

Wellness Notes

July, August, and September 2008

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

The Wright House Wellness Center Team Wins “Grand Marshall Award” for 2008 Pride Float Entry!

by Jonetta Wheaton

The 8th Annual Austin Pride Parade was held on June 14, 2008. This year’s theme was “Building CommUNITY” which speaks to the growth that Austin is experiencing and reflects the partnerships being formed within the LGBT community and its allies. The Wright House Wellness Center along with 5 other Austin Area organizations came together in a joint effort to build a beautiful float and march together in the parade. Those who marched with the float were dressed as construction workers to symbolize building community. The float consisted of a bridge that joined together two foundations representing community. A gap and torrential waters running through it symbolized the issues that get in the way of establishing successful communities such as poverty, discrimination, and fear, as well as many others.

According to those who observed, the parade was a moving tribute to community, acceptance, and togetherness. Special thanks to The Wright House float building committee as well as the following organizations: AIDS Services of Austin, TXMHMR-CARE, The Care Communities, Lifeworks and Project Transitions. With your help we were truly able to symbolize “Building CommUNITY by Bridging the Gaps.”



Third Annual Summer Soirée

by Kelsey Ehlert

A sweltering, sweaty, succulent, sweet, sensational good time!

Russell Baker, an American Pulitzer Prize winning author and columnist once wrote, “Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it.”

Texas residents know the truth behind this statement, particularly this year, with records as high as 107 degrees. Thus, in order to combat the Texas heat and fulfill the need for themed group social activities, The Wright House Wellness Center is proudly hosting our Third Annual Summer Soirée...

Beach Bingo Luau

Thursday, July 17th

6:30-9:00 PM

Kleberg Hall. 4301-B N. IH 35

All clients, volunteers, board members, and staff are encouraged to attend. Our beach party theme means you may dress to impress! As we all know, theme parties are more fun when everyone comes in matching attire! Super summer clothing is preferred but not required, so be sure to don swim trunks, sarongs, sundresses, sandals, or any festive combination of the aforementioned or just come as you are and be comfortable. We’d just like to see you there to join in on the fun and possibly win FANTASTIC prizes!!

Boasting an ice cream sundae bar, a live bingo show, and door prizes galore, the Third Annual Summer Soiree is sure to be a hit you won’t want to miss! **This a POT LUCK DINNER! Staff and board members are asked to bring main dishes. Clients and volunteers; please bring a side dish item.**

Many Austin businesses and restaurants have kindly donated gift certificates and/or outstanding services to honor The Wright House clients. Highlights include dinner at Mangia, free oil changes for your automobile, and a weekly ice cream from Ben & Jerry’s, free—for an entire year and much much more!

If your interests lie in smorgasbords, electrifyingly awesome prizes, or darned good company—come over to Kleberg Hall July 17th. You won’t be disappointed!

AIDS Walk of Austin: October 19, 2008

October will be here before you know it. Will you be ready? The AIDS Walk is an annual event put on by AIDS Services of Austin. It is set to start off at Austin City Hall and head to the heart of downtown and back to City Hall where the AIDS quilt will be on display. Registration for 2008 is almost here, so if you’re interested in participating either as an individual or on a team, go to <http://www.aidswalkaustin.org> for more information. To join WHWC’s team, contact mark@thewrighthouse.org

Signs Of Depression

By Devid Wolley from www.mental-health-matters.com

Depression can manifest itself anywhere at any time. Depression can isolate the people who suffer from it, from everyone including the people that they love. There are some signs of depression that can give us an early indication if we or someone that we know is suffering from depression.

As depression causes us to withdraw from society the symptoms create a buffer zone between normal quality life and us. Besides isolating the sufferer depression contributes towards a deteriorating physical condition, disables our ability to function in society and it affects our emotional health as well.

To the outside observer the signs of depression can be seen as a form of withdrawal or agitation. For the individual who suffers from depression the signs of depression are internal states of stress. Even though the signs of depression are the same, each person will react differently to depression symptoms.

In each individual the severity of the signs of depression can vary as well as the length of time. For depression to be diagnosed accurately the symptoms need to last for more than two weeks. Also the possibility that the symptoms may be another medical condition must also be investigated and ruled out before any treatment and medication is prescribed.

The signs of depression include anxiety, sad moods that linger, feelings of persistent pessimism, guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness, loss of interest in daily activities, loss of sexual functioning, decreased energy and fatigue, insomnia, restlessness, or irritability.

Weight loss which can attributed to the loss of appetite, or an increase in weight due to overeating, oversleeping, early morning awakening, difficulty in making decisions, concentrating and thinking are also signs of depression. Also there can be chronic unexplainable pains, stomach pains, headaches, thought of suicide and death.

Should you experience some or all of these signs of depression, it would be a good idea to consult with a **trained mental health specialist** to see what can be done to alleviate your suffering. You can also find out what you can do to prevent the signs from taking over your entire life.

Since depression can cause you to feel that living is pointless the idea of suicide might arise. However as depression can be treated successfully you need to get help as soon as you can and try to find some activity or social interaction where you can slowly rebuild your life. Depression does not have to rule your life. You have the means of destroying its hold on you. All that you need is to seek some professional medical help and you are on your way back into life.

Can Having an Active Social Life Be Good for Your Health?

by Jonetta Wheaton

The first things that people think about when they have been diagnosed with a chronic disease after their health usually have to do with paying the medical bills in addition to keeping up with every day living costs.

However, there is one thing that you can do which can be a key factor in improving your quality of life while living with chronic disease: **maintaining an active social life**. Though being social at times can involve spending money, by taking full advantage of what The Wright House has to offer, you will gain the opportunity to interact with others in the Austin community who are either themselves dealing with chronic disease or have dedicated a part of their lives to helping make life a little easier for those who have to deal with illness daily.

Making the decision to come to Yoga classes, support groups and signature WHWC events like The Summer Soiree this July 17th, will allow you to find a place to feel accepted, included, and possibly even find a sense of normalcy at no cost to you.

In addition to these benefits, maintaining an active social life is known to slow memory loss as we age.

See the Events Calendar in this Newsletter and online at www.thewrighthouse.org to find activities for you to attend to make The Wright House Wellness Center a fixture in your life.

Just remember, YOU are always welcome at a Wright House Event! We hope to see you there!!



The Importance of Eating Right

by Jonnetta Wheaton

As we all know, the key to living a healthy life is to make sure that we take in the proper nutrients that the body needs in order to function. For those with chronic illnesses like HIV, Hep C, and Cancer, this is even more important since the side effects and treatments associated with these conditions cause the body to use more energy. With the body using more of its energy to maintain the immune system, patients should make sure that they are getting enough protein, carbohydrates, and fats to compensate for this.

A barrier to getting the proper nutrition for those who do suffer from chronic illness is the lack of appetite. Though the body isn't craving food, it is still imperative that you get the proper nutrition in order to prevent a condition called wasting syndrome which is caused when one loses too much muscle weight. This is a very dangerous condition that should be avoided in order to prevent other undesired health effects. Nutrition classes, required by The Wright House Wellness Center, are a good way to learn proper eating habits that will provide the proper nourishment you need. See our website at www.thewrighthouse.org and click on Events Calendar for Nutrition Class Info.

If you do not have access to the the nutrition classes and would like ideas on how to make sure you're getting enough nutrients, check out the following tips from HIV InSite at www.hivinsite.ucsf.edu

To increase protein intake (very important for those who are in danger of weight loss):

- Spread nut butter on toast, crackers, fruit, or vegetables.
- Add cottage cheese to fruit and tomatoes
- Add canned tuna to casseroles and salads.
- Add shredded cheese to sauces, soups, omelets, baked potatoes, and steamed vegetables

To increase calories simply add carbohydrates and extra fats to your diet with things like pasta, bread, potatoes, rice, butter, avocado, and sour cream.

United Court of Austin Coronation XV 8/9/08

The United Court of Austin is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising as much financial support and support services for agencies that provide either free or affordable care to those with HIV/AIDS, or Breast Cancer. The Wright House Wellness Center has been fortunate to have been one of the 2 beneficiaries of their charitable works for several years. Please help us support their effort by attending the coronation held at The Radisson Austin North Hotel 8/9/08. For more details on the event, go to www.unitedcourtofaustin.org

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.

Calendar of Events

Ongoing Events:

-Mondays 5:30-8pm Volunteer Club meets at ECC. Food is served!

-Tuesdays, FREE Iyengar Yoga at ECC 4pm

-Volunteer Orientation-3rd Wednesday of each month 6-9pm at ECC location

-2nd Thursday of each month 6-8pm Board of Directors Meeting

July

7/12/08: Pool Party @ 1601 Montopolis Dr 2pm -5pm.

7/16/08: Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm at ECC location.

7/17/07: Summer Soiree Kleberg Hall 6p-9p

7/18/08: Springhill Estates Block Party, 5pm-7pm

August

8/09/08: The United Court of Austin Coronation-see www.unitedcourtofaustin.org for details

08/20/08: Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm at ECC location

8/23/08: "The Foundation" throws its First Annual Yard Sale to benefit The Wright House Wellness Center. 4301-B N. IH 35 from 7am-3pm.

September-

09/17/08-Volunteer Orientation 6-9pm at ECC location.

Who is TAEP and Why Should I Know About Them?

by Jonnetta Wheaton

The Treatment Access Expansion Project is a non profit organization whose goal is to emphasize the importance of improving access to comprehensive care to low income newly diagnosed HIV patients. Currently, the only way someone can get access to government coverage like Medicaid is for the disease to progress to full blown AIDS and cause disability in the patient. Having coverage that insures newly diagnosed patients can reduce HIV deaths, slow the progression of the virus, and decrease the overall amount of Medicaid funds being spent treating severe AIDS patients. In 2005, an unsuccessful bill was introduced by Senators Hillary Clinton and Gordon Smith introduced a bill called the Early Treatment for HIV Act which called for the federal government to give states the option to provide low income newly diagnosed HIV patients with Medicaid to treat the virus before it progressed to AIDS. Despite the bill's failure to pass, the TAEP is still working hard to make sure that this issue is still in the public eye. For more information on the TAEP 2008-2009 work plan and how you can help, go to <http://www.taepusa.org/index.html>.