

Action Request

CAS National Speakers Bureau

The Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) is creating a national speakers bureau on the topic of HIV/AIDS. By building a comprehensive catalogue of relevant and knowledgeable speakers, CAS will be bridging the gap currently existing between the Canadian media and the resourceful individuals who are motivated to speak on any number of key HIV/AIDS issues in Canada today.

The timing of this Speakers Bureau could not be more significant as it coincides with the arrival of the XVI International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2006) in Canada. More than 3,000 Journalists and reporters from around the world will be working to cover the numerous details of AIDS 2006, which further emphasizes the need for a national Speakers Bureau to speak to HIV and AIDS in a Canadian context.

Speakers

Joining CAS' National Speakers Bureau will give speakers the platform to showcase their work in the AIDS movement and to take a positive step towards representing the face of HIV/AIDS in Canada. Not only will access to the media promote discussion on the numerous pertinent issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in Canada, it will also allow speakers the opportunity to promote their own AIDS-related projects and endeavours.

Ideal candidates should be PLWHIV/AIDS and/or have a number of years of involvement with the field of HIV/AIDS and have a set of topics that they feel passionate speaking about. As a member of the Bureau, speakers will have the opportunity to directly deliver their ideas and opinions on issues of HIV/AIDS that may not normally receive media coverage. Members of the Speakers Bureau will lend their expertise and are encouraged to promote their own projects and associations. They do not speak on behalf of the Canadian AIDS Society.

Speakers are being asked to join the Speakers Bureau for a number of different reasons:

- There is a considerable amount of HIV/AIDS issues that do not receive adequate coverage in Canadian news.
 - It is important for journalists and reporters to have access to knowledgeable and informed authorities on HIV/AIDS issues in Canada.
 - Giving interviews may allow a speaker the opportunity of promoting personal projects that may benefit from media exposure.
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- Keeping AIDS in the forefront of the news is vital to the work of many AIDS service organizations, and keeping this dialogue open will lend support and legitimacy to the efforts of many groups.
- Considering the great amount of international journalists and reporters expecting to attend AIDS 2006 (and the focus that this will bring to Canada), members of the Speakers Bureau will be able to share their experiences, as well as advancements and progress, with countries around the world.

Considering the intensity of media coverage throughout the week of the AIDS 2006, all speakers will be encouraged to be available to give phone interviews during this period, and where possible, live interviews. As AIDS 2006 is being held in Toronto, speakers from the GTA may choose to further promote their message by giving on-site interviews. During the recruitment process, speakers will undergo an interview with CAS staff to discuss their involvement with the Speakers Bureau as well as their ability to effectively articulate issues during media interviews. Tutorials on effective interview delivery will be provided to speakers who will benefit from the information sessions. Details of these sessions will be announced.

CAS' Role

In compiling the catalogue, CAS will be collecting brief bios and profiles of speakers that will provide background and highlight areas of their expertise. CAS will also be creating and maintaining a web site dedicated to the Speakers Bureau that will serve as the primary method of accessing information about the Bureau. The web site will also be updated on a regular basis to provide visitors with current information on the Bureau as it develops.

The catalogue of speakers will be made available in the form of a media kit. Requests for speakers will be done through searching the completed catalogue and sending a request to CAS. Contact information for speakers will not be included in the catalogue. Those seeking to request a speaker must instead contact CAS first.

Beyond AIDS 2006, the Speakers Bureau will serve as an important resource of information for Canadian media and those seeking experts for research. The long-term potential for the Speakers Bureau may yield collaborative efforts and participation from future speakers. CAS expects that the database of speakers and the Speakers Bureau web site will serve as important tools in representing the face of HIV/AIDS in Canada in the future.

For more information about the Speakers Bureau, or to join become a speaker, please contact:

Henry Lau

Communications Consultant, Canadian AIDS Society

(613) 230-3580 ext. 130 / 1(800) 499-1986 ext. 130

henryl@cdnaids.ca / www.cdnaids.ca
