



THE PRIDE CENTER VOICE

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Stonewall Summer Pride PG. 7



Founder's Circle Reception at Sonesta PG. 13



Fit & Fabulous PG. 18



New Monthly Sunday Bingo PG. 21

Baby, Baby

"Thanks to the work of The Pride Center... we now have a son"

By Victor Gimenez

In 2008, Edwin and I began our first attempt at the adoption process. This was before it became legal for gay couples to adopt in the State of Florida, and we knew it would be a convoluted process. The agency we contracted and the Birth Mother we placed with were out-of-state. We also had to bring on board both a lawyer in Florida as well as a lawyer in the birth-state. For our specific case Edwin and I would have to claim we were bicoastal and had made

arrangements to use a friend's residence as our California address. In the end and for a number of different reasons, we walked away from the adoption. The whole experience left us emotionally, physically and financially drained.

Fast forward to 2012. Edwin received an e-mail from The Pride Center about a family planning seminar. We decided to attend and have been blessed ever since. That night we introduced ourselves to

+continued on page 4



Joshua Gimenez-Scharlau, Edwin Scharlau III and Victor Gimenez

Let's Have a Kiki

New \$100,000 HIV Prevention Grant Focuses on Communities of Color

The Pride Center recently received an additional \$100,000 HIV prevention grant from the Florida Department of Health in Broward County. Services will focus on outreach, testing, education, condom distribution and care linkage among Communities of Color.

"This is an opportunity to give a voice to the voiceless and hope to the hopeless," says Lorenzo Robertson. Lorenzo, who coordinates The Center's Couples Speak program, will see his role expand as he now also oversees the new staff for this project.

"Many times in the black community not a lot of programs articulate the needs, the concerns, the views of same-gender-loving men of color," says Lorenzo. "We must find new, organic, effective ways to address the barriers to HIV prevention."

They're calling this new program *The Kiki Project*. Along with other outreach and testing initiatives, The Pride Center will recruit popular or influential black gay and bisexual men to host Kikis in their homes or other social venues.

+continued on page 4



Lorenzo Robertson will help oversee new Kiki Project (Photo by Steve Shires)

Light at the End of the Tunnel

A letter from Robert Boo, C.E.O. of The Pride Center at Equality Park

When trying to articulate my feelings about marriage equality, sometimes it is hard to begin. Why isn't common sense enough? We are witnessing history in our lifetimes. On January 21, 2013, President Obama became the first president to use the word "gay" as a reference to sexual orientation in an inaugural address, declaring the movement for equality to be part of America's great civil rights struggles. On June 26, 2013 the Supreme Court's ruling struck down the Defense of Marriage Act. Recently, Judge Luis Garcia, who was appointed by Jeb Bush, ruled against Florida's constitutional amendment banning marriage equality for Monroe County. This is just the beginning of the house of cards to start falling within the state of Florida.

This past June, The Pride Center celebrated our 21st anniversary. During that time our mission has been to provide a welcoming safe space – an inclusive home that celebrates, nurtures and empowers the LGBT communities and our friends and neighbors in South Florida. Also in June, we closed up our 2014 fiscal year. The unaudited financials reflect the best year financially in the history of The Center. We continue to grow vital services to the community with the expansion of programmatic grants. I hope you read the article in this issue regarding our new grant focused on HIV education, prevention and outreach in Communities of Color.

Our Founders Circle, the backbone of our membership structure, continues to grow. In 2006, we listed 70 Founders; today we have over 285. Many people worked hard over the years to achieve this. Also in this issue is a great article explaining the benefits for businesses who want to market to the LGBT community by joining as a Business Founder. Additional information and benefits can be found on our website or by contacting Roger Roa, Director of Development.

I'm very pleased to welcome Ernest Olivas to our Board



of Directors. Included in this issue is a profile on Ernest highlighting the great reasons why he wanted to join the Board and the excellent skills that he brings to our community. Ernest has been involved in The Center's fundraising efforts for several years along with being a Business Founder and helping organize our Senior Health Expo.

New grants allow us to continue to grow our staff. In 2006 when I started at The Center, we had seven paid staff. Today, we have 39 paid staff. In this issue we highlight several Pride Center staff members. Several have been here since 2005 and some are new additions to the team. People who work at The Center do so because of the passion and belief in our mission. Any business model would love to duplicate that zeal in their workforce.

I close my conversation with you with a quote by Harvey Milk: "All men are created equal. No matter how hard they try, they can never erase those words. This is what America is about." I remember these words as I try to focus on that light at the end of the tunnel.

About The Pride Center

The Pride Center celebrated 20 years of service in 2013. Our mission is: "We provide a welcoming, safe space--an inclusive home--that celebrates, nurtures and empowers the LGBTQ communities and our friends and neighbors in South Florida." The Center's program and services meet the distinct cultural, health, educational, economic, social and safety needs of the LGBT community. More than 30,000 adult and youth attended activities at the Center over the past year. We host more than 65 regularly-meeting groups each month. Support, social and educational groups focus on women, seniors, youth, men, transgender, recovery, health, the arts, athletics, spirituality, games and more. Outreach activities over the past year directly impacted over 50,000 residents and visitors to South Florida. The Pride Center is a major site for HIV testing, prevention,

outreach, education, healthcare linkage, support, holistic health and counseling. Stop in and learn about all we do: a community Flea Market; women's health initiatives; family outreach days; Bingo; unique exercise classes; financial investment series; art gallery openings; adult educational opportunities through Pride University; Bingo; education for prospective and current LGBT parents; weekly "Coffee and Conversation" gatherings for seniors; music, movies and live theater presentations; a variety of health fairs; and a spectrum of creative symposiums, speakers, forums and events for the entire community. We own five-and-a-half acres of property with 30,000 square feet of office space that provide homes for programs and services, as well as synergy among organizations. Our Vision is to be the premier point of connection for our community.

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Tikkun Olam: Heal the World

Business Manager reflects on nearly a decade at The Center

By Janet Weissman

In January of 2005, I received a phone call from a dear friend who was-at that time-the Board Treasurer of the then Gay and Lesbian Community Center. He asked if I would be interested in a part time job as the bookkeeper.

I had previously worked in the not-for-profit world and found it to be one of the most rewarding and satisfying ways to earn a living. Not because the pay was the best, but because at the end of the day I felt like I had made a difference in a small way.

The Jewish term for this is "tikkun olam" which means heal the world.

After just a few weeks on the job, I went into then-Executive Director Paul Hyman's office and said, "You know this isn't really a part-time position." He said, "Yeah, I know."

I have been in charge of the Flea Market. I've helped with women's programming (because I was then the only female on staff, and felt passionate about the need) with our old Lavender Events. Of course I organize Bingo every

month. Oh yes, and I manage the day-to-day finances, too.

Now after almost 10 years working in the LGBTQ community, I have acquired an amazing amount of knowledge, experiences and most importantly, friends.

In today's world I do not believe there is anyone who has not been touched by HIV or who has not lost someone close because of the virus. I am no exception to that. In college, I worked in theatre and lost so many dear and very talented young men I knew then. Their talents were not able to develop and shine on the world but hopefully because of the work and commitment of everyone at The Pride Center, the future will not extinguish other young men. So Dean, Dalton, Bill, Barry and so many others--I balance the books for you.

And one more thing--we have a NEW Bingo starting on the 4th Sunday each month. July 27th will be the first one. It is an earlybird bingo so it starts at 4:00pm. Come, play and win!



Yoga Class

Drew Miller teaches weekly yoga classes at The Pride Center. To learn more about the many diverse groups that meet at The Center weekly, check out the listing on Page 6 or contact Samantha McCoy at 954.463.9005.



GAY NUPTIALS

a wedding showcase

"Gay Nuptials" mission is to provide an intimate, upscale, yet comfortable event where engaged same sex couples can connect with potential hotels, vendors and their affiliates with products, services and knowledge for their wedding.

A Bobby Kyser Event - Panache Style

One hundred percent of all ticket sales will be donated to **The Pride Center at Equality Park**

Hagen Park Center
2020 Wilton Drive
08.17.2014
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

\$20 donation Includes:

- Entrance to "Gay Nuptials" a wedding showcase, including over 35 vendor suites
- Free Parking
- Passed mimosas, bloody marys & champagne
- Open Bar with Vodka's, wines & beer
- Passed Hors d'oeuvres & food samples
- Dessert & candy samples
- Swag bag with vendor cards, brochures & samples
- Live music & entertainment throughout the show

www.mygaywedding.org



Baby, Baby

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(attorney and adoption specialist) Robert Lamarche and made a point to get his contact information and meet with him at a later date. We did so at Advocates for Children and Families (ACF), the agency where he works. He explained in further detail how the process works now, and we felt comfortable with him, his agency and the whole process in general. Whereas during our first experience our general impression of most of the people involved were that they were just doing their job, Robert and ACF truly cared about us and our experience. Shortly after our meeting, Edwin and I decided to move forward with the adoption process again.

Fast forward again to another e-mail from the Pride Center which resulted in us attending another seminar at The Pride Center—this time about what to expect from the world when you are a same-sex couple with children. After this seminar, we met Sherri who told us about her LGBT parents group that meets monthly. Their children play with each other, but more importantly they see other families like theirs.

Thanks to the work of The Pride Center and the quality of speakers and contacts they bring-in, Edwin and I now have a son, Joshua.

Thank you Pride Center, thank you ACF, thank you Robert Lamarche, and thank you Center COO Kristofer Fegenbush—who sent us that first e-mail in 2012.

The Pride Center provides regular Growing Our Families workshops both for prospective parents and current LGBT parents. Some events explore paths to expanding your family (adoption, foster care, surrogacy and IVF). Other workshops help families build skills for better parenting. Check out pictures from a recent event on Page 12! Don't miss the workshop for parents on "Bullying" on Thursday, August 28 at 7 pm at The Pride Center.

MEMBERSHIP WITH BENEFITS

THE PRIDE CENTER
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!

Join The Pride Center as a paid member today!
Receive an **I AM PRIDE** card that offers discounts at many local:

- Restaurants
- Medical and Dental Offices
- Attorney and CPA Firms
- Service Centers
- Retail Stores
- And so much more

PrideCenterFlorida.org/IAMPride



Let's Have a Kiki

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They'll invite their own friends to attend and discuss sex, relationships and HIV in these small groups.

"We're having friends talk to friends rather than designing a program where we try group strangers together to discuss HIV, sex, intimacy and identity," says Lorenzo. "We hope to inspire organic conversations among groups of friends. We're saying: 'we want you to invite people to the Kiki--people you know, people you care about, people you party with, people you date.' We want to inspire significant dialogue in friends' natural social groups."

Topics will range from stigma, discrimination, intimacy and communication to HIV testing, condom use, safer sex and medication adherence for people living with HIV/AIDS. Groups also will explore frank and candid discussions around sexual orientation and identity.

"This can help black gay or same-gender loving men explore their identity," says Lorenzo. "How do we identify ourselves? We still have a lot of black men who don't disclose their sexual orientation. They're not really on the downlow. They just won't discuss it with friends or family. Maybe they're discrete or closeted. Maybe they say, 'I just mess around.' Maybe they say, 'I'm just freaky.' For some it's not about the emotional attachment of being in a relationship. It's about expressing true intimacy. It's about sexual gratification. We want to explore these issues of self identification."

Lorenzo hopes these discussions lead to great dialogue within communities of color.

"The broader black community must address that there are black gay people in the community," says Lorenzo. This is a huge issue. We don't even address that we have black gay people. That's a big problem in itself. If we're not talking about black gay people, how can we talk about HIV? How can we address other issues that are paramount in our community?"

The Kiki Project also will host large community forums or townhalls on a variety of interesting, engaging topics. They're already planning an interactive poetry slam night in September.

"For many in the black gay community, there is no central place to go, no specific social scene," says Lorenzo. "We integrate ourselves to other bars. Some say there's nothing to do that's specific for us. We don't have enough cultural events geared to black gay men. Some people don't feel comfortable coming into Wilton Manors. They feel ostracized or targeted. Some only feel comfortable on Thursday nights. Maybe we can help provide more opportunities for black gay men to connect."

To learn more about The Kiki Project or get involved as a volunteer or participant, please contact Lorenzo Robertson at LRobertson@PrideCenterFlorida.org or 954.463.9005.

Olivas Joins Board of Directors

When asked what services provided by The Pride Center most excite him, Ernest Olivas doesn't hesitate to answer. "Of course the Senior Services," he replies enthusiastically. "They provide a valuable sense of community, information and activities for our growing LGBT senior community."

Olivas is the newest member of The Center's Board of Directors. Olivas has invested energy, resources and leadership as a Founder and volunteer with the annual Senior Health Expo and other Center fundraising activities.

"I was so impressed with how far The Pride Center has come as an institution, a program and service center," says Olivas. "The breadth of the activities touch so many different communities. The quality of the services and the information is so competent, reliable and caring. I wanted to be part of an even further expansion of services and functions that I see in The Pride Center's future."

Olivas is the owner of Emerald Elite Senior Home Care. He operates all aspects of this boutique nurse registry, providing concierge services to seniors in their homes and private facilities. He recruits, vets and verifies all experience, training, certification, licensure and insurance for Certified Nurse Assistants and Home Health Aides designated by the State of Florida and eligible for private placement. He also handles marketing and sales necessary to build awareness of their placement services. Olivas hopes this seasoned skill set will benefit The Pride Center.

"I hope that my marketing background will help with development activities of The Center to bring in more Founders, sponsors and supporters," says Olivas. "I also hope that if I dig deep back into my government background that we can



look for contract, grant and other funding sources. And of course, I want to ensure that outreach and services to our growing LGBT senior communities make Fort Lauderdale the national leader in Senior advocacy and programs."

Serving as a volunteer and donor at The Center has impacted Olivas personally. "I not only have made great new friends," he says, "but I have learned so much about our community, the breadth of activities and services that can be accessed and even learned how to provide my own services better to the community."

Olivas has great hope for the future of The Pride Center. "I see continued growth to reach all corners of Broward County, beyond our Wilton Manors and Fort Lauderdale core," says Olivas. "I hope for outreach to all communities, including retirees, senior shut-ins, seniors living in facilities, the Latino community and to our LGBT Business community, especially. And I hope we will become the national leader and Center for LGBT Senior advocacy and services."

Olivas also is clear about what he hopes people will say about him after seeing his work on the Board: "How can I help?"

Did you know?

+The Pride Center provided 3,272 HIV tests in the first half of 2014

+The Pride Center is the largest site for Enhanced Fitness classes for Seniors offered in the U.S.

+Center volunteers provided more than 7,500 hours of service in the first half of 2014

+Over 1000 visitors and 80 vendors attend The Pride Center's Flea Market on the first Saturday of every month

A free program for men in relationships or for those who want to be.

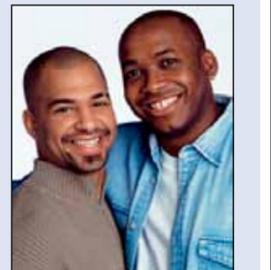
It doesn't matter if you're HIV negative or living with HIV. This program is a great way for you to build relationship skills, share with new friends and have fun.

New four week session starts every month. Space is limited so sign up now.

"Couples Speak"

For FOUR WEEKS you'll meet in small groups with other couples to:

- Improve healthy communication
- Manage conflict and differences
- Engage in fun learning activities
- Discuss sex openly and honestly
- Make your love life more exciting & safer
- Learn to love better
- Reduce your risks
- Enhance your health and...
- Have fun!



For more information contact The Pride Center's PALs Project...

Lorenzo Robertson
email LRobertson@PrideCenterFlorida.org
or call **954.463.9011 ext. 306**



Going to the Chapel *Gay Nuptials Wedding Showcase to Benefit Center*

By Ellen Schulman

Tickets are going fast for Gay Nuptials, a wedding showcase scheduled for August 17. All proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to The Pride Center at Equality Park, which provides a welcoming, safe space for the LGBTQ community.

Organized by Bobby Kyser, the owner of Panache Style, a Wilton Manors-based floral design and events planning firm, the event take place from 1 to 4 p.m. at Hagen Park Community Center.

Gay Nuptials will feature more than 30 vendors offering a wide variety of wedding ceremony services to same sex couples including venues, catering, luxury hotels, entertainment, photography, florist, invitations and party rentals. The Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau is the presenting sponsor of the showcase.

"We are honored that The Pride Center is the beneficiary of this important event for our community," said CEO Robert Boo. "Each person who attends will be making a valuable contribution to the LGBTQ community while they enjoy meeting some of the area's top wedding vendors. It's a win-win for everyone involved."

Tickets for Gay Nuptials are \$20 and can be ordered online at www.mygaywedding.org. Sponsorship and vendor booths, ranging from \$100 to \$5,000, are available by calling 954-356-9377.

Well-known diversity trainer Doug Cureton will be on hand to offer wedding vendors etiquette hints and methods for breaking down stereotypes at a private industry professionals luncheon from noon to 1 p.m. Cureton is the founder of CreativTEAM, Inc., a training and leadership consulting firm in Fort Lauderdale and owner of *Some Men like it Haute* fashion consignment store in Wilton Manors. Kyser will also presenting advice for planning equality-based weddings.

"Planning a same sex wedding can present a myriad of cross-cultural communication challenges," Cureton said. "The goal of the presentation is to help wedding planning professionals minimize mistakes that can negatively impact customer service."

Vendors, in addition to Panache Style, will include: Marriott Harbor Beach Resort & Spa; Pompano Marriott Beach Resort & Spa; Renaissance Fort Lauderdale Cruise Port Hotel; Riverside Hotel Fort Lauderdale; Sonesta Fort Lauderdale; The Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa; W Hotel Fort Lauderdale; Bridges Cinema; Michael Murphy Photographic Imaging Studio; Munoz Photography; Touch of Paradise Floral and Event Design; Over the Top Linen; Argenti Designer Jewelers; Beauty Couture, Inc; Bubble Miami Furniture Rental; Mike Sipe Entertainment; Zazz Events; Mauricio de Monaco; Southern Formals; Illumene;

Special Event Decorators; A Thierry's Catering & Event Design; Café Ala Carte

Dapur Asian Tapas & Lounge; Chocolate Fountains of South Florida; JP's Chocolate Shoppe; Storks Bakery; and Sweeter Days Bake Shop.

Additional sponsors include: Fort Lauderdale Marriott Coral Springs Hotel,

Simply Couture Weddings, Worldwide Transportation, and Cover It Fine Linens.

Media sponsors include Island City News, SHE Magazine, Hot Spots Media Group, Town Crier, South Florida Gay News, Guy Magazine, The Islander, OutClique, Greater Fort Lauderdale Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and jumpmarkerslist.com.

"We look forward to Gay Nuptials becoming an annual must-

attend event for engaged same sex couples," said Kyser. "Best of all, we're raising valuable support for The Pride Center and the important work they do for the LGBTQ community."



(l to r) Robert Boo, CEO of The Pride Center; Doug Cureton, founder of CreativTEAM, Inc; Richard Gray, managing director, LGBT Market for the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau; and Bobby Kyser, owner of Panache Style.

Groups at the Pride Center

WEEKLY RECURRING MEETINGS

- AA - Attitude Adjustment Group, Recovery, Mon-Fri, 7-8a
- AA - Attitude Adjustment Group, Recovery, Mon-Fri, 7-8a
- AA - Each Day a New Beginning, Recovery, Daily, 9-10a
- AA - Northeast Group, Recovery, Mon, 8:30-9:30p
- AA - Sober, Proud and Gay, Recovery, Fri, 8:30-10p
- AA - Pride 5:45 Meeting, Recovery, Daily, 5:45-6:45p
- BrothasspeakFTL-Social, Wed, 7:00p-9:00p
- Coffee and Conversation - SAC, Social/Seniors, Tues, 10:30a-12noon
- Crystal Meth Anonymous, Recovery Mon 6p-7p, Wed, 6p-7p
- Faith Circle, Social, Sun, 11:30a-1:30p
- Games Day, Social, 2nd & 4th Tues, 1-4p
- Gay Bridge Club, Fun, Mon & Fri, 1-4p
- Gay Hearts, Social, Sun, 1-3:30p
- Gay Men's Empowerment Group, Thurs 7p-8:30p
- Imagine Meditation in your life with Drew, Thurs, 7:30p-8:30p
- Island City AI-anon-Support, Thur, 7-8p
- Mahjong, Social, Wed, 1-5:00p
- Man2Man Talk, Social, Mon, 7-8:30p
- Monday Night Women's Group, Social, Mon, 7:30-9p
- Narcotics Anonymous Rainbow Group, Recovery, Wed, 8-9p
- New Path Narcotics Anonymous Group, Recovery, Mon/Tue/Thu, 7-8p
- New Path Narcotics Anonymous Group, Recovery, Sat/Sun, 4-5p
- Overeaters Anonymous, Recovery, Sun, 12n-1:30p
- Overeaters Anonymous, Recovery, Fri, 7:30-9p
- POZ Attitudes Here and Now, HIV Support, Wed, 7-9p,
- Quit Smoking Now, Tues 7p-8:30p
- SAGE Men's Social, Social/Seniors, Wed, 1-3p
- SAGE Computer Club, Wed 4p-5p
- Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA), Recovery, Fri, 7-8p
- Senior Exercise Class YMCA Health, Senior, Mon-Fri, 10:10a-11:10a, 11:15-12:15p, 1:30-2:30p
- Senior Gay Men's Support Group, Support, Mon, 11a-12n

- Smart Recovery, Recovery, Mon, 7:30-8:30p/Thur, 6:30-8p
- The Healing Project Meeting, Tues 7:30p-9pm
- Toastmasters, Educational, Mon, 7:15-9:15p
- Women's Non-Competitive Basketball, Social, Mon, Thur 5:30p, Sat 3p
- Pride Center Young Adult Group, (23-35 yoa), Support, Fri, 7-9p
- Yoga with Drew Miller, Social, Wed, 6p-7p, Sat, 12:30p-1:30p

BI-WEEKLY RECURRING MEETINGS

- Ballet & Opera Group, Educational, 2nd & 4th Sunday, 1-4p
- Bereavement Group, Support, 2nd & 4th Sunday, 2-4p
- POZ Long-Term Survivor, Gay Men/HIV Support, 1st & 3rd Thur, 6:30-8p
- Senior Games Day, Social, 2nd & 4th Tue, 1-4p

MONTHLY RECURRING MEETINGS/EVENTS

- Big Men's Club: Chubbies & Chasers, Social, 3rd Sat, 1-4p
- Pride Center BINGO, Open to Public, 2nd Sat, 7-10p
- Dolphin Democrats, Mtly Meeting, 2nd Wed, 7:30-9:30p
- Lavender Speaks, Social, 3rd Thurs, 7:30-10p
- Pride Center Memorial Garden Club, Educational, 3rd Wed, 7-9p
- Pride Center Flea Market, Open to Public, 1st Sat, 8a-2p
- Primetimers, Open to Public, 1st Sun, 2-4:30p
- SAGE Computer Club, Educational, 2nd Wed, 4-6p
- SAGE Movie Movie, Social, 3rd Mon, 4-6p
- S. F. Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, Support, 1st Sun, 2:30-3:30p
- Transgender Support Group, Support, 3rd Fri, 7-8:30p
- Women in Network, Social, 1st Wed, 7-9p
- Women with Pride Book Club, 2nd Thur, 7-9p

For further information or to rent a room for your special event call: Samantha McCoy at 954-463-9005 ext. 101. Visit www.pridecenterflorida.org/calendar for meeting room assignments. Room days/times subject to change.

Stonewall Summer Pride

Pride Center staff and volunteers participated in a packed-day of outreach at Stonewall Summer Pride. The Center utilizes diverse events each week to educate the community on its vital resources, programs, services and opportunities.



VIP Reception

*A Snapshot of Service:
The Pride Center at Equality Park*

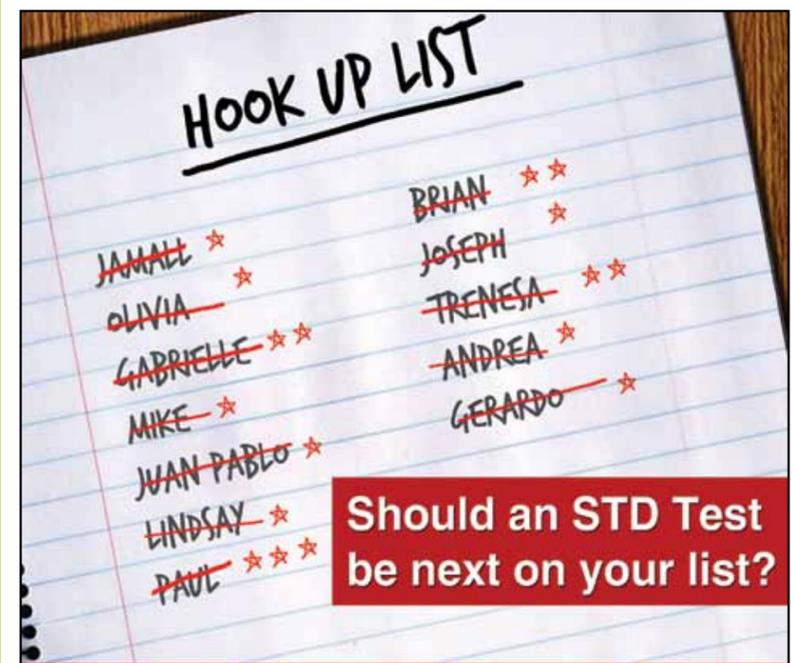
Monday, August 11 at 7 pm
Stonewall National Museum - Wilton Manors Gallery
2157 Wilton Drive, Wilton Manors, FL

Friends and supporters of The Pride Center at Equality Park, you are cordially invited to a VIP reception hosted by Stonewall National Museum & Archives in celebration of the exhibit opening *A Snapshot of Service: The Pride Center at Equality Park*. The exhibit explores over 20 years of service provided by The Pride Center to South Florida's LGBTQ communities.

stonewall
national museum & archives

Stonewall National Museum - Wilton Manors Gallery is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 2 pm until 10 pm. Admission is free, however, donations are appreciated. Visit stonewall-museum.org to learn more about Stonewall National Museum & Archives.

THE PRIDE CENTER
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!



Should an STD Test be next on your list?

THE PRIDE CENTER
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!

Protect Yourself - Get tested for Syphilis, HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases routinely.

STD/STI Testing
Chlamydia/Gonorrhea & Syphilis
Every Thursday 4 PM to 8 PM
2040 North Dixie Highway
Wilton Manors, FL 33305

For more info:
(954) 566-3553 / freeHIVtest@PrideCenterFlorida.org

Taking Care of Business

Business Founders reflect on benefits of supporting The Pride Center

By Bryon Bowlby

Founders are the cornerstone of The Pride Center membership structure. They provide vital funding for essential programs and services; Business Founders are an integral part of those resources. "At The Pride Center we enjoy a wonderful working relationship with many businesses in our community," says CEO Robert Boo. "There is nothing stronger than the support we receive from the Business Founders."

Businesses support The Pride Center in many ways, starting at the Silver Level (\$1,200 per year) to the Platinum Level (\$10,000 or more).

"I am a Business Founder because The Pride Center's mission is to help people in



(Photo by Stephen Lang)

the LGBTQ community and that in effect raises up our entire community" said James Senior with Edward Jones Investments.

"We are grateful to help The Pride Center so they can provide the community all of their programs and services," said Christopher Elmore with City County Credit Union (CCCU). CCCU provides a unique and very generous way of supporting The Pride Center. Not only is CCCU a Gold Business Founder, but CCCU also has a Matching Membership Program. When you become a basic level member of The Pride Center and become a CCCU member, CCCU will reimburse your membership dues and match the donation dollar-for-dollar back to The Pride Center. In essence, they double your contribution to The Pride Center! Please consult with City County Credit Union for details.

Ernest Olivas, owner of Emerald Elite Senior Home Care, has found his Business Founder membership to be an invaluable asset to growing his business. "I credit my relationship with The Pride Center one of the reasons for my immediate success as a small business owner when I 'hung out my shingle' and started Emerald Elite. Regardless of your business or service, every type of person at some time or another walks through The Pride Center. It is an enormous source of business."

"We enjoy our relationship with the LGBTQ community, and The Pride Center is an integral part of that relationship," said Norm Jacobs from Eden Funeral Services. Eden Funeral Services provides pre-arranged and funeral service cremation to the LGBTQ community. Norm also provides, at no cost, Durable Power of Attorney and Notary Service to Members of The Pride Center.

Businesses can also participate in the "I AM PRIDE" Community Discount Card. Participating businesses provide Pride Center members with unique discounts on goods and services. If you own or manage a business and would like to learn more about becoming a Business Founder or to participate in the "I AM PRIDE" Community Discount Card, contact Roger Roa – Director of Development, 954.463.9005 Ext 105.

- Founders Circle annual memberships are:
- Silver Level Founder (\$1,200 to \$2,499)**
 - Gold Level Founder (\$2,500 to \$4,999)**
 - Diamond Level Founder (\$5,000 to \$9,999)**
 - Platinum Level Founder (\$10,000 and above)**

For a complete list of Founders, please refer to the Founders Circle listing in this issue of The Voice.

Women With Pride

A Program of The Pride Center at Equality Park

- We Offer:**
- Holistic Health Series
 - Family Series
 - Book Club
 - Art Shows
 - Diverse Speakers
 - Basketball
 - LBT Health Directory
 - Service Linkage
 - Support Groups
 - Movie Nights
 - Panel Discussions
 - Social Events



Like "Women With Pride" on Facebook for events and updates!

2040 North Dixie Highway, Wilton Manors, FL 33305

Like The PRIDE CENTER CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

PrideCenterFlorida.org | 954.463.7370 x108 | women@PrideCenterFlorida.org

Connect with Your Community!

Seniors, This is for You!

Fifth Annual Senior Health Expo Set for October 18

By Robert Saunders



(Photo by Steve Shires)

The world takes a turn around the sun, another year goes by, and suddenly the annual Senior Health Expo arrives at The Pride Center again. This year's event--the fifth, no less--promises to hit it out of the park -- Equality Park, that is.

"By early July, we had already signed up 30 of the available 43 tables for healthcare and service providers to meet our senior LGBTers," said Senior Services Coordinator Bruce Williams.

Vendors who have registered for the Expo will offer valuable information on a wide array of important areas for our Seniors, including home healthcare agencies, senior living facilities, medical plans, insurance coverage, and legal issues.

These are service providers who respect and understand our community, Williams added. "We want the LGBT community to be aware of available local, state and national resources and we want to be sure those resources are sensitive to and supportive of our needs, and not just chasing the LGBT dollar."

As in past Expos, there will also be a number of engaging educational seminars focusing on topics of particular interest to the mature LGBT community, as well as stations offering a variety of medical tests, lots of giveaways and great door prizes.

The event is completely free, and there will even be free refreshments and a free

lunch at noon for the first 300 attendees.

All of this is only possible through the support of many generous sponsors, who more than deserve acknowledgement here.

The Premier Sponsor will be Broward Health Imperial Point and the Presenting Sponsor is the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF). Several Five Star Properties will again be with us including those in Hollywood, Plantation and spearheaded by Park Summit as a Sapphire Sponsor. Our Emerald Sponsors include AT&T, Vitas & Carefree Insurance, while our Ruby Sponsors to date are Emerald Elite Senior Home Care, Johnson & Johnson, Senior Medical Associates and Garden Plaza @ Inverrary.

Our returning supporting participants will include Walgreen's, the Law Offices of Stephanie Schneider, Firstlantic, David Treece Financial, Assisted Living Lifestyles, Unimed, Broward Burial Science Care, David Lerner Associates and Atlas Care Management.

No less important to making it happen are the collaborating community partners, who include the Futurity First Insurance Group, Gilda's Club, The Peninsula, SAGE, SunServe, Women in Network and The Pride Center's Senior Advisory Council.

The fair runs from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 18th. Be sure to come along! Even if you're not yet a senior, with any luck you will be some day.

Did you know?

+The Pride Center hosts regular Transgender Educational Series collaborative community workshops

+The Pride Center distributed more than 186,000 condoms in the first half of 2014. That's a lot of safer sex!

+More than 10,000 people used The Pride Center's computer center last year



Want A Jump-Start To Healthier Living?

If you're a gay or bisexual man living with HIV, you can learn to keep your immune system in strong, peak condition.



Join the FREE 18 week LIFE Program

You'll receive practical, step-by-step guidance in a fun interactive environment as you create and implement personal health plans for long-term thriving with HIV.

This program can help you...

- Build deeper, supportive relationships with new HIV+ friends!
- Get the latest facts on HIV!
- Improve your physical, emotional and social well being!
- Share your story while you learn from others!

Participation in the LIFE Program...

- Boosts the immune system
- Lowers risky behavior
- Increases adherence to health and medication schedules.



Offered twice a year beginning in January and July. MEETINGS ON TUESDAYS @ 6:30 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Jeff Grigsby at 954.463.9011, ext. 302 or email JGrigsby@PrideCenterFlorida.org



Sponsored by The Pride Center, and the State of Florida, Department of Health

Fit and Fabulous Event

Women with Pride and Women in Network recently hosted an interactive workshop exploring practical fitness and nutrition options for the busy LBTQ woman. Presenters included Fitness Trainer Allison Parnell, Nutritionist Elena Rodriguez and SCS Weightloss Systems CEO Sarah Strock. This is part of our ongoing Vital Signs holistic health series funded by Aqua Foundation for Women.



The Pride Center Founders Circle

LIFETIME

Bob and Hal Beemer-Peterson
Gil Corwin
John C. Graves Charitable Fund
Alan Schubert

PREMIER LEVEL (\$20,000 and above)

Richard Gray / Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Anonymous (2)
AIDS Healthcare Foundation
Aqua Foundation for Women
Bobby Blair / Florida Agenda
Peter Clark / Hotspots Magazine
Community Foundation of Broward
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Scott Kean / LSeven Solutions
Bobby Kyser / Panache Style
The Howard Greenfield Charitable Foundation
Kenneth Hollander and John Kardos / The Kenneth S. Hollander Charitable Foundation
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Camp 4 Health
Glen Weinzimer and John Rogatzki / The SMART Ride
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GOLD LEVEL (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

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Anonymous (5)
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Gary Kempler / Futury First Insurance Group - South Florida

Join the Pride Center Founders Circle! Support the programs and services of The Pride Center. Founders Circle memberships begin at \$100 per month. For more information, please contact Roger Roa, Director of Development, rroa@PrideCenterFlorida.org

Razones Campaign

Latinos en Acción recently hosted representatives from the CDC at The Pride Center to discuss the Razones Campaign focused on HIV testing, education and prevention among Latino/Hispanic gay and bisexual men.



Did you know?

- +Our CouplesSpeak program builds relationship skills, improves communication, lowers risks, and enhances sex
- +Over 100 people play Bingo at The Pride Center on the second Saturday evening and fourth Sunday afternoon of every month
- +We've provided HIV prevention outreach to more than 7,500 individuals already this year

Living with HIV?

Are dating, sex, relationships or disclosure stressful?

CHOICES

JOIN a free program to help you make smart CHOICES.

CHOICES is a five-week program that teaches you skills to handle challenges you may face. We meet in small groups to discuss how to:

- Build healthier relationships and lower stress
- Make better decisions and improve health
- Disclose HIV-status wisely

Fun, interactive sessions include:

- Video clips for discussion
- Thought-provoking activities
- Small group discussion and role play

CHOICES can help you...

- Meet new HIV+ friends
- Share different experiences without judgment
- Improve problem-solving & communication skills
- Learn more health supporting behaviors

CHOICES is FREE. Se Habla Espanol.
If interested, contact Magno Morales at 954.463.9011 ext. 303 or email mmoales@PrideCenterFlorida.org

project PALS THE PRIDE CENTER
The PALS Project offers gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men living with HIV social support, accurate HIV information and skills to lead safer, richer lives.

Sponsored by The Pride Center and the State of Florida, Department of Health

GET A ROOM!

The Pride Center has space rental opportunities for your every need

- Weddings
- Business Meetings
- Parties
- Training Sessions
- Conferences
- Life Celebrations
- Trade Shows
- And More!

THE PRIDE CENTER

954.463.9005 ext. 201
2040 North Dixie Highway
Wilton Manors, FL 33305
www.PrideCenterFlorida.org/rentals



Growing Our Families 101 Workshop

This half-day workshop to a packed room explored various pathways to building a forever-family. LGBTQ families provided their personal experiences on adoption, fostering, surrogacy and IVF. Legal, medical and social service providers presented practical strategies, vital information, and helped answer difficult questions.
Photos by Manuel Leon



Day of Decision Rally

The Pride Center hosted a Decision Day Celebration when Judge Garcia in Monroe County struck down Florida's marriage ban in The Keys. Days later, Judge Zabel affirmed that the denial of marriage to same-sex couples in our state is unconstitutional. Our community continues to make major strides toward freedom to marry and equality for all in Florida.
Photos by Stephen Lang

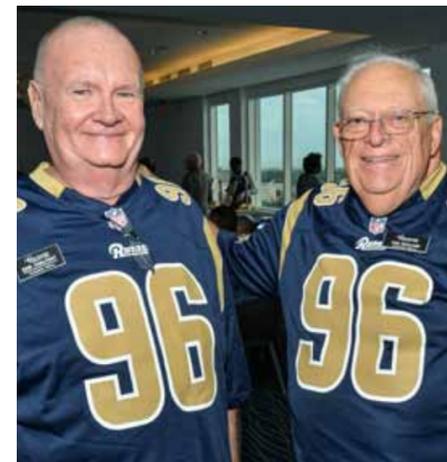
LIFE Graduation

Friends, family members, staff, volunteers and participants recently celebrated graduation from the 17-week LIFE Program. This powerful, popular holistic health program for people living with HIV/AIDS helps improve health, provide social support, lower risky behaviors and increase adherence to health routines including medication adherence. To learn more about LIFE, contact Jeff Grigsby at 954.463.9011 or JGrigsby@PrideCenterFlorida.org



Founders Circle Reception at Sonesta

Sonesta Fort Lauderdale hosted and sponsored a recent Founders Reception overlooking the beautiful Fort Lauderdale beach. Founders provide at least \$100 monthly to support the programs and services of The Pride Center. To learn more about Founders, contact Roger Roa at RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org
Photos by Stephen Lang & Steve Shires





Aqua Girl Outreach

Center staff and volunteers utilized annual Aqua Girl activities to educate LBT women about our Women with Pride program and to link women to the women's health directory at LBTHealth.org. To learn more about Women with Pride activities, contact Roya at WomenWithPride@PrideCenterFlorida.org

Listening and Leveraging

The Busy Life of Jorge Gardela

By Robert Saunders

Not to give offense, but let's be honest. When I'm talking with Jorge Gardela, he can sometimes be a tad difficult to follow, especially when he gets animated -- which is often. You know what? It doesn't matter at all, because one thing comes through very clearly: here's a guy who cares deeply about people's welfare.

"I always like to help people, in different ways. That's what motivates me," he said during a conversation about his work as Health Outreach Director at The Pride Center. "How can I assist people not only about HIV/AIDS, but in general. That's my motivation."

He first became involved with such issues as a lawyer in his native Costa Rica in the 1980s, when the first AIDS cases were recognized in that country.

"At that time, we had regular social security health coverage for everyone but the government said we can't cover medicine for HIV/AIDS because it's so expensive," Jorge explained. He and other activists took legal action and were able to get that decision reversed, arguing that it was unconstitutional and that cancer drugs were covered even though they were more expensive.

Later, he came to Florida. "I came here basically because I had a relationship with somebody," he said. "When I arrived, I saw so many needs, especially at that time for the Latino community. But not just the Latino community, everybody -- so many gaps."

That prompted Jorge to become involved with The Pride Center, as well as with several local agencies. "For example, I'm Latino Community Chair for Broward County, also Community Co-Chair for Broward County HIV prevention planning for the whole county." He also represents the state of Florida with a national organization, the Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS).

This broad involvement is a way to leverage what one person can do. "This is really my philosophy," he said. "It has to be all the community working together."

As Health Outreach Director, his aim is to connect with people in the LGBT community who don't come to The Pride Center. "The focus is not only related to HIV/AIDS, but it's about seeing what regular health issues like smoking, mental health, all the needs the people have. And then trying to consolidate, to see how we can integrate all these health issues."

He sees three aspects to his work. "One is to give knowledge out, another is advocacy because we're talking about human rights and health issues." The third is identifying unmet needs. In this, he said, his legal background has proven invaluable because it taught him how to listen. "If you can really listen to people, you can interpret what they say and really know what is the need there."

As illustration, he recounted the story of a chance conversation he had some nine years ago with someone who was doing community service, and asked him why.



"He was a Latino guy about 21 years old, and he started crying."

The young man was there because of a DUI offense. He said the reason he was driving drunk was because his partner put him out every night and he had to "sleep outside like a dog" while the partner had sex with another person.

"I said, this is domestic violence," Jorge recalled. He started looking into what domestic violence services there were in Broward County and found there were none geared to the LGBT community. "We started a coalition with Women in Distress, SunServe, and The Pride Center," he noted. "We applied for a grant, and now you can see many services for domestic violence in the LGBT community."

As well as shelters for women victims of domestic violence, Broward County now has options for men. "All this is because so many years ago I was talking and saw a need, and we started a coalition and now we have services for that community."

The many hats he wears make for a busy life, and Jorge can often be found in his office at the Pride Center at 7 in the morning, before he goes off to a meeting here or a conference there. In what little free time he has, he loves to garden. "On weekends if I'm here -- because sometimes I have to travel -- I really enjoy staying home and gardening." Even so, these days he has someone else mow the grass.

Looking ahead, his free time looks to become even scarcer. Implementation of the Affordable Care Act in the communities he serves presents formidable challenges in terms of education and preparation. "The concept is wonderful but how to do it at this level is difficult," he said.

Still, he is encouraged when he looks back and sees what has been accomplished. "Over ten years ago when I started working with the Pride Center, we had one program, and now we have so many programs," he smiled. "When people work together, it makes a difference."

Freak Show

Wicked Manors 2014 Planned for Wilton Drive this Halloween



Have you ever wanted to be the Bearded Lady or the Dog Face Boy? How about you and your partner dress as the Creepy Co-joined Twins? Feel like costuming yourself as the Sword Swallower, the Headless Woman, the Fire Eater, the Alligator Girl or the Lobster Clawed Man?

Join us on Halloween! This year's theme for Wicked Manors is "FREAK SHOW," and we anticipate over 25,000 costumed revelers to gather on Wilton Drive.

The Pride Center once again will partner with The City of Wilton Manors to create the largest Halloween Street Festival event of the year. This epic, entertaining block party will occur on Halloween, Friday, October 31, 2014 starting at 7:00 PM until Midnight.

Traffic will be prohibited in order to provide a safe area for guests to celebrate and get their freak on. Local restaurants, bars and food trucks will provide food and beverages for purchase.

"Think Circus Sideshow meets Halloween Street Festival and you've got FREAK SHOW," said Doug Cureton, Wicked Manors Chair. "We promise that this year's festivities will be bigger, better and freakier than ever before. From the moment you arrive on Wilton Drive, you

will be transported to a magically freakish celebration with over-the-top costumes, décor, music, flash mobs and costume contests with our main stage Diva Emcee -- Miss Misty Eyez."

Event guru, Bobby Kyser of Panache Style is "freaking" out his event design as well. "We are planning to create circus-freak-style entrances and a surprise stage set that will freak-out even the freakiest freaks," says Kyser, co-founder of Wicked Manors. "Get ready for the best year ever." year ever."

We are happy to announce that The Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau has already signed on as our first major sponsor and is promoting Wicked Manors throughout the country to attract visitors to this amazing event. They are helping us by creating a nationally recognized destination event.

If you would like more information on the event, sponsorship levels and/or the payment plans, please contact Doug Cureton, Wicked Manors Chair at WickedManors@PrideCenterFlorida.org or Roger Roa, Director of Development at RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org. All proceeds from Wicked Manors will benefit the vital programs and services of The Pride Center.

Did you know?

+Our CouplesSpeak program builds relationship skills, improves communication, lowers risks, and enhances sex

+Over 100 people play Bingo at The Pride Center on the second Saturday evening and fourth Sunday afternoon of every month.

+We've provided HIV prevention outreach to more than 7,500 individuals already this year

THE SMART RIDE 11
Southern Most AIDS/HIV Ride Twenty-Fourteen
MIAMI TO KEY WEST • NOV. 14-15, 2014

MIAMI Key West
MILE 0
KEY WEST

Giving back 100% of the money raised, 100% of the time. Join Us for the Eleventh Ride to Help the Fight Against HIV/AIDS from Miami to Key West, 165 Miles, 2 Days; Ride/Crew/Sponsor/Donate; visit TheSMARTRide.org or call 1-866-696-7701. Registration is \$95 & every rider commits to raise a minimum of \$1250 to ride.

FedEx, macy's, Lifeway, Inc., COMMERCARE PHARMACY, TARGET, abbvie, DARDEN, MERCK, BROWARD HEALTH, Hotspots media group, SFGN, HIMI-Miami.com

SMART Ride Official
Register Today at TheSMARTRide.org

TSR Adventures Inc. dba The SMART Ride is a 501(c) not for profit organization. A copy of SMART Rides official charitable registration and financial information may be obtained from the Department of Consumer Services by calling toll free in Florida 1-800-435-7352. Federal Tax ID: 45-1442103.

The Grindr Guy

Leon Uses Marketing and Social Media to Improve Lives

During his interview for his new job as Electronic Media and Marketing Coordinator, Manuel Leon was asked for the best example of his ability to market or do good advertising. His response? "I convinced my boyfriend to date me."

He laughs now remembering his response. "Sometimes people think I'm reserved when they first meet me," he confesses. "But I want to help people. I want to improve their lives. That's my ultimate goal."

Manuel's desire to get involved in the LGBT community and use his training and talents to help people led him to The Pride Center. He previously worked as the Communication Specialist at WorkForce One. A graphic designer, Manuel graduated from The Art Institute in Fort Lauderdale. He previously studied at the University of the Andes and Armando Reveron Art Academy in Venezuela. He now manages The Center's day-to-day electronic media presence and content, including social media platforms and electronic communication.

"I felt I wasn't doing enough," he says. "I struggled with my family when I came out--when I had to tell my parents. I live here now. I'm away from the rest of my family like my grandparents. They still don't know.

For some reason I'm nervous to tell them. I don't want others to have to struggle.

"Others have had worse challenges," he continues. "They've been kicked out on the streets. They don't have a supportive partner or job. If my struggles affected me that much being that small, I can't imagine how big challenges might have impacted others. If I struggled from just a tiny bit of ignorance, what about people who have to deal with so much more ignorance for being gay?"

Manuel now conducts and coordinates The Center's targeted internet and app-based HIV prevention outreach. He will spearhead The Center's ongoing HIV-prevention marketing campaigns in collaboration with the Florida Health Department in Broward County.

"I think social media is such a powerful tool in HIV prevention," says Manuel. "Dating has completely changed because of social media. It's a huge platform to help stop the spread of HIV. We can see amazing results. With dating apps, we can directly engage with folks who are looking for a hook-up, who may have questions, who need to access medical care. I can send a shout through an application like Growlr and thousands of people can hear a message from us. I don't



have to go door to door preaching out HIV testing or wearing a condom. I can begin important conversations at the touch of my fingers."

"People can be much more open in writing online than face to face," says Manuel. "People are very honest. I've been told such open stories through the apps--sometimes sad, sometimes funny. They can maintain a bit of anonymity. They can talk to me and ask questions. They have no holds barred. They ask the craziest questions. They share their entire story. I can see their true selves when they're texting or writing about a need."

In a few short weeks, Manuel has come to value the environment and culture of The Pride Center. "Over and over in my first days, I heard so many say, 'we are a family,'" he says. "There is so much support from staff to each another. People do their work better. People come to work happy, they like what they do."

He's also learning daily how diverse is the community in which he serves. "It's not that I didn't accept everyone or judged anyone before, but when I started working here I quickly was surrounded by so many types of people that I knew existed but I didn't interact with regularly," says Manuel. "I suddenly was interacting with such diverse people. It was a quick reminder of my own ignorance in some ways. I wanted to overcome that feeling. Within days I felt comfortable talking to so many."

Manuel says he wants to learn all he can in his new role--professionally, personally, relationally. "One of the reasons I was excited to get involved at The Center was I wanted to find people that have the same interests as me," says Manuel. "I want to build long lasting, true, real friendships. Will I be able? I guess I'll find out."

Tools for School

The Pride Center and GLBX once again hosted a successful kick-off to the annual Back to School Supply Drive. Each year, The Pride Center organizes diverse groups for school supply, food and holiday toy drives. Broward Education Foundation reports that our coalition of LGBT organizations provides more school supplies annually for local classrooms than any other group.



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John C. Graves Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation of Broward

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Vision 2015 charts the course for The Pride Center to be mortgage-free on our 5.5 acre Equality Park campus. We seek 1,000 donors who will contribute \$1,000 annually. To join Vision 2015, contact Roger Roa at RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org

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Connect with Your Community

How I Met My Friends

What SMART Ride means to me

By Cheryl Bennett

A little over a year ago, I had only lived in South Florida for five weeks or so. At that point, I knew no one. I always had enjoyed cycling and had heard about this charity ride I thought I would like to do.

There was a casual Meet and Greet one afternoon at someone's house. His name was Chris Caputo. I didn't know it at the time, but he would become the first friend I made here.

I was terrified of walking into a room of people I didn't know, but I forced myself to go. Every cell in my body was rebelling against me as I walked up to the door. Just as I approached, Chris opened the door for the pizza delivery guy and yelled, "Hey! I guess you are here for the ride. And with that sentence, I was welcomed inside.

I remember sitting at Chris's table, talking to his friends Kevin and Drew. I must have looked terrified because they were so sweet to me, and I have never forgotten that. I honestly figured that after the ride, I'd never see them again. Boy, did I get that one wrong.

I committed to do this shorter ride called Bike It For Life. As soon as the ride was over, we were sitting inside The Pride Center and Chris saunters up to me and says (ever so nonchalantly), "So, you want to do SMART Ride?" I looked at him like he had lost his mind. I could never in my wildest dreams ride 165 miles to Key West. I wanted to, but I didn't think I was physically capable of doing it. If you know Chris, he doesn't give up that easily. Fast forward a few months and guess who is signed up for SMART Ride? Yep, this kid.

At one of our Pride Pack meetings at The Center, I met

this girl who is also from Brooklyn. She comes up to me and says: "I like you, we're gonna be friends." Just like that; and we are. It still makes me laugh to this day, but those meetings are where you talk to the people on your team and get to know each other. I found myself sitting with Robert and Joe at many of them. That is essentially how our friendship came to be: just sitting next to each other, laughing and talking at Pride Pack meetings.

On one of our training rides, I was riding beside Kristofer. We were talking about making ice cream and all of the flavors we wanted to create that summer. I was full of questions about SMART Ride and concerns about whether or not I could actually do it. He wanted me to meet this pastor; he felt she could be a good sounding board for me. He had no idea, or maybe he did. LT (Pastor Leslie) has become one of my closest friends, and I spent the better part of the two day ride from Miami to Key West with her. Those moments riding together, especially Card Sound Road, cemented what is now a wonderful friendship.

Even after training for months for SMART Ride, I felt overwhelmed by the distance. One of the guys said to me, "Think of it as a series of 20 mile increments. You only have to get from this 20 miles to the next 20 miles." Believe it or not, that made a huge difference in my mindset. It no longer seemed insurmountable.

It's funny to look back at that moment when you first meet the people who now form such a big part of your life. I never imagined that this group would capture my heart, become some of the most important people in the world to me and change my life forever.

My cycling group is more than just the people I ride with. We have spent hours upon hours on the road together, training together, changing flats together, laughing together, teasing each other, sharing our nutrition bars and hanging out together after rides. I absolutely adore them.

Being a part of our Pride Pack team for SMART Ride has changed me in ways that are hard to explain. It has been one of the most challenging and rewarding things I've ever done. You will go into it thinking you want to do something good for someone else and you ARE, but what you don't realize is that what you get out of it is exponentially more than you gave. The bonds that are made with your team, the people you will meet during this experience, the camaraderie, the love and support you get from each other is immeasurable.



The experience of SMART Ride has been a precious gift. It gave me the gift of my friends, who are so much more than that--they are my family. It gave me a personal challenge to meet head on and overcome with confidence, and it gave me the gift of being able to do good for others.

Thank you SMART Ride; thank you (SR Founder) Glen Weinzimer; thank you Pride Center; and thank you to my friends, without whom I never would've made the journey.

SMART Ride 11 is a 165 mile bike ride from Miami to Key West on November 21-22. 100% of the funds raised go to direct HIV services at seven agencies across Florida, including The Pride Center. For more information on riding, crewing or donating, please visit www.TheSMARTRide.org

Did you know?

+We will host more than 3,000 group meetings at The Pride Center this year

+The Pride Center spearheaded a local initiative to create a tri-county LBT Women's Health Directory with over 300 culturally-competent healthcare providers

+Over 180 people attended our last Founders Circle reception. Founders donate at least \$100 monthly to support our vital programs and services.

Have you used your I AM PRIDE Community Discount Card?

By Bryon Bowlby

From Coral Gables to Boca Raton and all over Wilton Manors, colorful signs are showing up. "I AM PRIDE Community Discount Card Proudly Accepted Here" appears in businesses ranging from pet sitting to hotels, restaurants to hair salons.

Here's what one of our members says about her I AM PRIDE card. "I love my I AM PRIDE Card because it gives me great discounts at many of my favorite business," says Julia, member since 2011. "Not only does my membership support The Pride Center but I'm saving money too! What could be better than that?"

Businesses, too, see the rewards and benefits of the I AM PRIDE card. "We are glad to be involved with The Pride Center, says Nicki Rose, owner of Java Boys. "We are more than happy to help support the LGBTQ community. Please come by and use your 'I

AM PRIDE' card and receive 10% off on our coffees". Java Boys is located in the Shoppes of Wilton Manors.

Since its inception last August, The Pride Center has issued almost 1,000 I AM PRIDE cards. Anyone that joins The Pride Center as a paid member receives the card. Memberships are an integral part of the funding for the many essential programs and services provided by The Pride Center to our community.

It costs businesses nothing to participate in the "I AM PRIDE" Discount Program. The program is intended to promote local businesses, help increase sales and traffic, as well as adding extra benefits to members of The Center. A complete list of participating businesses can be located on The Pride Center website, www.PrideCenterFlorida.org.

If you are a business owner or manager and would like to learn more about this program contact Roger Roa,

Director of Development, at (954) 463-9005 ext. 105 or WomenWithPride@PrideCenterFlorida.org. To learn more about becoming a Member and receiving your own I AM PRIDE card, contact us today!



Dunham Gift to Women with Pride

Chris Dunham recently gave \$5000 to The Pride Center's Women with Pride program. Women with Pride helps provide local LBTQ women and their allies with the health information, education, social support, connection, recreational opportunities and linkage services they deserve. To learn more about Women with Pride, contact Roya at 954.463.9005.

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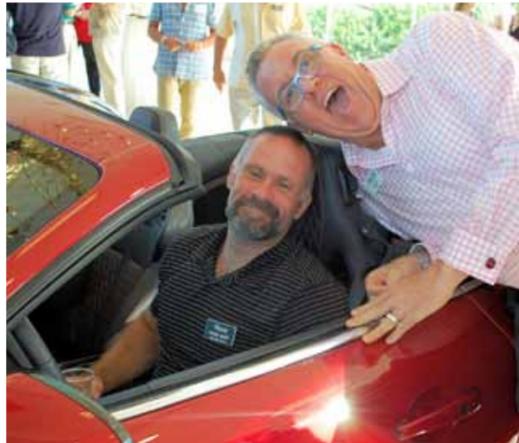
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Founders Circle Reception at Alpine Jaguar

Alpine Jaguar hosted and sponsored a recent Founders Reception in their stunning showroom surrounded by sleek automobiles. Funds donated by Founders Circle underwrite life-enhancing programs and services to the community. To learn more about Founders, contact Roger Roa at RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org
Photos by Stephen Lang



"Sharing Our Stories" Trans Ed Event

Our collaborative community transgender educational series recently hosted an inspiring evening exploring "The Power of Our Histories" with Dr. Jean Rich. To learn more about trans services, contact Bishop S.F. Makalani-Mahee at 954.463.9005.



New Monthly Sunday Bingo

The Pride Center recently launched an additional monthly Bingo event on the fourth Sunday afternoons. We continue to provide Bingo the second Saturday night of each month. To learn more about Bingo, contact Janet at 954.463.9005.



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Did you know?

- +The Pride Center designed a powerful anti-HIV-stigma campaign in conjunction with the Department of Health that is running on Broward County public buses
- +Our Women with Pride program hosts a monthly book club
- + Our Women with Pride program hosts regular holistic health seminars as part of our Vital Signs series.
- +The Pride Center's Healthcare Navigator links people daily to vital medical care

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Spotlight:

Getting to Know an HIV Testing Counselor

By Listron Mannix



RJ Hadley

Occupation:
Green Hopper Driver

Born: December 13, 1962

Hobbies:
cycling and sharing an upbeat affirming message outlook on life

A community center couldn't exist without the vital role that volunteers play each day. Ten years ago when I became a Center volunteer, I recall feeling important and knowing what I was doing was making a difference. "This still rings true today."

This testing volunteer not only stands out because he is a Pride Center Volunteer, but he is a community activist. RJ was born in La Grange, IL in the same town where his father was born. It's still the hometown of his mother and two brothers.

RJ's desire to help was clear during his time employed at the MCC Church. He engaged with many LGBT people in the congregation who were living with HIV. "I felt a sense of both urgency and care for marginalized people," says RJ. "That was the turning point. I knew that I'd help in any way I could."

RJ shares about his first involvement as an HIV Tester: "When Howard Brown Health Center put out a call for HIV testers I responded. The job was part time with a focus on men who went to bathhouses. I had the opportunity to meet some fascinating people and heard all sorts of life stories from them."

After moving to Fort Lauderdale, RJ quickly found an organization where he

could continue to utilize his talents. "Now at The Pride Center, I am currently assigned the day shift on Fridays and I am able to meet people from diverse populations," he says. "We talk; I listen. It's those connections that make being a tester at The Pride Center worthwhile".

In addition to being an HIV Tester, RJ is currently enrolled in graduate school. Fulfilling the promise he made to himself to help people, he also manages and drives The Hopper, a free area shuttle service in Wilton Manors.

To combine his hobby with his passion, RJ has been involved with The SMART Ride for the past four years crewing, cycling and raising money. He rides with The Center's Pride Pack team. "Since I'll be riding in the SMART Ride again this year, a portion of my Hopper tips goes to my cause, RJ shares with a big smile. "I'm rider #199."

"From delivering newspapers to being a police officer, I can honestly say I've worked hard all my life, and yet I've never really worked a day in my life," says RJ. "I enjoyed it all. I will continue to be activist. I've ridden my bicycle across Alaska. I've worked in rural Kenya. I still dream of doing more to help others."

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