



editor-in-chief

Spring has arrived at *Bloodlines* with a new team and fresh new look! Welcome to *Bloodlines* Spring 2005 Issue #4, which focuses on Downtown Eastside Vancouver, an area of extreme contrasts.

Did you know Downtown Eastside Vancouver is one of the poorest urban areas in this rich country called Canada, yet is one of the richest areas in terms of spirit and kindness? Extreme poverty, poor housing, crime, unemployment, prostitution, mental illness and a high rate of HIV infection are contrasted with an extraordinary sense of community, generosity of spirit and compassion, as you will read in our Vancouver Native Health Society's Positive Outlook Program feature article.

We are very excited about the inclusion of Red Road HIV/AIDS Network Society's (RRHANS) first guide to HIV/AIDS Services in the Greater Vancouver area! Please find your handy, credit card sized map on page 35 - it will provide you with the very latest, up-to-date information to assist you in your path to good health. RRHANS GIS Technician, Map Designer and author Steven DeRoy has written an excellent article about how we are utilizing GIS in "Mapping an Epidemic: Red Road's use of GIS Technology."

In our Healing section, Gerry Oleman (Indian Residential School Survivor's Society) and Robert Nahanee (Change of Season Society Aboriginal Men's Domestic Violence Program - Squamish Nation) discuss our Traditional Teachings, explore some of the reasons why we are suffering as a people, and offer us their wisdom in some of the ways we can start the healing process in our own lives.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to all of the wonderful people who have shared their stories, lives, creativity, guidance and wisdom with *Bloodlines* for our Spring 2005 Issue #4 - our APHA Editor G.H. Buck; Doreen Littlejohn, Joe White-Man-Left & the clients, volunteers and staff at Vancouver Native Health Society; Robert Nahanee; Gerry Oleman; Donald MacKenzie; Curtis Joe & Hill's Native Art; William White & Rita George-Greene; Wayne Lavalle; Paul Adomako of BC Persons With AIDS Society; Bronwen Tigar of YouthCo, Aboriginal Front Door Society's Elders and staff, Carnegie Centre, Melanie Rivers of Chee Mamuk and Barby Scaling of Healing Our Spirit.

On a personal note, great appreciation to RRHANS staff for their support during the production of this issue (ED Michelle George, Kim Louie, Rene Macchabee, Steven DeRoy, Gillian Panton & Shanti Morning Star Brett), especially Christopher Sands, who is our newly appointed Associate Editor. Thanks also to our committed production team - Indigenous Dynamics Plus (iD+) and photographer Amie Stafford. *Bloodlines* would like to thank Kecia Larkin, Gordon & Annwen Loverin of Tsenaglobe Communications and Bonnie Nickel for their work during 2004.

The creation of this issue has been a great honour and we are grateful to the Greater Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (GVUAS) for their foresight in supporting Red Road HIV/AIDS Network Society's GIS Mapping Project and *Bloodlines* magazine.

Every cloud has a silver lining and I believe we discovered the essence of what that 'silver lining' is, right on the streets of Downtown Eastside Vancouver. **We thank the Creator for guiding us on our walk on the Red Road.**

With love, kindness and compassion
All Our Relations
Michelle Morning Star Doherty

* apha editor

I'm half Cree, half French and was born in The Pas, Manitoba in the 1960's. I grew up on the Rez 'til my parents separated when I was 7 and my dad and I moved to town. When we got to town I was sent to the "School for Boys," and met someone there who introduced me to drinking and using drugs. Using drugs lead me to the streets, where I began to prostitute myself, and all the rest of the stuff that goes along with the 'street lifestyle'. I eventually met a girl and we had a baby girl, however I was not part of my daughter's life due to my drinking and drugging. My daughter passed away when she was 19 years old.

I eventually moved to Vancouver in 1993 and found out what it was really like to be a drunk and an addict. I was trying to find my way in life and continued to drink heavily. My excessive drinking, unhealthy lifestyle and bad choice of friends lead me to high risk behavior, to the point that I eventually tested positive for HIV last year. I still can't express how I feel about my diagnosis, I guess that I am still in denial because I still drink heavily and feel nothing has changed. By God's grace I will get to where I want to be - I don't know where that is yet.

I do know that this opportunity to work with *Bloodlines* as the APHA editor for this issue has made me feel very purposeful and hopeful. I find that I look forward to helping in my own way - I can see that I have value and I can see possibilities. I am grateful for my affordable housing, my good friends and my family for sticking by me and supporting me.

I think it's important to let others know that testing HIV positive does not have to happen to anyone - it is preventable!

Thank you
G.H.Buck

*Aboriginal Person with HIV/AIDS