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November 5th, 2012

Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Town of Markham
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON L3R 9W3

Your Honour,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the AIDS Committee of York Region to request a proclamation from the Town of Markham to declare December 1st as World AIDS Day. We also request your presence at the Candlelight Vigil to be held on Wednesday, November 28th between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

The purpose of the proclamation and the vigil is to enhance our awareness efforts on behalf of all persons throughout our community living with and affected by HIV. Many people living with HIV are living in isolation due to the experience of stigma and discrimination which is only exacerbated by the lack of awareness in the community.

The AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR) is the only local nonprofit organization providing desperately needed and life changing supports to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. We advocate and provide innovative programs that bring those affected by HIV/AIDS in from the margins, so that they can reclaim their role as engaged and valued members of our community. We champion inclusivity by including those affected by HIV/AIDS in our governance practices and program delivery. In addition, we deliver a unique platform of relevant services that are educational and prevent the spread of HIV. In York Region, men, women and children are impacted by stigma and HIV every day.

There are approximately 420 people who are aware of their status living with HIV in York Region. There are 65,000 people living with HIV in all of Canada, of whom 27,000 are living in Ontario. More importantly, an estimated 26% of Canadians do not know their status because they have never been tested. Anyone can be affected by HIV regardless of religion, age, class, race, culture or sexual orientation.

Your exceptional stewardship of various causes has left a great imprint on our work in the community. Therefore, the proclamation and your presence at our vigil event will generate a great deal of awareness for the cause. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. We are finalizing our program and launching our media campaign, so I would appreciate your kind and prompt response. We look forward to hearing from you so that we may send you more details about the Candle Light Vigil.

Kind regards,

Radha Bhardwaj
Executive Director
AIDS Committee of York Region
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Providing support and dignified care to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in York Region.