

Wellness Notes

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE WRIGHT HOUSE WELLNESS CENTER

April, May, June 2008

Hill Country Ride For AIDS

Each year the Hill Country Ride for AIDS holds a bicycle riding fundraiser in order to raise funds for Austin Area non-profits to help them do all of the great work they do for people living with HIV/AIDS. This year as well as years past, The Wright House will be one of the recipients of the proceeds raised during this event.

Those participating in the event have the choice of 2 routes. The 50 mile route allows for a scenic bike ride through the lovely Texas Hill Country. For those who need a shorter route, they have a ten mile route where riders can choose the distance they want to ride. Also, they have an Olympic Extension which adds 20 more miles of riding for those who are inspired enough to take on the challenge. We are proud to announce that WHWC has a team (Team Wright House) who will be riding in this event.

For more information on how you can support both The Wright House Wellness Center and the Hill Country Ride for AIDS, call (512) 236-8901 or visit www.hillcountryride.org



The Wright House Wellness Center Needs Volunteers

In order to effectively utilize the monetary donations and grant funding The Wright House receives for client services, we require many volunteers. Volunteers work in many areas of the organization from answering phones at the front desk to doing the initial intake that clients receive when they first seek services here. Did you know that as a client you can donate the gift of time to The Wright House? Here's a description of some of the areas where help is needed.

" VOLUNTEER NIGHT-Every Monday 2326 E. Cesar Chavez 5:30-8pm. We complete tasks, have a short meeting about upcoming events, eat pizza, talk, laugh and so much more.

" REAL AIDS PREVENTION PROJECT (RAPP)- Looking for women in the community to help reach the female, African American community by conducting outreach to distribute condoms and literature, making referrals, and recruiting women to participate in RAPP sessions. In addition, volunteers will host and recruit hosts for safer sex educational parties in the community; solicit and distribute Role Model Stories (true stories about women who are contemplating or already using condoms); and conduct stage-based encounters to determine participant's stage of condom use. This position requires completion of RAPP training to learn about the program and develop necessary skills and one day of commitment to do this work per week.

" STOP THE CYCLE- Help educate men and women of color on the importance of getting tested, safe sex and pass the message to others.

" FOOD PANTRY-Provide support and assistance to Food Pantry staff, greet clients, fill orders, organize supplies, make deliveries, etc. Food Pantry days are: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays every other week.

For more information on these positions or other volunteer positions at WHWC, visit our website at www.thewrighthouse.org or call Mark Johansen at (512) 236-8901 to sign up for the next Volunteer Orientation. Orientations are held every third Wednesday of each month from 6-9pm.

Volunteer Appreciation Night

On April 17, 2008 the people who donate their time helping us at The Wright House Wellness Center will be recognized at the 2nd annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held at Kleberg Hall. The dinner, provided by The Black Eyed Pea, will celebrate the work done by our generous volunteers and spotlight some exceptional individuals who will be recognized for their service to WHWC. Special thanks to **The Black Eyed Pea** for helping us show our immense appreciation for our volunteers.

A Word From Your WHWC Volunteer Coordinator

By Mark Johansen

My name is Mark Johansen and I am the Volunteer Coordinator and Office Manager for The Wright House Wellness Center and I LOVE IT!

As some of you know I did not always work in the wonderful world of non-profit. I worked over 20 years in the hospitality business which allowed me to live in 13 cities and 7 states. I loved seeing our country and meeting great people along the way.

In 2003 I became sick with flu like symptoms and finally, on July 25th, my best friend told me to get in the car. He took me to the hospital where I stayed for 7 days. During that time I found out that I had PCP pneumonia which was a result of advanced HIV or AIDS.

I was very sick for the next few months and did not work. As I sat home recuperating I found that I was bored and needed to do something with my time. In those months I also had been given so much from our community that I wanted to give back. As I soon found out, it was a very rewarding and fulfilling decision.

Too sick to work but well enough to be doing something, I started doing volunteer work with some local HIV/AIDS organizations which helped build up my strength and endurance. During that time I became involved with The Wright House Wellness Center where after a few months of volunteering I was offered a job that would be a challenge but that I thought I could physically handle. But not only that....I was going to do work that sounded like fun and would use my imagination because I hadn't done work like this before.

Now my job as the Volunteer Coordinator is the most fulfilling job that I have ever had. It's an adventure everyday and I love working with people who, like me, just want to help others. It really does make you feel worthy and good. If you have any interest in volunteering, I urge you to think about volunteering with a non-profit organization.

If you would like to volunteer at WHWC please join us for Volunteer Orientation on Wednesday, April 16th from 6-9pm at our 2326 E. Cesar Chavez location. Call me at 236-8901 or email mark@thewrighthouse.org to sign up.



CulinART: A Fantasy of the Healing Arts A Huge Success!

Thank you International Special Events Society for an amazing night of fantasy featuring the city's best event planners, creative caterers and hippest artists. CulinART 2008 evoked emotions of high energy, warmth, beauty and love. The food demonstrations were informative, and the hors d'oeuvres and food were delectable. The entertainment was a delight.

ISES Austin is a resourceful network of dedicated professionals creating and supporting exceptional events. For more information visit www.isesaustin.com. This year, CulinART benefited us here at WHWC, and we are grateful for their generosity.

**Thank you Hellas Construction Inc.
CulinART 2008 Red Saffron Sponsor**

The Benefits of Yoga

Have you wondered why The Wright House has free yoga sessions twice a week? Well, here's the answer. According to healthandyoga.com, this type of exercise can help to improve flexibility and strength. In addition, it can also increase lubrication in the joints for easier movement, massage the organs in the body (the heart, lungs, etc), clean toxins from the body, and improve muscle tone. For patients with HIV and cancer, yoga has also been known to help relieve the side effects that come with taking the medications for these diseases. Though it is not medically proven to cure these conditions, there are some doctors who recommend yoga to their patients because the flexibility improvement as well as the improvements in heart rate allow for patients to be better able to handle their symptoms and reduce their stress levels. By coming to these classes twice a week, not only will you get the physical benefits of exercising, you can also take advantage of the emotional support you will receive by taking classes with other people who are going through similar experiences you face every day. Did I mention that it costs you nothing to take part in the yoga classes? We invite you to check out a class either on Tuesdays at 4pm and/or Thursdays at 5:30 pm here at WHWC to see what a difference yoga makes to your life.

About the Board of Directors

Some may think that the members of the Wright House Board of Directors are paid staff hired to do what they do. However, all of the positions on the board are volunteer-based. This means that they are giving back to the community with the donation of their time in order to help continue the Wright House's success. So, what exactly is the Board and what is it that they do? Well the short list of duties include, making sure The Wright House is a recognized organization in the Austin area in order to promote us to potential clients, donors, and volunteers; evaluating the programs and services provided at WHWC, making sure that these programs follow the mission of the organization, and fundraising so all programs and services are supported. Without them, events like the Ray Benson concert held last November and the Culinary Event in March would not be the successes that they were.

Now that you know what they do, let us tell you who they are.

President: Randolph B. Houston Jr.

Vice President: Brian Jorgensen

Secretary: Leslie Light

Treasurer: Laura Lewis

Members: Kerry Gray, James Shew, and Tonya Walton

Immediate Past President: Andrew Allen

Special thanks to each member of the WHWC Board of Directors for everything you do.

Pride Parade

This year marks the Seventh Annual Pride Parade produced by the Austin Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (AGLCC). It will be held on June 14, 2008 and will be loads of fun for people of all ages. This event is held to remember the Stonewall riots, which is considered to be the start of the LGBT fight for equality. Come out and give your support to the gay and lesbian community, and be on the lookout for The Wright House Wellness Center Float. Contact Mark at 236-8901 or e-mail mark@thewrighthouse.org if you would like to be involved with this year's Pride Parade Float.

Calendar of Events

Ongoing Events:

- Mondays 5:30-8pm Volunteer Club meets at ECC. Food is served!
- Tuesdays free Iyengar Yoga at ECC 4pm
- Thursdays free Kundalini Yoga at ECC 5:30pm
- 3rd Wednesday of each month 6-9pm Volunteer Orientation at ECC
- 2nd Thursday of each month 6-8pm Board of Directors Meeting at Kleberg Hall

April

4/17/08 Volunteer Appreciation Night

4/26/08 Hill Country Ride for AIDS

June

6/14/2008 Seventh Annual Pride Parade hosted by AGLCC

6/27/08 National HIV Testing Day

A Glimpse of Our Volunteers In Action

Here are some photos of our volunteers as they participate in various events for The Wright House. Thank you for all your time and dedication to The Wright House Wellness Center.



Your volunteers assisting at the 2008 Culinary event in March.



Helping out at the Texas Gay Rodeo.

Vision and Mission Statement:

Vision: Everyone in our community affected by chronic illness will experience an improved quality of life.

Mission: The Wright House Wellness Center gives care and compassion to Central Texans living with or at risk of chronic illnesses by providing resources for support, education and empowerment.