



John Gordon Home
London Regional AIDS Hospice

April 1, 2015 - Today is a significant milestone in the HIV/AIDS sector in Southwestern Ontario as John Gordon Home and Regional HIV/AIDS Connection have officially become one organization. In a strategic move to strengthen services for residents and clients, the amalgamation was initiated and driven by the two organizations; it was strongly supported by funders and partners and it has been recognized by government officials as a model for integration and collaboration.

RHAC, formerly the AIDS Committee of London, marks its 30th anniversary this year and the John Gordon Home is nearing its 25th year of providing respite, transitional and palliative health care.

Heading the new Regional HIV/AIDS Connection is its current Executive Director, Brian Lester. Senior Director is Bruce Rankin, formerly Executive Director of the John Gordon Home. Rankin continues to lead the operation of the John Gordon Home from its Pall Mall Street location in London.

In an open letter to staff of the new agency, Lester outlined the joint, historical roots of Regional HIV/AIDS Connection and the John Gordon Home which were both created by the former AIDS Committee of London. The vision for what would become Canada's first AIDS Hospice (JGH) was led by Betty Anne Thomas – later to become its first Executive Director and Dr. Iain Mackie, a leading Internist in HIV/AIDS care.

Lester reminded staff of the period in history when AIDS had devastating effects in the London area and around the world. He promised to go forward in the memory of those who lost their lives.

“Both RHAC and JGH were inspired at the grass roots level in response to an urgent need. Ours is a history rooted in social justice and intensive activism...As a result of the grass roots efforts to create organizations, London and area received critical HIV/AIDS prevention/education, support, end-of-life and advocacy services... I believe, together, as one entity, we are on the precipice of even greater potential”.

Combining forces allows Regional HIV/AIDS Connection and John Gordon Home to enhance services while integrating operations in support of residents, clients, and others affected by HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. Based on principles of harm reduction, RHAC serves many individuals including those with mental health or physical health challenges, such as addiction. It also provides support and awareness to deal with the continuing, societal shadow of HIV – stigma.

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