



Oahas

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

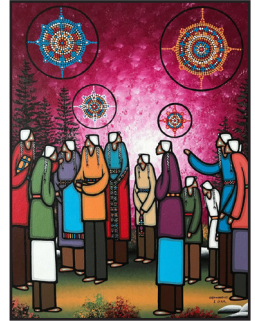


WHAT IS Oahas?

Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy is a provincially mandated AIDS service organization that provides outreach and support services to Indigenous people (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) who are living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and other STBBIs, by way of a network of community prevention workers. The strategy was created by a steering committee composed of government representatives, researchers, community representatives and people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

OUR MISSION

Oahas leads culturally distinct and sensitive programs and supports to prevent the transmission of HIV and other STBBIs through safety, knowledge and care with Indigenous people to achieve wellbeing.



OUR VISION

Oahas exists to end the HIV infections in Indigenous communities in Ontario.



Oahas operates based on the principles of Greater Involvement of People living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA), Meaningful Engagement of People living with HIV/AIDS (MEPA), Indigenous harm reduction, and respect for our cultural knowledges and teachings. These foundational principles guide all aspects of our relationships and work, and support our community prevention workers in providing culturally safe and trauma informed approaches related to prevention, education, outreach, testing and treatment supports and services for Indigenous peoples living in Ontario.

KEEPING THE CIRCLE STRONG



Joint Message

from

Sarah Tilley, *Board Chair*

Meghan Young, *Executive Director*

As we reflect over the past year, we recognize the many challenges that were experienced collectively and brought into focus on the center global stage over the course of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated many of the chasms that exist within our current structures and systems, and we recognize the tremendous loss of life that community members, volunteers, peers, employees, board members and the ASO sector has felt over this past year. We acknowledge that this is not a new experience for the communities we live and work in, rather that our collective grief has only been compounded by the continued intersecting convergence of factors, which are rooted in the continued practices of racism, colonialism, imperialism, white supremacy, capitalism, misogyny and sexism, and on-going violence against 2SLGBTQIA+ folx.

At this time, we would like to recognize these experiences of violence are not unique to Indigenous peoples and communities, but rather over the course of 2020 we saw horrific racist attacks against our Black and Asian relatives. As an organization, Oahas stands in solidarity with our relatives, and have taken time over the past year to really look internally and spend some time assessing our own racist beliefs and ideologies, and evaluating how these beliefs have led to the development of harmful policies and practices. As part of this process, the Board of Directors has taken steps to change their meeting practices to include designated time and space for discussions to evaluate how we are addressing racism as an organization. The Board has also engaged in two sessions with consultants to support the development of anti-racist structures and processes as an organization, and are committed to engage in these necessary on-going conversations and processes.

We also recognize that due to Canada's harmful and violent drug policies, increased isolation due to COVID-19 and reduced access to community connection and harm reduction services, we saw a huge surge in the number of premature deaths related to the drug poisoning catastrophe. The Office of the Chief Coroner reports there was a 76% increase in the number of opioid related deaths in the province of Ontario between April 2020 – March 2021, when compared to the previous year. We recognize the impact that this loss of life has had in community and for the frontline staff at the organization, and we would like to thank staff and community members, and our community partners for their tireless advocacy to change policy, and their community mobilization efforts to honour the lives of the loved ones we have lost.

As we look ahead, we recognize the impact that the continued housing crises has had in community, and we are turning our efforts to look at the ways Oahas can advocate for access to affordable, sustainable and safe housing for members across the province. As an Indigenous governed service provider, we understand the need for all people having the ability to access mother earth, clean water, food sovereignty, safe shelter and community connection. We understand that these elements are critical from an Indigenous harm reduction lens, and over this next year we are looking forward to our continued conversations and engagement with community to build our understanding of Indigenous harm reduction.

continued from previous page

In order to support continued innovation, adaptability and navigate a change management process, all of the staff at Oahas have engaged in number of crucial capacity building trainings over the past year. These include participating in two sessions on Indigenous focused workplan development, six session of social media training, and the Zone of Fabulousness training. As a result of participating in these trainings, we are continuing to strengthen our internal mechanisms for communicating and evaluating the important work staff are doing, as well as looking at how we are adapting service delivery to be safe and accessible during the pandemic, and ensure we, as an organization, are holding a community-centered focus in our work and are creating a culture of accountability.

Lastly we would like to take this opportunity to recognize, thank and honour a number of individuals who have been involved with Oahas:

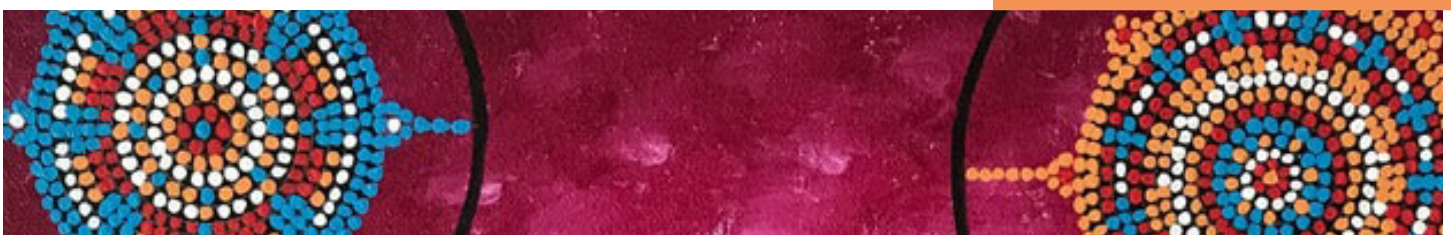
We would like to start by recognizing that December 1, 2020 marked the 10-year anniversary of the passing of Laverne Monette (LV). LV was the founding Executive Director of Oahas and fierce advocate, and her knowledge and spirit continue to guide us and have a positive impact in the ASO sector.

We want to recognize the continued leadership changes at Oahas, and would like to thank Mark Atanasoff for his tenure as Executive Director at Oahas. We would also like to acknowledge and thank Glenn Checkley for his leadership as interim Executive Director at Oahas, and navigating the organization through the height of the pandemic between March and September 2020. We would also like to thank and acknowledge Sarah Tilley, for all of their leadership as they are coming to the end of their 2-year term as Oahas Board Chair.

Over the fall of 2020 the Board of Directors engaged the services of Adobe Consulting to recruit and hire a new Executive Director. We would like to thank Beth Jordan and her team at Adobe for all of their work in helping the Board navigate this process. We would also like to send a special thanks to Keith McCrady, Michael Baxter and Sarah Tilley, who volunteered to be on the hiring committee and support the ED recruitment process. As a result of this process, we would also like to welcome the successful candidate - Meghan Young. Meghan joined the Oahas team as the new Executive Director in November of 2020.

Lastly, we would like to give a special *chi-miigwetch* to Donald Turner. Don has provided tremendous love, guidance and wisdom to the ASO sector as a whole over his many years as a vocal advocate and IPHA leader. The 2021 AGM marks the completion of Don's 3-year board term with Oahas, and we are deeply grateful for his service on the board, and look forward to him sharing his continued wisdom and generosity with the larger Oahas team through all of the work he does in Southwestern Ontario.

**MEGHAN
& SARAH**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020/21

(as of March 31st, 2021)

Sarah Tilley | Board Chair

Don Turner | Vice Chair

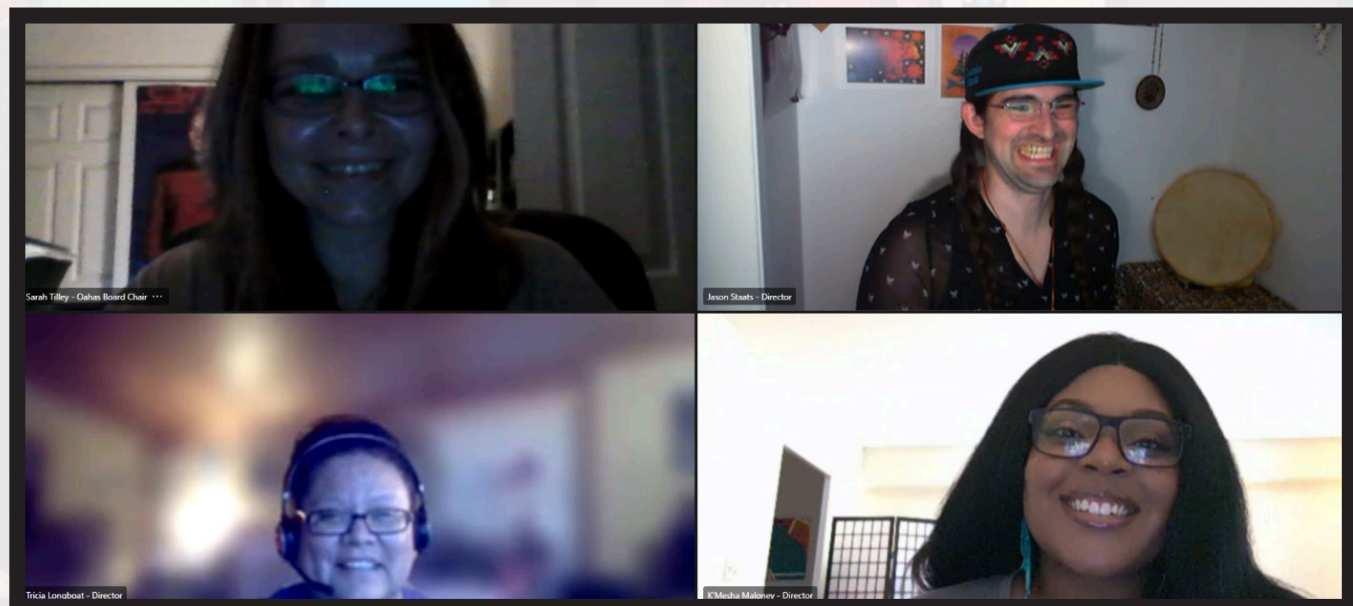
Michael Baxter | Treasurer

Bella Reynolds | Director

Tricia Longboat | Director

Mesha Maloney | Director

Jason Staats | Director



Clockwise: Sarah, Jason, Mesha, Tricia



WHERE WE ARE



OUR TEAM

Thunder Bay

Rene Boucher
Sally Woodside
Sarah Kaukinen
Melissa Deschamps (on leave)

Sudbury

Tina Rowe,
Steven Loranger
Leisha Neuman (Gilbert Centre)

London

Destini Millar
Christina Doxtator

Ottawa

Austin Ward
Jimmy Constant

Sault Ste-Marie

Chasse Gibeault
Kristine Lalonde
Jennifer Cheryk
Karrie Howden

Toronto Program Office

Pesokas McKay Loscher
Sara Luey
Alison Bray
Anton McCloskey
Shayne McGregor (TUHF)

Toronto – Administration

Meghan Young
Carol Buenafé
Meryca Shawongonabe

PROGRAMS

The fiscal year began in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and continued for the rest of the year – an event from which the end is not yet in sight. To say that the pandemic affected the most vulnerable people on the planet is an understatement. It is important to contextualize the respective communities and situate them in their proximity and access to life-giving resources at the best of times, but specifically, during the pandemic. The community which we serve, Indigenous peoples living with HIV/AIDS and those at-risk of HIV/AIDS and STBBIs – are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. With the introduction of COVID-19 safety protocols and the very real risk to the immuno-compromised members of the community, living in COVID-times is especially perilous. Coupled with the rise of deaths from the drug poisoning crisis, it was a grim year for those who continue to feel the impacts of the intergenerational abuse and trauma from the colonial policies and genocidal practices of the Canadian government.

Against this backdrop, Oahas rose to the challenge of continuing programs through COVID-19. Through the ever-changing stages of lockdown and openings and armed with safety protocols, Oahas ramped up street outreach to meet people where they were at.

Oahas staff played a crucial role in the small but mighty team of harm reduction service providers that continued to support Indigenous community members across six sites during the pandemic - Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, Ottawa, London and Toronto.

As an essential service, we continued programming creatively through pop up tabling events, telephone wellness checks, connections through social media and virtual ceremony and education.

With the help of local public health units and partner agencies, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous in these six cities, we quickly adjusted our programming to meet the needs of the community. Aside from street and community outreach – Oahas provided harm reduction supplies, food hampers, protein supplies,

DIBIKI GIIZIS
ONLINE FACEBOOK EVENT

Join Oahas on
WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
for drumming, singing,
beading, and stories

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFO

Oahas
ONTARIO ABORIGINAL
HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

WHA Women & HIV/AIDS Initiative
Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy
Elevate NWO
ACCESS Network
HIV/Hepatitis Health and Social Services
Services sociaux et de santé pour l'hépatite et le VIH
ACONBA

Northern Perspectives: Strengthening Women Centered harm reduction services and services

Presented by: Women's HIV/AIDS Initiative, Ontario Aboriginal AIDS Strategy, ElevateNWO, Reseau Access Network, AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area

Tuesday, December 8, 2020
1:00-3:30

#END OVERDOSE
SOMEONE'S EVERYTHING
JOIN US
AUGUST 26TH
11AM TO 1PM
95 PINE ST, SUDBURY
for a small vigil to honour those we have lost to overdose.

Oahas
ONTARIO ABORIGINAL
HIV/AIDS STRATEGY
TOBACCO TIES AND ELDER AVAILABLE
SACU
Sudbury action centre for youth

covid safety kits and warm winter gear. Oahas conducted virtual support groups and educational sessions and took advantage of social media. It was important to stay connected in every way with the community to combat the isolation and loneliness brought on by social restrictions dictated by COVID-19.

When times were briefly relaxed around Q2 and Q3, Oahas supported testing events and ramped up programming in partnership with other agencies whether through supply sharing, or supporting each other's events.

Programming highlights of the year included:

- Moving to larger programming space closer to community in Sault Ste-Marie
- On-boarding the new Executive Director and orientation of new program staff
- Increasing community outreach and harm reduction supply delivery in all sites
- Supporting isolation centers in Thunder Bay
- Providing access to culture through medicines and ceremony to mitigate the losses due to the pandemic and drug poisoning crises.
- Successful collaboration with many partners in each region.

Overall, Oahas managed to maximize material resources and staff talent, though sadly, it is never enough. The pandemic stacked on top of both a drug poisoning crisis and housing crisis demonstrated once again the gaps in the Canadian social service net and shone a light to the systemic racial bias against First Nations, Métis and Inuit. While each day seemed to be about mounting insurmountable challenges, Oahas provided care and support to the community, in the best way it knows how – with

respect and dignity for Indigenous peoples.



HIV AWARENESS

MEDICINE PILLOW SEWING WORKSHOP

MARCH 25TH @ 6PM-8PM

FIRST 15 PARTICIPANTS TO REGISTER WILL RECEIVE A FREE GIFT CARD

ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL BE RECEIVING A FREE GIFT BAG

FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER CONTACT AMY ALLISON AT (123) 456-7890 LOC. 345

Oahas ONTARIO ABORIGINAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

GHC HRP

GARDEN RIVER WELLNESS CENTRE



Self-care is... knowing your status

A FREE HIV TESTING EVENT FOR WOMEN AND MARGINALIZED GENDERS

Thursday March 18 5-7:30 PM

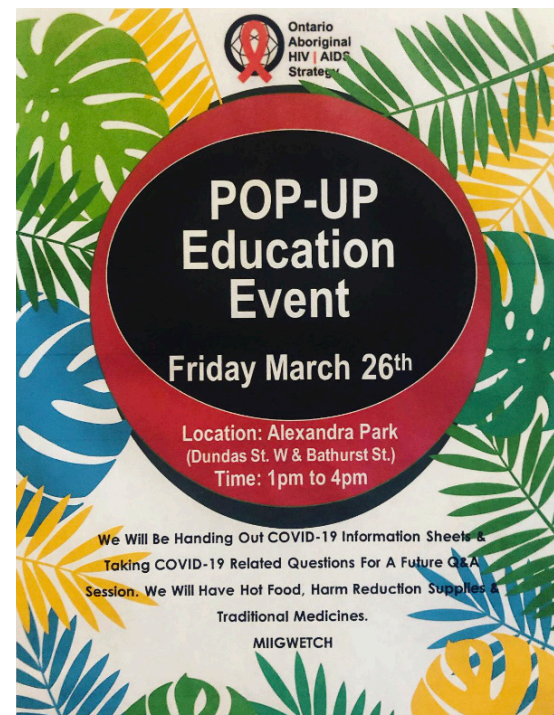
Shoppers Drug Mart
431 Richmond Street

To reserve a spot and care package call or text Destini at 519.719.0751. Walk-ins welcome as time allows.

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection

Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy

London Inter-Community Health Centre



Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy

POP-UP Education Event

Friday March 26th

Location: Alexandra Park (Dundas St. W & Bathurst St.)
Time: 1pm to 4pm

We Will Be Handing Out COVID-19 Information Sheets & Taking COVID-19 Related Questions For A Future Q&A Session. We Will Have Hot Food, Harm Reduction Supplies & Traditional Medicines.

MIIGWETCH

Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council COVID-19 Safety and Response Program



Without question, Oahas would not have been able to serve the Indigenous community in Toronto to the extent that we did, without the support of TASSC. During the first lockdown in Toronto due to COVID-19, the Oahas team brainstormed and collaborated with community partners across the city to continue our outreach program and provide harm reduction supplies. Through the additional fundraised dollars from TASSC, we were able to purchase a vehicle, ramp up community outreach and increase production and distribution of harm reduction kits. In addition, we were able to include COVID safety kits, protein kits, and hygiene kits. Along with food gift carts for food security for those in precarious food and housing situations, these kits constituted essential items we were able to distribute on our regular street outreach and to encampments across the city. It is heartening to see that in times of severe crisis, Oahas and our local partners were able to come together and address the immediate needs of the urban Indigenous community, despite the uncertainty and challenges of tomorrow due to COVID-19.



NIMINWENDAM OMMA AYAAYAN

(I'm happy you are here) ■ ■ ■ □

Program funded by Toronto Urban Health Fund

The Niminwendam Omma Ayaayan (I'm happy you are here) is a 40-week virtual workshop program for community members to stay connected and build relationships. Each session focuses on developing wellness practices and self-care strategies through culturally-specific activities and teachings, all guided by harm reduction principles.

Through Niminwendam Omma Ayaayan, we were thankful to offer honorariums to local community members such as Jerry Thistle. Jerry created beautiful art work through an Indigenous lens to promote and enhance the Niminwendam Omma Ayaayan program for community.

**SHAYNE
MCGREGOR,
PROGRAM LEAD**



This has offered community members a safe space, connection to culture and wellbeing enhancers. While continuing to build relationships, share resources and offer support where needed regarding individuals mental, physical, spiritual and emotional well-being.

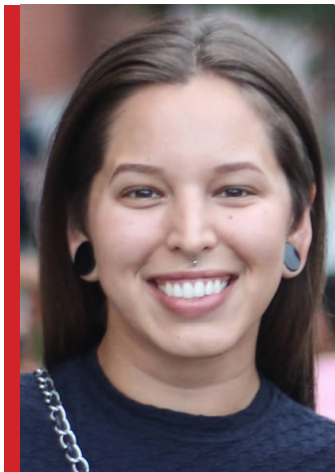
NEW HORIZONS

FOR 2S-LGBTQ+
OLDER ADULTS

NEW HORIZONS

*Funded through a partnership with
The Gilbert Centre*

The New Horizons for 2S-LGBTQ+ Older Adults program is a program committed to reducing the social isolation experienced by this population through the creation of online and in-person social and support opportunities, educational workshops, and culturally relevant programming. The team is committed to community building, inclusion across identities, and the creation of spaces where all people on the 2S-LGBTQ+ spectrum feel welcome, heard, and honoured. The 2S-LGBTQ+ Older Adults program aims to support and empower those who identify as older adults (55+) within the 2S-LGBTQ+ community, to promote healthy relationships, and to increase access to health and social services.



This program is Central and Northern Ontario specific, servicing the Simcoe/Muskoka, North Bay, and Sudbury areas. Coming together as a larger team allows for community building across regions and a larger network of support for the vast geographical area that we serve.

**LEISHA
NEUMAN**

TWO-SPIRIT OUTREACH WORKER

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31

2021

2020

Assets

Current

Cash	\$ 875,367	\$ 182,532
HST receivable	33,188	17,056
Prepaid expenses	36,111	41,073

944,666 240,661

Equipment and leasehold improvements (Note 3)

94,499 83,622

\$ 1,039,165 \$ 324,283

Liabilities

Current

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 4)	\$ 97,720	\$ 124,015
Deferred revenue	775,144	55,419

872,864 179,434

Deferred capital contributions (Note 5)

94,499 83,622

967,363 263,056

Fund Balances

Operating Fund	26,285	21,160
General Reserve Fund	45,517	40,067

71,802 61,227

\$ 1,039,165 \$ 324,283

Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy Statement of Operations

For the Year Ended March 31

2021

2020

Revenue			
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care		\$ 1,833,026	\$ 1,805,610
TASSC COVID funding		248,669	-
The Gilbert Centre funding		56,055	3,000
Elizabeth Fry Toronto funding		30,000	-
OHTN research grant funding		29,274	51,520
TUHF funding		25,179	-
Miziwe Biik		5,852	19,703
Other revenue		-	5,636
Amortization of deferred capital contributions		40,491	39,367
		2,268,546	1,924,836
Expenses			
Advertising and community relations		1,841	2,652
Amortization		40,491	39,367
Bank charges and interest		2,907	2,362
Insurance		6,646	4,815
Supplies		51,446	100,374
Postage and courier		6,242	10,300
Programming costs (Note 7)		585,835	281,751
Rent		161,270	154,129
Telephone and utilities		40,800	53,620
Travel and accommodation		28,064	77,977
Wages and benefits		1,337,879	1,203,515
		2,263,421	1,930,862
Excess of revenue over expenses (expenses over revenue)		\$ 5,125	\$ (6,026)

Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy Schedule of Revenue and Expenses by Program

(Unaudited)

For the Year Ended March 31

	IDU				2021	2020
	Core	Outreach	TASSC	Other		
Revenue						
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	\$ 1,434,847	\$ 398,179	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,833,026	\$ 1,805,610
TASSC COVID funding	-	-	248,669	-	248,669	-
The Gilbert Centre funding	-	-	-	56,055	56,055	3,000
Elizabeth Fry Toronto	-	-	-	30,000	30,000	-
OHTN research grant funding	-	-	-	29,274	29,274	51,520
TUHF funding	-	-	-	25,179	25,179	-
Miziwe Biik	-	-	-	5,852	5,852	19,703
Other revenue	-	-	-	-	-	5,636
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	37,591	530	1,429	941	40,491	39,367
	1,472,438	398,709	250,098	147,301	2,268,546	1,924,836
Expenses						
Advertising and community relations	1,725	-	-	116	1,841	2,652
Amortization	37,591	530	1,429	941	40,491	39,367
Bank charges and interest	2,907	-	-	-	2,907	2,362
Insurance	5,351	1,295	-	-	6,646	4,815
Supplies	31,553	10,626	6,714	2,553	51,446	100,374
Postage and courier	5,426	-	-	816	6,242	10,300
Programming costs	242,269	56,359	223,255	63,952	585,835	281,751
Rent	132,686	28,584	-	-	161,270	154,129
Telephone and utilities	28,712	6,912	2,457	2,719	40,800	53,620
Travel and accommodation	15,369	820	8,666	3,209	28,064	77,977
Wages and benefits	968,844	293,583	7,577	67,875	1,337,879	1,203,515
	1,472,433	398,709	250,098	142,181	2,263,421	1,930,862
Excess of revenue over expenses (expenses over revenue)	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,120	\$ 5,125	\$ (6,026)

Thank You

Funders | Donors

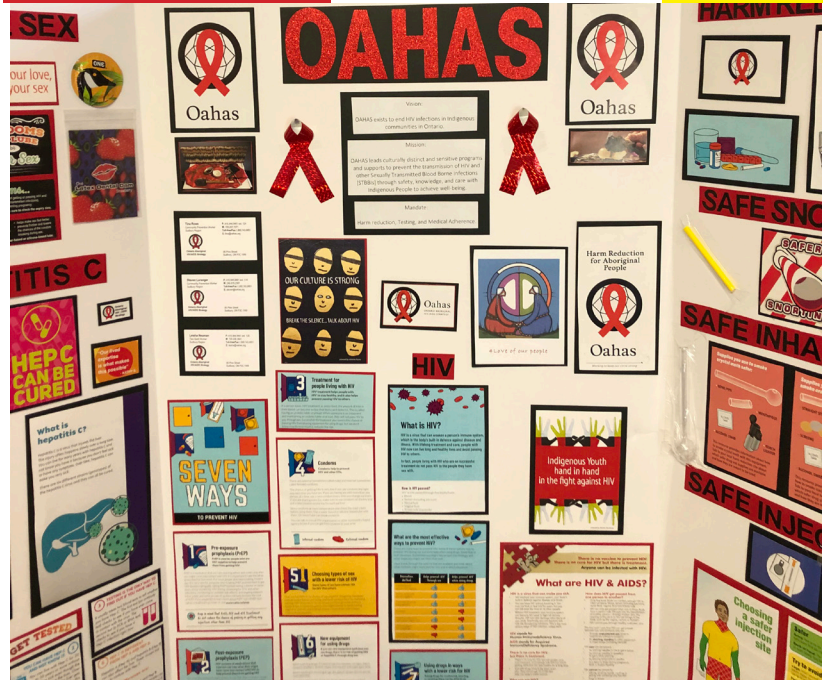
AIDS and Hepatitis C Programs, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council
Gilbert Centre
Toronto Urban Health Fund
Rotary Club of Toronto
Ontario HIV Treatment Network
HealthStats Inc
Erica Chan
Joanne Adair
Joseph Mpalirwa
Andrew Wang
Jenise Aaron
Clementine Oberst
Michael David
Charlie Jupp-Adams
Once Upon A Queer Time
W. Blair Welch
Anne Caroline Buenafe
Glenn Checkley
Janine Cutler
Ezra Blackwood
Suzanne Brunelle
Artur Kerobyan
Keith O'Regan
The PrEP Clinic

... and to all our anonymous donors and countless volunteers...





All of Our Relations



Do you have questions about COVID-19 or questions about the COVID-19 vaccines?

If so, Oahas is organizing a community information session to make sure you get the answers to your questions!



Oahas

ONTARIO ABORIGINAL
HIV/AIDS STRATEGY



Oahas

ONTARIO ABORIGINAL
HIV/AIDS STRATEGY



ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

164 EGLINTON AVE. EAST, SUITE 301
TORONTO, ONTARIO M4P 1G4



1.800.743.8851 | 416.944.9481



info@oahas.org



oahas.org



oahas



oahas_ig

artwork pictured left - Leland Bell, 2015

