

THE INGERSOLL MESSAGE

June 1998

Volume 4, Issue 3

Planning for "A Place of Our Own"

The Queen City Community Development board voted unanimously to develop an LGBT Community Center and Senior Housing in Seattle at its December 1997 board meeting. Queen City will plan, develop, own and manage the facilities in partnership with established nonprofit community development organizations. Planning, fundraising and construction of the facilities will take three to five years.

For the past two years, the board of Queen City Community Development has studied how other communities build institutions, how they come to own their land and buildings and increase community-owned equity over time. QCDC found out that they do it with love and money. But the passion comes first and the money follows. Professional fundraiser Sonya Campion put it best, "Donors don't give to build a building -- they give to support a mission."

Queen City's broad community development mission is now focused on a single goal -- to build a community center and senior housing. This focus results from Queen City's Elder Initiative forums and other LGBT venues where participants supported building a community center and senior housing in large majorities.

The most commonly heard reason for building a community center is the lack of connection between individuals in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. People are keenly aware that even community leaders don't know what other segments of the community are up to. Many elders feel a profound disconnection from younger generations and people of all ages expressed disappointment with their social options. In its investigations, QCDC also found that 'out' elders are uncomfortable with their choices for retirement housing and health care. This is particularly true of low-income elders.

Even community leaders don't know what other segments of the community are up to.

For these reasons, Queen City will lead the community in building a Community Center and Senior Housing. We know these facilities will improve communications among community leaders, build stronger connections among individuals and allow organizations to serve their memberships more effectively.

Queen City plans to own and manage the community center -- but programming will be provided by existing and new organizations. For this reason, it

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From the Founder

If you were creating a "Gender Center," what would you make? You are already crafting a self, so to conceive of a Center may be a task you know something about. This challenge is one of the tools we use at Ingersoll; we keep asking ourselves, our clients and friends; what do we need to do to further our work?

What would you do? Would you create support groups, train therapists, offer information and struggle to bring peace into the lives around you---I think you would, and I am proud to say that is what we at Ingersoll are doing as well.

What a fine way to spend our time and our careers! Every day brings a new "take" on gender and identity and a call to expand our minds and hearts. We know that 20 years ago many of our people would have given all they possessed to get the help that sits ready every day in our office and in our support groups.

I know that we are not alone; I know there are others around the country and the world, who are engaged in this

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The Ingersoll Message

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My Own Experience

by Nate

Being transsexual is unique to each individual. Here's my own experience.

By the time I was five or six I knew something wasn't right with me. I had no idea, of course, what it was, but I must have had the same dream over and over, that the doctor would operate on me and make me into a neat little boy and then everything would be all right. I had two girl friends with whom I walked home from school, but that was the extent of my playing with them.

I had buddies with whom I played touch football, soft ball, bows and arrows, kick the can, and toy soldiers. I lived in a pair of jeans and tennis shoes. My name was Nat, short for Natalie. I coped very well until I became a teenager and started growing breasts and lost my buddies. They no longer wanted to play with me or talk to me buddy to buddy.

Girls' basketball was my salvation in high school as well as girls' softball. But at eighteen, after graduating from high school, I joined the Dominican Order. I was a nun for seven years. Although I dearly loved the nuns. I could not picture myself being one all my life. In those days, all a nun did was pray, work, sleep and eat. I never left the convent except to go to the doctor or dentist and then only in the company of another nun. I loved being outdoors too much to live this kind of life so I left the order when my temporary vows expired. My life in the convent, on the whole, was a happy one. The nuns I lived with were some of the dearest and sweetest women I have ever known and I shall cherish them always. Also, the Mother General put me through Seattle University which was a very wonderful

experience for me.

I returned home and I got a job. A year later I married. We had six children, three boys and three girls. I never really enjoyed sex with him, but I did it out of a sense of duty. Part of the problem was my own ignorance. I did not know that women have a gland in the vagina that, when the woman is excited, is supposed to lubricate the vagina and prevent her from getting sore and him too. Mine never worked until I had the chance later on in life to strap on a belt and an artificial penis and play the husband's part in the sex act. Then, I would get so wet it would start to run down my leg. I learned how wonderful sex can be. The more I aroused and excited my wife, the higher I got and after a few months I could come to a wonderful climax without her ever having to even touch me. I do not know if this is true of men in general or not. I have heard of "Wham, Bamm, Thank you Ma'am," which would imply the guy did not care whether she got excited or not. I know so little about genetic males.

I am not a male born in a woman's body. I have no idea what it is like to be male or female. I am a TG with some male and some female in me. I show both, in varying degrees, at different times. It was very difficult trying to act the role of a woman. I felt very uncomfortable around a gracious, charming, beautiful woman. Now I love to be around them. It is much more comfortable for me to act the role of a man, but after twenty years living as a man I still do not do that well talking to one. And, of course, women no longer really talk to me so the only person I can really talk to is another TG. However, in doing this I am reminded that I am a TG, something I would just as soon forget. So I have become something of a loner. However, I am very content and at peace with my own company so it is not as bad as it may seem. (cont. next month)

SUNDAY, JUNE 14
Presentation by
Dr. Toby Meltzer
at Group Health
Room 618, Main Build-
ing, 15th & John, Capital
Hill, Seattle 12-5 p.m.
\$15 suggested.

Dr. Toby Meltzer will be presenting information on and answering questions about FTM and MTF surgical techniques and results:

Noon-1:30 MTF Surgical Techniques
 1:45-3:15 FTM Surgical Techniques
 3:30-5:00 Questions and Answers

The Ingersoll Calendar

SUNDAY, JUNE 14 Presentation by Dr. Meltzer at Group Health, Room 618, Main Building, 15th & John, Capital Hill, Seattle 12-5 p.m. \$15 suggested.

FRIDAY, JUNE 26 T-Rally, 7:30 pm to 9 pm. This is a free, outdoor celebration at the Student Activities Center across the street from Seattle Central Community College, 1701 Broadway, just north of Pine Street.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28 PRIDE DAY See you in the Parade or at the booth in Volunteer Park.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED:

Wednesday Evening Group—7:30 to 9:30 p.m. folks living in cross-gender situations. Referral needed.

Thursday Evening Group—7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Open drop-in group. This is a good place to contact the Ingersoll Center for the first time. All are welcome in this facilitator-guided support group. Individual consultation is available and publications are available for purchase.

Friday Evening Group—8:00 to 10:00 p.m. Open support group for anyone with gender questions. The longest-lived group of its kind in the U.S. Structured discussion, facilitator-led.

Saturday Evening Group—7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Focus on education about personal presentation.

FTM Specialty Group one Saturday a month. Contact David for more information: (253)859-1053.

All Ingersoll groups have a suggested group fee of \$10 and \$5 minimum.

AFFILIATED GROUPS:

Amazing Changes: Closed AA group for the T-communities. 12-Step Tradition. Mondays 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Ingersoll Center.



Founder, from page 1

good work—and I know that Ingersoll is a pioneer. Our energy is still strong after 21 years and is growing.

Our mission has the life and power of all our volunteers, staff and friends. But the world moves on. As the technical side of gender identity work becomes easier and more routine the deeper questions of identity and expression call out for more attention. Because we fought so hard to change laws, train helping professionals and educate public officials, we can expect our new visitors to have a much easier time securing the medical, therapeutic and social help they want. And we can expect new questions from our clients and friends. As the work of self discovery goes on, our work as an organization changes.

Of all the organizations in the world, we are honed by the inevitability of change: we welcome it.

So think a moment on what a "Gender Center" should be. First make yourself; then, if you wish, join us in this satisfying work. Or simply live a good life of peace and accomplishments. For when I think about the perfect Center, I see that it is the whole world.

— Marsha C. Botzer

Planning, from page 1

is important to know what facilities organizations will use and how much they can reasonably pay for such use. Queen City is not creating a centralized organization which might upset the dispersed culture which has contributed to the great variety, creativity, and innovations of Seattle's many LGBT nonprofit organizations.

Queen City will hold an all day planning conference for the LGBT Community Center and Senior Housing on June 20th, 1998 at the University of Washington Waterfront Activities Center.

Information on registration can be had by calling or e-mailing David Schraer at Queen City: 206-723-1927 or inplainair@aol.com.

SEE YOU ALL
at
THE T-RALLY
on
Friday, June 26
&
THE PARADE
and
THE RALLY IN
VOLUNTEER
PARK
Sunday, June 28th

Ingersoll Center

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