

EDITORS' LETTER

Welcome to a special AIDS 2006 edition of *The Positive Side*. Among other reasons, it's special because we are extending our reach well beyond our usual readership to include many of the 20,000 or more attendees of the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto this summer. It is special too because we are devoting our pages to content somewhat different from our usual offerings: more international articles and more about the Canadian experience.

This becomes immediately clear as one reads Tim McCaskell's history of AIDS action in Canada. Perhaps it is not surprising that many of us remain unaware of the fear and desperation, the anger and activism of those early days when there was no effective medical response to a barely understood killer and when government seemed indifferent. That was, after all, a long time ago, and many of the leaders of those struggles did not survive. But some veterans of those battles and the ideas that inspired them do survive and they inform the present, through national and regional groups like the Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC), the B.C. Persons With AIDS Society (BCPWA), le Comité des Personnes Atteintes du VIH du Québec (CPAVIH) and, of course, CATIE.

For many, Stephen Lewis is the current flag-bearer for this same activist impulse, albeit in a different part of the world and on a different scale. Indeed, as the United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, he has become a heroic figure in the battle here and now as a result of his years of passionate dedication and persuasive eloquence. We are very pleased to have a lengthy interview with him in this issue.

Having a conference of the scope and magnitude of AIDS 2006 right in your own backyard means a lot: a lot of work to be sure, but also a lot of opportunity to share experiences and insights across geographic and cultural divides. To the thousands of delegates who are gathering in Toronto in August, we welcome you and hope your time here is productive, pleasant and rewarding. We look forward to meeting you. To all of our readers who will not be attending, CATIE's Web site and *e-Bulletin* will be chock full of news leading up to and following the event.

—The Editors

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Publications Agreement

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Editors:

Matthew Church,

Sean Hosein, Anna

Kohn, RonniLyn Pustil,

Tim Rogers

Contributors:

Beverly Deutsch,

Diana Johansen, Susan

Massarella, David McLay,

Devan Nambiar, Jacob

Peters, Darien Taylor,

Derek Thaczuk

Creative Direction

and Design:

David Vereschagin,

Quadrat Communications

For expert review,
thank you to:

Bill Cameron, MD,

Ann McCarthy, MD,

Ottawa Hospital

Cover Photograph:

Elaine Brière

Chatty CATIE

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