

LGBT News

The LGBT Resource Center for the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.

November 2011

Rosanne's Ramblings

Happy November! The cool, crisp air of winter is dancing just around the corner and waiting to shift us from Autumn to her reign of the land. For many of us, November serves as a time to reflect on our blessings and those we hold dear, as well as simply enjoying being among friends and family as we celebrate a holiday of over-indulgence and deliciousness; for those of us that are fortunate to experience it that way we are truly blessed. But, there are many others who see the holiday as reminder of our nation's genocidal history and do not celebrate Thanksgiving. And others still who fear familial holidays and the closeness of people who do not accept them, truly know them, and/or may feel free to make dismissive statements about their identity and very core of their being. Holidays are a mixed bag for all of us, for many reasons, so when you are making plans or simply getting through November 24, this year remember there are many nameless others having similar experiences and send some positive energy out in to the universe to help us all have a truly blessed day, however we choose to celebrate it.

Be authentic, be you, be happy, and enjoy all that you are-for each and every one of us is a one of a kind miracle.

Belief & peace,

Rosanne

GLEND A Monthly Meeting Change:

Starting this month, GLEND A will be meeting on the 3rd Friday of every month, starting at 7 pm. Anyone dealing with addiction and looking for support is encouraged to come out and give GLEND A a try. Please feel free to share this opportunity with others who would benefit.

Thank You!

Thank you to Dan and Rich for our new beautiful piece of furniture, a lovely shelving unit with a cherry wood desk top. It is the newest addition to our Center since the move.

Annual Center Garage Sale

We are still looking to partner with a new home with a garage for our annual garage sale. Typically, this sale has occurred in August, but it was decided by the many wonderful volunteers that have fueled this sale for several years to move the sale to spring and that it was time to find a new host home. If you are willing to discuss the possibility of donating your garage for a week in the spring to help the Center have the annual garage sale, please call Rosanne at 608-784-0452.

Huge thanks go to all the wonderful people who have put much time, effort, energy, and love in to making the annual garage sale a successful fundraiser for the Center!!!



The Life Care Community. It's one option and why I am grateful.

by Christina Mae Olson, CFP®

What will life be like when your parents become too frail, ill, disabled, or otherwise incompetent and unable to take care of themselves? Growing old is a fact of life. The time will come when mom and dad will need help with the tasks of simple daily living. I have heard it all too many times, “My wife will take care of me,” or “I plan to die in this house,” or “Under no circumstances will I go into a nursing home,” or “I’ll kill myself before needing that kind of help.” I’ve also heard the children step up and offer to take care of their parents, not really knowing or appreciating the full meaning of that loving offer. This article is not about growing old as an LGBT person—it’s about LGBT people taking care of their aging and frail parents. Parents: take care to try and understand the dilemma your children face when you can’t care for yourselves anymore. (*I’ll write about our own aging predicament in a future issue.*) Families: please have this discussion years in advance of when you need to act. You will be so much better off if you plan this ahead of time. Where will your mother and father live when they can’t live independently anymore? Who will take care of them? Who will pay for it? Who will make the decisions if they can’t do it for themselves? Do they have the answers to these questions? You should ask.

Many middle aged LGBT Americans are “in charge” of their parents. One research paper notes that 3.6 million aging parents were living with their adult children in 2007—up from 2.3 million in 2003. An overwhelming majority of adult caregivers are LGBT children. According to the Family Caregiver Alliance (www.caregiver.org), ¼ of American households are caring for friends or relatives age 50+. This is unpaid physical care and financial support for loved ones who are frail, disabled or chronically ill. Taking care of just one parent in your home can be costly even if you do the lion’s share

of work yourself. Adult children caring for their parents in their own homes still pay for in-home care assistance. In Wisconsin this care costs an average of over \$25/hour or \$160/day. LGBT adult children who are not married, in the conventional sense, are often the “obvious” choice to take care of the parents. After all, the other siblings have their families to care for. LGBT adults are often viewed as having fewer responsibilities than their heterosexual brothers and sisters.

Skilled nursing care averages \$87,000/annually in Wisconsin for a private room in a nursing home. If you have 24 hour skilled nursing care in your home for a parent this will cost you over \$60,000/annually. It is expensive, not to mention physically and emotionally draining, to care for someone in your home. If you and your family decide that your parents will not be moving in with you when they can't live alone anymore—please urge them to consider the Life Care community option. I am so grateful that my mother made the decision a long time ago to live out her years in a Life Care community.

My mother gave my brother and me a huge gift when she decided to plan her own life—up to and including her death. She decided on her own to give up driving. She decided on her own when it was time to stop traveling. No, she hasn't died but she has arranged for the disposition of her own body when she does die—after her body is examined by the University of Iowa Medical Research Centers. When one is 98 and still ticking, one is considered a modern medical wonder. She never wanted us to care for her in our homes and while we might have been honored to do so, she orchestrated her life in other ways. I'm not sure why she saw the need to do this. Mom took care of her own mother in our home up until the day she died. She also cared for my father's frail parents in our home until their death. Her father died in a VA nursing home.

When Mom was 76 she toured several Life Care retirement communities in her home town. She picked Friendship Village and paid \$100 to go on their waiting list. They asked her several times if she was ready to move in and it took her 10 years (age 86) to say, “Yes, I'm ready.” Friendship Village is one of hundreds of “Life Care” communities in the US. When you move in, you not only “buy” your own apartment but you “buy” all future care you will ever need; no matter what the future cost may be! The purchase price was tax-deductible as a medical expense (long term care premium). Her monthly fees for meals, utilities, transportation, recreation, etc. are also deductible as long term care expenses. This fee is well within her ability to pay with her small pension and social security checks. She paid a lump sum for a one-bedroom apartment. Children can chip in for the initial cost of a Life Care “buy in.” These communities have an entire continuum of residential options, depending on one's particular situation. Mom later upgraded to a 2-bedroom apartment. She was able to remain there 12 years. She will

never have to pay another dime for her care now that the time has come for her to need it.

My mother fell in her apartment in August. She lost her balance putting on a jacket, fell backward, and crashed sideways onto a bedpost. She broke 4 ribs and punctured a lung. The nurse called me an hour before Michelle and I were planning to leave for this year's Pride Along the Mississippi. They've called twice before when they had to take Mom to the hospital (both times prior were to stabilize her blood pressure). Those calls always churn up a haunting, lingering feeling in my stomach. Of course, I always fear that they'll be calling to tell me she is dying. Friendship Village has been there for mom since she moved in—in whatever way she needs at any particular time in her life. I left for Friendship Village that day and spent the better part of the next month helping her in her recovery from the fall. I helped in every way EXCEPT for her medical and home health care needs.

It has been such a huge source of relief and comfort to know that Mom is being cared for. She spent a week in the hospital before transitioning to temporary skilled nursing (at Friendship Village) as she recovered from her fall. During this time she made the decision that she would not/could not move back into her apartment. She moved to Lakeview Lodge (the assisted living component at Friendship Village). We had month to clean out her place for the next resident. Friendship Village has a very long waiting list! Michelle and I packed up her apartment and shipped many things to my brother that she couldn't take with her. We boxed up family heirlooms for various relatives. We had some items shipped to our place. We donated quite a bit to local social service agencies. Each time Mom has transitioned to a new home, over the years, we reminisce about our lives. All of her things have special stories attached - which she loves to tell. I love hearing those stories—when she is gone the story telling will die with her.

Mom is very happy now. She feels much safer and more secure than she did in her apartment. Help is right there if she needs it. We participate in her life in a very meaningful way. We visit frequently. I take her to some of her medical appointments. Friendship Village takes her if I cannot. As her power of attorney, I help her pay her bills. I help her make many big decisions. I'm so happy that I don't have to change her sheets or bathe her. I'm so happy that I don't have to learn how to insert or remove a catheter. We are all so happy not to have to worry about whether or not she is getting her medicine on time. She is just as happy as we are that we don't have to be the ones taking her to the bathroom. We are very involved in her life and are so grateful that we can be the loving family and not the primary care giver. And, I know that if/when she falls again—or something else happens—she'll have competent and professional help at a moment's notice. She won't fall in our home. This is very comforting to me.

When you think about what life will be like when your parents cannot live in their own home—please consider the Life Care community. Parents—you owe it to your family to plan now for that day. What will you do when you can't care for yourself anymore? The Life Care community isn't right for everyone but it is certainly one very good option. Here are some links to useful resources:

http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/print_friendl.jsp?nodeid=632 (for LGBT caregivers)

<http://www.seniorhomes.com/p/life-care-communities/>

<http://www.eldernet.com/options/lifecare.htm>

<http://search.seniorlivingfinder.org/?mkwid=skaifFH8Q&pcrid=8219909292&gclid=CLDFivTZk6wCFUqFQAodp3bVpw>

Chris Olson is a licensed financial planner with a fee-only practice. You can reach her at CMoney@centurytel.net or 608-525-9818.

SAVE the DATES 2012:

Annual Meeting and Board Elections January, 2012, specific date not set

For the Love of Art, Silent and Live Art Auction, Friday, February 10, at Days Inn, French Island

Pride Along the Mississippi, Saturday, August 25

Silent Rally for Equality, Saturday, October 20, Cameron Park, meet up at 11:30 a.m. then head off to span bridge from 12-12:30 p.m.

Coming Out For Equality Gala Dinner, Saturday, October 20, Days Inn Ballroom, French Island

Families Like Mine

All families are invited to attend our first family-focused fun event on Saturday, November 19, 11:00 a.m. at the Center (309 Pearl Street). We will share a story, enjoy cookies and milk, and make a Pride Turkey. Come join us and meet other families just like yours. Please RSVP Rosanne at 608-784-0452 or r.st.sauver@7riverslgbt.org Please share with other LGBTQ parents.

Rainbow Feast

Please join us for a potluck Rainbow Family Dinner on Tuesday, November 22, starting at 6:00 p.m. I will make the turkey and stuffing. Please RSVP the number of guests and what potluck item you will be bringing. Even if

you are unable to contribute to the potluck, please join us to celebrate grace in our lives and enjoy one another's company. Plates, plastic ware, and cups will be provided.

Upcoming Events

Check the Center's [calendar](#) for more information about upcoming and monthly events.

Ongoing Center Activities

Weekly Activities

Coffee & Conversation

When: Every Wednesday, 1-2 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse
Ages 18+. Folks looking to find community, connection, and support. No conversation is too big or too small; join us for an afternoon get together. You will be glad you did!

GALAXY, a group for youth ages 13-20

When: Every Tuesday 4-6 p.m. and every Saturday 2-4 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

LGBTQ Parents Group

When: Not currently meeting. Call the Center to restart this group.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

Drop-in Group

When: Every Thursday 6-8 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

Bi-weekly Activities

GLENDAA/AA Group

When: Third Friday at 7 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

Just as Glenda was Dorothy's support in OZ this group is the equivalent for LGBT people struggling with drug & alcohol addictions and issues. If you are looking for support and a safe place to be yourself as you deal with your drug & alcohol issues- please join us. For more information please contact Aaron at 608-788-1508.

Monthly Activities

PGLAG

For more information call the Seven Rivers LGBT Resource Center at 608-784-0452, or Lori at 608-790-5052.

L.I.F.E.

When: First Monday, 6 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse
Ages 18+. Work with others to become stewards of change.

Gender Queer/Transgender Gathering

When: First Wednesday 7-8 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

Do you identify as gender queer? How about Transgender? Do you ever feel like you don't fit in because of your gender identity or expression? Then come to a monthly discussion group at the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center. Genderqueer - A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. This person may want to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.

Transgender - A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex.

GNO (Guy's Night Out)

GNO will meet the fourth Friday of every month at the Center from 6-8 p.m. All male identified persons are welcome.

HIV/AIDS Get-Togethers

Meets every fourth Saturday, 11:00 a.m. at 309 Pearl Street. All persons living with HIV/AIDS are welcome to attend.

Gay Friendly Professional Network

Meets the first Thursday, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Call the Center to find out where we will meet.



In Closing

Thanks for reading! If you have any comments or anything you'd like to add to an upcoming newsletter, please e-mail us at:

7riverslgbtnewsletter@gmail.com.