taking her HIV medication. In 2015, Muluba mustered the courage to publicly disclose her HIV status in a YouTube video, and in 2017, after avoiding support groups for years, she began accessing PYO (a free, peer-led program at ACT for young people living with HIV between the ages of 16 to 29). It was here she was able to discuss sexual health and be around other HIV-positive young people who are also navigating through the world. Most importantly, Muluba was able to be herself.

Through a collaboration with PYO, Muluba heard about ACT's Women's Programming. At first, she was hesitant to join.

"As a young woman who is about to graduate PYO in two years, it's great to know that women's programming is available for me!" exclaims Muluba. "At first I thought this program would be made up of mostly older women who would try to tell me what to do. The reality is, it's a group of women who support each other, share their experiences and talk freely about everything from sex and relationships, having children, and the struggles and stigma associated with being HIV-positive. I'm so thankful to be a part of this group."





Women's programming is crucial for women like Muluba, who have grown up living with HIV. With the support of the community and donors like you, these programs afford participants the opportunity to "see other women survive and thrive as women, and as mothers" as Muluba puts it.

Seeing the other women's intersectional experiences continues to motivate Muluba to advocate for her community, and for people like her.

"Being born HIV-positive from HIV-positive parents, reaching 30 years of age was something that I never thought would be a possibility when I was younger. And there are many more years ahead for me!" says Muluba. "A lot of the women that attend the program remind me so much of my mother. I'm glad that we have this safe space that is beneficial for our mental, emotional and overall health and well-being, especially when we see campaigns like *Love Positive Women*, which celebrates women living with HIV."

Love Positive Women is a campaign that runs every February, highlighting women living with HIV while acknowledging the struggles and stigma they still face.

Furthering her appreciation for ACT, Muluba adds, "It means so much to me that ACT has so many programs and services and that I don't have to pick just one. I've accessed *Employment ACTION* prior to getting my current job." Muluba is also considering accessing *Planning for the Long Term*, a group focusing on mental and physical health and well-being.

"ACT is a very welcoming organization and both Rob, the PYO Coordinator, and Savannah, the Women's Support Coordinator, check in on me and make sure I am doing okay," Muluba concludes.

"It's a family. Women's programming is about community, allyship and bonding with each other. It's something worth checking out. There is a reason why it has been running for such a long time."

12% of ACT service users identify as female.

73 unique service users participated in Women's Coffee Night, a 24% increase in participation over last year.

105 unique service users participated in Women's Zone, a 38% increase in participation over last year.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

CONNECTING *Community* TO EMPLOYMENT & SUCCESS

▶▶▶ Looking for employment can be challenging in the best of times. It's even harder when you're a refugee in Canada. That certainly was the case for Hassan*, who left Syria and has been living in Canada for almost three years. Within three months of living in Toronto, Hassan was able to find temporary employment with one of the big banks, but soon, needed to seek something more permanent.

A friend of Hassan's (who is also an ACT employee) recommended he get in touch with *Employment ACTION*, an employment service program at ACT that helps people living with HIV and LGBTQ2+ individuals find career solutions that best suit their individual needs. Not long after his friend's recommendation, Hassan was having a one-on-one session with Jason, one of ACT's Employment Consultants.

"Jason looked over my resume and cover letter and provided helpful suggestions," says Hassan. "He also referred me to his colleague who got me an interview with another bank, since I have prior banking experience. I took advantage of the free seminars offered by ACT that covered topics like the hidden job market."

Although Hassan did not get the job he first interviewed for, it was a good networking opportunity for him and ultimately prepared him for the interview with the company for which he currently works.

"My interview skills are good, but I wanted to know what hiring managers are looking for when they are speaking to potential candidates," says Hassan. "Through *Employment ACTION*, I learned skills to answer some of the difficult questions. Jason walked me through answering questions regarding disadvantages and weaknesses; it made my interview skills so much stronger."

"If you are looking for employment, I highly recommend that you get in touch with *Employment ACTION*," concludes Hassan. "It has everything you need, from resume writing, interview skills and job searching. It was a great experience overall and they really give you the tools you need to be successful."

George* is an *Employment ACTION* service user who shares a similar experience. As a person who has been living with HIV for almost 12 years, George first connected with ACT through the *Totally outRIGHT* program nearly a decade ago. The program allowed him to learn more about his LGBTQ2+ community and get more involved, while finding the guidance and support he needed. It wasn't until two years ago, while needing help seeking employment, that he reconnected with ACT.

"My educational background was not in social services, but I really wanted to work in that sector," says George. "I went back to school in 2019, applied for a position and waited a couple weeks before I decided to give up."

George has always found employment on his own but was feeling stuck. He was struggling to find anything in his desired field. When he came across the *Employment ACTION* website, and after learning more about the resources available, he decided to give it a shot.

“ Because of *Employment ACTION*, I was able to access opportunities I may not have found on my own. ”

— George, *Employment ACTION* Service User

"After doing a one-on-one with Jason and having him look over my resume, he provided me some advice and guidance that was very beneficial," says George. "He signed me up for a webinar, but shortly afterwards, I heard back from the company I applied to."

George credits Jason's support as key to helping him secure the job.

"Jason helped identify resources that he felt would help me and connected me with what I needed. Because of *Employment ACTION*, I was able to access opportunities I may not have found on my own," says George. "This program is so specific to people living with HIV and newcomers to Canada. You gain guidance, skills and advice on how to get employment. I have shared my experience with other people so they can also access this; I tell everyone!"

With the support of community and donors like you, Hassan and George were able to make meaningful connections and gain support from ACT's skilled Employment Consultant to secure employment aligned with their skills and passion.

**To maintain anonymity, both Hassan and George's real names have been changed for this story.*

38 service users successfully gained employment through *Employment ACTION*.



DONOR PROFILE

ONE MOMENT THAT BECAME A LASTING *Legacy*

It was the 22nd of March 1995. Joseph Iannuzzi was just 36 years old and admits that his life changed forever that day.

"I was terrified to share the news with my family and friends. In some respects, telling them I was HIV-positive was more frightening than the infection itself," Joseph shares.

Following his diagnosis, Joseph was immediately put on AZT, one of few medications available at that time, used to delay the development of AIDS for people living with HIV. Unfortunately, he did not respond well to the medication. Within a year, Joseph was hospitalized with a life-threatening case of pneumonia. Doctors said he had six to nine months to live. Fortunately, new HIV treatments developed a year later helped him get his pneumonia under control.

For many including Joseph, concerns for health and well-being get magnified when deciding whether to continue employment or take time off. One of the places where Joseph would find support was through a benefits clinic offered at ACT. It was a moment that would change his life for years to come.

In this particular clinic, facilitated by a late volunteer and Manulife representative named Mary Kay, Joseph absorbed all he could regarding the benefits of various insurance policies. Investing in life insurance and other such policies enabled Joseph to receive regular dividends that helped maintain his quality of life while off work, allowing him the opportunity to focus on his health.

"I will forever be grateful for what I learned in the ACT benefits clinic," Joseph said. "What I learned from Mary Kay helped me make informed decisions to improve my financial outlook. It was critical in giving me comfort as I continued to maintain my health and move forward as an HIV-positive man."

Joseph would receive additional counsel from Mary Kay outside of the benefits clinic. She recommended additional life insurance opportunities through his employer and encouraged use of sick-time benefits so he could further focus on his health.

It's a full circle moment in many ways. Joseph's investment in a variety of insurance policies were to ensure his continued financial security and to support his own well-being for years to come. His gratitude for the support he received made his decision to leave a gift to ACT that much easier. He knows his legacy gift will

make a big difference in the future health of people who will also benefit from ACT's vital programs and services, much like he did.

Joseph admits that he has hit a few bumps and setbacks on his journey, but is grateful to be alive today – healthy, and his viral load undetectable.

"I have survived this infection because of the love and inspiration I have received through the years from my mother, my brother and all my dear friends who wanted me to continue to enjoy life."

Part of how Joseph continues enjoying life and giving back is through participation in the AIDS Walk Toronto, which has kicked off a year-long celebration to mark its conclusion during Pride in 2021. Participating every other year, in 2018, Joseph was the top AIDS Walk fundraiser, securing over \$18,000 in donations and pledges, and has already raised \$7,000 for the 2021 Walk event.

A decision to leave a gift in your will to ACT is not one that is made lightly. It says a great deal about how you must feel about ACT's impact – whether that be on you personally, someone you love, or reflecting on ACT's own legacy of supporting the community.

We are touched by the heartwarming support of donors like Joseph, making this ultimate gift to support the continued work of ACT. We are grateful to him for sharing his journey to make this consequential decision. Joseph is truly passionate about inspiring others to know that they too can make such a commitment at their end of life.

If you would like to learn more about leaving a legacy to ACT, or if you have included a donation to ACT in your estate and would like to notify us, please contact Jason Patterson, Director of Development at jpatterson@actontario.org.



Joseph Iannuzzi (left) with Jason Patterson (right), Director of Development in the ACT Access Centre



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

GIVING BACK
TO *Women*
IN OUR
COMMUNITY

▶▶▶ Moving from Montreal to Toronto to study Corporate Social Responsibility at St. Michael's College while working in the creative field of advertising, Rosana Rampersaud was lacking the work-life balance that she needed. She wanted to do more and give back to her community.

"I wanted to find something that was a good fit for me," says Rosana. "Working in advertising, it's easy to get caught up with just working long hours. It was serendipitous when one day, a friend of mine mentioned ACT's Volunteer Information Session."

“ I encourage anyone to get involved with ACT. They are organized and passionate about the work they do; volunteers are thanked and appreciated, and nothing goes unnoticed. ”

— Rosana Rampersaud, ACT Volunteer

Prior to becoming a volunteer for *Women's Coffee Night* and *Women's Zone*, Rosana went through *Core Skills* training, a 20-hour intensive training for new volunteers to learn about HIV, anti-oppression, concepts in communication, and creating and fostering safe, accessible spaces. They learn the practical skills and knowledge needed to navigate conversations with ACT service users and other people who are at risk of HIV or who need additional information about the work of ACT.

"From my first meeting during the *Volunteer Information Session* to *Core Skills*, everything was so well organized and was composed of so many passionate people – both staff and other volunteers," says Rosana. "I knew this was the right fit for me. I especially enjoy *Women's Coffee Night* because it takes more of a focus on community."

Since volunteering for *Women's Coffee Night* and *Women's Zone* in 2017, Rosana has gotten to know many program participants. "These programs mean so much to the women who attend. They are dealing with socio-economic issues, citizenship, seeking employment, and other challenges associated with being a woman living with HIV."

"Women's programming is a place to have community. It's something you can count on and a place to see your friends. Much bigger than living positive, it's a time for dinner and one night off for yourself. It is about self-care and body positivity – offered in a fun way."

Things came full circle for Rosana when she was able to bring in a friend for a tea-making activity for women's programming and discuss nutrition with the participants. "Savannah, ACT's Women's Support Coordinator, is very creative and her energy is contagious. She loves to collaborate and comes up with the great activities."

While ACT has given Rosana the ability to give back to her community, she reflects on the great strides in HIV and AIDS advocacy and says there is more we all can do to uplift our communities. "I encourage anyone to get involved with ACT. They are organized and passionate about the work they do; volunteers are thanked and appreciated, and nothing goes unnoticed."

394
active volunteers this year

6,699
hours contributed by volunteers this year

“ Women's programming is a place to have community. It's something you can count on and a place to see your friends. Much bigger than living positive, it's a time for dinner and one night off for yourself. It is about self-care and body positivity – offered in a fun way. ”

— Rosana Rampersaud, ACT Volunteer

TOTALLY OUTRIGHT

CREATING YOUNG GAY *Leaders* THROUGH TOTALLY OUTRIGHT

“

Times have evolved so much that folks are getting younger and younger when they come out. This type of program is so important for young people as they learn to explore what their identities mean for them. I'm glad that Totally OutRIGHT was able to provide me with the knowledge and skills to navigate the world as a young gay man.

— Cam, Totally outRIGHT Service User

”

▶▶▶ As a refugee, Cam and his conservative family moved from Colombia to Canada when he was seven years old. Being a newcomer, Cam struggled to adapt to a new country and culture, learn a new language, and deal with the divorce of his parents. He further struggled coming to terms with his sexuality.

“For many years, I had a lot of internalized homophobia because of my upbringing,” recalls 25-year-old Cam. “There was a lack of sexual health resources for someone like me to educate myself on what it means to be a young gay man.”

During Cam's final year at the University of Toronto, he decided to come out to his friends and family. Finally, he was ready to live his truth. He wanted to get more involved within the LGBTQ2+ community. He soon heard about *Totally outRIGHT* at ACT, a sexual health leadership program for young gay, bi and queer guys that currently runs twice a year. He quickly signed up for the program.

Reflecting on his experience, Cam says: “*Totally outRIGHT* was the sexual health manual I needed to help me come to terms with who I am as a newly out gay man. It was the sex education I feel is lacking in school. The training prepared me for life as a gay man – the challenges, the history, learning about sexual health, STIs and HIV, and overcoming transphobia and homophobia. We develop skills to approach friendships, relationships and learn about online dating and hook up culture. Mental health was also a strong focus in the program.”

Made possible by your support, *Totally outRIGHT* has provided Cam with the opportunity to build leadership skills to advocate for the LGBTQ2+ issues in the community. It has also helped him in his personal and professional life as he enters his second year as a school

board trustee in Hamilton. The program has empowered him and other young gay, bi and queer guys by providing a safe, inclusive, and diverse space for them to appreciate each other and explore a variety of topics in a non-judgemental way.

“ *Totally outRIGHT* was the sexual health manual I needed to help me come to terms with who I am as a newly out gay man. It was the sex education that was lacking in school. ”

— Cam, Totally outRIGHT Service User

“Times have evolved so much that folks are getting younger and younger when they come out. This type of program is so important for young people as they learn to explore what their identities mean for them,” Cam adds. “I'm glad that *Totally OutRIGHT* was able to provide me with the knowledge and skills to navigate the world as a young gay man.”

19 attendees participated in *Totally outRIGHT* groups last year.

ROLL CALL

THANK YOU TO ACT'S COMMUNITY OF DONORS & SUPPORTERS

GOVERNMENT

Federal

Community Action Fund (CAF), Public Health Agency of Canada

Provincial

Ministry of Community and Social Services

Ministry of Health – AIDS Bureau

Ontario Disability Support Program

Municipal

City of Toronto Community Service Partnerships (CSP)

Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF) and Purchase of Service Agreement (PSA)

CORPORATIONS & FOUNDATIONS

\$100,000 +

TD Bank Group

\$20,000 – \$49,999

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M·A·C Cosmetics

\$15,000 –\$19,999

Pride and Remembrance Association

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Steamworks

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Canadian Gay Open (CGO)

CIBC

Philip Smith Foundation

PINK MARKET

Queer Songbook Orchestra

The PrEP Clinic

Toronto Image Works Limited

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United Way Greater Toronto

YourCause NPOconnect Employee Giving Program

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Gaelen Patrick

Gail and George Anthony

John Maxwell

John V. Rider and A. K. Karsan

Paul Austin

Sandra J. Sintnicolaas

Timothy Thompson

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Anthony Partipilo and Mo Killu

Barry Walker

Bill Morneau

C. George Boisvenue

Donald Scott

Glen R. Johnson

Ian Woodruff

Jane Wall

Janine N. Bowen

Jeff Axelrod

Jonathon Borland

K Siriopoulos

Llana Nakonechny

Maritza Yumbla

Mary C. Watson

Michael Fanous

Neil Guthrie

Richard J. Willett

Ron Rosenes

Salah J. Bachir

Scott C. Miskie and Carl Bylow

Shakir Rahim

Shane Olson

Stephan P. Gotschel

Steve Diakanastasis

Tom Hutchinson

William D. Arnott

Yona and Zev Frishman

543 GIVING CIRCLE

Barry Waite

Ben Nauta

Brian Wale

C. George Boisvenue

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David Cobb

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Grant McLellan

Heather McDougall

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Jason Patterson

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John Strachan

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Rupert Hon

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Terry Christiansen

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Bill Fung

David O'Brien

Gail and George Anthony

Glen R. Johnson

James R. Beattie

Jeff Axelrod

John Maxwell

John Goodhew

Lea M. Rossiter

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Ron Rosenes

Sandra J. Sintnicolaas

Scott C. Miskie and Carl Bylow

Shane Olson

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Anthony Partipilo

Blair St. Amand

Daniel b. Tewolde

Dylan Rogers

Jason Patterson

Joe Rocha

John Maxwell

Kevin Robitaille

Litsa Skrivanos

Michel Rondeau

Mikah Styles

Ron Rosenes

Sergio A. Martinez

Sheila Chevalier

Tamryn Jacobson

Tom Hutchinson

\$1,000 – \$1,999

Al Ramsay
Bill Morneau
Cathy McKim
Elise Tremblay
Elyse Hill
Gary W. Robinson
Glen R. Johnson
Japneet Kaur
Jo-Anne Kennedy
John Larsson
Mario Medeiros
Melissa Kennedy
Mhairi L. Cumming
Phillip Ing
Rob D. Cumming
Robert Sharp
Rupert Hon
Sean Colyer
Spencer Chen
Stefan Wypchol

\$500–\$999

Andrew Schonbe
Anna Yeung
Claudia Fuller
Claudia Labal
Daniel D. Holland
David DesLauriers and
Nicolas Diaz
Doug Rier
Geoffrey Skelding
Grace Chiutsi
James Ip
Janine Baillie-Roos
Jason Oord
Jessica Cattaneo
Katrina Krizmancic
Leah N. Spicer
Lisa De Murtas
Mac Stewart
Marc-Antoine Saumier
Mark Irvine
Michael Burtch

Naomi Ceppetelli
Shawn Killam
Taposhi Gandhi
Ty Best
Vincent Francoeur
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SNAP 2019
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Rolfes
David DesLauriers and
Nicolas Diaz
Llana Nakonechny
Timothy Thompson

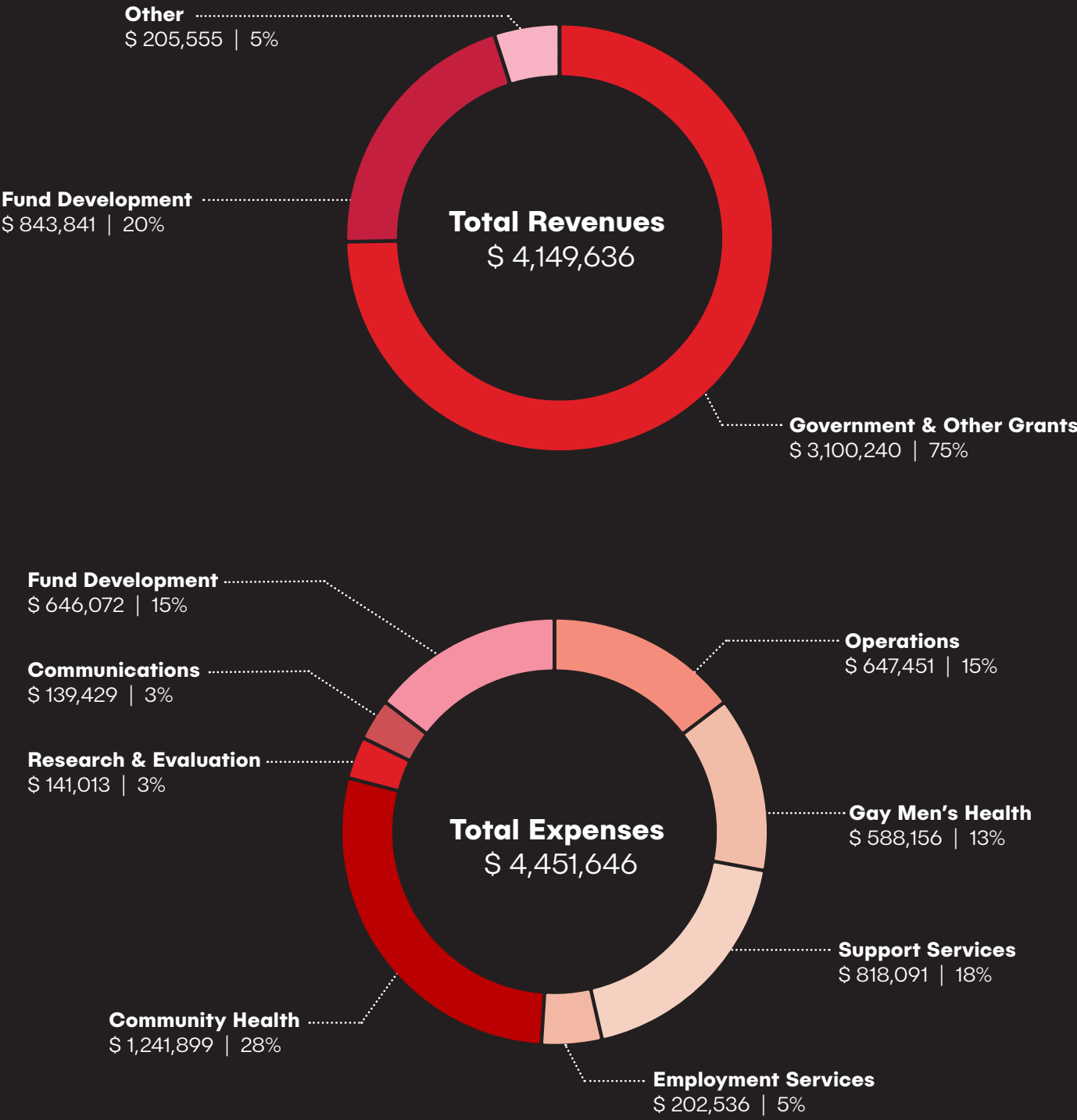
COMMUNITY EVENTS

Ann Kaplan Dinner Party – Bohemian Rhapsody
City of Toronto World AIDS Day Volunteering Event
Flood Documentary Premier Event
Nachoritos Productions – Good Vampire Morning
PhotoED Magazine – Pecha Kucha Speakers Event
Pop Music Vinyl Auction Christmas Fundraiser

POZ-TO/POZPLANET MINGLE Social Fundraising Event
PwC Youth Volunteering Event
TD Bank Forever Proud Volunteering Event
TELUS Spectrum Volunteering Event
Queer Songbook Orchestra – Roasted Chesnut

FINANCIALS

2019 – 2020





ACT EVENTS

2019 – 2020



▶▶▶ FLUID – AN IMMERSIVE, SEX POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

ACT hosted a new event to engage a diverse group of young people in the work of the agency. An immersive experience sponsored by Steamworks, *FLUID* featured a screening room of short films supported by Inside Out Film Festival, live painting, video art and some sexy musical and dance performances. The evening shined a light on the issues around sexual and mental health that impact young people, including cis and trans gay, bi, and queer guys, and how ACT programs support those needs.

◀ **Against the dying of the light**, Lucas Murnaghan, 2018, Part of the SNAP Live Auction Collection

▶▶▶ SNAP – AN EVENING INTERRUPTED BY A PANDEMIC

The handshakes, the hugs, the hands held high to bid on works of exceptional modern and contemporary photography – all were absent in March 2020 when a pandemic took hold of communities throughout the country. When it comes to a pandemic, as an agency supporting people living with HIV and AIDS and those at increased risk since 1983, this ain't our first rodeo – we know the community will come together again and planning continues in earnest with the hopes of hosting SNAP in some shape or form in March 2021.

Extra special thanks extended to TD Bank Group and TD Ready Commitment, who maintained 100% of its financial support despite SNAP not taking place. We are grateful to TD Bank Group for its long-standing commitment to our community, and all our sponsors, artists, patrons and volunteers who make SNAP possible each and every year... almost.

Yellow with Flowers, Jimmy Limit, 2016, Part of the SNAP Live Auction Collection ▶



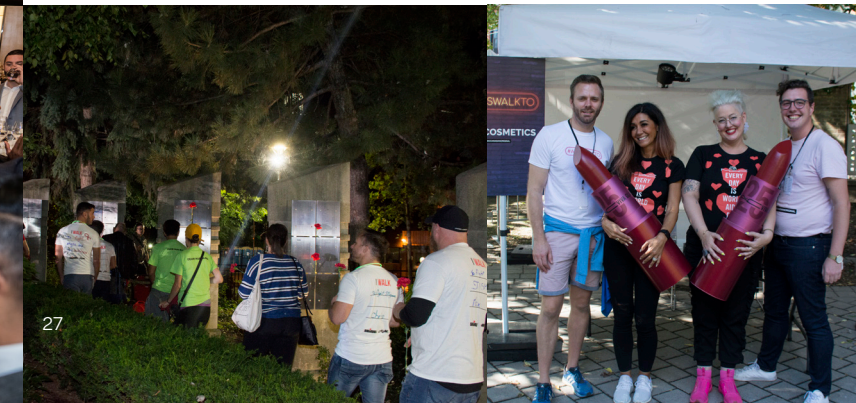
▶▶▶ TOGETHER TOWARDS ZERO LUNCHEON

Acknowledging World AIDS Day, this past year the Luncheon honoured two stand-out, long-standing supporters in Dr. John Goodhew and Scotiabank. The event featured an engaging panel on holistic health for gay men, featuring special guest Joshua O'Neal from *Strut Clinic* in San Francisco. Guests were moved by the testimonial from Julian, a *Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)* service user and would give generously to support its programming for 2020.



▶▶▶ AIDS WALK TORONTO FROM DAY TO NIGHT

The AIDS Walk Toronto went from day to night in 2019. During the day, a community fair featuring music, a beer garden, and vendors from the Pink Market selling their goods. The Walk kicked-off with ceremonial activities in the evening, including words from Mayor John Tory and former MP Bill Morneau. Walkers and Teams laid their carnation on the memorial before hitting the night streets, heading south on Yonge and ending at St. James Cathedral Centre with an after party featuring future Canada's Drag Race queens Priyanka and Scarlett Bobo. A big thank you to the sponsors, teams, walkers, matching donors and volunteers for making the AIDS Walk a success!





▲ John Maxwell, Executive Director (left) with Enrico Mandarin, Chair of the Board of Directors

WITH GRATITUDE

YOUR PLACE. YOUR *Voice.*

▶▶▶▶ With your support of programs and services at ACT, people living with HIV and those at increased risk continue to find their place and their voice as they receive a holistic approach to care and overall well-being.

Groups such as *Addressing Trauma & Recovery* help people like Santiago recover from the traumas they experience in childhood. You empowered him to find his voice through meaningful conversations with others and work on living life to the fullest in the present.

Guys like Hassan and George find their place by accessing resources to create the change they want to see in their professional lives through *Employment ACTION*. Your generosity allowed them to experience opportunities that they may have not found on their own, especially as newcomers to Canada.

For women like Muluba, she is able to connect her voice with other HIV-positive people through the *Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)* program and other women living with HIV through ACT's women's programming. Your support has allowed her to find community, friendships, and sisterhood with other program participants.

Rosana too, found her place and voice, contributing first-hand to the amazing work you make possible. Volunteering her time with women's support programs, she plays an important role in connecting people to an important place they need – a place of social and community connection that's emotionally supportive, helping to uplift women and connect them to self-care and positivity.

Programs like *Totally outRIGHT* give guys like Cam the leadership skills they need to find their voice and navigate through the world as a young gay man. He's developed skills to approach friendships, relationships and learn about sexual health while becoming a community leader – a great place to be indeed!

ACT continues to adapt and change with your support – the tail end of our year and beyond continue to be a challenge for all due the new pandemic of COVID-19, but you empowered us to make our programs and services available online. You also empowered us to better listen

to our communities and offer services such as trans HIV testing days – all this is possible only with your ongoing commitment to our place.

Because of you, Ezra can use their voice to provide resources to the underserved trans and non-binary community and make sure they know this service, along with *Folks Like Us* is offered for trans and non-binary folks.

The connections and communities we foster are only made possible with the support of people like Joseph. Having accessed the benefits clinic at ACT in the mid-1990's, he has experienced how this, and other ACT programs help HIV-positive people and those at increased risk get the support they need. We are so grateful Joseph has extended his voice by generously sharing his story of what is possible through the act of giving. We are grateful to Joseph and donors like him for ensuring ACT is a place people in need can go for years to come.

We know our efforts together are just beginning. That's why we are thoroughly excited to be among the partners in *HQ*, a game-changing health hub for cis and trans gay, bi, and queer guys. This will indeed be "Your Place" to find what you need to support your ongoing sexual and mental health needs as a gay guy in Toronto. We can't wait for what's in store at *HQ*, which will be made possible by broader community support.

On behalf of all the individuals and the communities we serve, thank you for your unwavering support as we work towards zero new HIV infections. Through our collective efforts with you to promote health and build strong, interconnected communities, you help people find their voice and their place at ACT, bringing us all closer to ending HIV and AIDS in Toronto.

John Maxwell
Executive Director

Enrico Mandarin
Chair, Board of Directors

“ ACT continues to adapt and change with your support – the tail end of our year and beyond continue to be a challenge for all due the new pandemic of COVID-19, but you empowered us to make our programs and services available online. You also empowered us to better listen to our communities and offer services such as trans HIV testing days – all this is possible only with your ongoing commitment to our place. ”

We're grateful to these service users for sharing how ACT became their *Place* and supported them in finding their *Voice*, enabling them to take control of their own overall health and wellness.

“ I'm very grateful for your counselling service. It has helped me through some difficult and desperate times. ”

“ ACT programs and volunteer opportunities have allowed me to socialize with people in the community. ”

“ *I was a different person before I started using ACT programs. I'm much happier and healthier now thanks to ACT. I have better mental health and a sense of community. I don't feel isolated or alone anymore.* ”

“ There is no judgment and I feel like I belong. ”

“ I know that when I am there, I will be around people like me, or people who are accepting of people like me. It feels like a home. ”

“ My counselling sessions gave me a wider perspective on life and a vocabulary and confidence to express issues in my life in order to create and maintain a better quality of life. ”

“ Staff have been very kind and generous; it seems everyone is doing their best to make ACT a community, a friendly space. ”

THANK YOU

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▶▶▶▶ **We are here for you.**

**Stay informed and up to date with ACT's
online resources and social channels:**

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