

## About Dr. Peter

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*Photo by David Gray, courtesy of the CBC*

Dr. Peter Jepson-Young (1957-1992) was a young, handsome, and well-educated gay Vancouver physician who was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 1985.

For two years, beginning in 1990, he personalized the face of AIDS through his weekly “Dr. Peter Diaries” on CBC-TV. Becoming affectionately known as “Dr. Peter,” he brought local and national attention to the AIDS epidemic through personal accounts of his experience as a person living and dying with AIDS. His candid approach and medical knowledge helped educate the public about the realities of HIV/AIDS.

Despite his diagnosis, Dr. Peter knew that he was lucky. With his education, medical background, and close family and friends, he had the support that he needed to cope with his illness.

Still, Dr. Peter knew that for many others living with HIV/AIDS, life was very different. So before his death in 1992, Dr. Peter established the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation to provide comfort care for people living with HIV/AIDS. In 1997, the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation established the Dr. Peter Centre, operating an Assisted-Living Residence and Day Health Program.



## The Residence



Photo by Derek Lepper

Each of the two residence floors has a living-dining room overlooking historic Mole Hill's restored roofs and turrets, West End high-rises, and the North Shore mountains.

Twenty-four hour nursing care is provided in the residence. It is a home for those who need palliative care, longer term medically complex care, and shorter term stays for respite or until health improves.



Photo by James Loewen



Photo by Derek Lepper

Each of the twenty-four private suites has a bathroom with shower, kitchenette with microwave and fridge, television, and computer work station. All meals are provided.

Recreation, music, and complementary therapies such as massage, reiki, and healing touch enrich residence life. Volunteers add to comfort care by assisting with outings, personal shopping, laundry, hair styling, pet care, and bedside vigils.





## “One day at a time...”

At twenty-four years of age, Jaime is the youngest resident. In her suite at the Dr. Peter Centre residence, she counts herself among the lucky ones.

“Before I came to the Dr. Peter Centre, I had double pneumonia. I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C because of sharing works (street drug paraphernalia), and also HIV positive because of a gang rape. Today, I am in the health-care program of my choice. I am clean and sober, and getting my life back — one day at a time.

I was born to a mother who was an addict and an alcoholic. I was 3 pounds, 2 ounces at birth. I had fetal alcohol syndrome, and went through withdrawal when I was a baby.

I started using alcohol when I was ten years old. My father used to beat my mom and then beat me, so I finally ran away to the streets of Vancouver, where I began prostituting to support my cocaine habit. My addiction made it impossible for me to live in a shelter — they have curfews. I slept in alleys. That was “home sweet home.”

I spent many years in the back alleys shooting up and smoking dope, even when I hated it. I have also made multiple suicide attempts, but none of them succeeded — thank God.”

About Jaime



## The Day Health Program



*Photo by Derek Lepper*

Admission to the Day Health Program is based on degree of risk for deteriorating health. Participants have, in addition to HIV/AIDS, multiple illnesses, disabilities, and disadvantaged life circumstances. There are more than 20,000 health visits annually to the Day Health Program.

Nurses provide consultation about pain and symptom management; medication support; wound care; a broad range of harm reduction services, including supervised injection; and health education. A dietitian provides consultation on difficulties with food intake. Psychotherapy services are also available.



*Photo by James Loewen*



*Photo by Derek Lepper*

The café is the heart of the Centre. Nutrient-dense food is essential for people living with HIV/AIDS. Each month, food service staff and volunteers provide day health program participants with more than 3,000 hot, wholesome meals: 1,400 breakfasts and 1,900 lunches. On sunny days meals are enjoyed on the terrace.

The art studio provides opportunity for creative, artistic expression. The music room offers a broad range of instruments including guitars, conga drums, and a cello. Music therapy includes song writing, instruction, recording, relaxation, and in-house concerts.



*Photo by James Loewen*



## “Something to get up for...”

“I felt really lost before I came to the Dr. Peter Centre. I had isolated myself and had no friends at all. Most of my friends had died of AIDS. I really wasn’t all that keen on making friends again with people who were HIV positive or gay. Then I made close friends here at the Dr. Peter Centre.

I sometimes get depressed from struggling with my physical health. I have sleep apnea, poor breathing, and low energy.

I met David about five years ago. David is living with fibromyalgia and is also HIV positive. Coming here has made a difference to our relationship. We get marital counselling, and we get structure during the day, which gives us something to get up for.

I am now waiting for surgery. It is good to know that if my care gets too stressful and David needs a break, we can arrange a respite stay for me in the Dr. Peter Residence.”

About David & Wally



## The AIDS Epidemic Is Ahead of Us

“In spite of tremendous advances in treatment, the burden of care still lies in the future in British Columbia’s HIV epidemics. The current situation at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver serves as an early warning with respect to future acute and community care needs across the province as a whole. By the beginning of 2003, St. Paul’s Hospital was reporting a significant increase in the number of in-patients living with HIV disease — as many as 35-39 on any given day. These numbers have not been seen at St. Paul’s since the early 1990s, before the advent of improved treatment.

Hospital staff and researchers suggest this renewed pressure on acute care capacity is in large part the result of a convergence of two epidemics:

- large numbers of individuals for whom all existing treatment options have failed, many of whom are gay men infected relatively early in the epidemic; and
- individuals who have never received treatment, mostly injection drug users infected in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside during the HIV outbreak in that community during the early and mid 1990s.

Further complicating the situation, as many as one-third of HIV positive in-patients at St. Paul’s are ready for discharge to a sub-acute setting, but must remain in acute care because facilities offering more appropriate levels of care are not available.

Without access to healthy living conditions and appropriate care, treatment, and support services, people living with HIV/AIDS will place significant pressures on the health-care system as their disease progresses.”

Excerpts from *Priorities for Action in Managing the Epidemics: HIV/AIDS in BC: 2003-2007*  
BC Ministry of Health Planning, BC Ministry of Health Services: Sept. 2003

## The Dr. Peter Centre Provides Solutions

The Dr. Peter Centre improves the flow of AIDS patients out of St. Paul’s Hospital, freeing hospital beds for others who need to be admitted for acute care.

- A 1998 study showed that 16 Dr. Peter Centre residents reduced their hospital stays by 98% within one year of admission to the residence, from 1,484 to 33 days.
- A 2001 study, “Engagement, Rehabilitation, and Quality of Life at the Dr. Peter Centre,” showed that participants’ engagement in the day health program improved their quality of life.
- A study, published in the September 2002 *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (JAIDS)*, showed that within one year of admission to the Dr. Peter Centre Day Health Program, participants reduced their use of hospital beds by 55%.

The new Dr. Peter Centre, opened in September 2003, increases residential and day health program capacity.

*“The model of care at the Dr. Peter Centre is highly effective in improving and stabilizing the health of its participants and reducing their use of hospital beds.”*

- Dr. Thomas Kerr, Research Associate  
formerly of B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

# Dr. Peter Had the Vision of Comfort Care

Today, more than ever, government looks to the not-for-profit sector for partnerships in the provision of health care and housing.

Each year, the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation must raise more than \$500,000 and provide more than 7,000 hours of volunteer services to accomplish its mission of providing Comfort Care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

*“If all people could be provided with the same degree of comfort care as I have been, then the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation will have achieved that which government and society in general cannot provide. There is no substitute for the ongoing involvement and support of caring people. Persons living with HIV/AIDS have needs greater than survival.”*

-Dr. Peter Jepson-Young

Dr. Peter’s legacy is yours to continue.

Dr. Peter was able to sustain courage throughout his illness by drawing strength from his medical background, his optimistic nature, and his spirituality — a strong belief that moved him to compose “Affirmation”, a meditation that remains an inspirational message and comfort for many.

## Affirmation

*I accept and absorb all the strength of the earth to keep my  
body hard and strong;*

*I accept and absorb all the energy of the sun to keep my mind  
sharp and bright;*

*I accept and absorb all the life force of the ocean to cleanse  
my body and bring me life;*

*I accept and absorb all the power of the wind to cleanse my  
spirit and bring me strength of purpose;*

*I accept and absorb all the mystery of the heavens, for I am a  
part of the vast unknown.*

*I believe God to be all these elements, and the force that  
unites them.*

*And from these elements I have come and to these elements  
I shall return.*

*But the energy that is me will not be lost.*

-Dr. Peter Jepson-Young

## How you can make Comfort Care possible

### Make a Donation Today

■ online: [www.drpeter.org](http://www.drpeter.org) ■ by phone: 604.608.1874 ■ by fax: 604.608.4259  
■ by mail: Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation – 1110 Comox Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6E 1K5

### Sponsor Comfort Care

Comfort Care Sponsorship provides the Dr. Peter Centre with stable funding. Many opportunities exist for sponsorship of programs, services, equipment, and supplies. You may also choose to sponsor a day health program participant.

### Host an Event

Host a party, a golf tournament, a fashion show, or other event to benefit the Dr. Peter Centre.

### Make an In-Kind Donation

In-kind donations of professional services, equipment, event tickets, dinner outings, food, and other items ease the financial cost of operating the Dr. Peter Centre.

### Volunteer

Volunteers enrich life in the residence and day health program, and assist with special fundraising events.

### Make a Planned Gift

Planned giving takes into account your wish to support Comfort Care at the Dr. Peter Centre, while maximizing the tax and estate planning implications of your gift. Planned gifts take several different forms, and include gifts through wills, life insurance, charitable trusts, mutual funds, RRSPs, and other securities.

For further information, please contact [donations@drpeter.org](mailto:donations@drpeter.org)  
or call 604.608.1874

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**Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation**

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