reACT-Believe

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay

Spring, 1996 Volume 9, Issue 1

Call to Renew the National AIDS Strategy

by Michael Sobota, Executive Director

The Federal government's ***National AIDS Strategy*** ends in March 1998. This strategy spells out the role and responsibility of the Federal government in responding to HIV and AIDS in Canada, and commits the government to certain levels of spending in making that response. Included in the commitment to spending, is support for research in Canada related to HIV/AIDS, the National AIDS Secretariat, to the Canadian AIDS Society and the AIDS program of Canadian Public Health Association.

As well, the National AIDS Strategy delivers funds across the country to local community based AIDS organizations (ASO's) through the AIDS Community Action Program (ACAP). Locally, that filters down to approximately $50,000 annually to ACT-B. These funds support our Health Promoter position, as well as our annual AIDS Awareness Week activities, Healthy Sex Cabaret, our regional social marketing campaign and a workshop series called "Positively Well." So the National AIDS Strategy plays a vital role in supporting important, national goals as well as significant community activities. The strategy is in danger of lapsing.

To date the government has no plans or process put in place to continue the work against HIV/AIDS in Canada beyond March, 1998.

The National AIDS Strategy, which funds ACT-B's Health Promoter Position is in danger of lapsing.

ACT-B is joining our sister ASO's in Ontario and across Canada, to urge action on renewing the National Strategy as a health priority. Meetings have been arranged with the Federal Health Minister to express this urgency. The Minister, while sympathetic, has said he needs to hear the support of local MP's from across the land, that renewing the National AIDS Strategy *is important.* We will be advocating vigorously with our local MP's.

We invite you to express your own feelings to Thunder Bay's two MP's:

Stan Dromisky
(Thunder Bay-Atikokan)
1500 S. James Street,
Thunder Bay ON P7E 6N7
FAX: 577-1905

Joe Comuzzi
(Thunder Bay-Nipigon)
180 Park Avenue Suite 210,
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6J4
FAX: 345-4752

A simple letter, calling for a renewal of the National Strategy in support of national research funding and local, community activities would be helpful. It is very important that our MP's hear from as many individuals as possible.

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Education News

EDUCATION SERVICES

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay has a range of services available to the community. Most of these are easily accessed in Thunder Bay, but we do offer services in the region on a cost-recovery basis.

STAFF TRAINING, PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

We will tailor presentations and/or workshops to meet the needs of your organization. We offer agency workshops for staff, clients, or both. We can also offer workshops for schools, community groups, or others.

RESOURCE CENTRE
217 S. Algoma St.

ACT-B maintains a well-stocked library of books, videos, posters, pamphlets, information files (including treatment information), etc. We have a number of magazines and newsletters. Most material is available free to the public on loan, or for reference in the resource centre. Condoms and lubricant are also available free.

Here is a partial list of the areas that can be covered:

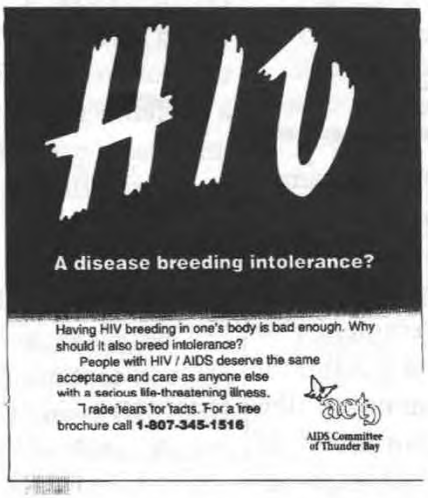
- ✓ working with clients who may be HIV positive
- ✓ HIV/AIDS updates
- ✓ living with HIV/AIDS
- ✓ infection control procedures
- ✓ sexual orientation issues and/or homophobia
- ✓ legal and ethical issues
- ✓ healthy choices, including safer sex

AIDS INFORMATION PHONELINE
345-SAFE (7233)

Available anytime for a recorded message. Calls during office hours (9:30 - 5:00 pm. weekdays) are answered by staff who provide information or counselling on issues related to HIV and AIDS.

SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The campaign involves placing ads in regional newspapers designed to combat stigma and work towards promoting a supportive social environment. We have completed the first two years of the three year project. The first year involved four ads, the second year four ads plus a poster, and a brochure addressing homophobia. Each year of the project has been evaluated through a regional telephone survey.



AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

This is an annual event, that is part of the National AIDS Awareness campaign. Each year has a different focus. In 1996 the theme will be "SUBSTANCE USE AND HIV". We urge communities, organizations, and individuals to become part of this annual effort.

ADVOCACY

ACT-B is involved in a wide range of advocacy concerns. These include, but are not limited to, direct support issues. We attempt to keep abreast of emerging issues and act when appropriate. These have included access to treatments and drugs, the cost of treatments, sexual orientation concerns, language and human rights issues. We often work in concert with the Ontario AIDS Network and the Canadian AIDS Society.

❖ AIDS in the news ❖

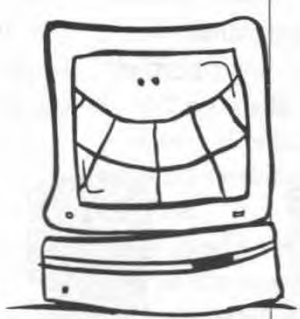
AIDS STAMP

Canada's first AIDS stamp was unveiled on May 8, 1996

On May 8, 1996, AIDS Service organizations and Canada Post joined to unveil Canada's first commemorative AIDS stamp. Created by Joe Average, the design features a multi-coloured stained glass window of faces with a heart at it's centre. It was commissioned for the XI International Conference on AIDS, which is being held in Vancouver from July 7 to 12, 1996.

In Thunder Bay, our presentation was held at Keskus Mall on Saturday, May 11. Philatilists were able to purchase limited edition stamps that were embossed with a "day of issue" and ACT-B butterfly logo stamp. The stamps are an attractive addition to collections. Get yours at your local Post Office.

WEB SITE



The AMA has introduced a new valuable resource for HIV/AIDS information supported by a grant for Glaxo Wellcome on the Internet. The address for this new resource is ***"http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/hivhome.htm".***

It provides information in 9 categories: Journal Scan (the most recent significant HIV publications), Newsline, Practice Guidelines, Ethics Center, Treatment Center, Global Link, Information for Patients, Patient Support Groups, and a Glossary. Not all of the links are fully developed, but there is some very useful, readily available information here.

This "web" site has some valuable medical information. I have been to the site and downloaded several files. Some of the more interesting articles include:
"Evaluation and Management of Early HIV Infection: Clinical Practice Guidelines" This article is about 200 pages (takes 10 minutes to download) and contains information on Drug Regimens for Adults and Adolescents, Drug Regimens for Children, and Standards of Care and Prophylaxis for opportunistic disease.

If you are looking for information about HIV/AIDS treatments, call *The Network.* This is a FREE service sponsored by Health Canada. All information is current and your call is confidential. Check it out!

service bilingue disponible

ALL CALLS CONFIDENTIAL
Tuesday – Thursday 10:00am to 10:00pm (Eastern Time)
Friday 10:00am to 7:00pm (Eastern Time)
Comprehensive, up to date information about HIV/AIDS treatments

The Network
1-800-263-1638
HIV/AIDS Treatment Information

Réseau communautaire d'info-traitements sida (RCITS) | Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE)
Health Canada

Profiles

by Jo-Ann Jacomb, Volunteer Coordinator

Richard DeVuono

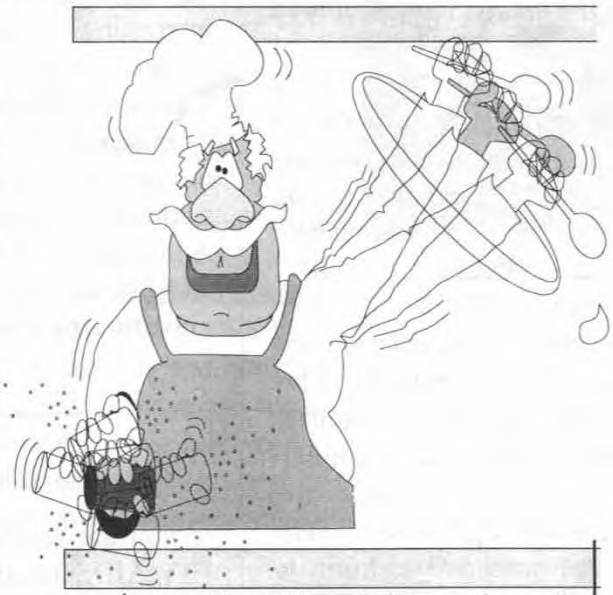
The first time I saw Richard DeVuono, he was wearing a bright crimson coloured sports jacket with a perfectly matching tie. I was impressed. The second time I saw Richard DeVuono, I heard him laugh; one of those laughs that cuts through a crowded room - the contagious kind that makes you want to laugh along. I was impressed. Rick is an all round good guy. He is a devoted and conscientious volunteer who brings a wealth of business knowledge to the AIDS Committee. I am still impressed.

Rick's interests are varied and numerous. He enjoys movies (especially foreign films, swimming, bike riding, cross country skiing, gardening and candle making. He claims to be a "naive home improvement specialist." "I'm putting a bathroom in the basement and it's almost finished after two years!"

Richard's real passion is cooking. "I love watching cooking shows, memorizing what they are making and then adding my own variations. I find cooking a very creative activity." With this special skill in mind, Rick is coordinating the Cheese Cake Bake-Off for Harbourfest this summer!

Rick is presently serving his second year as a Director on ACT-B's Board. He likes his commitment with the AIDS Committee because "everyone makes me feel welcome".

Rick has worked on many notable projects at ACT-B, but the one that he remembers fondly is last years Walk. "I think bringing in a thousand dollars for the Walk was a highlight because I actually achieved that goal. I also enjoyed participating in last years AGM."



So if you hear a great laugh across a crowded room, and glance up to see someone dressed in a splashy outfit, it's probably Richard DeVuono. Thanks Rick!

Christa Alsch

There is a desk that sits in the middle of the office (the hub of all we do). A woman sits, poised by the telephone, ready to field any questions that come her way. The pulse of the agency, Christa Alsch is our secretary/receptionist.

Christa has worked at ACT-B for three years. Coming from the Kinnewaya Legal Clinic, her strength and interest in computers has proven to be an invaluable asset. Christa told me that she enjoys her work at the office, " I like the people and the atmosphere. I like the fact that anyone coming into the office can feel comfortable."

Although Christa was born and raised in Thunder Bay, her extended family live in Germany. Five years ago, she made her first trip to her parents homeland and fell in love with the country. She spent four weeks visiting relatives and discovering her cultural heritage. She also discovered the Autobahn and since then, her driving has never been the same!

When not at work, Christa enjoys crocheting, walking her dog Senta, bicycling, and learning new computer programs. She spends time with her partner Wayne refinishing their older character home.

Focus on Fund Raising

Preparing for a busy year!

by John Books, Fund Raising Co-ordinator

We fell a little short of our fund raising goal for 1995 and finished the fiscal year with $73,000 brought in to this agency. It was a very valiant and courageous effort made possible only through the dedicated work of our fund raising committee and a great many volunteers who contributed their time and energy.

These are difficult times for many in Thunder Bay and Ontario. Business and government changes have created an atmosphere of caution and anxiety. Regardless of whether one thinks the changes are good or bad, they have put increased pressure on all kinds of organizations. Many of them need more support and financial assistance from the community and that has resulted in intense competition for the fund raising dollar. This affects the AIDS Committee at a time when there is an increased need for our services. In the coming year, we must maintain our level of service to the community.

Our fund raising goal for this year is $80,000.

Our goal for the coming year is $80,000. To help us achieve this goal, we hope to add several more bingos to our schedule and will concentrate our efforts on the national Walk in September.

Our new Nevada Ticket outlet is Mike's Milk at the corner of Red River Road and Clarkson. Buy your tickets there to support ACT-B!.

Here are some of our upcoming events:

Klondike Casino will be June 14, 15 and 16 at Casey's. If you would like to volunteer, please call Jo-Ann.

Harbourfest will run from July 19 through 21 in beautiful downtown Thunder Bay North. The AIDS Committee will sell popcorn during the three day festival and also sponsor a cheese cake bake-off. Enter your cheese cake at our competition and you may win some valuable prizes!

Yard Sale will be in mid August. Stay tuned!

The Walk will take place on September 29. If you are interested in serving on the Walk or the Fundraising Committee please call us.

A sincere thanks to the Thunder Bay Lottery Corporation (**Thunder Bay WINS**) for its donation of $1010 to the Emergency Financial Assistance Program. Your financial assistance helps us to provide emergency aid to our clients. Your donation is greatly appreciated!

Lending a Hand....

There's no shortage of activities for the willing volunteer to help with!

Diverse opportunities for volunteers

Volunteers are our life line! Their commitment and dedication permiates everything we do. To give you an idea of the enormity of their involvement with the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay, last year over 200 volunteers logged almost 8000 hours of service! This impressive show of support translates into enhanced quality service.

I am often asked about the types of activities that volunteers perform while at the AIDS Committee. There seems to be a preconceived notion that volunteers only help those who are HIV+ or who have AIDS. However, duties are diverse, with client care being only a small portion of the requests that I receive. What follows is an encapsulated description of the various volunteer opportunites available here.

Last year, over 200 volunteers logged almost 8000 hours of service!

Clerical:
Upon arriving at the office, visitors are greeted by reception volunteers. These people donate 1/2 day each week to answer phones, perform clerical duties and input information into the computer. These volunteers play an important role in the day to day operation of the office.

Continued on next page....

MY LIFE AS A PLACEMENT STUDENT AT ACT-B!

by Jennifer Peter, Social Work Student

Working at ACT-B over the last few months has been quite the experience. I didn't know what to expect as I have had no previous experience in the HIV/AIDS field. What I have learned will be invaluable to me in the future.

During my 5 month placement, I have worked in both the Education and Support Services Departments. Serving a dual role has been a great learning opportunity. Some of my duties included the Social Marketing Campaign, the Health Agenda Forum, staffing educational display booths, Art Auction, support work and *other duties as required* (a phrase just about everyone in the office knows by heart). I have also been visiting community agencies to tell them about ACT-B and the services we provide. All in all, this has been fulfilling work.

As my placement draws to a close, I would like to thank all the staff for their mentorship, friendship and humor. You have made my placement a truly enjoyable experience.

(Volunteer Opportunities continued...)

Education:
ACT-B has a wide array of books, magazines and treatment articles in our library. These materials are available for use by the general public. Volunteers assist with cataloging, shelving and organizing the library. They may also assist with special education projects such as the organization of AIDS Awareness week (first week in October), and the Social Marketing Survey.

Volunteers lend a helping hand in many ways. We gratefully appreciate your donation of 2 hours of service per month or 20 hours!

Fund Raising:
This continues to be an area where volunteer committment is needed on an ongoing basis. Our goal is to raise $80,000 this year. The Fund Raising Committee (comprised of volunteers) designs innovative ways to raise money. Volunteers are always needed to assist with the actual events - which are numerous. They include: a monthly bingo, casinos, The Walk, bake sales, yard sales, raffles, Harbourfest, socials, Art AIDS (the art auction) etc... etc... etc...

Committee Work:
Volunteers serve on all committees attached to ACT-B. 12 people serve on our Board of Directors and 8 community members sit on our Advisory Board. A core group of volunteers assists each of the Education, Fund Raising and Support Services Committees. Their role is to offer the guidance and direction that shapes those departments. The Mothers' Cupboard Food Bank Committee meets monthly to generate new sources of food for our clients food bank. This group of volunteers works diligently to access help from our community.

Support Services:
If you are interested in working directly with people living with HIV/AIDS, we may be able to match you in our Buddy Program. Volunteer Buddies are matched with clients on a one to one basis. They may be able to help with practical skills such as grocery shopping or meal preparation; or provide a social link into the community. The client's individual needs are met by volunteer buddies. Training is provided.

Volunteers lend a helping hand in many ways. There is no minimum or maximum time committment required. We gratefully appreciate your donation of 2 hours of service per month or 20 hours!

I hope this gives you an idea of all the ways to get involved. If you'd like to become a volunteer at ACT-B, feel free to call me, Jo-Ann Jacomb at the office (345-1516).

Parting Glance

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay acknowledges and thanks our various funders:

- Ontario Ministry of Health - AIDS Bureau
- Health Promotion and Social Development Office, Ontario Region, Health Canada
- Thunder Bay WINS!
- All of the people involved in general fund raising and the support of many local businesses and individuals.

The opinions and medical information offered by "**reACT-Believe**" are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the staff and Board of Directors of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay. Medical information offered should be used at your own discretion. Please consult your doctor.

Please address any comments or concerns to

reACT-Believe
P.O. Box 24025
Downtown North Postal Outlet
Thunder Bay ON P7A 8A9
(807)345-1516

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I want to become a member of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay!

_____Enclosed is my $10.00 Membership fee.
_____I want to be a Supporting Member. I have enclosed $25.00.
_____I would like to make a donation of $_____.

Name:

Address:

City, Province & P.C:

Telephone:

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ACT-B Advisory Council

Fred Ball	Director, Public Health Laboratory
Mary Lee Berry	Ogden East End Health Centre
Richard DeVuono	Co-Chair
Gail Linklater	Co-Chair
Dr. Gordon Milne	Family Physician
Diana Smith	Public Health Nurse, Thunder Bay District Health Unit
Nicky Tittley	Health and Safety Officer, Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, Port Arthur
Rev. Don Uhryniw	Current River United Church, Council of Clergy
Pius White	Community Consultant

ACT-B Board of Directors

Rick Atkinson	Treasurer
Joyce Barnes	Director
James Budd	Director
Charlene Burford	Director
Richard DeVuono	Director
Maryanne Gabriel	Director
Mahlon Inksetter	Secretary
Carmen Klassen	Director
Gail Linklater	Vice President
Rob MacKay	Director
Noel Ward	Director
Darryl Williams	President

ACT-B Staff

Christa Alsch	Secretary
David Belrose	Education Coordinator
Sheila Berry	Support Services Coordinator
John Books	Fund Raising Coordinator
Jo-Ann Jacomb	Volunteer Coordinator
Lawrence Korhonen	Office Manager
Ian Ritchie	Support Worker/Health Promoter
Michael Sobota	Executive Director

reACT-Believe Contributors

Jo-Ann Jacomb	Editor
Richard Boon	Layout and Design
Ian Ritchie	Health Promotion Pages

ACT-B Staff and volunteers

Health Promotion

by Ian Ritchie

Is Our Drinking Water Safe?

On March 28, 1996, the Globe and Mail reported that there was an outbreak of *Cryptosporidium* in the Collingwood, Ontario water supply. This is important for people living with HIV/AIDS in Thunder Bay, because like Collingwood, Thunder Bay lacks the necessary water filters to stop *Crypto* from getting into our water supply. In 1993, 150 people in the Kitchener-Waterloo area were infected, and towns in Alberta and Manitoba have also reported outbreaks. The worst outbreak of *crypto in* North America occurred in 1993 in Milwaukee Wisconsin; 400,000 people became ill and 100 people died. There has also been reported outbreaks in San Francisco, Las Vegas and Denver.

Symptoms

The symptoms for *Crypto* infection include; diarrhea, intestinal cramps and vomiting. These symptoms usually last several weeks. Although this parasite is normally not fatal, it can be life threatening for people living with HIV/AIDS, especially for those who are farther along in their disease progression.

Treatment

Standard anti-diarrhea medications, intravenous fluids, electrolyte management and oral rehydrating therapy with appropriate fluids such as juice, broth or commercially available products are usually recommended, but there is no recognized, effective treatment for *Crypto.*

Prevention

In September 1995, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued prevention guidelines for HIV positive individuals. These include:

- ✓ Washing Hands frequently may be the best prevention strategy.
- ✓ Always wash hands before preparing food.
- ✓ Wash hands with soap and water before eating anything, after touching dirty diapers or after touching clothing, bedding or surfaces soiled by diarrhea.
- ✓ Often overlooked as a source of *Crypto,* garden soil may be contaminated by neighborhood pets or farm animals in rural areas. Wear gloves while gardening and wash hands when you are finished.
- ✓ Practice safer sex. *Crypto* can be found on the skin, in the genital area, including the thighs and buttocks of a person infected with *Crypto.* Always wash your hands after touching any animal. Farm animals, particularly young ones, should be considered a source of infection. Contact should be followed by careful hand washing.
- ✓ Most house pets are safe. Young puppies or kittens should be examined by a veterinarian for infection. An HIV positive person should avoid cleaning cat litter boxes or disposing of pet stools. If help is not available, gloves should be worn and hands washed after the gloves are removed.
- ✓ Wash and/or cook all food. If safe water is a concern, wash in water that is known to be *Crypto* free.
- ✓ Peeling fresh fruits and vegetables that will not be cooked also reduces the risk of *Crypto.*
- ✓ Unpasteurized drinks are not safe.
- ✓ When travelling, especially in cities where previous outbreaks have occurred, it is advisable to drink only bottled water or boiled water.
- ✓ Drinking water safety can be enhanced by boiling water, filtering or drinking safe bottled water. Boiling water for at least 1 minute will completely kill *Crypto.*

Filtering water with an appropriate water treatment unit can reduce the risk of infection. Not all water treatment units are effective against *Crypto;* in fact, most are not. The CDC guidelines of September 1995 recommend only 3 categories of filters:

1) Microstraining filters that can remove particles 0.1- 1 micron in size (make sure they are labeled "absolute" not "nominal").
2) Units that work by reverse osmosis
3) Units that meet the National Sanitation Foundation International (NSF) Standard 53 for "cyst reduction".

Listen for local "boil water" advisories from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. They are required to issue a warning if *Crypto* is detected in the water supply.

If you are camping or drinking lake water, a local Thunder Bay store "Gear Up For Outdoors" has a product called "Sweet Water" that will filter out *Crypto.* If you need further information about Crypto or any other opportunistic infections, please call Ian at 345-1516.

Source: Bulletin of Experimental Treatments for AIDS March1996

Good Food On A Low Budget

It's hard to make a small income stretch to afford all the food you need. Here are some shopping and cooking ideas which can help you save money.

- ☺ Plan what you will eat and make a list of what you need to buy. Buy the treats only if you have extra money.
- ☺ Read the flyers and plan some of your meals based on what foods are on sale.
- ☺ Corner, Convenience stores are usually much more expensive than larger stores.
- ☺ In larger stores, look for what is cheap. Often the most expensive items are placed at "eye level" so you will pick them first. No-name and store brands are usually cheaper than name brands.
- ☺ Shop around the edges of the store first - this is where you will find the basics; milk, meat, fruit , vegetables and bread.
- ☺ Check the day old table. Use coupons - but only for items already on your shopping list.
- ☺ Buy bulk items - you can buy the amount you need and bulk is often less expensive.
- ☺ Avoid "convenience" foods such as packaged pizzas, canned spaghetti and frozen chicken pies. They cost a lot! Many packaged foods can be made easily and cheaply at home.
- ☺ When buying cereals, plain cereal is the best buy, pre sweetened cereals cost more. Cereals you cook (like oatmeal) are really cheap.
- ☺ When buying milk products, buy skim, 1% or 2% in bags. It's much cheaper than the cardboard boxes.
- ☺ Vegetables and fruits that cost less are apples, oranges, bananas, carrots, potatoes, cabbage and turnip. In winter, frozen vegetables are a good buy.
- ☺ Meat alternatives like eggs, beans, lentils and peas are the very best buys. Use beans and lentils in soups and stews.

Consider other options to save money on food:

Community Kitchens - Four to six people get together once or twice a month to cook large quantities of food. Each person takes home several meals to feed their family. A great way to stretch you food dollar.

Food Buying Clubs - A group of people meet to shop for large, bulk amounts of food and then divide the food and cost up. This really saves money!

Good Food Boxes - A box containing good nutritious food that is paid for at the beginning of the month and delivered at the end of the month when food and money are running low. The cost of the box is usually very cheap for the amount of food you get.

Coming to Thunder Bay Soon!

reproduced with permission from the Ogden East End Community Health Centre