



Positive Women

Positive News



June 2009

Significant Women



A co-facilitated six week peer group for women who are supporting someone who has HIV or AIDS

This is a space where you can meet other women living with similar situations; you can share experiences, receive and give support, and freely express your feelings.

The aim of this group is to assist you in creating your own peer support network.

Co-facilitated by two professional therapists

Private and confidential

The meetings are **free** however bookings are essential as there are limited spaces available.

Six weekly Monday meetings from **27th July to 31st August**
from **6:30pm till 8pm**
at **Burnett Centre- NZAF**
35 Hargreaves St. College Hill. Ponsonby

Please contact us for any queries and to book your space.

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Coordinators Update

Tena Koutou Katoa, Jambo, Hello, Talofa lava, Taloha ni, Halo olaketa, Bula vinaka, Kam na mai, La orana, Fakeaalofa, Lahi atu, Malo lelei, Nabat, Zdravo, Ciao, Shalom, Saludo, Bonjour, Aman, Servus, Konnichi wa, Buenos Días, Nyob zoo, Torova, Namaste, Ci yi bak, Salaama.

Hello everyone,

I got my power bill today which indicated very clearly that winter is here. Amazing how much it costs to keep a couple of rooms warm!

Positive Women Inc. has had another busy few months with the Digital Story Telling Workshop, the Women's Retreat and the Candle Light Memorial service all of which are covered in more detail in this edition of Positive News.

I would like to start by saying a huge THANK YOU to the Lottery Grants Board who gave us a donation of \$51,000 last month which was a bit of a life saver. These funds are tagged for wages and administration costs which have been areas of funding which have been difficult to attain recently due to the current economic situation. So the grant was very timely and VERY much appreciated.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH LOTTERY GRANTS.

We also received a significant donation from the MAC AIDS Fund so with the two donations Positive Women Inc. is secure for the next 12 months in regards to running costs and providing services for our members.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH MAC AIDS

Fund.

Also a **BIG THANK YOU** this past month to **GSK** for funding towards the Women's Retreat.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Positive News and that you are all keeping warm, well and happy.

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Thank you very much to the following companies for sponsoring Positive News



2009 Women's Retreat

The every popular annual retreat for women living with HIV was held in Auckland over the Queens' Birthday weekend from 29 May till the 1st of June. Forty two women registered this year, one of the highest numbers ever.

The theme of the weekend was around boosting confidence and self esteem with a creative arts self esteem workshop facilitated by Amanda Levey of Alleviate and a workshop by Linda Davidson on how wearing different colours make you feel. This was followed by a transformation make-over, and haircut on one of the women which highlighted the difference a haircut can make to the way one looks and feels.

Dr Mark Thomas facilitated a two hour question and answer session addressing

questions around medication to menopause and from cramps to pregnancy. Always a very popular and informative session and well attended.

The peer support group talking sessions were once again a very significant part of the retreat. For many this is often the only time they get to be with other women and share how living with HIV affects their lives. A quite space to share feelings and fears, knowing that others total understand, without judgment or prejudice, without fear or shame. Just a wonderfully safe, supportive and encouraging space

Thank you to Gabriela and Kate from NZAF and Susan and Michelle from the Community HIV Team for facilitating these groups. And to Susan for being a wonderful 'gofer'.



The weather was perfect for most of the weekend as women gathered to chat while taking in the spectacular views



M.A.C. Artists, from left to right, Tatum, Kirsten and Jo

The retreat would not be the retreat without the wonderfully relaxing therapies which are always available and we thank all the therapists who give up their weekend each year to come and share their touch with the women. Massage, Shiatsu, Reiki, Deep meditative Head & Shoulder massage, Ayurvedic massage, one-on-one NLP and nutrition sessions and of course our wonderful M.A.C. Make-overs done by the girls from M.A.C.



A relaxing massage from Hawkwind

A special treat this year was a quiz night hosted by one of the Board members which created a lot of fun and laughter...because we do that at the retreat as well. Laughter is the therapy of the soul and there was definitely a lot of laughter therapy going on over the weekend.

We thank those who, year after year, continue to support the retreat through funding donations. Thank you to J. R. McKenzie, GlaxoSmithKline, Gilead, Boehringer Ingelheim and Merck Sharp and Dohme. Your support is hugely appreciated by us all. Another thank you to all those who donated products for the welcome bags, NEXT Magazine, The Body Shop, The City Mission, Cadbury's, Nekta and GSK.

And finally....a huge thank you to all the wonderful, wonderful women who came to the retreat. You are the stars...shine bright beautiful ladies.

It only takes One

It only take one flower to brighten a garden
It only takes one smile to brighten my day

It only takes one light to brighten a dark room
It only takes on kind word to encourage my day

It only takes one hard word to harden my heart
It only takes one weed to ruin my garden

It only takes on prayer to nourish my soul
It only takes one kind touch to make me feel whole

It only takes one thought to chose my attitude
It only takes one call to connect me with a friend

It only takes one bad reaction to pills to be put off for life
It only takes one bad decision to drive while drunk

It only takes one good letter (or email) to feel connected
It only take one unplanned visit to feel less isolated

It only takes one good song to lift my spirits
It only takes one good picture to give me hope

It only takes one so which will you choose today
Which thought, word or action will make your day

Maybe its not only about you
Maybe you can brighten someone else's day too

Women's Retreat 2009
Amanda

2009 Positive Women Inc. AGM

The 2009 Positive Women Inc. AGM was held on Friday 29th of May at Vaughan Park starting at 10.30am.

All Board and staff plus 18 members were present at the meeting which was opened by the chair.

The meeting discussed the annual report which highlighted the many achievements the organisation has accomplished over the past 12 months.

A strategic planning session was included on the agenda to enable members to have their say on the direction they wish to see Positive Women Inc. take in the future which will be incorporated in the 2011-2014 strategic plan currently being put together.

An open forum discussion resulted in some new initiatives. The most significant being that in future the annual women's retreat will finish on Sunday evening rather than Monday morning as it has become apparent over the years that many women are leaving on the Sunday as they need to get back to work. Finishing on Sunday evening will also cut accommodation costs while not impacting significantly on the retreat itself.

It was also agreed that the AGM be held on the Friday prior to commencement of the retreat as this seemed to work well for many people.

The AGM was closed by the chair at 12.30 pm.

Digital Story Telling Workshop ...

Five women attended the Positive Women Inc. three day Digital Story Telling Workshop held in Wellington in April. The workshop was facilitated by Suzi and Jon from Digital Express who worked tirelessly over the three days teaching and helping everyone involved to tell their stories.

One woman who attended said:

"The workshop was very worthwhile, therapeutic, educational, emotional, and full on as well. I went in to the workshop with a 2 1/2 page script which I had pre-prepared, only to find out I had to cut it right down and simplify it much more. I have a habit of writing too much sometimes, and it was good practice for me to learn how to break it down. I had to edit it and cut bits out 3-4 times before it was short enough to fit into the digital story. I based my script on 'my story' with a focus on getting some educa-

tional messages out there. I was excited that this was yet another opportunity for me to get started in my goal of HIV education, and the story could be viewed on the internet world-wide. We all worked extremely hard on our stories, and we were able to share with each other and give each other advice before we finished the final story. I really enjoyed seeing the finished products of the other women in the training; their stories were amazing and so inspirational. I was relieved when I had finished, not only because it was a hard 3 days, but because in general I was happy with it. There were a couple of audio issues to be fixed, but otherwise it was a powerful story; and all of the stories were powerful and they really affected and inspired me.

All the stories will go on the Positive Women Inc. website later in the year. Watch this space for more information.

Magnificent Month of May for Mel



May has been a magnificent month for one of our young members, Mel Fraser.

Mel is passionate about raising awareness of HIV and believes education, especially of young people in New Zealand is one of the major keys to HIV prevention.

Mel, along with 4 other members of Positive Women Inc. took part in a digital story telling workshop held through Positive Women Inc, at the end of May and has produced an amazing educational digital story which will soon be available to view on the Positive Women Inc. website. More details on the launch of the online digital stories will be available soon.

Mel also spoke at the Wellington Candle Light memorial service held on the 17th of May. There wasn't a dry eye in the house as Mel captivated the audience with her personalised message encouraging everyone to 'work together' in the fight against HIV transmission and stigma (see more on

page 10).

Mel then followed by having her story and key messages published in the Otago times . Mel explains:

"When a member of Positive women contacted me about a friend who was a reporter wanting to do a story on 'stigma' focussing on women and HIV, I wasn't hesitant in saying 'yes I'll do it!' I had been waiting for an opportunity such as this to come along, and sure enough it did. Although I had a fear inside me of the story being one of those 'horror stories' we all hear about or have read, I knew that becoming public about my status to educate was always going to have some risks and possible fallbacks, and it was just something I was going to have to be prepared for and deal with at the time if it happened. I was interviewed over the phone two days before it was published. I couldn't wait to see the finished article, and I was extremely anxious. When I did see it, I was happy and relieved. It was a good article, and the photo wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.

I felt satisfied that my journey had officially begun. A small error in the article made me laugh; in the caption under my photo it said I was one of the founders of Positive Women Inc, if this was the case I must have been a pretty talented 5 year old!"

A copy of Mel's article has been included with this newsletter.

As if that wasn't enough Mel's proposal to do a presentation at the ICAAP conference being held in Bali, Indonesia in August was accepted.

Mel explains:

"I had applied for a scholarship and submitted an abstract for a presentation for the ICAAP9 HIV and AIDS conference to be held in Bali in August this year. I was so keen to attend, especially since Indonesia is an important part of my life, and where I would like to do some HIV and AIDS work sometime in the future. I knew it would be a wonderful opportunity to attend 'my first ever conference', and I would be able to meet people, build on my skills, and get new ideas essential to becoming a successful HIV AIDS advocate and educator. I knew the scholarship would not necessarily be accepted because there were 2000 applicants, and they generally go for people from the 'Global South', and it wasn't accepted. Although, my abstract for a poster presentation was accepted, and I was so excited that I had been accepted for that, especially since I didn't know what an abstract was before I submitted my one. My abstract was based on developing alternative health programs in Indonesia to improve the quality of life for people living with HIV and AIDS. I would hate to miss out on such an opportunity, and I would appreciate it if anyone is able to help me financially to get to Bali in August".

Congratulations Mel....well done.

If anyone would like to make a donation to help raise funds to get Mel to Indonesia please contact Positive Women Inc. at positivewomen@xtra.co.nz or phone Auckland 309 1858.

To highlight her dedication to being an HIV advocate Mel recently disclosed her HIV status when she applied for a job and guess what happened? Read on;

"A few weeks ago I had a meeting for a job interview to become a part time support worker for people with disabilities. I had been pondering on the idea of disclosing to them about my status or not. I was not going to tell them because I 'had to'; but because I felt I had something to fight for and by not disclosing it was going to go against what I am fighting for. I knew it shouldn't have made any difference 'in reality' whether I was HIV positive or not. I also felt that in me becoming public to help fight discrimination, it was a relevant quality to have for the job because people with disabilities experience discrimination all the time. In the initial meeting, I wanted them to get to know me for me, but when I was called back for an interview, I decided I was going to tell them despite many friends advising against it. I took along my article, and I adjusted my C.V to include what I had done in regards to HIV and AIDS so far. I wasn't worried which way it turned out; on one hand if they had turned me down I would have a chance to educate and stand up for my rights as an HIV positive woman, and on the other hand if they employed me I knew that I would have a great place to work where everyone understood and did not judge, and I would be free to be myself. They were glad that I shared that with them, and immediately started thinking of good client matches for me who I could help see the positive side to their situation. I got the a phone call the next day, and I had been accepted for a position with them".

What an amazing young woman and on behalf of Positive Women Inc. we thank you Mel for having the courage to speak out, not only for women but for all those living with and affected by HIV.

Candle Light Memorial Service

“Together we are the solution”

Candle light memorial services were held all over the county on the 17th of May to acknowledge and commemorate those living with HIV and especially those who have passed away over the years.

This year's theme was “Together we are the solution”, highlighting the need for communities to work together to help reduce HIV transmission as well as HIV stigma and discrimination which is still one of the largest barriers for those living with HIV.

In Auckland Jewel Grimshaw spoke at



Jewel speaking at Candle Light Memorial Service in Auckland

St Mathews Cathedral and reminded everyone that HIV affects all sectors of the community, not just gay men. Reinforcing the message that we need to ‘work together’ as HIV is something which can affect everyone.

In Wellington, Mel Fraser spoke on the need for education, especially amongst youth as a critical factor for both HIV prevention and in the war against HIV stigma and discrimination.

This was Mel's first ever public appearance speaking as an HIV positive woman. She said it was an amazing experience and that she was more determined than ever that she wanted to work in the area of HIV education and prevention. Congratulations Mel and well done.

Mel talks about her experience of speaking at the Candle Light Memorial Service

“When I was asked to speak at the candle-light memorial, I was hesitant because I had never spoken in front of an audience before. However, I knew that it would be a big step forward in becoming an HIV and AIDS advocate and educator, and that took over my fear of public speaking. I was extremely nervous right back to a few weeks before the speech, and especially on the night. When my name was called, I just told myself I would do well, and it would be worth it 100%. At the beginning of the speech my nervousness was showing, but then I got it together and read it just the way I wanted to. I was amazed at all the positive feedback I received from many people, and hugs from strangers including the winner of NZ Idol. I felt so empowered and strong. I had proved to myself that I could do it, and I now believe in myself more for doing future speeches when sharing my story, or educating others about HIV and AIDS”.

Thanks Jewel and Mel for sharing your messages and ensuring the voices of women are also being heard.



Mel with Carl of NZAF at Wellington Candle Light Memorial Service

NZAF Wellness Fund

There has been an unprecedented number of applications made for assistance through the NZAF Wellness Fund over the past 12 months and as a result the fund now only has around \$30,000 remaining. In an attempt to ensure those who need assistance the most are able to get access, the fund criteria has once again been restricted.

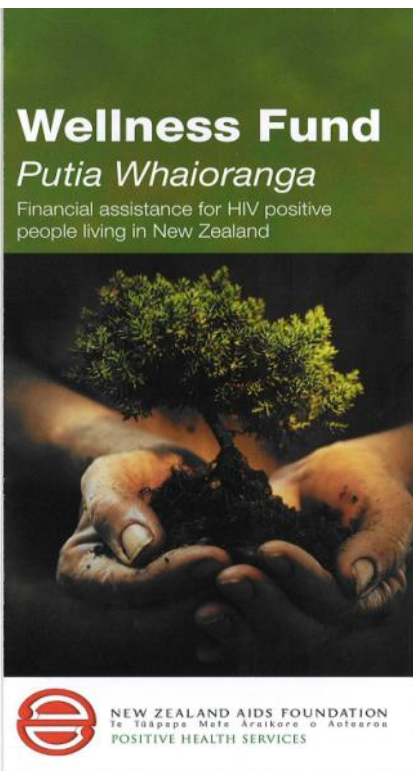
This means only small grant applications of up to \$500 per person per year will be considered from now on.

Applicants are not income tested specifically, although they are required to have a community services card.

Grant payments will continue to be made to either the service provider or the support group partner unless there are special circumstances which NZAF would have the final decision about. i.e. Applicants do not get the money.

Costs covered by the fund include those which are directly linked to the health and wellbeing of a person living with HIV which includes things such as medical costs, therapies. Specifically those recommended by a specialists or GP and grant also covers travel costs for a person to get to the retreat or any other event which contributes to a persons health and well being.

If you have any questions or are unclear of the criteria please do not hesitate to contact us and we will clarify if we can or find out if we don't know.



The poster features a green header with the text "Wellness Fund" in large white letters and "Putia Whaioranga" in smaller white letters below it. Underneath, it reads "Financial assistance for HIV positive people living in New Zealand". The central image shows a pair of hands cupping a small green tree growing from soil. At the bottom, there is a red circular logo for the New Zealand AIDS Foundation and the text "NEW ZEALAND AIDS FOUNDATION Te Tāpapa Māte Āraikoro o Aotearoa POSITIVE HEALTH SERVICES".

Change in appearance of ZIAGEN (abacavir sulphate)



300mg tablets. The Ziagen 300mg tablets currently supplied by GSK are film coated tablets, yellow biconvex, and capsule-shaped. The tables are en-

GraxoSmithKline NZ Limited (GSK) would like to advise of a change in appearance of Ziagen

graved GX 623 on one side of the tablet. The new tablets will be very similar in appearance but will now have a score line and are engraved with GX^23 on one side of the tablet, with the score line between the GX and 623. Change does not affect efficacy or safety of Ziagen.

GSK will transition to scored Ziagen

Chiropractic....

A Natural Approach to Health

Chiropractic is a natural approach to health care for all ages. The main focus of a Chiropractor is the nerve system and ensuring that it is free of interference.

The nerve system controls and coordinates every function that your body performs.

Interference of your nerve system can lead to compromised health and poor function of the entire body. These interferences, known as subluxations, are a result of physical, emotional and/or chemical stresses in our daily lives.

Chiropractors are specifically trained to locate, analyse and bring about the correction of vertebral subluxations through safe and gentle adjustments, which in turn allows your body to heal and function optimally.

Benefits of Chiropractic care include:

Strengthened Immunity
Increased energy and alertness
Increased adaptability to stress

The following research indicates that chiropractic may have a positive impact on strengthening immunity:

In 1994 research into the effects of upper cervical chiropractic adjustments on the CD4 counts of HIV positive patients showed that those receiving adjustments experienced a 48% increase in CD4 cell counts, indicating that correction of upper cervical subluxations could improve immunocompetence.¹

In 1975, Ronald Pero, chief of cancer prevention research at New York's Preventive Medicine Institute discovered

that patients who had been under long-term chiropractic care had a 200% greater immune competence than those who weren't receiving chiropractic care & a 400% greater immune competence than people who had cancer or other serious diseases. This increase in immunocompetence was seen across all age groups & did not decrease with increasing age.²

At our initial consultation we check your spine for subluxations and evaluate the functioning of your nerve system.

To book an initial consultation please contact Tammy McKenzie or Lan-Ling Clark at the NZCC Chiropractic Centre on 09 526 2100

Please Note: Both Tammy and Lan-Ling are going on a chiropractic mission trip to India and won't be back until the 13th July - but please feel free to make contact with the Chiropractic centre or wait unit after the 13th of July if you would prefer to contact Tammy or Lan-Ling

References:

Selano, J.L, Hightower, B.C., Pflieger, B. et al (1994). *The effects of the specific upper cervical adjustments on the CD4 counts of HIV positive patients*. Chiropractic Research Journal;3(1): pp32-39

Pero, Dr Ronald (1975). Chief of Cancer Prevention Research at New York's Preventive Medicine Institute & Professor in Environmental Health at New York University

HIV Treatments Update.....

On the 27th May Body Positive hosted an HIV Treatments Update Seminar at Otago University House in Auckland. The one-day seminar was a great success with almost 80 people attending from various aspects of the community throughout New Zealand and with varying knowledge around the Treatment of HIV in New Zealand.

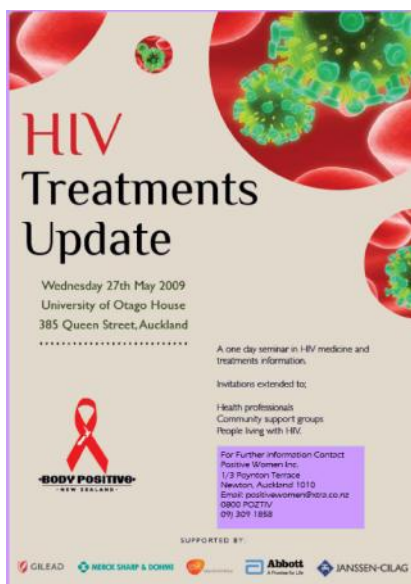
"We were absolutely overwhelmed and delighted with the community response to attend this event, initially we had only expected about 25 people to attend! Our ambition is to now make this an annual event." - Bruce Kilmister, Body Positive Inc.

Speakers included Dr Richard Meech from Hawkes Bay and Dr Mark Thomas from Auckland who gave a very good run down on how HIV effects the body, how current medications work against the virus and the importance of drug adherence in order to stay healthy. Dr Rod Ellis Pegler gave a moving speech on the History of HIV and his personal experience in working against it since its arrival in New Zealand in the early 1980's. In addition to this Dr Nigel Dickson from Dunedin gave a very informative overview of how the virus has effected and continues to effect the New Zealand population. The guest speaker for the seminar was Professor Bruce Brew from Sydney who gave everyone an insight into the often overlooked area of how HIV can affect the mental health of Positive People.

Four members from Positive Women Inc. attended the workshop. One woman commented "*The Treatments Update was the first forum like*

this that I have attended and I was unsure of what to expect. and I had no criteria to be met. So I was pleasantly surprised to have a really enjoyable and informative day. I did manage to learn some new things, about both the virus and some of the treatments but as this was open to many different people involved in the area I did not feel comfortable asking questions that would identify me as a positive person. That would be the only drawback about the day. There was some information given out that was not very encouraging about the progression of HIV in the body but on the whole there was quite a lot of optimism from the Doctors discussions.

A valuable experience and thanks to Body Positive for putting on the day".



The poster features a background of red blood cells and green virus particles. The title "HIV Treatments Update" is prominently displayed in red and black. Below the title, the date and location are listed: "Wednesday 27th May 2009, University of Otago House, 385 Queen Street, Auckland". A red ribbon logo is positioned above the "BODY POSITIVE NEW ZEALAND" text. A purple box contains contact information for Positive Women Inc. The bottom of the poster lists sponsors: GILEAD, MERCK SHARP & DOHME, Abbott, and JANSSEN-CILAG.

HIV Treatments Update

Wednesday 27th May 2009
University of Otago House
385 Queen Street, Auckland

.....

A one day seminar in HIV medicine and treatments information.

Invitations extended to:

- Health professionals
- Community support groups
- People living with HIV.

For Further information Contact
Positive Women Inc.
118 Poynton Terrace
Newtown, Auckland 1010
Email: positivewomen@ora.co.nz
0800 POCITYV
091 309 1888

SUPPORTED BY:

GILEAD MERCK SHARP & DOHME Abbott JANSSEN-CILAG

Writer for Positive News....

Positive Women Inc. is currently looking for a volunteer to write the bi monthly newsletter, Positive News.

Interested person would need to have good working knowledge of Publisher and a keen interest to source interesting and relevant stories and photos.

It is estimated the role will take about an hour a week. Any expenses incurred will be reimbursed (after prior

approval). A minimum commitment of 12 months is required and deadlines must be met.

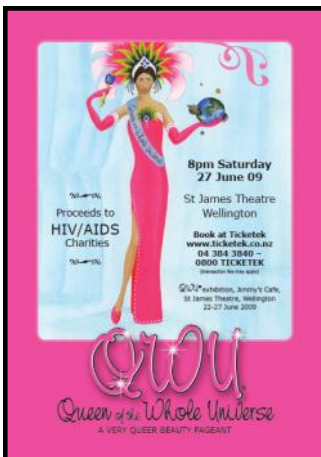
Positive Women Inc. National Coordinator will do final editing.

Contact Positive Women Inc. for more information if you are interested at positivewomen@xtra.co.nz or by phone on 09) 309 1858 or free phone 0800 769 848

More Viva Glam.....

For 15 years MAC has been supporting various and AIDS charities around the world by donating every cent of the sale price of its popular Viva Glam lip colours through the MAC AIDS Fund. As of 13 April 2009 there were four new products available in the ranges and a brand new campaign, fronted by Fergie (the singer not the ex royal princess).

Viva Glam lipsticks and lip-glasses are all \$38 from M.A.C. Counters nationwide.



Queen of the Whole Universe Wellington.....

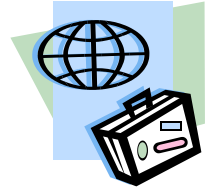
If you live in Wellington, don't forget to book your tickets for the Queen of the Whole Universe Pageant.

Positive Women Inc. are one of the three charity recipients of funds raised from this event so by supporting the QWU, you will also be supporting Positive Women Inc.

Plus it is a fun and entertaining night out.

Travel Insurance

Positive Women Inc. is able to help you get travel insurance at a very competitive price with no questions asked as to HIV status.



This can all be done by email or phone. Call us for a quote

HIV friendly Dr's & Dentists

Need to find a new Doctor (GP) or Dentist and are anxious about disclosing your HIV status? Give us a call and Positive Women Inc. will do the initial (anonymous) investigation for you.



Straight Arrows Dinners

Last Thursday evening of the month

This social gathering is held on the last Thursday of each month from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm in the central city. The Straight Arrows dinner is a chance for heterosexual HIV + people to come together for social support over a meal.

Contact

Positive Women Inc.

1/3 Poynton Terrace, Newton, Auckland 1010

Email: positivewomen@xtra.co.nz, Web: www.positivewomen.org.nz

Phone: (09) 309 1858,

Free phone: 0800 769 848

For more information on any of the above

**Positive Women Inc. thankfully
acknowledge the following Sponsors**



J R McKenzie Trust

