

# SEATTLE COUNSELING SERVICE

*Proudly Serving our LGBT Communities since 1969!*

SCS Newsletter

Fall 2006

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Since moving into the current facility two years ago, SCS staff and board have dreamed of adding beautiful signs to mark the building. Thanks to a generous grant from the Employees Community Fund of Boeing Puget Sound, the dream will soon be reality.

A \$22,920 grant was recently awarded for building signs and interior painting. The signs will feature symbols familiar to the LGBT communities—triangles and a rainbow.

“We really wanted to mark our building as a safe and welcoming space for all mem-

bers of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. And we wanted to remind Seattle that Capitol Hill is still our neighborhood,” said Executive Director Ann McGettigan.

Two outdoor signs will be erected. One will be mounted on a tall pole at the edge of the parking lot on Melrose Avenue, marking the entrance to the building. The other sign will span fifteen feet across the west face of the building and will feature a large lighted rainbow. The rainbow will be clearly visible to the traffic on I-5 and to



*Artist's rendering of planned sign*

motorists as they drive up Pine Street from downtown.

The rainbow sign takes advantage of SCS's location at the edge of Capitol Hill, where it borders downtown. “The rainbow will serve as a beacon to the community, an icon to mark the ‘gateway’ to Capitol Hill,” said McGettigan.

The move to the current facility and the addition of these striking signs are part of SCS's goals to serve clients better through maximum visibility in the Seattle community. McGettigan noted that SCS has not had an exterior sign on any of its locations in over a decade. “Social stigma surrounding mental health and chemical dependency issues has in the past encouraged us to be a low-key kind of agency. But it's time SCS came out of the closet. No one benefits from hiding.”

## Join Us at the 2006 Film Festival

SCS will co-present the film *Whole New Thing* at the 2006 Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. Join us on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:45pm at the Broadway Performance Hall for this comedy/drama about the discovery of sex and the longing for intimacy.

Set in Nova Scotia, *Whole New Thing* follows a precocious, homeschooled 13 year-old boy as he is sent to the local public school for the first time. Discover what happens when he develops his first crush on a male English teacher.

And be sure to check out the rest of the festival, running



October 13-22, for many more fantastic films. For more information, see [www.seattlequeerfilm.com](http://www.seattlequeerfilm.com) or call festival producer Three Dollar Bill Cinema at (206) 323-4274.

## National Coming Out Day October 11

Did you know that polls show Americans are more likely to support LGBT rights if they know an LGBT person? So come out now to your family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, doctor, barista, people on the street—anyone! Think of the difference it could make.

SCS offers a free Coming Out Support Group, every Tuesday 6:00-7:30pm. For more information, call SCS therapist Angie Canelli at (206) 323-1768.

"Most times, the only gay or lesbian face people know of is who they see in the pride parade. To judge us on that would be like judging heterosexuals after watching Mardi Gras."

--Candace Gingrich

## Message From the Director . . .



Ann Mcgettigan  
Executive Director

National Coming Out Day is annually celebrated to commemorate the historic LGBT march on Washington, D.C. on October 11, 1987. On that day over half a million Americans came together to tell our government that LGBT people have the right to full citizenship under the law. Yet nearly *twenty years* later we are still fighting for basic rights including legal recognition of our marriages. It is clear that standing up for ourselves and calling upon our allies to stand with us continues to be vital.

The "closet" is a symbol of the fear that oppresses us and keeps us invisible. Coming out of the closet is a process, one of freeing ourselves from oppression and living openly as ourselves without apology.

But for many of us there are closets beyond our sexual identities that continue to hold us. Many of us are afraid to "come out" as being affected by a mental disorder or chemical dependency. The social stigma can be terrifying. Would we lose our friends, jobs, or families if they knew?

The truth is that millions of people each year deal with a mental disorder and/or chemical dependency. According to U.S. statistics, one in four adults suffer from a

mental disorder in any year but only 15% seek treatment. Over 22.8 million people are dependent on alcohol or drugs, yet less than 10% receive treatment. One of the leading reasons for not seeking treatment is the fear of social stigma.

But what if every person who suffered from a mental disorder or chemical dependency "came out?" Just imagine the difference it would make in breaking silence and ending fear.

I urge you to make coming out a goal and to support those who are just coming out—in any area of life. We all deserve to live free of oppression and to be accepted for who we are.

## Team SCS Completes First Ride



The newly-formed Team SCS completed their inaugural ride July 15-16 in the Group Health Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic. The small but mighty team raised more than \$11,500 for SCS! Pictured above are riders (l-r) Paul Grekin, Troy Lucero, Delfino Morales Jr, Donnie Goodman, and Jee Wong. The team also included support crew Warren and Lisa Nicley and John Meehan. For more photos and information on joining Team SCS, visit [www.SeattleCounseling.org/STP2.htm](http://www.SeattleCounseling.org/STP2.htm).

## Marriage Ban Harmful to LGBT Mental Health

The State Supreme Court's decision to uphold the ban on same-sex marriage will have a negative impact on the mental health of many gay and lesbian citizens. The court decision, handed down in late July, is another blow not only to the gay and lesbian community's struggle for equal legal rights, but also to the personal psyches of many individuals.

"By continuing to deny the right to marry, the State is essentially devaluing and rejecting gay and lesbian citizens' primary relationships," says Executive Director Ann McGettigan. "Not only are they refused rights afforded to heterosexual couples, but many must continue to deal with State-sanctioned discrimination and all of the effects

that has on their personal lives and the lives of their families."

Recent national studies have shown denying marriage to gays and lesbians can have individual mental health consequences such as increased stress disorders, guilt, low self-esteem, depression and may lead to substance abuse.

"When you are constantly struggling to defend your relationship as legitimate and stable, the stress really begins to add up," says McGettigan. "Everyone has a fundamental need—a right—to emotional security. When the State puts up barriers to obtaining that emotional security, they are directly contributing to the degradation of the mental health of those individuals

and families."

Studies have further found the inability to marry forces some individuals to be unable to accept their own sexuality due to their inability to imagine a stable relationship without the social and legal recognition of marriage.

"Without the social support and status heterosexual marriage automatically receives, some gays and lesbians find it difficult or impossible to sustain long-term relationships," said McGettigan. "This can promote unhealthy relationship patterns or could compel them to remain 'closeted' about their true feelings in regards to their sexuality."

### SCS to make training film

SCS has been chosen by the Department of Social and Health Services to develop a training film on working with LGBT mental health clients. The 20-30 minute film will be distributed to mental health providers and agencies across the state.



## THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!

Donations received 4/1/06 thru 6/30/06

Barbara Andersen  
Anonymous (9)  
Jesse Atkinson & Jamey Boudreaux  
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Keith Wagner  
Washington State, Employees of  
Laurita Whitford  
& Judith Donaghue  
Nicola Wilke  
John Williar  
Rebecca Wood

*Special Thanks  
to our Table Hosts at  
ICON 3: A celebration of drag,  
art & life*

Matt Cronkhite  
Donnie Goodman  
Elizabeth Grabow  
Greater Seattle Business  
Association  
Jim Holm  
Ann McGettigan  
Sheila Murphy  
Wesley Neumann  
Larry Nicholas  
Peggy Pullen  
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Seattle LGBT Community Center  
Carol Sterling  
Tacky Tourists Club

# Clubhouse Turns 25!

## *Day treatment program celebrates a quarter-century of service*

This year, Seattle Counseling Service for Sexual Minorities completes its 25<sup>th</sup> year of providing day treatment to our clients. Our day treatment program, called Clubhouse, is a structured program of therapeutic activities developed to meet the mental health needs of clients on an outpatient basis.

Activities are largely social, active, and psycho-educational, designed to provide a safe and dynamic environment from which positive bonds and connections can be made. Clubhouse meets every Wednesday and Friday afternoon, year-round.

One of the unique characteristics of the SCS Clubhouse program is the focus on social support and peer-driven community building. While the main objectives of Clubhouse are focused on the well-being of the individual client (self-care, self-esteem, conflict resolution and social skills), the real magic of the group is in

the sense of belonging and community that is created when each person is allowed to contribute and express their true self.

Clients are referred to as

clients who were previously isolated and without support.

In 2006, the Clubhouse facilitator role was taken over by staff therapist Cassie Salewske. Under her leadership, an ef-

ily." Birthdays and holidays are celebrated with enthusiasm, and appreciation for the safety and acceptance of Clubhouse is palpable within the group.

**“Clubhouse is an accepting, positive, safe, and supportive community where we have the freedom to be ourselves.”**

-Clubhouse mission statement, developed by members (2006)

Our monthly newsletter (copies are available in the SCS lobby) has become a forum for deep thinking, creative expression and the published

writing of our many talented members. Activities all over the Seattle area have provided each participant a chance to enjoy our beautiful region and develop positive friendships.

In honor of 25 years of Clubhouse, we have put together a glimpse of the Clubhouse experience, in none other than the words and photos of our members.

Should you feel moved to contribute to the continued success of this program, please look at our “Wish List” for suggested donations.

“members” in order to highlight their individual importance and responsibility in the group; they are not simply recipients of a service or intervention, but are active and creative participants. Clubhouse models around the country are based on this effective practice: encouraging clients to not only take responsibility for their own treatment, but for the well-being of a group and all who choose to be a part of it.

At SCS, we have found this day treatment practice to be crucial in restoring social relations and a sense of vitality to

fort has been made to have food available to clients at each Clubhouse meeting, not just for physical nourishment but for the sense of fellowship and family that is created when sharing a meal together.

As one Clubhouse member wrote, “At our primal core we find food to be the centerpiece of family and friends. It is an important way we share our hearts and souls with the people we live with, work with, or simply share time with.” Along with this effort has been a renewed focus on warmth, laughter and sharing among the “Clubhouse fam-



*On a trip to Bainbridge Island on the ferry*

“Clubhouse has been very enjoyable for me. It’s also been an important place to socialize. Meeting twice a week has provided valuable structure in my life. This summer was very enjoyable because of all the outings we had.”

“Clubhouse is an opportunity to socialize and do things with other people—an exchange of ideas and philosophies, and a celebration.”



*Admiring the view from the observation deck at Smith Tower*



Getting creative with "Food Art" produce from Pike Place Market

"In Clubhouse, I've learned to become more comfortable around people. My fear is much less now. I have made new friends and I look forward to coming to Clubhouse every week."

"Clubhouse has given me a lot of things to do, people to meet and places to go. I've made a lot of progress in making friends, and I realize I'm not alone. Clubhouse has become a family to me."

"I suffer from multiple medical conditions along with post-traumatic stress disorder. Clubhouse has been a wonderful, safe and supportive place for me to come and interact with others and join in group activities. I have had a lot of fun, and made new healthy friendships that left on my own I wouldn't have done by myself. Going bowling, to the movies, to the zoo and other outings have really been therapeutic and helped me come out of my shell and relearn how to have fun."



On a tour at KING-5/NW Cable News TV station



Exploring exhibits at the Museum of History and Industry

"Everyone who participates in Clubhouse is a unique individual with his/her own issues. Clubhouse has provided me with the opportunity to socialize and interact. For many at Clubhouse the opportunity to meet and interact in a meaningful way can be very limited, especially for us with various disabilities, limited financial resources, and without immediate family."

"Due to HIV, I have had problems with my memory loss. I feel like a part of Clubhouse and I feel safe and comfortable, being accepted with great understanding from clients and the facilitator."

"I lost a lot of 'friends' due to quitting drugs and being transgender. In Clubhouse I've been able to make new friends in a place where there's not a bunch of mean-spirited people!"

### CLUBHOUSE WISH LIST

If you'd like to help SCS Clubhouse clients enjoy cooking, socializing, and going on outings in the Seattle area, in-kind donations would make a meaningful difference.

- AMC Movie Theaters (Entertainment Card or Ticket Packages)
- Sporting event Tickets (Mariners, Seahawks, Sonics, Storm, etc)
- AMF Imperial Lanes (Seattle) Bowling
- Safeway gift card
- Trader Joe's gift card
- Grocery Outlet gift card
- Dollar Tree gift card
- Costco gift card
- Local restaurant gift card



PROUDLY SERVING OUR  
LGBT COMMUNITIES

SCS NEWSLETTER FALL 2006

Please help us keep your information current. If you have changed your address or any other information, please give us a call or drop us a line.

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1216 Pine St, Suite 300  
Seattle, WA 98101

Phone: 206.323.1768  
Fax: 206.323.2184  
E-mail: [info@seattlecounseling.org](mailto:info@seattlecounseling.org)

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# LAST ISSUE!

It's time to update our mailing list. If we haven't heard from you in awhile, please let us know that you are still interested in receiving the SCS Newsletter by making a donation or just dropping us a line.

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