

## EDITORS' LETTER

This is, as we often say here at *The Positive Side*, a magazine for, about and primarily by people living with HIV/AIDS. And we are reasonably successful, we think. Indeed, we are proud of the issues we discuss, the stories we tell and the writers and artists with whom we work.

And yet there is something too simple about this blanket statement. After all, the estimated 60,000 people in Canada who are living with HIV/AIDS come from all walks of life, every age, every region and every heritage. Indeed our audience is no less broad than the entire population of Canada.

Our cover image tells that story. It is keyed to two articles in this issue—one on positive youth, the other about positive seniors. Two distinct and discrete populations with different values, needs and outlooks. And yet the story these articles convey are very similar: in a time of change and evolution in the reality of HIV in Canada, perceptions, preparations and programs also must change.

First, as Laurette Lévy reveals in her article on AIDS and aging (page 8), there is so much still to be learned about the long-term physiological and psychological effects of being HIV-positive and on anti-HIV medications for extended periods of time. Second, the infrastructure needed to support an aging positive population—trained general practitioners and specialists (in gerontology, immunology and psychology), supportive living facilities and financial support—have only begun to be discussed. There is a great deal of work to be done.

The same can be said about youth in Canada—because at least half of all new cases of HIV in Canada are among youth. As Colleen Patterson reports in “The Truth about Youth” (page 12), we are not prepared. There is not enough funding for agencies to create the programs, environments and facilities youth need. Nor are there effective prevention campaigns specifically geared to youth that address their stunning lack of awareness of HIV and the risks of unprotected sex. There are many things that need to be done, but none is more important than a commitment that programs for youth be created with and by youth.

We hope, no matter who you are, that you find something of value in this issue of *The Positive Side*.

—The Editors

## THE POSITIVE SIDE

## Summer 2007

Publisher:

Canadian AIDS

Treatment Information  
Exchange (CATIE)

505-555 Richmond St W  
Box 1104

Toronto ON M5V 3B1  
Canada

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ISSN: 1191-9809

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Number 1707361

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