

A Mighty River from Many Streams...
Where we meet we find our strength

Ontario AIDS Network 2005/2006 Annual Report



**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

"A mighty river from many streams" speaks to the focus of the Ontario AIDS Network (OAN) in the past year.

While last year's theme of change and growth symbolized the renewal of many aspects of our organization – evidenced by the development of a new vision, mission, strategic plan and several by-laws – this year's theme highlights the progress we have made in coming together to achieve our goals.

The streams in this metaphor refer not only to the OAN's membership of 48 AIDS service organizations (ASOs) across Ontario but also pay tribute to the diverse lives and many communities that add to the depth of our experience and challenge us to rise to new levels of achievement.

In 2006, the XVI International AIDS Conference transformed Toronto into a meeting place for the world. Our membership played a prominent role in supporting this global event. The stewardship of the OAN was recognized when we were asked by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to administer a scholarship program that enabled 400 Ontarians to participate in the conference, among them more than 80 people with HIV/AIDS (PHAs). On the final evening of the conference the OAN co-hosted the International AIDS Vigil which honoured the thousands of lives lost to AIDS in Ontario and around the world. The Vigil called upon each one of us to defeat AIDS once and for all.

Throughout this busy year our work continued in the areas of policy development, community-based research, leadership development and skills building. A summit meeting of Board Chairs and Executive Directors was held in January to identify the organizational resources needed to sustain our work. Key areas of concern highlighted by the summit included inadequate funding of ASOs, lack of technology and the need to create a coordinated approach to human resources management. Progress has been made on all of these vital issues in the past year: agencies funded by the AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care received funding increases as well as computers and training and, through our ongoing work in the Provincial Community Planning Process, the creation of a human resources partnership is becoming a reality.

In accordance with our commitment to recognizing the contributions that PHAs make in response to the epidemic and the need to create opportunities that encourage their active participation in all aspects of our work, the Governance Committee has been busy implementing the new by-laws including the shift to a majority PHA representation on the Board of Directors. The Board also made a decision to invest in our future by supporting a leadership development program to attract and support an emerging generation of HIV positive leaders.

To integrate new Board members into the governance structure, the Board conducted a Board orientation day which was later followed by a two-day retreat to establish governance priorities for the current year and to assess implementation of our strategic directions. The Executive Committee met to discuss governance structure and organizational transformation. The Committee also reviewed the Board Matrix of skill sets, building on the work conducted at the retreat and in preparation for the Election Call for the 2006 Annual General Meeting.

To support its membership, the OAN organized a provincial policy action day which provided training in media relations and policy development. One component of this training was a meeting of some of the OAN membership with representatives from all provincial parties to discuss the impact of HIV in Ontario. As part of our policy development focus, in addition to meetings with senior policy officials at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Board held meetings with the provincial Minister of Labour and the Minister of Community and Social Services. This further demonstrates our commitment to social justice issues such as reducing barriers to employment, maintaining access to health and disability benefits (such as the special diet supplement) and housing. Our focus on income support goes beyond the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and speaks to the needs of employed PHAs, many of whom face challenges re-entering or remaining in the workplace.

Our approach to influencing public policy and the focus of our Board is one that continues to recognize that addressing the social determinants of health is critical to ensuring that PHAs live healthy, productive lives. Our commitment to ensuring access to housing for PHAs, for example, has resulted in a partnership to conduct two provincial studies that address housing on both the individual and systemic levels. We have also worked tirelessly to raise more than \$150,000 to support the OAN Positive Action Fund which helps PHAs in need of emergency assistance.

Of course, we could do none of this important work without the outstanding efforts and commitment of our membership, staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, donors and funders.

Where we meet we find our strength.

Ron Lirette, President
Rick Kennedy, Executive Director

i) Policy Development Program *Patti Bregman*

Community capacity and leadership

In its second year, the Policy Development Program at the OAN expanded the “rivers” of community capacity and leadership in the area of public policy. Public policy in this context focused on policy issues beyond health care for PHAs. Key initiatives in support of these goals included a two-day training program attended by 20 volunteers and staff of OAN member organizations. The goal of the training was to create skills that participants can use in meetings with local politicians, community leaders and the broader community. The first day of the program featured on-camera training to demonstrate how messages can be spread effectively across the province through local media. Participants were also involved in refining key messages to ensure consistency across the province. The second day of training featured meetings with representatives of all three political parties at Queen’s Park. This series of meetings provided an opportunity to take messages directly to the politicians, raising the profile and understanding of issues important to PHAs. The OAN was recognized in legislature that afternoon as participants watched from the galleries in the legislature.

Funding enhancements

The OAN continued to work closely with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the AIDS Bureau on a range of issues including enhanced funding for ASOs. After a concerted effort by the OAN and its members, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced funding increases for ASOs across Ontario. Additional increases were provided to those ASOs that have been historically underfunded. These increases demonstrate the capacity of the OAN and its members to effect change when there is strong engagement in an issue.

Social determinants of health

The Policy Development Program continues to increase the profile of and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the social determinants of health. In addition to meeting with representatives from all three parties, the OAN worked on income security issues including the special diet. We met with the new Minister of Community and Social Services to discuss a number of issues of importance to PHAs including income assistance, the new employment supports, the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and housing issues. Finally, we continue our work with other organizations on issues including the criminalization of HIV and human rights reform in Ontario.

ii) PHA Leadership Development Program *Thomas Egdorf*

Strong leaders create stronger communities

The new PHA Leadership Development Program offers PHAs a unique opportunity to identify and develop their leadership skills. A core value of this evolving program is that “strong leaders create stronger communities.” Level I training focuses on creating a network of informed and empowered individuals within the PHA community who will have the tools to participate in and influence their communities.

Feedback on the program

In its first year, the response to the new PHA Leadership Development Program has been enthusiastic. Fifty eight participants have graduated Level I training. Participants represented a diverse range of PHAs, unprecedented in the Program’s previous format, in terms of gender, ethnicity and regional representation. The first Level II training course will be piloted in late January 2007. The next year will feature several Level I and Level II courses.

What some of the Level I graduates had to say:

“...this course is one that has allowed me to understand myself and to see myself taking on more of a leadership role in my life and in my work.”

“...the content and course materials were extremely relevant to what we as PHAs need to make ourselves more effective as leaders...I left enthused about the future. [The course] is an essential component, I think, of the personal development plans of all PHA who want to better themselves and contribute more effectively to the work of their ASO or the HIV/AIDS movement in general.”

“It was interactive and in-depth; exploring my skills and perceptions to create transformations while embracing individuality and diversity. It's time has come and the training is right on track.”

iii) Community-based Research Program *Shelley Cleverly*

Building Bridges: developing the community-based research capacity of HIV/AIDS communities in Ontario

Over the last year, the Director of Community-Based Research has worked with our membership to build awareness of the value of HIV/AIDS community-based research (CBR), to assess needs and build comfort and skill with carrying out all parts of CBR initiatives, to support relationship building and partnership development that enables strategic collaboration on research projects and to enhance infrastructure in support of CBR.

CBR capacity building activities have included: evaluation support for the OAN's PHA Leadership Development Program; team building, skills building and support for the submission of a proposal to the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) for the PHA ACCESS Project which aims to support access to mental health therapy modalities in ASOs; focus group and CBR ethics training for the Kingston Men's Study; skills building for an online survey called A Pilot Assessment of Service Needs For HIV Positive Women in Etobicoke, North York/York, and East/York Scarborough; CBR ethics training for the Positive Spaces, Healthy Places study on housing; support for the research design phase for the Ontario Women's Study; and support for the design and implementation of Living & Serving: 10 Years Later, a study designed to assess barriers to and strategies for supporting PHA participation in the HIV/AIDS movement in Ontario ten years after Charles Roy, former AIDS Committee of Toronto Executive Director, conducted a study entitled Living & Serving: Persons with HIV in the Canadian AIDS Movement.

Research infrastructure development

CBR infrastructure development activities have included a series of activities in partnership with the OHTN including: the preparation of HIV/AIDS CBR principles; conducting a CBR capacity assessment involving ASOs across Ontario to support capacity-building planning activities; the design of 'Compass' an HIV/AIDS CBR newsletter in partnership with McMaster University's Community-Linked Evaluation AIDS Resource (CLEAR) Unit; and preliminary planning for the Innovation Series (a forum for showcasing CBR research), E-Learning (a web-based learning program), and community-based ethics review.

Other infrastructure development activities involving Community-Based Research Facilitators (CBRFs) nationally included three key contributions to the 2006 AIDS Conference: a poster presentation promoting CBR and the role of CBRFs; promoting the CBRF role and contributions at the Conference's Global Village; and supporting a CBR panel presentation featuring the work of CBRFs



Shelley Cleverly (2nd from left), Director of Community-Based Research for the OAN with other Community-Based Research Facilitators (CBRFs) from across Canada following a panel presentation at the AIDS 2006 Conference.

The Skills Workshops and Development Program is a skills-based educational series provided to our member organizations. The goal of the Skills Program is two-fold: 1) to ensure that those affected, infected and/or at potential risk of HIV infection receive the optimal support and educational resources necessary to better enhance their quality of life and maintain a healthy life-style through service and care providers and 2) to enhance the skills of ASO staff to produce more professional, cohesive ASOs and member groups throughout Ontario.

Workshops for ASOs

Every year, the program holds seven two-day Skills Workshops. A workshop is held for each of the key positions within our member agencies. For the upcoming year, scheduled workshops include: Executive Directors' and Board Chairs' Summit, Educators, Fundraisers, Volunteer Coordinators, Executive Directors' Retreat, AIDS Support Workers and Administrators. The OAN also worked in partnership with the Ontario Organizational Development Program (OODP) to provide a series of "Boundaries" workshops that enabled staff to explore and define appropriate limits and protocols within the workplace.

Outcomes of the program

Some of the significant outcomes of our series of workshops include the identification of three priorities for our members at the Executive Directors' and Board Chairs' Summit in January 2006. Key priorities included: addressing inadequate funding of ASOs, lack of technology and the need to create a coordinated approach to human resources management. Since January, there has been a 1.5 percent increase in funding to all AIDS Bureau-funded programs in Ontario; the AIDS Bureau supplied over 400 laptop computers to AIDS Bureau-funded organizations and the OAN in partnership with the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) and the AIDS Bureau supported computer software training; and the OAN has begun working to identify recruitment, retention and best practices in human resources for ASOs in Ontario.

Web-based learning initiatives

In keeping with our focus on blended learning (both in-person and virtual), the Skills Program led the transformation of the OAN website (www.ontarioaidsnetwork.on.ca). Aside from creating a new look for the website, web-based learning opportunities abound. The OAN now provides virtual opportunities for member organizations to post materials and notices. Further, as part of the Making Connections Project, the website also boasts two web-based learning opportunities:

HIV 101: A course developed in partnership with Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE) and to be used among member organizations to develop a common language and knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

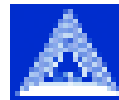
HIV and Depression: Developed in partnership with the Centre for Research on Inner City Health (CRICH) at St Michael's Hospital, this course features interviews with PHAs with the dual diagnoses of HIV and depression, a self-assessment tool and various coping strategies and resources. The Adding Life to Years guide to HIV and depression in this section is designed to help ASOs and other community-based organizations that provide services for PHAs. This course features video interviews with PHAs and front line workers.



v) Positive Action Fund

With the generous support of our many donors, the Positive Action Fund operates to provide emergency assistance to PHAs throughout Ontario. Funds support PHAs who are in need of financial assistance for necessities such as food, medicine, shelter, transportation and optical and dental care. In the past two years, \$290,000 has been dispersed. Last year alone, 4,651 people with HIV/AIDS requested assistance from ASOs who act as distribution centres for the Positive Action Fund. The Fund's resources are distributed by designated OAN member agencies including:

AIDS Committee of Durham AIDS Committee of Guelph and Wellington County AIDS Committee of London AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area AIDS Committee of Ottawa AIDS Committee of Simcoe County Access AIDS Network AIDS Thunder Bay AIDS Committee of Windsor AIDS Niagara The AIDS Network Peterborough AIDS Resource Network (PARN) Peel HIV/AIDS Network Toronto PWA Foundation HIV/AIDS Regional Services (HARS)



Ongoing Projects at the Ontario AIDS Network

i) Making Connections

Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, Making Connections is a project designed to increase the OAN's online capacity for knowledge transfer and exchange. This project is an exciting web-based learning initiative meant to engage ASOs, support workers and PHAs. Making Connections has enabled the OAN to reach out to diverse and isolated communities who benefit from information and interaction with others in their field. PHAs are able to find relevant information, take part in skills training and, importantly, connect with other PHAs online. Making Connections uses audio, video, quizzes and e-mentoring to support development for online learning. To date, Making Connections has developed two online courses that are now available: HIV 101 and HIV and Depression. An additional learning module to help connect and mentor PHAs in their leadership development work is also being developed.

ii) Adding Life to Years Project

Depression is a serious issue for many people with HIV. While research findings vary, it is estimated that depression affects 40-60 percent of people with HIV and it often goes unrecognized. Adding Life to Years is a partnership of the OAN, the AIDS Bureau of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and St Michael's Hospital's Centre for Research on Inner City Health (CRICH). The project was designed to help ASOs deal with depression among PHAs and its goals are to: develop training, tools and resources that will help community-based ASOs; identify clients who are depressed; identify clients who can be served appropriately by ASOs and those that require more specialized services; link with other useful organizations; and provide appropriate interventions.

Some of the results of this multi-year project include: a think tank held in Alberta for people who work in the HIV/AIDS sector in Alberta and British Columbia; a presentation at the Canadian Mental Health Association's third annual Making Gains in Mental Health and Addictions Conference in Ontario; and a satellite session at the XVI International AIDS Conference, Adding Life to Years: A National Collaborative and Multi-Sectoral Response to HIV and Depression. Further, a web-based course on HIV and depression has been made available at the OAN website. This online course is designed to help ASO staff recognize and support the needs of PHAs suffering from depression.

iii) Provincial HIV/AIDS Community Planning Initiative

Supported by the AIDS Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Community Planning Initiative is a process developed to bring together organizations with a mandate in HIV and related services. Each planning region across Ontario has two champions to organize and lead the community planning process: for the provincial planning region, the two champions are Rick Kennedy, Executive Director, OAN and LaVerne Monette, Executive Director, Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy. The task of each planning region is: to develop a community HIV/AIDS strategy that responds to local needs and reflects provincial goals and directions; to improve access to and coordination of services to PHAs and populations at risk; to provide more integrated, comprehensive, effective, efficient care and service; and to develop innovative service delivery models.

iv) Federated Health Charities

The OAN continues to be a proud and active member of Federated Health Charities. Rick Kennedy acts as a co-chair of Federated Health's Executive Committee and the OAN is a recipient of the organization's fundraising initiatives. Federated Health began 23 years ago when members of the Ontario Public Service created an internal, workplace campaign to benefit various health charities and to raise awareness of health issues. Since it began, the campaign has raised over \$20.2-million to help find cures and treatments, to care for people living with diseases and to help others learn how to prevent illness. The health education side of the campaign has helped thousands in the OPS to better care for themselves, their families and their friends. As for the OAN, the support of Federated Health Charities has been a vital component of our success.

v) Housing Research Projects

The OAN continues to address the housing needs of PHAs through participation in two research initiatives.

Positive Spaces, Healthy Places

At our annual retreat for Executive Directors in 2002, a provincial sub-committee was formed to look at the issues facing PHAs directly related to housing. A partnership between several ASOs and then researchers from York and McMaster Universities was formed to study the housing needs of PHAs. The partnership identified that housing may be the greatest unmet need among PHAs and that specific housing supports to ensure safety, health and dignity, varied among PHAs. It also noted the lack of research in Canada that presents a barrier to the adequate understanding of the current situation in Ontario and an ability to plan for the future.

Ongoing collaborative efforts of the partnership have resulted in the successful funding of a province-wide CBR initiative, with the goal of examining housing and health in the context of HIV and assessing the current and projected housing needs of PHAs in Ontario. This CBR initiative is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), Wellesley Central Health Corporation, the AIDS Bureau and the OAN.

Housing Solutions

Housing Solutions is an example of the OAN partnering beyond traditional boundaries. Funded by the OHTN, the project team includes: Dale Butterill, Manager, Knowledge Transfer, Health Systems Research and Consulting Unit, CAMH; Rick Kennedy, Executive Director, OAN; Dianne Macfarlane, Senior Associate, Health Systems Research and Consulting Unit, CAMH; and John Sylvestre, Assistant Professor, School of Psychology and Senior Researcher, Centre for Research and Community Services, University of Ottawa. Housing Solutions is a direct response to ASOs, the OHTN and the AIDS Bureau, having identified housing as one of the most urgent needs of PHAs in Ontario. This project will deliver: system level recommendations for housing and housing supports for PHAs in Ontario that are directed to policy makers and service providers; recommendations located within a clear vision and set of principles; and details on the components comprising an appropriate continuum of housing and housing support services.

This project depends on working with stakeholders to gather and refine the best possible information from a range of sectors and groups from the HIV/AIDS service provider community, the mental health housing/housing support service provider community to the generic social housing service provider community including emergency providers, the larger housing system and the PHA community.

The OAN Celebrates the 10th Annual Honour Roll of Excellence

2005 marked the tenth anniversary of the OAN Honour Role of Excellence. Each year, the Honour Roll recognizes the outstanding achievements of individuals and their dedication to creating a just and effective response to HIV/AIDS in Ontario. In 2005, the OAN was thrilled to announce four Honour Roll recipients as well as our second ever Social Justice in HIV/AIDS award. The OAN appreciated the ongoing support of GlaxoSmithKline in partnership with Shire BioChem for our Honour Roll Banquet.

Social Justice in HIV/AIDS Award Inductees

2005 The HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario (HALCO)

2004 June Callwood

Ontario AIDS Network Honour Roll Inductees

2005 John Gaylord Jay Koornstra Ron Lirette Ruthann Tucker

2004 Patrick Cupido Bob Leahy Raj Maharaj Susan Secord-Paul

**2003 Laurie Edmiston David Linton Shari Margolese Danny Nashman
Ron Rosenes**

2002 Yves Denis St. George Dr. Colin Kovacs Devan Nambiar

2001 Jim Wakeford Joanne Lush Derek Thaczuk John MacTavish

2000 Sean Hosein Sam Conti Judith Tresidder Tony Di Pede

Dr. Anita Rachlis Charles Roy

1999 Alex Berry Rick Bebout Dionne A. Falconer Robert Trow

John Flannery Dr. Don Kilby Jane Strickland Penelope HOLETON

1998 Frank McGee Ann Matte Dr. Alan Li Dr. Anne Phillips Kevin Orr

Michael Lynch Stephen Manning Bernard Courte George Smith

Molly Nakyonyi Yvette Pereault Ed Jackson Dr. Greg Robinson

1997 Mary Cerré Paul Maingot Louise Binder Gail Flintoft Mark Bulbrook

Michael Sobota Betty Anne Thomas Dr. Alex Klein Tim McCaskell

James Thatcher Clarence Crossman Camille Orridge Andrew LaFontaine

1996 David Kelley James Kreppner Darien Taylor Brian Farlinger

Maggie Atkinson Dr. Jay Browne Dr. Rick Green Dr. Philip Berger

David Hoe Dr. Ian Mackie Douglas Stewart Joan Anderson Wayne Fitton

The Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care presents the Social Justice in HIV/AIDS Award to Mark Blans, accepting on behalf of HALCO.

2005 Honour Roll Award Recipients: (from left) John Gaylord, Mark Blans (on behalf of HALCO), Ron Lirette, Ruthann Tucker and Jay Koornstra.



XVI International AIDS Conference

In August 2006, Toronto played host to the XVI International AIDS Conference. The OAN had a significant role in the AIDS Conference. The OAN coordinated an unprecedented learning opportunity for hundreds of people in Ontario as over 400 scholarships were awarded to PHAs, volunteers and staff at AIDS related programs throughout Ontario. The AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provided \$1 million in funding and the OAN facilitated the scholarship process, registration, travel and accommodations for scholarship recipients.

The OAN was a strong presence at the 2006 AIDS Conference in several areas. The OAN co-hosted a satellite session with St Michael's Hospital and the AIDS Bureau entitled Adding Life to Years: A National Collaborative and Multi-Sectoral Response to HIV and Depression. This session highlighted our efforts to bring together ASOs and mental health organizations to develop an effective response to people with HIV and depression. The Community-Based Research Program also collaborated with its Canadian counterparts and funder, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to host a panel discussion and an information booth at the Global Village.

International AIDS Vigil

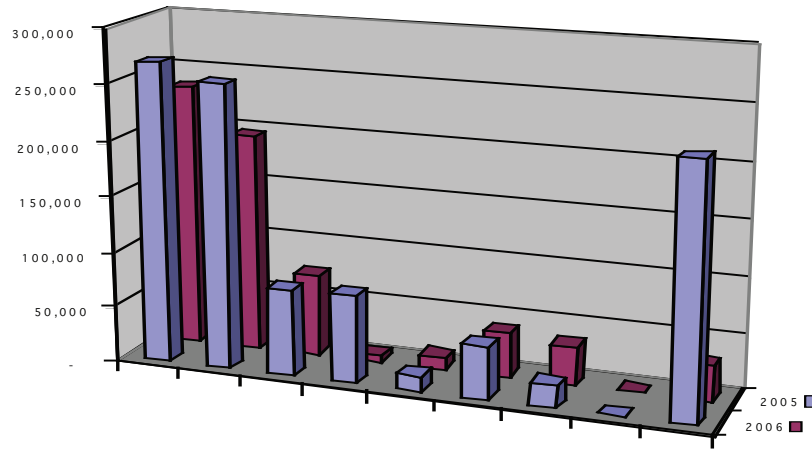
One of the key events that occurred during the 2006 AIDS Conference was the International AIDS Vigil coordinated through a partnership of the 519 Church Street Community Centre, Casey House, the AIDS Committee of Toronto and the International Conference Local Host. The event was co-chaired by Rev. Philip Weaver (Casey House), Jocelyn Watchorn (ACT) and Rick Kennedy (OAN). Over 7,000 people participated in the Vigil which was held at Yonge-Dundas Square in Toronto. The event garnered significant media attention and featured many Ontario and international participants in the AIDS movement. The Vigil was broadcast live on CBC Newsworld and simulcast on electronic billboards around the Square. Notable participants included federal Minister of Health Tony Clement, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman and Toronto Mayor David Miller. Live performances by Holly Cole and Billy Newton David were some of the highlights of the event.

Aside from bringing international attention to those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS, the proceeds from the Vigil went towards the OAN Positive Action Fund which provides emergency assistance to PHAs. The Vigil was made possible through financial assistance from the AIDS Bureau and BMO Financial Group.

Thousands of people attended the International AIDS Vigil in Yonge-Dundas Square, Toronto.

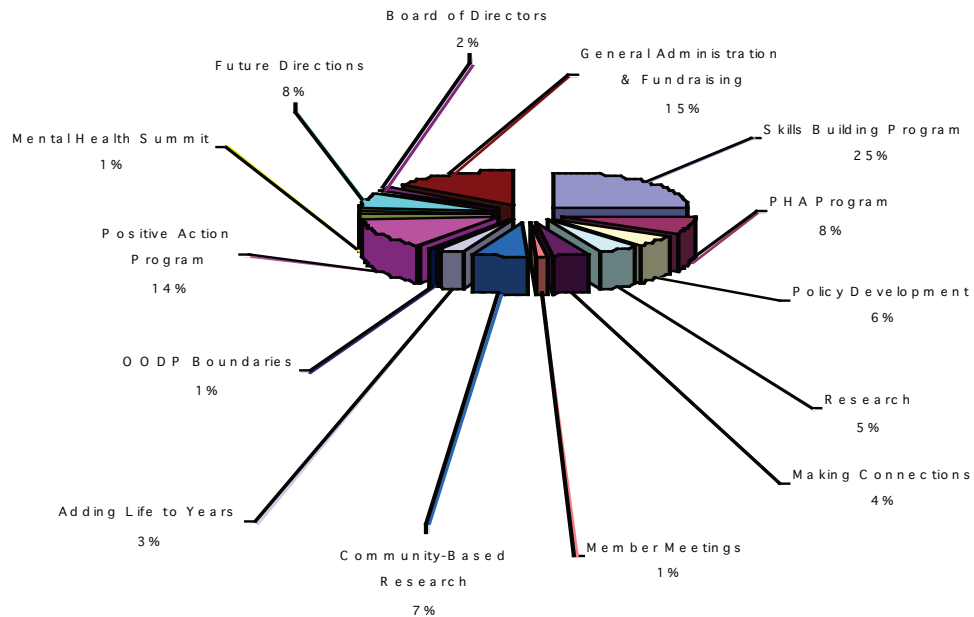


Sources of Revenue



	Ontario Ministry of Health	Health Canada	Federated Health Charities	Corporate	Individual	Membership Fees	Registration Fees	Interest	Other
2006	270,181	255,517	77,379	78,750	13,392	47,477	19,819	259	224,593
2005	236,577	197,000	73,561	5,484	11,299	39,966	34,789	203	32,205

Expenditure by Program Area



Kudos to our Volunteers

We are grateful to our volunteers who contribute their time, energy and passion to supporting the work of the OAN. Our volunteers are members of the Board of Directors, participants on various working committees and frequent "extra sets of hands" to ensure that the work of the organization gets done. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who help to support the work of the OAN. Some of these volunteers include:

**Amutha Samgam Chuck Haskins Ed Argo Gerry Croteau Jane Wallis Janet Mellor
Jari Dvorak Jeremy Cox Jim Empey Joseph van Veen Juanita Smith Kaddu Mukasa
Justine Ndibalwanya Karen Vance-Wallace Kim Dolan Les Bowman Mark Fisher
Michael Sobota Murray Jose Neil McGregor Patrick Cupido Peter Hayes Robb Travers
Ron Lirette Saara Greene Steve Harris Tony DiPede Vicki Kett Victor Inigo**

Thank you to our Donors and Funders

The Ontario AIDS Network acknowledges the generous support of our donors and funders:

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Action Program (ACAP), Public Health Agency of Canada Alfred W.J. Dick;
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Community-Based Research Program, Canadian Institutes of Health
Research LCBO Lord Elgin Hotel Ottawa Mildred Pierce Restaurant
Paul McClure Jewellery Ramada Hotel & Suites (Toronto) Souleppper
Theatre Company Starbucks Coffee Canada Steve Stober Photography
Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club Toronto Marriott-Bloor/ Yorkville
Toronto Raptors VIA Rail Canada Inc. The Vintage Inns**

A special thank you to the hundreds of individual donors throughout Ontario.

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