

For Immediate Release
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AIDS Vancouver changes name to Ribbon Community

The new name and brand identity maintains a strong connection to the past while embracing a commitment to support and empower communities well into the future

(Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Territories; Vancouver, BC)—AIDS Vancouver, one of the country’s first AIDS Service Organizations, is changing its name to Ribbon Community. For over forty years, the charity has worked with people living with HIV/AIDS, volunteers, staff, community partners, advocates, politicians, funders, and donors to create a community of advocacy, support, and belonging. Today, the name change to Ribbon Community symbolizes the charity’s focus on supporting and empowering communities in overcoming the impacts of HIV and HIV stigma.

“All of this started with a question we asked our communities as part of our 40th anniversary: ‘How can we support people living with HIV in 2023 and beyond?’ While holding the experiences of the past 40 years close, we listened to what our communities had to say about the future,” explains Sarah Chown, Executive Director of Ribbon Community.

“Through a meaningful consultation process with people living with HIV in Metro Vancouver, we heard over and over again about the importance of HIV-specific services, and the challenges of persistent stigma – whether related to HIV, AIDS, substance use, mental health, sex, or anything else- that can be much harder to deal with than the virus itself,” says Board Chair Michael Leclair.

Now, the new purpose and values have made way for a new name that reflects how Ribbon Community will continue to support and empower people living with HIV/AIDS, HIV-negative people and HIV-positive people wanting to learn about safer sex and harm reduction, and our broader communities. Ultimately, these changes to our purpose, values, name and look are a celebration of our communities: what we have built together over four decades and counting, how we have taken care of each other, and what we have learned along the way.

For people who are diagnosed with HIV now and are able to access today’s HIV treatment, AIDS does not have to be part of their experience. However, whether living with HIV for days or decades, hundreds of clients each month turn to Ribbon Community for specialized support and stigma-free information to live long, healthy lives with HIV.

“Our programs, services, and the people who count on us remain the same,” adds Chown. “We honour where we’ve come from—and, in particular, the passionate members who helped create the HIV response that exists today. Our new name, purpose and values will allow us to continue the work started over 40 years ago and show up in a way that reflects the realities of the communities we work alongside every day.”

New Logo:



Description:

The ribbon, in our name and our look, honours some of the earliest community efforts in what we now know as the HIV movement. The ribbon pulls the past, present, and future of the HIV response together, connecting the many communities that make Ribbon Community possible. Our logo offers an interpretation of the red ribbon in the form of an 'r', rather than the 'v' shape of the original red ribbons developed by Visual AIDS. In choosing to use the red ribbon in our look, we are continuing the work of artists and community groups and people living with HIV in 1991 that led to this now renowned symbol. The name Ribbon Community references HIV and AIDS without saying them in order to offer some discretion in a world that still carries too much stigma, while highlighting the power and possibility of communities working together.

For more information about the name change or to learn more about the journey to Ribbon Community, or our current work, please visit www.aidsvancouver.org/RibbonCommunity.

About Ribbon Community:

Ribbon Community was founded in 1983 as AIDS Vancouver. It was one of the first AIDS service organizations in Canada established out of urgent necessity in the early days of the crisis. Since then, the epidemic and the organization have evolved along with it. Today, Ribbon Community is here to support and empower our communities in overcoming the impacts of HIV and HIV stigma.

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