
On November 25, the 25th edition of BSE, presented by BMO Financial Group, will honour our hospitality & luxury retail partners as well as the Canadian HIV scientific research community

TORONTO, Oct. 5, 2021 /CNW/ - The Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) will be hosting the 25th edition of its milestone fundraising event, Bloor Street Entertains (BSE), on November 25, 2021. The event marks a return to in-person dining at some of the most prestigious locations in Bloor-Yorkville, thanks to our large community of retailers and hospitality partners who have been the heartbeat of the event since its inception. Presented by Signature Partner BMO Financial Group, this 25th anniversary edition of BSE25 will honour long-time CANFAR partners and patrons, as well as pay tribute to healthcare communities, including Canadian HIV research scientists who have been hard at work fighting two pandemics these past 18 months, COVID-19 and HIV.

"A year ago, we held a virtual edition of BSE in the midst of COVID lockdowns. We're thrilled to return to in-person dining for this exceptional edition of BSE25 this fall," says Alex Filiatrault, CEO of CANFAR. "It was also one year ago that we celebrated an important milestone in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Canada: the approval of HIV self-testing kits. This has brought us that much closer to our goal of ending the HIV epidemic by 2025, but much work still needs to be done and the support of our donors and patrons is critical at this stage," he added.

"Over the past 25 years, I have admired and supported the immense progress CANFAR has made through industry leading research and breaking down HIV/AIDS stigma and am honoured to be this year's Chair for Bloor Street Entertains," says Hon. Scott Brison, Vice-Chair, Investment & Corporate Banking, BMO Financial Group. "BMO's Purpose to Boldly Grow the Good in business and life includes creating an inclusive and barrier free society. We are proud to be the Signature Partner, as CANFAR marks 25 years of advancement through this outstanding event."

The event will take place in the form of its traditional, intimate dinners in prestigious locations in Bloor-Yorkville, among them returning partners The Four Seasons Hotel Toronto, Tiffany & Co., Dolce & Gabbana, RIMOWA, Christian Louboutin, Brunello Cucinelli, Tagliatella Galleries, Gardiner Museum, Park Hyatt Hotel Toronto, Hazelton Hotel Toronto, Vintage Conservatory and Holt Renfrew. In lieu of BSE's signature after-party, red carpet receptions will take place in select venues, allowing patrons to enjoy the evening while remaining in smaller groups. A strict COVID protocol will be in place, including the use of Ontario's official vaccine passport for all guests.

In Canada, an estimated 65,000 people living with HIV and 14 per cent of those are unaware of their status. Self-testing kits are critical tool in HIV prevention because it allows people to safely learn their status in the privacy of their own home and seek out treatment or prevention services as appropriate. Through the last year, community-based organizations across Canada have benefited from access to and distribution of 60,000 self-testing kits with peer navigation services free of charge. This initiative was made possible through funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in addition to CANFAR.

"This past year, our efforts have been focused on education, awareness and fundraising, in order to end the HIV epidemic by 2025. In addition to supporting self-testing kits, several other priorities need to be addressed to meet our goal, among them establishing new rapid testing HIV/AIDS laboratories; continuing to ensure equal access to testing and care for all Canadians and maintaining youth awareness to slow down infection rate and fight stigma. By working with established community partners as well as our network of National Youth Ambassadors, we remain committed to making the next four years the 'final four years' in our battle, and an event like Bloor Street Entertains allows our community of patrons to reiterate their support CANFAR's mission," says Andrew Pringle, Chairman of CANFAR.

In addition to Signature Partner BMO Financial Group, BSE25 partners include Air Canada, Labatt, Corby and Mantella Corporation.

The BSE25 committee is comprised of Isabella Baboury, Cailli and Sam Beckerman, Chad Brincheski, Kelley Burns-Coady, Melissa Campisi, Janice Fricker, Eva Hartling, Aileen Hernandez, Jamie Knoepfli, Robert Lemieux, Paulo Leone, Lily Li, Michael Liebrock, Sylvia Mantella, Ivan Mao, Jay McCauley, Bernadette Morra, Ashley Rose Murphy, Paul Noble, Christine Rezvanian, Ralph Roach, Myles Sexton, Candice Sinclair and Mary Symons.

About CANFAR

CANFAR's mission is to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Canada by funding innovative research, and awareness programs focused on increasing prevention, increasing testing, improving treatment and care, and ending HIV/AIDS stigma. Over its 30-year history, CANFAR has invested more than \$24 million and awarded more than 500 grants across Canada in research addressing all aspects of HIV/AIDS. Visit canfar.com to learn more and purchase tickets to BSE25.

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