

THE ALTERNATIVE

A quarterly newsletter from Mazzoni Center (formerly PCHA)

Autumn 2003

Volume 4, Issue 2

REPORT

Dear Friends:

I have always welcomed change as a positive and invigorating force in my life. If embedded in a familiar and secure context, change can open doors for new opportunities, offer possibilities for growth and allow for meaningful impact. That is why I now welcome the change we are bringing to PCHA.

As you will read in this newsletter, PCHA has many recent achievements about which we are proud. We are especially excited to report the adoption of our new name: Mazzoni Center.

The Mazzoni name has been part of PCHA for a long time, honoring medical director, Dr. Peter Mazzoni.

Peter embodied the spirit and energy that motivated the founders and continues to be at the heart of our mission: to provide comprehensive health care to the LGBTQ community, remaining open and inclusive of all.



mazzoni center

LGBT HEALTH & WELL BEING



Mazzoni Center will continue the proud tradition of PCHA and Lavender Health, which came before it. Our organization has grown with the Philadelphia community. What began as a small agency serving HIV/AIDS infected individuals has flourished and developed into a sophisticated resource for sexual minorities throughout the region.

Through change we become the changer - implementing new ideas, creating new trends that offer all access to care and demand recognition for our community.

We have far-reaching plans to expand and enhance our services geared to the entire community. Doing so costs money. If ever there was a time to donate money to the Mazzoni Center, it is now. Please consider demonstrating your support for the Philadelphia region's unique health center, by sending a financial contribution in the enclosed envelope.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nurit'.

Nurit Shein

PS- Your donation to Mazzoni Center will enable the LGBT community to have a health facility it can call its own.

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Dear Friends:



Over the summer the Board of Directors worked on several projects; as much as we would have liked to have surrendered to the lazy days of summer and watch Mars as it passed closer to the Earth than it has since biblical times, we instead moved forward with projects that you will read about in this issue of *Alternative Report*.

The board – with help from staff:

- Actively recruited a new group of dynamic people to join the board
- Worked on the “New Look” and communication strategy for Mazzoni Center
- Discussed and worked on a list of “stars” to receive the Mazzoni Award
- Committed ourselves to continuing to aid the agency in its growth as a full service organization serving the health and well being of the LGBT community.

I thank the board for their hard work. Please join us for an upcoming event and see our new look.

Respectfully,

Jill A.R. Roberts
President

All A-board!

Mazzoni Center would like to welcome and introduce the following new and prospective members to its Board of Directors:

Tom Duffin – As a financial advisor for 17 years, Mr. Duffin brings a “wealth” of financial experience to the Board of Directors as the Vice President for Wachovia Securities.

Kim Hoffman – As a president at American Business Financial Services, Ms. Hoffman ensures strategic and fiscal responsibility for the private-label mortgage company. She looks forward to contributing to the organization through her years of financial expertise.

Michael Lobianco, MSW, LSW – Has worked extensively with our community as a private practice psychotherapist. His areas of expertise include addiction and trauma.

Ana Nunez, M.D. – A nationally recognized medical educator in women’s health, Dr. Nunez is Director of both the Drexel University College of Medicine’s Center for Excellence and Women’s Health Education Program.

Michael Palmer – A former executive for PrideFest America, Mr. Palmer joins the Board of Directors with an acute awareness of issues facing the LGBT communities in Philadelphia. He currently works as a financial advisor.

Jeffrey Shablin – Is the owner and operator of Optimal Personal Fitness Training. As a nutritionist and personal trainer, he works in conjunction with 12th Street Gym, and is well connected to the LGBT community.

Mr. Shablin is also a regular contributing columnist for *Exp Gayzette*, a bi-monthly Mid-Atlantic gay news and entertainment magazine.

Joel Yuhás - Mr. Yuhás recently relocated from California to become Chief Operating Officer of Graduate Hospital.

Heshie Zinman – For nearly 20 years, Mr. Zinman has been a tireless advocate for HIV-infected individuals through his creation of the AIDS Information Network.

He is currently the Patient and Community Affairs Manager for Bristol Myers Squibb where he serves as the sole interface between community groups and BMS.



"To cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always."

The Mazzoni Award honors the life of the late Peter Mazzoni, M.D. Dr. Mazzoni's vision touched the lives of thousands and his spirit guides us until this day. The Mazzoni Award is given annually to others who provide a similar inspiration.

Stars Shine for 2003 Mazzoni Award

Annually, the Mazzoni Award honor an individual or group whose achievements in the fight against HIV have been nothing short of stellar. This year's honorees, a diverse group of physicians, represent a universe of outstanding clinicians who have been heroes since the early days of the epidemic and who still tirelessly provide cutting-edge treatment options for their patients.

Please join Mazzoni Center in celebrating the passion of our constellation of stars:

Ian Frank, M.D. (The University of Pennsylvania Health System)

Marla Gold, M.D. (Drexel University College of Medicine)

Nicholas Ifft, M.D. (Philadelphia FIGHT)

Jay Kostman, M.D. (The University of Pennsylvania Health System)

Helena Kwakwa, M.D. (Mercy Health System)

James Shepard, M.D. (Philadelphia Department of Public Health)

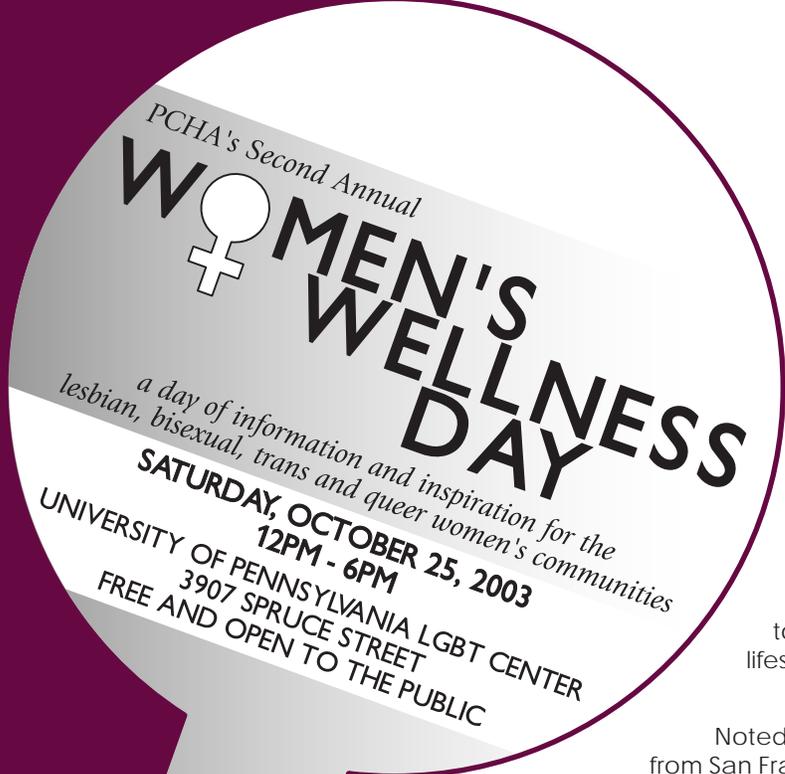
Ellen Tedaldi, M.D. (Temple University Health System)

**Saturday, December 6
6PM**

**Fels Planetarium
The Franklin Institute**

20th Street at the Ben Franklin Parkway
Philadelphia

For more information on attending or sponsoring, please contact Anthony at 215.563.0652 x 222 or ajohnson@mazzonicenter.org.



2nd Annual Women's Wellness Day Taking Shape for October 25

With nearly a dozen interactive workshops and intriguing panel discussions, the 2nd Annual Women's Wellness Day promises to delight the 200 attendees this fall.

"We designed this year's Women's Wellness Day to provide attendees with vital information they can use right away to improve their quality of life and gain access to services that are appropriate and welcoming of their lifestyles," said Mazzoni Center Executive Director Nurit Shein.

Noted author Charyn Pfeuffer (*Breast Cancer Q & A*) is coming in from San Francisco to conduct a workshop on breast health and answer questions from concerned women.

"I cannot emphasize how important it is for women to take an active role in their health, to educate themselves, and to evaluate all of their treatment options, both conventional and complementary," said Ms. Pfeuffer on her website, www.breastcancerqanda.com

Other workshop topics include coming out support, partner violence, body image, reproductive health and smoking cessation.

To register for this FREE event, please contact Education Specialist Miranda Amanti at 215-563-0663 x 251 or mamanti@critpath.org.

Mazzoni Center thanks the Susan G. Komen Foundation for partial funding of this event.

Until there's a cure...

This summer, the CDC reported that AIDS cases rose in 2002 – reversing a ten-year decline.

Particularly hard hit were gay and bisexual men who saw their newly diagnosed rates increase 17.7 percent since the 1999 low.

Each year, the AIDS Fund coordinates one of the largest volunteer events in our region to benefit AIDS-service organizations.

Please join Mazzoni Center (Team #12) for AIDSWalk 2003 on Sunday, October 19. Mazzoni Center, one of the first teams to participate, welcomes your pledges before the day and your support during the event.

Whether small or large, your donation makes a difference. For more than a decade, Mazzoni Center has received funds from the proceeds of the AIDSWalk. Your donation will help us continue the services we provide to the 1,500 clients in our HIV case management and Food Bank programs.

To make a donation, please visit www.aidswalkphilly.org and choose Mazzoni Center (Team #12) or contact Team Captain Anthony Johnson at 215.563.0652 x 222 (ajohnson@mazzonicenter.org).



Thank You...



Cooper Pelegrin (left) and Thomas Wescott of GlaxoSmithKline's Vaccine Sales Department present Mazzoni Center Executive Director Nurit Shein with a \$5,000 check as part of the Center City-based company's community outreach program.

FALL 2003 DATES TO REMEMBER

- October 5** ----- Chester County Pride Day Festival
- October 9** ----- Annual Board Meeting
- October 11** ---- National Coming Out Day (NCOD)
- October 12** ----- OutFest
- October 19** ----- AIDSWalk 2003
- October 25** ----- Women's Wellness Day
- December 6** ----- Mazzoni Award Dinner

For more information, please call Anthony
at 215-563-0652 x 222

The next time you visit us, we might look a little different.

That's because Mazzoni Center recently received a beautiful donation of artwork (below). The anonymous artist drove more than 100 miles to Philadelphia seeking a nonjudgmental primary health care facility. Although unable to pay, clinician Melanie Santiago assured him that his well-being was much more important than the fee.

Everyday, Mazzoni Center receives letters and calls that reaffirm what wonderful staff we have and our contribution to the community.



A few of the many beautiful photographs donated anonymously to the Community Health Center.



In honor of its 16th anniversary, The Westbury Bar and Restaurant, 13th and Spruce Streets, hosted a 50/50 raffle to benefit Mazzoni Center.

The evening was a smash and raised a lot of money! We would like to thank The Westbury for its ongoing commitment to LGBT communities.

Local 'house' leaders meet to discuss focus, challenges

"Houses", a loosely organized underground network of havens for LGBTQ youth, provide a social outlet for many young Philadelphians everyday.

Their names – the House of Prada, the House of Movado, the House of Revlon and others – are derived from the high culture that many of the residents admire and emulate.

The Brothers Collective, a partnership between Mazzoni Center, ASIAC, COLOURS and GALAEI, recently established the Philadelphia Council of Houses and invited the houses' mothers and fathers – senior members who oversee all activities – to discuss the network's history, mission and challenges.

"A lot of times, LGBT kids become house members because they have no where else to turn. Once there, they can talk with others experiencing the same feelings while building their self esteem," said Brothers' Collective Coordinator Damon Humes.

House members range in age from 8 to 80 but most are in their teens or twenties. The house mother and father foster community through regularly scheduled "family" dinners and other events designed to facilitate bonding. One highlight – the ball – is a friendly competition between houses showcasing rhythmic dancing and elaborate costumes.

"They [the house members] really look forward to the balls because this is their time to show people how fabulously they can dress and dance," said the House of Revlon mother Angelique Gissendanger.

The panel discussed the importance for Mazzoni Center and other agencies to provide services for this marginalized population. We continue to work on formalizing these connections so that we appropriately provide primary care, HIV testing, and education while supporting other organizations also reaching out to this population.

To find out more about Philadelphia's house community or the Brothers' Collective, please call 215.563.0652 x 243 or visit www.mazzonicenter.org.

**BROTHERS'
COLLECTIVE**

Mazzoni Center to Launch Rapid HIV Test on December 1

As Philadelphia's largest community-based HIV-testing site, Mazzoni Center will be implementing the new "rapid" HIV test recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

With rapid testing, a fingerstick is performed and analyzed on site within 30 minutes. People who initially test positive through this process are then required to have a follow-up test done to confirm their status.

"To ensure that our clients receive the best standard of care, our counselors are undergoing extensive training with this new testing instrument and on a new counseling



approach," said Clinic Director Alison Gerig, adding " We will have a response team on hand to provide the most comprehensive support and services for those testing positive."

Mazzoni Center will launch its rapid testing program on December 1, 2003 – World AIDS Day.

"I think it will be great for us to provide our clients with this testing option. Many of our highest-risk clients don't come back for their results. This procedure will help clients who test positive to learn their status and get linked into services all in one visit," said HIV Counselor Courtney Wilburn.

Staff Picnic Recap

Everyone knows life can't be all work and no play.

On Sept. 5, Mazzoni Center staff loaded up their cars and headed for the hills – of Bensalem – for the annual employee picnic.

About 50 people made the trip to Neshaminy State Park on a beautiful Indian summer day to enjoy hot dogs, veggie burgers, desserts and other goodies. Many strolled the beautiful park grounds, danced to an assortment of the hottest music or joined in a spirited game of volleyball!



(above) Smiling for the camera are Medical Assistant Sophear Phat, Clinic Director Alison Gerig and Open Door Counselor Tonya Ladipo.



(above) Fiscal Clerk Terrence Hitchens just couldn't resist bringing a little work from the office!



(left) Assistant Director Virginia Austin takes time out from fun and games to enjoy some sun in the park.



(inset) Getting the charcoal ready immediately is a picnic must! Helping out are fiscal coordinator Gloria Prusakowski (left) and HIV Counselor Yexsy Gonzalez.

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Vivian Cooperman, who passed away on September 29. Vivian has worked for the agency since 1994 as an Assistant Case Manager. She has been a pillar of strength and hope for many of our clients - always positive, always giving, always there. She also brought Mac, her husband, to the agency starting as a volunteer and now as the Food Bank Coordinator.

Thank you, Vivian. We will miss you.

Introducing New Staff Members

Judy Morrissey (Open Door Director) A trained psycho-therapist who spent years at Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, D.C. as the coordinator of adult groups, Judy returns to her hometown as our new Open Door Director.

A "rabid" Eagles fan who enjoys watching and playing all sports, she obtained her MSW from Gallaudet University where all graduate classes are instructed in sign language. In fact, Judy has a particular interest in Deaf and hard-of-hearing services.

Tom Thomson (Care Outreach Specialist) A Ft. Lauderdale native, Tom joined the Outreach Department this summer and brings an extensive background in publishing and health education.

The University of Florida graduate is currently writing a book on the impact of hip-hop culture on white youth.

Jessica Mansbach (Case Manager) Jess is no stranger to our agency. While completing her graduate coursework at the University of Pennsylvania, she performed her social work internships at Open Door and at the Rhoads Elementary School in West Philadelphia. We welcome her back as a full-time employee.

Originally from Rockland County, NY, Jessica enjoys cooking, yoga and attending concerts.

Alice Meekins (Case Manager) Her current duties as a case manager for HIV+ individuals is similar to her most recent position as residential services coordinator for the Colorado AIDS Project.

The Philadelphia native attended Morgan State University in Baltimore and is happy to be home again.

LGBT Adoptive Parenting Session Planned for November 13th

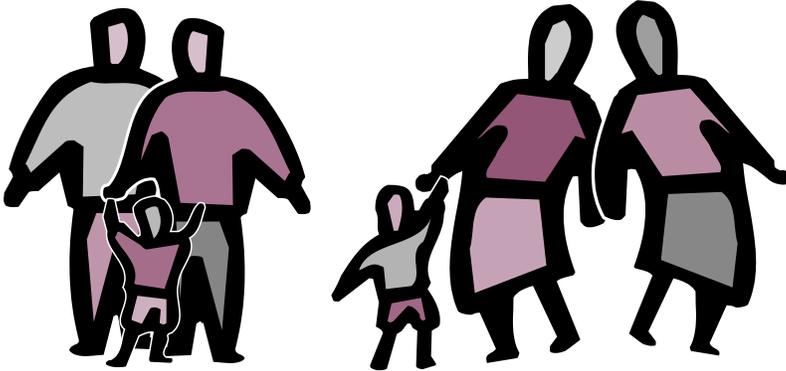
With nearly 8,000 children currently in foster care, there is no better time to open your heart to a loving child in need.

Please join the Department of Human Services, Mazzoni Center and other community agencies for *Love Makes a Family*, a specially designed evening of information and insight for LGBT Philadelphians interested in becoming adoptive parents.

Activities include a Q & A session with child-welfare professionals and a special screening of Daddy & Papa.

Love Makes a Family, based on a successful similar workshop this summer, will be held Thursday, Nov. 13 from 5:30 - 8:30pm at the William Way Center (1315 Spruce Street).

Please call 215.563.0652 x 222 for more information.



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LGBT HEALTH & WELL BEING

1201 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
www.mazzonicenter.org

A Gift for the Ages



Help to make the
holiday season brighter
for local children.

Every year, we distribute hundreds of toys to the families of people living with HIV/AIDS. To donate new unwrapped toys and games for boys and girls or volunteer to lend a hand in wrapping and distributing gifts, please contact Michelle Brasch at 215.563.0652 ext. 206 or write to mbrasch@pcha1.org.

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