



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**  
2015/2016

**avi** .ORG  
AIDS vancouver  
island

# THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS:

**6100**  
# of individual education and support sessions

**3500**  
# of people who used our harm reduction services

**703,665**  
# of used needles returned across Vancouver Island

**42**  
# of times AVI was mentioned in the media across Vancouver Island

**1100**  
# of education initiatives provided across Vancouver Island

**1005**  
# of people trained in using naloxone. \*These numbers only include up to March 30<sup>th</sup> 2016

**10**  
# of staff who have been with AVI for more than 5 years

**639,533**  
# of new needles distributed across Vancouver Island

**3**  
# of years AVI has been providing the Take Home Naloxone program

**30**  
# of years AVI has been in operation

**484**  
# of people living with HIV and Hepatitis C served

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*AVI respectfully acknowledges the territory of the Kwak-waka’wakw, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Coast Salish Peoples on whose land we live and work.*

“You do amazing work with very limited resources. Thank you for caring for hurting people who struggle to belong anywhere in this society, for teaching and raising awareness.”

## MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

AVI celebrated a milestone this past January - 30 years of existence. This organization was formed by a group of gay men sitting around a kitchen table reacting to the AIDS epidemic unfolding around them. We continue to address some of the same challenges that faced the founders of our organization. Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men were the population first affected by HIV in BC and remain the population most affected by HIV in BC. Earlier this year 49 of our gay brothers and sisters in Florida were hatefully gunned down. The work that brought this organization together continues to be extremely necessary.

The AVI of 30 years ago depended on the commitment and kindness of volunteers, just like today. Thank you to the volunteers of AVI and their thousands of hours put into this organization. Thank you to the staff of AVI who show an inspiring amount of passion and dedication to their work.

The AVI of today also faces different challenges. We have evolved over 30 years as a result of ongoing need

across our society. We serve people suffering from Hepatitis C. We focus on prevention and care for a wide range of individuals living with HIV and AIDS. We have had to evolve and become a service provider for a greater range of people affected by shrinking support systems.

One piece of our identity that hasn't changed in 30 years is our need to fight. This need is necessary again, now that we are faced with another raging epidemic. We are fighting for individuals who are seeking a safe space to use drugs and the supports they need. Overdoses in our community are at epidemic levels. Just like HIV and AIDS in the 80s and 90s, this epidemic is not being given the resources, respect and commitment it deserves. There are significant parallels to thirty years ago: a marginalized group of our community, an ineffective response by some levels of our government, and a community of individuals fighting back to get the support that is needed.

The overdose crisis has been declared a public health emergency. The rates of overdoses in Victoria, across the islands and throughout BC have spiked. Some steps have been taken, including increased access and training of naloxone, but more needs to be done. We need safe consumption sites in our cities. These will help reduce the overdose crisis, provide users access to health care and other critical services, and improve the communities we live in by encouraging people to move out of stairwells and doorways to use drugs.



Together we need to fight for the establishment of safe consumption services across the island.

Our organization is an evolving community of peoples: LGBTQ+ people, homeless people, first nations peoples, marginalized people, people without access to effective healthcare services, citizens, advocates and more. We cannot work in isolation. We need to remind ourselves that we're more effective, more deliberate and stronger when we stand up together. We can demand action on violence against LGBTQ+ people, demand places in our communities that people can use drugs without fear for their health or liberty, we can demand action on housing, the right to enough food in our bellies and the rights to effective health services and support for everyone affected by HIV/AIDS and HEP-C. This will require us to once again stand together.

We have to come together and fight once more, this time for the rights of people impacted by the overdose epidemic. Fighting together for justice is a piece of our organization's DNA.

*Brett Harper*

Brett Harper

## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It was on January 24<sup>th</sup> 30 years ago this year that AVI was incorporated as a society. I would like to acknowledge, Grant Sullivan, Wayne Cook, Roy Saloin, Don McIvor and John Spencer. AVI would not be here today if it were not for these five men who sat at Grant's kitchen table more than 30 years ago and decided it was time to meet the challenge presented by AIDS. They showed remarkable courage for the time and they were bound by their relationships to each other and the men they were trying to help.

Over the years since then, AVI has evolved and expanded. In 1989 the new Chair of the Board, Larry Frost, wrote about the pride in our agency for operating the street outreach services and the needle exchange reminding people that AVI was actually the first community based AIDS agency to do so. In 1996, we created our first Men's Wellness program and in 1998 we expanded our mandate to

include hepatitis C. Along the way we picked up some offices across Vancouver Island and lost one. We have confronted many challenges over the last 30 years as we seek to meet the ever expanding needs before us. Yet the courage and the willingness to step forward to make a difference is what binds us to the past and what also points the way forward.

And now we are at another point in our history. This last year has seen an unprecedented rise in the number of people dying from overdoses and Vancouver Island currently has the distinction of having the highest overdose death rate in the province. Many other communities have also been impacted. We have watched the number of deaths rise alarmingly each year since 2012, but the past few months have been the most challenging and heartbreaking. Rarely does a week go by that staff, clients, and volunteers aren't confronted by the dreadful news of yet another unnecessary death within our community. Often it is someone we knew, or have supported. We grieve these losses and remain determined to fight for safer environments where people are able to use substances and receive care and support. In the meantime, our harm reduction staff in Victoria are on the frontline of the response, administering naloxone and oxygen more than 40 times over the course of the last 9 months. Across the Island our staff have continued to educate our clients and have expanded naloxone training and distribution, training more than 1000 people in the last year alone. We

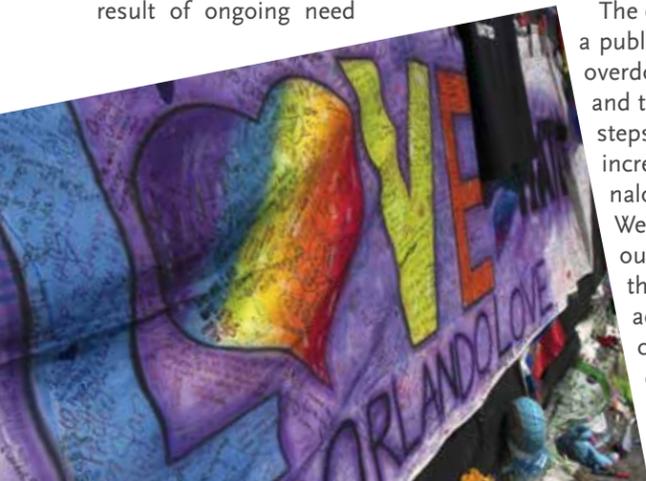
recognise the importance of and continue to advocate for active involvement of people who use drugs in any services designed to serve them. At the end of the day, we know what else needs to be done and I hope that by the time I am standing here before you next year, we will have seen the implementation of supervised injection services on the Island.

In closing, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for whatever role you play in supporting our work. To our funders and donors and community partners, your belief in our work and your continuing contributions makes everything possible. To our Board of Directors, especially our Board Chair, Brett Harper and the members of the Executive Committee, for your commitment and passion. To all our volunteers across the Island, for being our ambassadors in the community and for your dedication to our cause. To our staff, for your everyday kindness and compassion in the face of adversity. And to those who seek our support, it remains a true honour to be of service to you. With you, we stand together to continue the fight for a just and health society where everyone belongs and feels welcome.

Yours in health,

*Katrina Jensen*

Katrina Jensen



"I am a happier, healthier person now. I go to the support group to talk about health and what's going on in my life and it helps me immensely."

"The volunteers and staff are super welcoming and supportive. The programs have purpose and the people have had a really positive effect on my life."

## PROVIDING EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY



Our Island wide Youth Program had another successful year! Activities included providing safer tattooing kits to youth, delivering HIV and sexual health education to hundreds of high school students, a Youth Harm Reduction Training Series, and a Queer Peers Youth Training Series. In Victoria, one of the youth participants co-created and co-presented at the LGBTQ2S Aboriginal Youth Conference. In the North Island, the Queers Creating Change youth group continued its work providing mentorship and peer leadership opportunities. In the Central Island, our educator provided a range of workshops to students at alternatives schools in Nanaimo and Cowichan as well as educating youth of the Stz'uminus and Snuney-muxw communities.

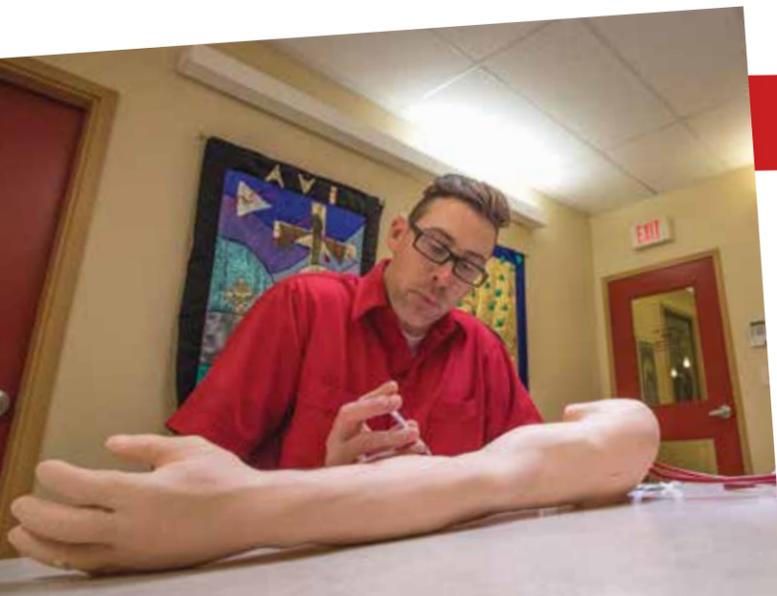
The Hepatitis C Project provided educational support to people living with or at risk of hepatitis C infection through support groups and workshops both at AVI and in the community. In Victoria this included the popular peer program at the Wilkinson Road jail, the detox and stabilization facility connected to the Royal Jubilee Hospital, and outreach at Our Place and the Salvation Army. In the North Island we ran a hepatitis C community

kitchen and provided regular workshops at transition and recovery houses.

We remain grateful for the many Aboriginal communities across Vancouver Island who invite us to work with them. Activities included a Testing and Education event for Aboriginal Hep C Awareness Month held at Victoria Native Friendship Centre; support and attendance for more than 10 health fairs promoting HIV and HCV awareness and providing support for HIV testing including the following communities, the Stz'uminus First Nation, Laichwiltach, Kwakwaka'wakw, K'omoks First Nation, Quinsam, Holmalco, T'Souke, Tseycum, Pauquachin, Esquimalt and Beecher Bay. AVI provided information on HIV transmission, stigma and treatment to the Komox First Nation and developed the HIV Bingo Game with their input and feedback as well as provided training for Aboriginal Elders and Youth at the Quinsam Reserve.

## PEER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

The Street College program expanded across the Island with sessions running in Courtenay and Campbell River. In Victoria, the Leadership course in 2015 was the first wholly peer run leadership courses since its inception 5 years ago. The participants then worked to organise the Convergence for People who Use Drugs as part of 'Street Deaths are Preventable Deaths' convergence. It was hugely successful due to the high quality of the presentations chosen for the convergence, the overall attendance by the leadership participants and the fact that every participant presented.



"I really appreciated the project about HIV. I came into the workshop thinking I basically already knew everything that I needed to, but was blown away when I found out so much more."

## SUPPORTING TESTING FOR HIV AND HCV

AVI Staff provided more than 480 referrals for testing for HIV and HCV and organised more than 50 opportunities for people to be tested across Vancouver Island. In Nanaimo these included monthly MSM clinics, a Valentine's Day event with the theme "Knowing Your Status Is Sexy" and outreach clinics in local housing services. In the North Island, staff also assisted in the co-ordination of the 9th Annual Community Resource Fair in Courtenay where 125+ folks visited information tables, including AVI, and had an opportunity to be tested for HIV, Hep C and other STI's. A number of Blood Blitz events were held in the North Island offices which greatly increased access to supportive and timely HIV testing in the region. In Victoria, MWP partnered with Cool Aid CHC to provide testing outreach to a local sex club as well as running regular MSM specific testing nights.



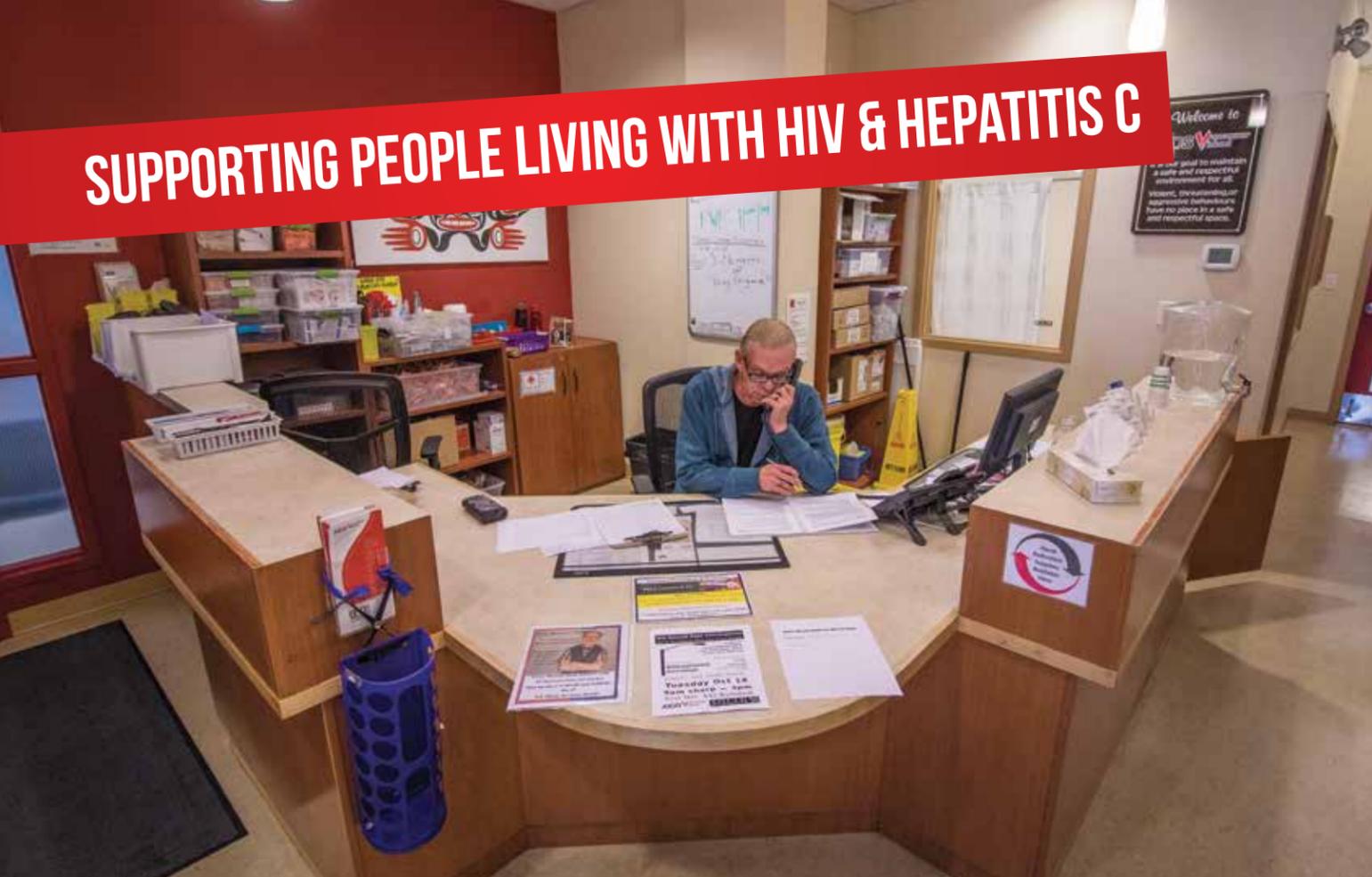
## MEN'S WELLNESS PROGRAM

It was another amazing year for our Men's Wellness Program. Testing initiatives continued to grow along with our regular testing clinics in partnership with the Cool Aid Health Clinic in Victoria and an additional testing program in Nanaimo. We further developed various Education and Support Groups for LGBT Youth, the Gender Variant Community, GBMSM, and LGBT folks who are living with a disability. This was all done with the amazing support of the UVIC Pride Society, Saanich Parks and Rec, and Lifetime Networks. The 3rd Annual Mens'capes conference brought GBMSM from across the island together in Nanaimo giving us the opportunity to teach and discuss topics such as sexual health, resiliency, sexual shame, GBMSM in the prison system and small town gay life. The Screw Crew was busy at many PRIDE events in both Victoria and Salt Spring Island and led many other various other outreach activities aimed at increasing access to relevant sexual health information and safer sex supplies. The Screw Crew has become a well known group who increase access to relevant sexual health information and safer sex supplies.



"The support groups are a very important part of my reconnection to society, it completely helps to have people who get it around you."

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV & HEPATITIS C



Our Positive Wellness Programs across the Island provide care and support for over 400 people living with HIV and hepatitis C infections. Staff also contribute to wider HIV care collaboratives that have been highly successful in supporting people to access and remain on their HIV meds and assist in advocacy for

people to receive hepatitis C treatment. Our partnerships with Island Health, the Cool Aid Community Health Centre, and community based physicians and nurse practitioners remain at the core of our ability to assist individuals in accessing health care that meets their needs.

In Victoria, the Access Health Centre HIV Care Collaborative provided care and support to 35% of the individuals living with HIV on the South Island.

In addition to services at the Access Health Centre, the PWP counsellor and nurse from the Cool Aid Community Health Centre provided regular outreach to engage people who may be otherwise be lost to care. As in previous years, the support services offered

by PWP such as the hot meal program, hepatitis C and HIV support groups, and individual advocacy continue to be well utilized by the 207 registered program members

At our health centre in Nanaimo, our clients living with HIV also accessed regular health care due to the co-location of our medical and support services in the Central Island region. Along with a drop-in and counselling, clients received nursing supports including, vaccinations, bloodwork, HIV POC & linkages along with intensive case management. In Courtenay and Campbell River staff remain committed members of the Positive Wellness North Island HIV Care team providing engagement and case management to people requiring significant support to maintain their HIV treatment regime and their overall health.



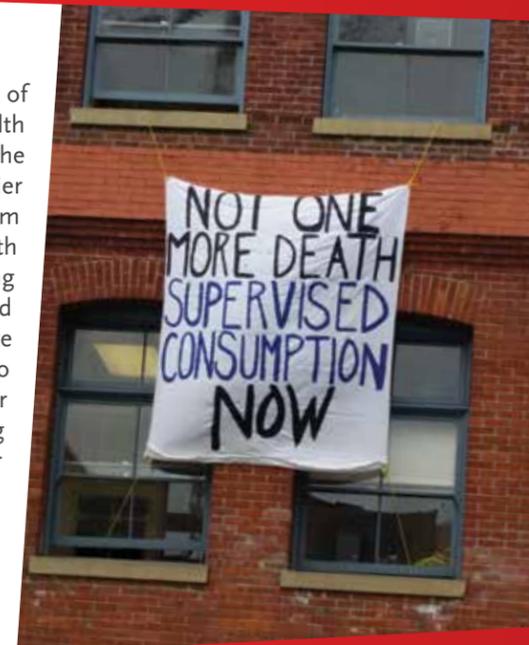
"It's an oasis in the desert for me when I am hurting emotionally and when I feel alone."

## PROVIDING SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

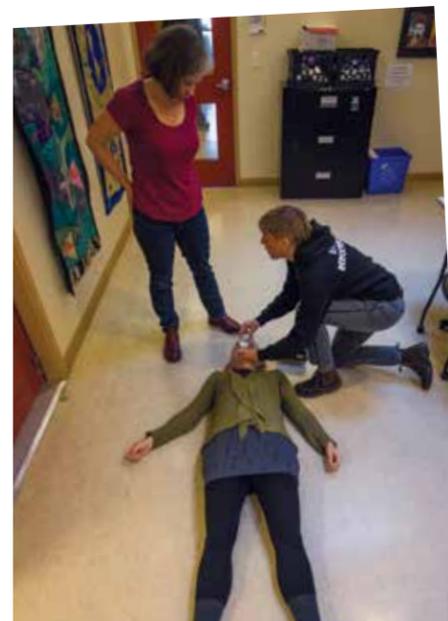
Thanks to the United Way of Greater Victoria, for the last 8 years AVI has been able to offer substance use system navigation and support out of our Harm Reduction services in Victoria. This unique project works with people both individually and in groups to provide early intervention counselling, motivational interviewing, active referral and navigation. Over the last year we worked with more than 180 people seeking support for their substance use and had over 200 people attend a support group. Our counsellor referred more than 100 people for detox and treatment and supported 50 people through admission.

In Nanaimo, the AVI Health Centre cared for over 200 patients in our Opiate

Substitution Treatment Program. Each of our four physicians worked in the Health Centre one session a week. Because the centre is not for profit our low barrier clinic was able to also provide short term support counselling, assistance with housing and access to food, nursing care and harm reduction education and materials. We provided dozens of Take Home Naloxone trainings and kits to our patients and their families. Our physicians, support workers, nursing staff and reception worked together and took great pride in providing services that were low barrier, respectful and caring.



## HARM REDUCTION & RESPONSE TO THE OVERDOSE CRISIS



Across Vancouver Island, AVI continued to provide dedicated harm reduction support, supplies, and education in a safe and non-judgmental environment without fear or stigma. Clients continued to attend our site knowing that they were welcomed, could access a listening and empathic ear, and speak with an individual who is unreservedly on their side and committed to both support and offer direction when requested. Clients readily received training and education when they desired so and were able to forge positive connections with staff, many of who have survived the same struggles, the loneliness, the despair, and the challenge to survive. Over the last year, thanks to a grant from the Victoria Foundation we were able to pilot a harm reduction peer navigator program, in the

Central Island for much of the year, we were the only site to offer naloxone trainings, and in Courtney and Campbell River we expanded our Street College program to provide peer education for clients.

AVI has been working in partnership with the BCCDC's Take-Home Naloxone program since 2013 but in response to the Overdose crisis, we significantly increased our capacity for training and Naloxone distribution in all our regions across Vancouver Island. We provided training to over 1000 people, double the number of last year with these numbers continuing to grow. The trainings included both individual clients and service providers all over the island.



"The HIV Support Group is great. I connect to other community members creating my own community."

## SPECIAL EVENTS

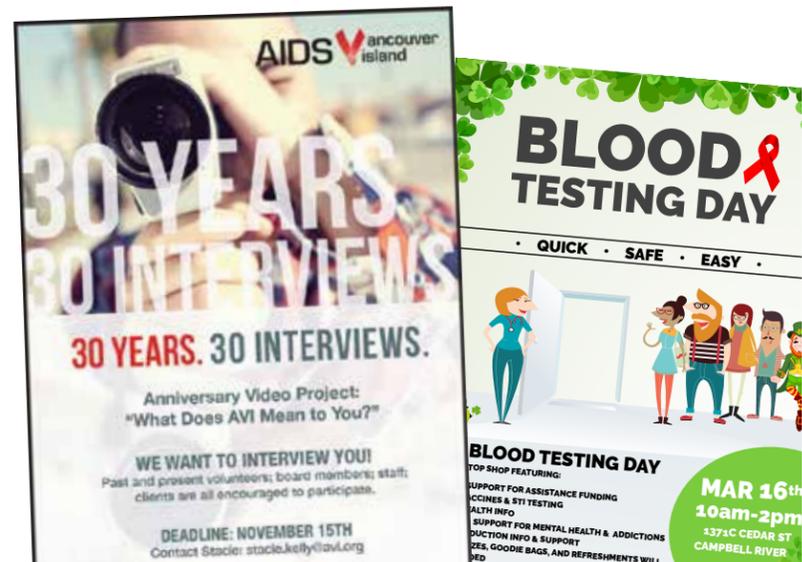


## OUR 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

- AVI celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a party at the Odd Fellows Hall in Victoria on January 29th! We had musical talent, a delicious catered dinner, a silent auction and vibrant speakers. There was also a wildly successful video campaign in which 30 members of our community told us what AVI means to them. See the final "30 Years. 30 Stories" project at <http://bit.ly/AVIturns30>. Warning: It's a tear jerker so make sure you have your tissues ready.

## WORLD AIDS DAY

- In the North Island, opportunities to provide public education included a story in the Comox Valley Record about a service user living with HIV as well presentations and support groups for Aboriginal individuals at both the KDC and Quinsam reserve health units. We worked in partnership with the K'omox Band in Courtenay to host a dinner and HIV Bingo Night for Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week.
- The *We Are Here* anti-stigma campaign was mounted in numerous libraries across the Victoria area and we also had a 'free hugs and high fives' flash mob in the downtown, and a red ribbon candlelit display on the steps of the Legislature to remember the many loved ones who have passed away.
- In Nanaimo, we held an Open House for AVI Nanaimo's 20th Anniversary, participated in the Snuneymuwx First Nation's AIDS Walk and in Tillicum Lelum Health Centre's Open House for Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week.



"Very informative, educational, compassionate and easy to understand."  
 "This program has a ripple effect. I often talk with people and educate people on things I've learned in 10x10."



## A PORT IN THE STORM

- The Palliative Outreach Resource Team and the Equitable Access to Care research study presented "A PORT in the Storm" that explored end of life care for structurally vulnerable people. We had experts in palliative care as well as members of our community delivering speaking about current research and best practices in this area. Over 50 front-line workers and community partners gathered to learn and build the capacity of our community to address the unique needs of our services users as they prepare for end of life.

## ROCK YOUR AWARENESS

- The 8th annual Rock Your Awareness show was a great success once again. We are grateful to Logan's Pub, the many businesses who donate to the raffle, and to all of the musicians for their on-going support and participation.

## WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

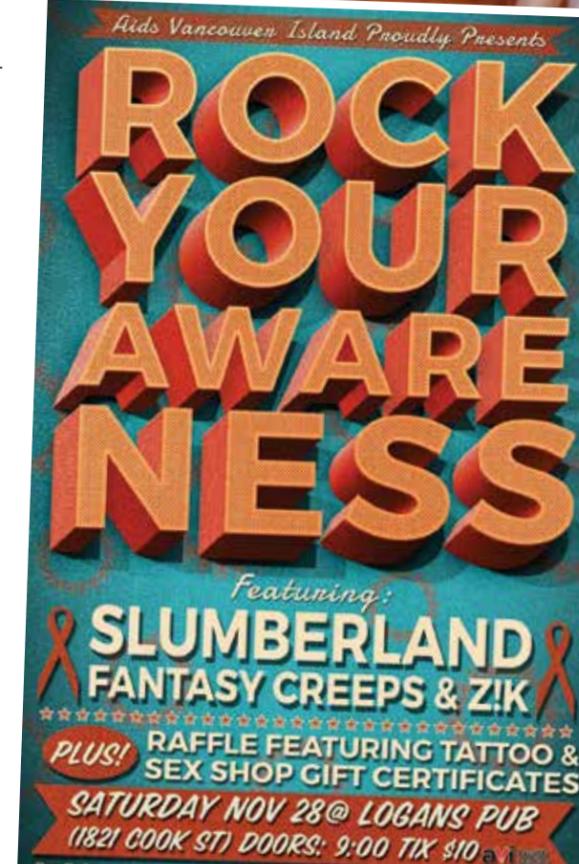
- World Hepatitis Day took place on a beautiful day in July. In Victoria, participants walked together from Centennial Square, through downtown Victoria, to the steps of the Legislature, where we had very special guest speakers and presentations. In Nanaimo, we held film presentations for client and the general public. In Courtenay and Campbell River presentations at the City Councils led to the Mayor and other councillors agreeing to be publically tested.

## CELEBRATING PRIDE

- The Screw Crew with the support of the Men's Wellness Program and AIDS Vancouver Island had another amazing time at Victoria and Saltspring Pride. This year during Pride season the Screw Crew interacted with over 7000 Gay, Bi, Trans, and however else people chose to identify themselves as individuals. Pride is a time for us to celebrate which makes each one of us unique, and it is always a pleasure to experience this event with our communities.

## DINING OUT FOR LIFE

- For the tenth year in a row the restaurant community on Vancouver Island united to help people living with HIV by donating 25% of their food revenue from one day in April. More than 300 individual diners also donated. Proceeds from Dining Out for Life go directly to the Positive Wellness Program, which provides nutritional support for people living with HIV and hepatitis C across Vancouver Island.



"I have maintained my clean time due to my closeness with staff at AVI."  
 "AVI was a resource in the community for me when I had no support at home."



# Thank you

## A THANK YOU TO THE MANY BUSINESSES & INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO OUR AGENCY OVER THE LAST YEAR.

**North Island:** Island Health Mental health, Public Health and CD programs, the Comox Valley Transition Society, KDC Health, Holmalco First Nation, Comox Valley Recovery Centre, Second Chance Recovery Centre, School District #71, School District #72, North Island John Howard Society.

**Central Island:** Nanaimo Women's Centre, RCMP – Nanaimo Bike Unit, Nanaimo Division of Family Practice, Vancouver Island University Vancouver Island Regional Library – Nanaimo Harbour front Branch, (Port) Alberni Community and Women's Services Society, St Andrews Church, MAC Cosmetics, Tillicum Lelum Health Centre, Harris House Health Centre, Island Health Positive Health / Communicable Disease, Beaufort Clinic, Nanaimo Correctional Centre and Nanaimo Pride.

**South Island:** Cool Aid Community Health Centre, Vancouver Island PWA, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Greater Victoria Public Library, 713 Outreach, SOLID, PEERS, YES2SCS, PHS, Salvation Army, Our Place, Umbrella Society, Island Health Street Nurses, Cool Aid, Pacifica Housing, Victoria Youth Clinic, Vic PD, Rock Bay Landing, Island Health HR Coordinator, Victoria Pride, Island Health Detox and Stabilization and CARBC.

## A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



## SPECIAL THANKS TO MAC COSMETICS

A big thank you to the women who work for MAC cosmetics in Nanaimo. For the last eight years Sam and her incredible team of makeup artists (Remy, Anita, Jenna, Shanel and Mandy) have organised a Beer and Burger night as part of the Nanaimo AIDS Walk. This year they raised over \$7000 which was matched by the MAC AIDS Foundation for a total of \$14,000 in donations. This funding helps us provide services for people living with HIV in the Central Island including the very essential nutritional support. We thank the many businesses as well who donate items to the silent auction held during the night. The MAC AIDS Fund also funds our nutrition program in Victoria. Every cent of the selling price of MAC Cosmetics VIVA GLAM lipstick goes to the Fund.

“Great work - AVI has been a leader for years in seeing gaps and needs and then doing what’s needed to make sure these needs are met.”

“Counselling and education has reduced my fear and the effects of stigma.”  
 “I am on disability for severe depression and the love and caring I feel at AVI makes a difference.”

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of Financial Position March 31, 2016

Assets	
Cash	704,608
Accounts Receivable	101,225
Fixed Assets, Net	1,522,453
Other Assets	1,877
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>2,330,163</b>
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	158,480
Mortgages and Lines of Credit	62,808
Advances and Deferred	1,746,618
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,967,906</b>
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	354,754
Restricted	7,503
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>362,257</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>2,330,163</b>

## Statement of Activities April 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016

Support and Revenue	
Health Authority	1,782,732
Federal Government	290,700
United Way	130,211
Gaming Commission	125,000
Health Clinic	515,292
MAC AIDS Fund	80,000
Donations and Fundraising	55,727
Minor and pilot project grants	64,795
Interest and other income	16130
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>3,060,587</b>
Expenses	
Salaries and Benefits	2,241,091
Rent and Office Expenses	325,164
Program Materials	192,328
Meetings, Honoraria and Travel	51,262
Amortization	13,755
Other	277,091
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,100,691</b>
Excess of revenue over expenses before operations from joint venture	<b>(40,104)</b>
Net Operations from Joint Venture	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(40,107)</b>



## BOARD MEMBERS 2015-2016

- Brett Harper, Chair
- Bob Clark, Treasurer
- Lisa Cowan, Secretary
- Mike Kalinka
- Frank Buruma
- Will Nikl
- Antonio Marante
- Sherri Pooyak
- Chad Dickie
- Lily Mignault
- Alex Stirling

## MISSION

AIDS Vancouver Island serves the needs of people infected and affected by HIV and hepatitis C. We take evidence-based action to prevent infection, provide support and reduce stigma.

## VISION

Our Vision is of a world free of HIV and hepatitis C. Until that time, those most at risk in our community continue to be marginalized—not only by their disease, but also by stigma and discrimination, poverty and despair. As we fight these diseases, we join with those we serve to provide services based on consideration and respect and to provide visibility and a voice in the community.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the members of the Vancouver Island AIDS Society. We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Vancouver Island AIDS Society, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2016, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### Qualified opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Vancouver Island AIDS Society as at March 31, 2016 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then

*Grant Thornton* LLP  
Chartered accountants

# CONTACT US

## Campbell River

1371 c. Cedar Street, BC, Campbell River  
Phone: 250-830-0787 | Fax: 250-830-0784  
Toll free Infoline: 1-877-650-8787

## Courtenay/Comox

355 6th St., Courtenay, BC, V9N 1M2  
Phone: 250-338-7400 | Fax: 250-334-8224  
Toll free Infoline: 1-877-311-7400

## Nanaimo

AVI Health Centre  
102-55 Victoria Road, Nanaimo, BC, V9R-5N9  
Phone: 250-753-2437 | Fax: 250-753-4595  
Toll free: 1-888-530-AIDS (2437)  
[www.avihealthcentre.org](http://www.avihealthcentre.org)

## Victoria

3rd Floor - Access Health Centre  
713 Johnson St, Victoria  
Phone: 250-384-2366 | Fax: 250-380-9411  
Toll free Infoline: 1-800-665-2437

Harm Reduction Staff, 3-10pm daily,  
250-889-0268

Mobile Harm Reduction Services  
250-896-AVIX (2849)

Email: [info@avi.org](mailto:info@avi.org)



Preventing Infection,  
Providing Support and  
Reducing Stigma.