

March 2017



In Loving Memory of Raffi Balian

The International Network of People who use Drugs expresses our deepest condolences to the family members, friends and colleagues of our brother Raffi Balian, who was one of the true visionaries, and exemplary leaders of our movement.

We mourn the loss of one our most precious, dedicated, knowledgeable, and loving activists. Raffi embodied everything that a drug user leader should be; tirelessly advocating for our meaningful participation on the issues that affect our lives.

His contributions to our common movement in ensuring the health and human rights of people who use drugs are beyond measure. They include coordinating an internationally recognised peer-led harm reduction programme in Canada and the pioneering of many strategies that have saved countless lives in Toronto, Canada and across the world. His cooperation and collaboration with other like-minded activists resulted in the founding and success of peer-led networks such as INPUD. Raffi was a mentor and friend to many of those in our community, and his passing leaves a huge gulf in our hearts and our movement.

Raffi was a warrior for drug war peace. Due to his tireless leadership our movement has been made all the stronger and richer, and his legacy will live on in our continuation of the work he played a critical role in starting. Following in his steps, and in honour of his life and legacy, we will endeavour to continue the fight against the war on drugs, stop needless casualties in this war, end stigma and discrimination, challenge the pervasive judgment and devaluing of our knowledge and experience, and stand firm in our commitment in fighting for a more just world.

Love from INPUD

International Network of People who Use Drugs

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