



HEARING
THE VOICES OF
CHILDREN

THE TERESA GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT
12/13

Message from the President

Overview

In a quiet location of Toronto a small group of highly skilled and dedicated staff work with children affected by HIV and their families to mitigate the often devastating effects an HIV+ diagnosis brings. The children bring smiles and laughter even though their parents deal with many hardships – poverty, unemployment, discrimination and the stigma of being associated with HIV and AIDS. At The Teresa Group, families tell us that *“Everyone here is so welcoming and caring. I feel like I can share anything with you – you are like family to me.”* By offering a comprehensive range of supports and services, we deliver on our mission to **“advance the dignity and well-being of children and their families affected by HIV and AIDS”**.

Achievements

The Teresa Group, one of only a handful of such organizations in North America, helps support children and their parents individually and in group settings. Each year our staff team works with approximately 300 families. We walk with them every step of the way offering support groups for pregnant women, new moms, moms and toddlers, a tutoring program for school-age children and a parents’ club. Therapeutic groups include the highly successful “Leading the Way” 9-week program. Individual direct counseling services are offered in person or over the phone. As we all know, families everywhere are facing tough economic times. Even more so for those affected by poverty, stigma and isolation. The Family Support Program and Infant Formula Program alleviate this burden. We can help parents alleviate financial stress by providing them with otherwise costly items such as kids’ lunch packs, backpacks and school supplies, hats and mitts in the winter, diapers, new or gently used clothing, transit tickets and a “welcome baby” package of diaper bags filled with supplies for new babies.

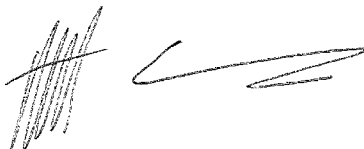
Of course none of this would be possible without our many funders and wonderfully dedicated volunteers. Our work is made possible by the collective support of hundreds of corporate and individual donors, foundations, churches, community organizations and all three levels of government. We are especially grateful to our special event donors and volunteers, many of whom have been supporting us for years – a testament to their commitment and passion.

Challenges

Economic times are challenging, for the families that come to us, the funders and donors that support us and for the organization itself. We continue to be extremely grateful for the consistent support of funders and donors who believe in the work we do and are passionate about helping children affected by HIV and AIDS.

Leadership changes

Our highly skilled and compassionate staff team has been led by Executive Director, Karen Vance-Wallace for the past twelve years and in my last report we bid farewell to Karen and many of our supporters and volunteers attended her retirement party in March 2013. Karen remains committed to the organization and will remain involved as a volunteer and guide. Karen will guide and work closely with the new Executive Director, Nicci Stein, who moves into the role in April 2013. Nicci brings to the organization a long history of working in the field of community organizations and HIV, including nine years at The 519 Church Street Community Centre in Toronto, Program Activities Manager for the International AIDS Conference that took place in Toronto in 2006 and most recently as the Executive Director of the Interagency Coalition on Aids and Development (ICAD). We are excited to have her on board and look forward to working with her.



Matthew Swarney, President

Our Programs



Family Support Program

Economically tough times combined with the complex issues of poverty, stigma and isolation have significantly impacted the children and families who visit The Teresa Group. The agency is currently serving approximately 300 local families affected by HIV and AIDS, and it is encouraging to know that in some small way our Family Support Program alleviates some of the burden created by the social determinants of health. Throughout the year families come in to access practical support items such as a bag of food, new and gently used clothing, TTC tokens, and diapers. New moms and their baby receive a brand new diaper bag full of baby items like blankets, bottles and clothing. We also have back to school supplies in a new backpack, and warm hats and mitts for children when the cold weather comes. Our families say they feel safe when visiting our office and often drop by just for a visit and a chat with staff.

The Tutoring Program

Living in a family affected by HIV and AIDS has an impact on many children's ability to succeed in school. Distracted by thoughts of what might be going on at home and worrying about a parent may compromise their ability to focus and function at school. The Tutoring Program helps fill this need for academic support. Dedicated and caring volunteer tutors and teacher candidates from York University's Faculty of Education Concurrent Program work with students every week in two locations. Not only do students have the opportunity to practice their new academic skills in a safe space, but they also gain in their confidence and self-worth, believing they can achieve great things academically and in their lives!

"I feel less worried about taking the EQAO test after talking with my tutor. She helped me practice for it and gave me some good ideas."



OUR PROGRAMS

New Moms' Group

The first year of a new baby's life is a happy but challenging time for first time mothers and even for moms going through it a second or third time. It is often one of the biggest learning curves of a woman's life. In addition to the common challenges experienced by all moms, new moms with HIV are also coping with their health condition, medications for themselves and their baby, and worries about bonding in the absence of breastfeeding. The support systems they generally rely on in times of difficulty may not be available to them due to the stigma surrounding HIV. This is where the New Moms' Group can help. Twice a month moms and their babies fill the programming room with cooing, laughter and friendship. It is often one of the only places moms can talk openly about parenting with HIV during the first year of their child's life. The activities are designed to engage, teach and stimulate as new moms and their babies get to know one another in their first year together.

“This group is very special to me. Here I feel secure and safe and understood.”

“Leading the Way”

therapeutic group for children

Who knew that Saturday mornings could be fun and that teenagers would get out of bed on a weekend to attend our “Leading the Way” Program? There must be a reason, and as one group member stated:

“We learn a lot and have fun. It's too short, why is it only 9 weeks? Why can't it be longer?”

“Leading the Way” offers therapeutic group programs to children and youth affected by HIV and AIDS between the ages of 5 and 18. Two nine-week sessions per year (one in the spring and one in the fall) are provided. The sessions are based on a participatory peer support model and are facilitated by professional counselors. The children and youth who participate in the Saturday morning support groups are dealing with major challenges, and in most cases, big secrets. Through discussion, play, art, theatre and recreational activities these youngsters find friends, support, expert guidance, and a forum for safe discussion. Why do the kids come? Because “Leading the Way” is the one place where they can talk openly, ask questions, and get information about HIV and AIDS (and have fun...).

“Now I see lots of kids who go through what I go through. I don't feel so alone anymore.”



Direct Counselling Services

Living with or being affected by HIV and AIDS can be very challenging for children and families. It is often difficult for families to discuss the complexities of their situation due to fear, stigma, and discrimination. Staff at The Teresa Group offer counseling services in a safe and supportive environment either in person or over the phone. When it comes to HIV issues such as disclosure, grief and loss, future care planning or parent-child relationships, there is always a trained counselor available to listen and help.

“Knowing that I have someone to talk to, who understands my situation, has been life changing”.

Volunteer Program

The Teresa Group has a large and dedicated group of volunteers who assist staff in accomplishing our mission “advancing the dignity and well-being of children and their families affected by HIV and AIDS”.

Volunteers are involved in meaningful ways that reflect their skills, needs and interests. Opportunities are abundant including being a tutor/mentor, assisting with administrative tasks in the office, event planning, transportation – either driving or being a TTC companion, or offering respite for example to a new mom or being a buddy to a child.

Teresa Group volunteers are a special group of individuals who are connected to the cause and truly care about our children, youth and their families.

Parents' Club

Parenting....probably one of the most rewarding jobs an adult can have, yet likely the only one that we receive absolutely no training for! Why didn't they tell us that these small bundles of joy grow up and actually challenge parents, often do not listen and leave us worn out at the end of the day! Yes, parenting can be hard, but for many parents living with HIV there are often additional stressors that affect their ability to raise children. These can include having numerous medical appointments, coping with the side effects of medications, being in a new country with few supports, finding housing and trying to navigate school systems. The Teresa Group's Parents' Club is a place for parents to find comfort in the knowledge that there are others who understand what they are going through, particularly how living with HIV can add to the challenge of raising children. The groups are a place to learn new parenting techniques from the facilitators and from one another, to share experiences and most importantly to feel supported.

“I listened to what the group said to me, and decided to go home and enjoy being with my daughter instead of trying to control her. When she saw the change in me, my daughter all of a sudden wanted to spend more time together and actually began to share things with me. By not judging her it allowed us to show our love again. The group helped me to do this.”



OUR PROGRAMS

Infant Formula Program

Now in its 17th year, The Infant Formula Program is an amazingly successful example of a long-term partnership between government and the community. It is still proving to be an excellent and cost-effective prevention program for mothers who are HIV positive. Fully-funded by the AIDS Bureau in the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, and administered by The Teresa Group, the program supplies infant formula free of charge to HIV positive new mothers living anywhere in Ontario. Combined with proper prenatal care and safe birthing techniques it has resulted in the reduction of mother to child transmission to negligible levels.

“When I was pregnant I looked at formula at the pharmacy and I couldn’t believe how much it costs. I would never be able to afford it without this program. I am so thankful that I have one less thing to worry about in this first year with my baby.”

Prenatal Group

Pregnancy is a very exciting time in a woman’s life. Being pregnant and HIV positive however often changes that excitement into fear and can cause a great deal of anxiety. Suddenly there are many questions looming such as “will my baby be okay?” and “what can I tell people when they see I am not breast feeding?” The Prenatal Group provides women who are HIV positive with support and education during this difficult time. During sessions presented by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals from St. Michael’s, Sunnybrook and Women’s College Hospital, The Hospital for Sick Children, and Mount Sinai, women learn about what to expect during their pregnancy and delivery, medication, privacy and disclosure, as well as post-partum care and testing for the baby. The soon-to-be moms also have the opportunity to connect with other women in a safe and caring environment, often taking those bonds into the New Moms Group after the babies are born.

“The Prenatal Group was helpful because I felt like I was not alone and I was not the only one having the concerns I have, others have felt the same way as me. It was helpful to hear from other women about how they have faced challenging issues like not being able to breastfeed.”

Toddler Group

The Teresa Group has a toddler group ready to welcome young ones who are learning to walk, run and navigate their way around sofas and chairs. Once a month moms and their busy toddlers join together to play, sing, and talk. Laughter and squeals can be heard coming from the program room where the toddlers engage in activities related to the development of speech, fine and gross motor skills and social skill development. The children are able to play and practice new skills, while the moms have a chance to connect with others who are coping with similar challenges related to living with HIV while facing the complexities of parenting.

“It’s so good to come together with other moms and their toddlers. We get out of the house and have fun; and have a space where we can talk about parenting and living with HIV.”

Our People

HONORARY CIRCLE

Penelope Holeyton
Patricia MacKay C.M.
Stanley E. Reid M.D., Ph.D., FRCPC

STAFF

Emily Essig, MSW, RSW
Family Support Coordinator
Wendy Firth
Office Manager
Constance Nobes
Volunteer Coordinator
Megan Porter, BSW, RSW
Family Support Coordinator
Maureen Ringlein, MSW, RSW
Family Support Coordinator
Liz Ryan, MSW
Family Support
Simone Shindler, MSW, RSW
Program Director
Karen Vance-Wallace
Executive Director

2012-2013

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The Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS

believes that children need to be made a higher priority in the international response to HIV and AIDS. The Coalition brings funders and technical experts together to advocate for the best policy, research, and programs for children because children are a vulnerable population that has too often been overlooked. The Teresa Group is a proud founding member of the Coalition and acts as its fiscal agent. Working collaboratively with a broad range of partners, the Coalition hosts an international symposium every two years in the lead up to the International AIDS Conference. The symposium creates a forum for global experts to come together to explore data, share information, and build consensus about best practices for children.

www.ccaba.org

Our Caring Contributors

The Teresa Group wishes to thank the hundreds of individual donors who have given so generously over the past year. In addition, we would like to thank the following:

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School Restaurant
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The Fairmont Royal York
The New Leaf Flowers and Gifts
The Printing House Ltd, College Park
Toni Bulloni Italian Restaurant
Toronto Blue Jays
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Venus Beauty Supplies
Via Rail Canada Inc.
W Hotel Montreal
Windsor Arms Hotel
Winners - Home Sense
Wish Restaurant

We
provided
1,349
healthy
lunch packs
for kids.

159

sets of warm
hats and mitts
were provided
for children
when the
weather turned
cold.

The Teresa Group's Year in Numbers

35 "Welcome Home
Baby" kits were
supplied to the
moms of newborns.

We supported
235
families with **\$11,750**
worth of holiday
food vouchers.

Direct counsel-
ling services
supported
families with
1,040 wellness
calls, **115** in-depth
counselling
sessions, **84**
support group
sessions and
47 crisis
interventions.

Parents were assisted with a total of **1,288** TTC tickets to help them attend vital programs and appointments.

163

children received new backpacks with school supplies at the start of the school year.

Staff made

55

home and hospital visits.

A total of

\$26,625

in **Emergency Financial Assistance** was distributed to help families in need.

Generous and dedicated volunteers gave an amazing amount of

12,000

hours of service to The Teresa Group.



Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statement

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE TERESA GROUP - CHILD AND FAMILY AID

The accompanying summarized statement of operating fund revenues and expenses (the summary financial statement) is derived from the audited financial statements of The Teresa Group - Child and Family Aid ("the Teresa Group") for the year ended March 31, 2013. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated May 23, 2013 (see below).

The summary financial statement does not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading the summary financial statement therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of the Teresa Group.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statement

Management is responsible for the preparation of a summary of the audited financial statement in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statement based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standards (CAS) 810, "Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements".

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statement derived from the audited financial statements of The Teresa Group - Child and Family Aid for the year ended March 31, 2013 is a fair summary of those financial statements. However, the summary financial statement is qualified to the equivalent extent as the audited financial statements of the Agency for the year ended March 31, 2013.

The qualification of the audited financial statements is described in our qualified audit opinion in our report dated May 23, 2013. Our qualified audit opinion is based on the fact that the Teresa Group receives donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these revenues was limited to the amount reported by the Teresa Group and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to revenues, excess of revenues over expenses, assets and net assets. Our qualified audit opinion states that, except for the effects of the described matter, those financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Teresa Group - Child and Family Aid as at March 31, 2013 and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended March 31, 2013 in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Clarke Herming LLP

Toronto, Ontario
May 23, 2013

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
Licensed Public Accountants

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF OPERATING FUND REVENUES AND EXPENSES YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2013

	2013			2012
	General Operations	CCABA International Coordination Projects	Total	Total
REVENUES				
Funding from Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care				
General operations	\$ 294,154	\$ -	\$ 294,154	\$ 267,328
Special projects	197,000	-	197,000	183,826
Public Health Agency of Canada	81,723	-	81,723	80,000
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada				
Summer student	3,225	-	3,225	2,817
Leap for Success	58,637	-	58,637	67,735
City of Toronto grant	26,535	-	26,535	26,535
Circle of Care funding	35,809	-	35,809	88,772
Private sector donations - cash	437,414	-	437,414	410,563
- donations-in-kind	4,088	-	4,088	9,994
Interest	5,884	-	5,884	11,076
Amortization of capital contributions	1,884	-	1,884	3,079
Other	82,074	-	82,074	77,084
CCABA international coordination projects	-	914,940	914,940	481,378
	1,228,427	914,940	2,143,367	1,710,187
EXPENSES				
General and administration	72,253	-	72,253	68,087
Communication and education	46,712	-	46,712	47,713
Family support	459,300	-	459,300	453,773
Counselling	248,708	-	248,708	220,124
Volunteer recruitment, organization and training	81,723	-	81,723	80,000
Summer student	3,916	-	3,916	3,256
Board expenses	3,326	-	3,326	1,722
Amortization of capital assets	16,672	-	16,672	15,134
Fundraising	125,746	-	125,746	113,848
Donated goods	4,088	-	4,088	9,994
Scholarships	9,037	-	9,037	8,023
Tutoring project	104,350	-	104,350	85,745
CCABA international coordination projects	-	914,940	914,940	481,378
	1,175,831	914,940	2,090,771	1,588,797
Excess of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ 52,596	\$ -	\$ 52,596	\$ 121,390

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