

# Seattle Counseling Service

PROUDLY SERVING THE LGBT COMMUNITIES SINCE 1969

FALL 2007

## OUR MISSION

*Seattle Counseling Service is a community resource that advocates, educates and serves to advance the social well being and mental health of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities.*

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## Peer Recovery Network Developing

SCS will partner with Multifaith Works, Gay City Health Project, Dunshee House, and Seattle Black Pride to develop and launch a Peer Recovery Network for the LGBT community. The project will be funded by a \$1.4-million federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The Peer Recovery Network will be a referral and resource system to support LGBT individuals in recovery from alcohol and drugs. The program will be centered around and staffed primarily by

“peers,” who are in recovery themselves and understand the needs of recovering LGBT clients.

The Network will connect clients who are exiting treatment to a variety of support options such as support and self-help groups, job and housing assistance, and other services. The Network will also work to fight stigma and isolation by building a visible and accessible community of recovering LGBT folks.

Multifaith Works is leading the project but it is truly a collabora-

tive effort among the organizations. Each partner organization will take an active role in the Network and all will contribute to the project's overall design and management. SCS will create and fill a staff position for a recovery peer coordinator. The coordinator will be responsible for connecting clients as they are exiting treatment to the Peer Recovery Network of services.

The next few months will be dedicated to hiring staff and developing strategies. The Peer Recovery Network will officially launch in early 2008.

## Speed, Sex & Sanity Events Build Community

On September 26, Project NEON and Gay City Health Project (GCHP) collaborated on a thought-provoking forum about crystal methamphetamine as it relates to Seattle's gay, bi- & trans-men community. Capitol Hill's Freehold Theatre housed the intimate group of individuals, representing various sectors of Seattle's LGBTQA communities – from volunteers, outreach workers to prevention providers.

Prior collaborative events since 2006 utilized various arts & media formats to encapsulate the discussions that followed after each formal opening. “Every SPEED, SEX & SANITY installation has provided a unique perspective on how our lives, as gay/bi men in Seattle, have been affected by crystal methamphetamine,” says Robert Yoon, Program Manager at GCHP.

Both programs felt that it was

time unmask the subject, and freely talk about *meth* without shame or judgment. Thus, ‘*Speed, Sex & Sanity LIVE!*’ came to fruition.

This free event dubbed itself as an open space where individuals could comfortably and safely talk about the issue. Although field professionals were present, it purposely lacked a ‘panel of experts’ to avoid the stigma of the ‘provider versus patient’ stereotype. Participants were encouraged to strip themselves of titles, and to speak from personal experience while following the event's group's rules.

Topics included *Stigma and Stereotypes, Relationships, Harm Reduction and Recovery, and HIV +, HIV – and HIV Unknown*. As the topics progressed, so did the interaction and openness of participants.

Yoon adds, “The intimate conversation at SPEED, SEX & SAN-

ITY - LIVE reminded me that we still have questions to explore as we try to understand this complex, multi-dimensional issue.”

Although it was evident, the purpose of the conversations at the event was to initiate dialogue with each participant's circle of colleagues and friends- as the event concluded, it was obvious there were still a lot of questions unanswered. However, it was clear participants left with a sense of awareness and greater level of understanding.

The most resonating question for Yoon is, “How will our communities collectively address the underlying issues that fuel the need for crystal *meth*?”

SSS is already excited to launch an arts-installation in the Winter that will hope to get various community organizations and businesses involved in education & prevention.

# Message from the Director By Ann McGettigan



Executive Director Ann McGettigan at a recent event.

Autumn is here, the days are cooling down, the leaves are beginning to change, and many people are returning to school. I've always thought of autumn as back-to-school season and it is a perfect time to reflect on learning. So what is SCS learning as an agency?

One of our most important continuing lessons is that collaboration among service providers is key to building a strong and healthy LGBT community. In this issue of the newsletter we discuss important collaborations that are developing. SCS is partnering with Multifaith Works, Gay

City Health Project, Seattle Black Pride, and Dunshee House to implement the new Peer Recovery Network (see page 1). This project will serve thousands of recovering individuals in our community and give them the support they need to remain sober and rebuild their lives.

SCS's Project NEON also has an ongoing partnership with Gay City Health Project to present the Speed, Sex & Sanity events (also on page 1), designed to build community and open up the discussion of how crystal methamphetamine affects the lives of gay and bi

men in Seattle. These events have been very popular and continue to grow. They are helping to make our community stronger by providing a forum for a difficult issue.

As one of the oldest LGBT organizations in Seattle and the U.S., SCS has long been a leader in community building and our influence continues to grow. As we learn more lessons about what the LGBT communities need, we will continue to respond by working to build partnerships that strengthen not only the community but all LGBT individuals.

## *New Hours!*

*SCS is expanding office hours to better serve clients. New hours are:*  
**Monday-Thursday**  
 8:00am-8:00pm  
**Friday 8:00am-5:00pm**

## Upcoming Dates to Note

### **LGBT History Month**

In October we celebrate LGBT people and events throughout history. SCS plays a unique role in LGBT history. The agency was founded in 1969, the same year as the Stonewall Riots, and was the first gay-affirming counseling center in the world.

### **Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

October is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Did you know that 25-33% of same-sex relationships involve violence or abuse? SCS offers individual and group counseling for survivors and can help with resources for those wishing to leave an abusive relationship.

### **National Coming Out Day**

October 11—National Coming Out Day was founded in 1988 to commemorate the second March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. It is actually celebrated around the world and is a chance to come out as LGBT and to support those coming out.



Staff therapist Sharon Arthur awaits her close-up during the recent filming.

## Film Trains on LGBT Issues

SCS recently participated in the development and filming of a training video for mental health providers. The film, produced by WA State Mental Health Division, will be distributed state-wide to

train providers on working with LGBT clients. SCS staff

members assisted in developing the content and providing material for the script. The filming was done on-site at SCS's offices and staff members portrayed therapists and clients. The training film is slated to be completed later this year.

As the only LGBT-specific

community mental health agency in the state, SCS is considered an expert on LGBT issues in mental health. SCS is pleased to partner on this important project that will help to ensure that LGBT people receive culturally competent care in Washington.

## Rainbow 'Beacon' Now Lit



SCS Staff, Board, and friends celebrated the lighting of SCS's two new outdoor signs at a reception in early August. The signs are part of

an on-going project to make upgrades and improvements to the SCS facilities. One sign was mounted on the pole near the agency entrance, while the 17-foot long neon rainbow sign (pictured at left) now shines from the roof of the building.

The rainbow "beacon," as it has been called, is visible from I-5 and downtown. The sign is already becoming a familiar part of the Seattle cityscape as it marks the entrance to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

### Join Us at the Film Festival!

SCS is proud to co-present the film *Another Woman* as part of the Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. *Another Woman (Une Autre Femme)* tells the story of a transgender woman who returns to her family in Paris after being away for ten years. None of the family recognizes her since during that time she transitioned from Nicolas to Lea. Lea decides to be honest about her true identity and to try to reclaim her place as a parent. The film shows on Monday, October 15, 7:30pm at Harvard Exit Theatre. For more information about the festival or to purchase tickets, see [www.seattlequeerfilm.org](http://www.seattlequeerfilm.org).

## ICON 4 Benefit Show Successful

Some 200 guests gathered for the recent event ICON 4: a celebration of drag, art & life! This popular show, a benefit for SCS now in its fourth year, features the top drag and burlesque performers from Seattle and beyond. The event raised over \$16,000 for SCS's programs.

ICON was created and continues to be directed and hosted by Aleksa Manila. This year's performers included Arnaldo! Drag Chanteuse with Charles Baker, Sean Paul, Jaylene Tyme, Silvia O'Stayformore

(pictured at right), Jesse Volt, Chica Boom, Nina Maxwell & Rosita, Regina King with Dynasty, Larry Ryan & Eric Bonesteel, Sara & the Rhythm Knights, Kristina Cash, Jada Manila, and Lady Chablis.

ICON 4 was received support from a number of local businesses and organizations. Sponsors and donors included Mae's Phinney Ridge Café, Group Health, Intrigue Chocolate Co., Neighbours Nightclub, Knights of Malta, Martin's Off Madison, Gay City Health Project,

Seattle Goodwill, Seattle Gay News, and Timothy Bradbury Law.

Thank you to special guest speakers Dana Kennedy, Peggy Pullen, and Fred Swanson and to all the terrific table captain, volunteers, and attendees for making the event so successful!



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# Seattle Counseling Service

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