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MARCH 2007 EDITION

International Women's Day was March 8. I can't help but think of Bella Abzug, who said, "They used to give us a day-it was called International Women's Day. In 1975 they gave us a year, the Year of the Woman. Then from 1975 to 1985 they gave us a decade, the Decade of the Woman. I said at the time, who knows, if we behave they may let us into the whole thing. Well, we didn't behave and here we are."

I love women who don't behave, for you can be sure the women at the core of grassroots change in their communities are not always "well behaved." I'm proud to be raising a daughter who hasn't always behaved. The very elements of her personality that kept me awake at night when she was in her teen years are born of the strength and independence that are serving her well as an adult. At 21, her tenacity now delights me. Blended with her growing wisdom, strength and maturity, she's up to something with her life. Her friendship and the joy she brings to Lisa and me (or as she calls us, Bonus Mom and Mom) are among our greatest gifts.

Here at the Center, through our Horizons Youth Program, we are also mentoring young women to channel their energy into the right kind of "misbehavior"! I'm so proud of these young women and of our staff! Center on Halsted staff works daily to use the arts, recreation, vocational training, counseling, humor, patience and love to build strong young women who are up to something with their lives.

Speaking of women, the Center's annual women's event, the WOW Gala, is being planned for fall of 2007. Our Women's Committee works to put together this event as a fundraiser for our programs dedicated to women. Stay tuned for more information about WOW 2007 and for more programming for women at Center on Halsted.

And, don't be afraid to misbehave, for all the right reasons!



A message from

Executive

Director

Robbin Burr



Robbin Burr
Executive Director
Center on Halsted



For updated Center on Halsted events go to www.centeronhalsted.org

Horizons Youth Program

It's March, Women's History Month, and a good time to assess how well we as individuals and as organizations honor women, their history, their perspective and their role in our communities. It's a good time to assess the gender diversity of our clients, staff, board members and donors, to ask if there are any disparities and, if so, to devise appropriate responses. It's a good time to examine our circle of friends and see who we surround ourselves with. And it's a good time to evaluate our programming and ask if we are truly meeting the needs of our female-identified clients.

It's also LGBT Health Awareness Week and the Horizons Youth Program has marked this week in a number of ways. Our Young Men's Group examined how they might keep healthier boundaries in their relationships. Our Up and OUT Group discussed the importance and the difficulties in coming out to our health care practitioners. We brought in a guest speaker from Chicago Recovery Alliance, Dan Bigg, to talk about substance abuse from a harm reduction model. Our leadership development group, B.E.L.O.N.G., identified unhealthy behaviors they engage in and then offered suggestions to each other about making healthier choices. And our Young Women's Group discussed the importance of gynecological exams.

We at the Center understand that good health must be practiced at many levels so we provide opportunities for people to be well in many ways. Sometimes a group focused on grief is what brings about healing. Sometimes interviewing our elders and taking the focus beyond our own lives lifts us up. An opportunity to sing or paint or play Scrabble can all lead to good health. When we move into our new Center, we look forward to offering sports and fitness programs for our young people, aiding their physical well-being and, for some, healing the wounds caused in Physical Education classes. The Horizons Youth Program is proud to offer a safe and nurturing place where all are welcome, where our young people can grow into healthy and responsible adults, and where diversity, including gender identity, is honored.

Janine M. Dnomme
Director, Horizons Youth Program
Center on Halsted

Mental Health Program

In 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHHP) was founded in Santa Rosa, California. NWHHP was responsible for successfully lobbying the United States Congress to designate March as National Women's History Month. According to its mission, NWHHP places "emphasis on positive role models and the importance of women from all backgrounds." This year's theme is "Generations of Women Moving History Forward" and the female members of Center on Halsted's (COH) Mental Health team are prepared to help lesbian, bisexual and transgender women of all generations reach their full potential. Allow me to introduce these phenomenal providers:

Denise Hagerla, LCSW, is clinical supervisor for the Mental Health Program. She has served as a volunteer at the LGBT Center of Central Iowa, as well as Rape Victim Advocates here in Chicago. Among Denise's responsibilities as clinical supervisor are facilitating a support group for HIV+ transgender women, as well as working with the female-identifying participants of our SAGE Program.

Lisa Gilmore, LPC, is the Anti-Violence Project therapist and trainer. In addition to her work with survivors of domestic violence and interpersonal trauma, Lisa's accomplishments at COH include the oversight of quarterly coming out workshops for women. Both Lisa and the work of the Anti-Violence Project were honored recently by the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. She currently facilitates a weekly support group for bisexual women.

Karen Rothstein-Pineda, LPC, is client services coordinator for the Mental Health Program and a Spanish-speaking psychotherapist. Karen is a widely recognized speaker and lecturer on issues specific to the lesbian, bisexual and transgender Latina population. Her presentations include "Cultural Characteristics of Latinas Who Love Women" for both the 2006 International Hispanic/Latino Mental Health Week Conference and Latino Social Work Organization Conference. She also served as a panelist for "This is What a Feminist Looks Like," a forum on women's equality and how her work at COH contributes to feminism. Karen works extensively with Latino/Latina immigrants who survived oppression and torture in their country of origin as a result of their LGBT status.

In addition to these extraordinary clinicians, COH also utilizes the talents of many other female clinicians through our volunteer/contractual therapy program. Their combined expertise and practice skills enhance the already abundant richness of our Mental Health Services. It is because of the incredible talents of these professionals that the ratio of men to women served in this program was roughly equal in 2006-in contrast to the previous year, where male-identified clients outnumbered women by more than 2 to 1.

It is a privilege to work with these colleagues and I am deeply respectful of their ability and contribution to the empowerment of women in our community. As we celebrate the history and accomplishments of women this month, I encourage you to explore the many affirming services available through the Mental Health Program. Please contact Karen at 773.472.6469, ext. 261 for more information.

Jason T. McVicker, LCSW, RDDP
Director of Mental Health Services
Center on Halsted

Anti-Violence Project

"What Will It Take? Building the Safest State for All Women and Girls" is a yearlong initiative throughout Illinois headed by Chicago Foundation for Women to which I am pleased to be actively involved. The "What Will It Take?" initiative is based on the idea that we have to ask more questions about violence against women and girls to find answers. The initiative, part of the Foundation's Safe State Council and Public Awareness Campaign, reaches out to a wide audience who haven't always understood that they can do something.

Violence against women and girls permeates our world. It is everyone's issue. It affects people no matter their income, age, race or sexual orientation. It affects not just individuals, but families, workplaces, institutions and our communities. And it appears in far too many forms: From child abuse and incest to bullying and elder abuse; it is domestic violence, sexual assault, prostitution and the trafficking of women and girls for sexual or labor exploitation.

Violence against women and girls will not end until we understand it is our business-problems all of us must address. It will take action. It will take advocacy. It will take you and me. It will take all of us working together.

"The battle for the individual rights of women is one of long standing and none of us should countenance anything which undermines it."
Eleanor Roosevelt

For more information about this initiative and Anti-Violence Project services, please call 773.472.6469. If you or someone you know is a victim of LGBT discrimination, domestic violence, hate crime, pick-up crime, police misconduct or sexual assault, please call the AVP 24-hour crisis line at 773.871.CARE (2273).

Laura A. Velazquez
AVP Manager
Center on Halsted

State of Illinois AIDS/HIV & STD Hotline

March 11-17 was National LGBT Health Awareness Week. This week is a very visible way for an organization to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health in a given community and across the nation.

The theme of the 2007 National LGBT Health Awareness Week was KNOW MORE. This call to KNOW MORE concerns issues about how to stay healthy and how to improve the health of our community, the LGBT community. The major objective of the program is to encourage members of the LGBT community to be aware of their own health and take concrete steps, such as getting regular physical exams, to become and stay healthy. Because of discrimination and some health professionals' lack of experience or comfort level in dealing with LGBT sexuality and health issues, staying healthy and finding care can be a real challenge.

The Center on Halsted's AIDS/HIV & STD Hotline program is concerned about your health every day. Our trained hotline resource counselors can discuss your sexual health concerns and help you to

reduce the risk of being exposed to HIV and other STDs. An important part of being healthy is to KNOW MORE by getting regularly tested for STDs. Creating an awareness of what it means to be healthy and learning about ways to maintain your health, like getting checked routinely, is paramount to your well-being. Our trained hotline counselors are available every day to speak with you and provide up to date information and referrals, helping you to KNOW MORE.

We are committed to providing you the information that can make a difference in your life. If you have general questions concerning your sexual health, are worried about your risk of getting HIV or an STD, or would like a free testing referral in your area, please call our anonymous hotline and speak with one of our experienced hotline resource counselors. We are here to help you every day from 8am to 10pm. All questions are welcome and answered in a compassionate and professional manner.

We hope you will give us a call to KNOW MORE throughout the entire year.

State of Illinois AIDS/HIV & STD Hotline
1.800.AID.AIDS · 1.800.243.2437 · (TTY) 1.800.782.0423

You may also choose to visit us online at www.centeronhalsted.org. The Center on Halsted's Hotline program has developed an extensive, online database that can assist you in locating service providers that offer STD testing, vaccinations, treatment, legal services, and HIV case management, for example.

Another valuable resource available on the Internet is www.lgbthealth.net. This site offers online help and discusses health issues such as Access to Healthcare, Aging and Caregiving, Cancer, Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Nutrition and Weight, Smoking, Substance Abuse, Trans Men Health, Trans Women Health and more.

Jill Dispenza
Hotline Call Center Manager
Center on Halsted

Community & Cultural Programming



Center on Halsted is pleased to announce the formation of CenterPages-Chicago's first comprehensive literary program for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Initiated in November 2006, this program includes a quarterly recommended reading list and regular programming based on rotating themes. Currently, CenterPages displays can be found at Borders Bookstores in Lincoln Park and Uptown-with an expanded list of stores coming in the near future.

Upcoming topics include Chicago Themes and Authors, Out in Sports, Global Voices, Families, Transgender, and Comedy. For more information, email culture@centeronhalsted.org.

First Quarter 2007

Civil Right / Civil Left: LGBT Civil Rights in America

In recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday and Black History Month, the CenterPages topic is

LGBT Civil Rights in America.

Recommended Books

Stonewall

Martin Bauml Duberman

Publisher: Plume; Reprint edition (May 1, 1994)

ISBN: 0452272068

This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color

Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldua

Publisher: Kitchen Table-Women of Color Press; 2nd edition (February 1984)

ISBN: 091317503X

Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights

Kenji Yoshino

Publisher: Random House Trade Paperbacks (March 13, 2007)

ISBN: 0375760210

The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk

Randy Shilts

Publisher: St. Martin's Griffin; Reissue edition (March 15, 1988)

ISBN: 0312019009

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