



A message from your 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

together.

www.7riversLGBTQ.org

December 2014

A few things you'll find in this month's newsletter

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From the Desk of the Executive Director: Jackson's Corner

The Center's Dedicated Full-Time Focus

I am pleased to announce that as of November 1, 2014, I officially became The Center's full-time Executive Director. I was excited to accept the board's invitation to transition my role to a full time one allowing me to leave my day job and have 100% professional focus on The Center's needs and future.

We have amazing opportunities and goals we want to achieve in 2015. My ability to dedicate all my time to these goals brings me great joy professionally. I hope we'll also see this focus translate to greater strides in shorter time on the large goals below. A few of these announcements we will elaborate in this and coming newsletters.

- La Crosse Foundation Matching Grant Opportunity
- Develop a comprehensive business directory
- LGBTQ Summits
- Elder Network trainings
- InQueery learning and development opportunities
- Communication changes, additions and improvements
- Development of more social opportunities



Jackson dressed as "Pride Explodes" for the Halloween Gala welcoming everyone.

Halloween Gala

We held this year's Gala on Halloween at the Concordia Ballroom. We had a little bit of everything for everyone hosting a dinner and raffle early in the evening before opening the doors to any who wanted to join for a dance.

Special thanks to Cake Quake Custom Cakery for the cake donation, Photography Without Borders and Ellickson Photography for donating their photography services.



Post Dinner fun



This lovely cake was donated by Cake Quake Custom Cakery. Many thanks to them for helping us weave recent marriage equality with our Halloween theme.



Tarot Readings Special thanks to Willow Center for Renewal

Right and below: Dance floor comes alive





Photo: Bob Good

\$34,800 Matching Grant in 2015!

The La Crosse Foundation Provides The Center a Matching Grant Opportunity

We are elated to announce an opportunity the La Crosse Foundation has provided The Center for 2015.

The La Crosse Foundation notified us of a unique opportunity. The Bridge Builder Grant is a grant we've received a number of times during our history. We learned this year they are giving us the opportunity to convert it to a dedicated foundation account. They will give us now through 2015 to raise matching funds toward this effort. This is a dollar for dollar match up to \$34,800 with a yearly 4.5% return of all money raised helping the center on a yearly basis.

We are sending letters to past supporters on how to become a supporter for 2015 to help current operation needs as well as an option for helping us with this grant drive. If you don't receive a letter in the next week and would like more information, please email Jackson directly at ExecutiveDirector@7RiversLGBTQ.org or call The Center at 608-784-0452.

2015 Sponsorships

The matching grant is an amazing opportunity for our future, however we need your help with our work in 2015. Everything we do is made possible through your generosity. Your yearly individual or business sponsorship commitment allows us a financial base to make a difference in the lives of many LGBTQ people, family and allies. If you have not already, please consider a 2015 Sponsorship. You can donate online or by downloading a form on our website <http://7riverslgbtq.org/get-involved/individual-memberships/> and mailing it in. Thank you!

Financial Corner with Chris Olson

JUST A LITTLE BIT GOES A LONG WAY

By Christina Mae Olson, CFP®

Every single day I tell at least one person, “You can live on less than you earn.” YOU CAN! You have to find a way to hold back just a tiny bit of money from every paycheck. The only way you can get ahead is by living on less than you earn. You can pay down your debt with that extra money. You can save for a big ticket item you’ve always wanted. You can save for a future goal like college tuition or a home purchase. It’s always better (read: cheaper) to save the \$\$ and pay cash for something than to borrow money (including on a credit card) and later have to pay it back with interest. The interest charges often amount to more than the original purchase if it takes you a long time to pay off the debt.

You can also save for your own retirement with that little bit you hold back each pay period. If you save in an employer plan (401k, 403b, 457) or a Traditional IRA then you’ll also be able to reduce your income tax bill in the process! A double benefit!!

Start small. Can you save 5% of each paycheck? If you make \$10.00/hour then 5% is about \$40.00/month. \$15.00/hour earners would save around \$60/month. If you earn a \$30,000/year salary then 5% equates to about \$125/month. \$75,000/year savings at 5% equals about \$313/month. Can you do at least that much?

A little money every month adds up over time. If you can save \$100/month for 35 years then you’d likely have a nice little nest egg worth over \$231,000! A 30 year-old who wants to retire at age 65 can do this. Do your own

calculation at Bankrate.com: <http://www.bankrate.com/calculators/savings/simple-savings-calculator.aspx>. I used an 8% rate of return, the average annual return of a diversified stock and bond mutual fund account over all 35 year time periods in the history of the market. Vanguard’s balanced stock/bond Wellington fund (ticker: VWELX) started in 1929 and has earned an average annual return of 8.31% since then.

According to the US Census Bureau the median age of the US labor force is 35. The value of the average 35 year old worker’s 401k was \$101,000 in 2013. Is your retirement savings worth that much? Is it worth more?

YOU WILL NEED A STASH OF SAVINGS WHEN YOU RETIRE. Yes, I’m yelling. Social Security benefits won’t even replace ½ of your income – if you are lucky enough to even get Social Security when you quit working. If you start saving now you will have money to live on when you stop working.

Are you already saving? Bravo!! You have figured out how to “live beneath your means.” You have little or no debt. You are watching your savings balance swell each month and I bet you feel pretty good about it. To you savers: I challenge you to INCREASE your current savings by 5%. YOU CAN. There is always room to save more. You’ll be glad you did it.

Chris Olson is a Certified Financial Planner™ Practitioner with a fee-only practice. She has been helping people get their financial lives in order since 1993. She saves 15% of every dollar she earns. You can reach her at CMoney@centurytel.net or 608-525-9818. Please contact her with topic ideas for future newsletter columns.

Meet Blythe Newburg!



In this space, we are going to continue introducing you to all the board members; volunteers and interns that help us make our work a reality.

1. What is your position on the board and what else do you do for The Center? How long have you been involved in The Center?

My position on the board is President, but I really share most of my responsibilities with the Executive Committee. When I was elected, it was very important to me to have a strong collaboration between board members and our executive director. I've been involved with the Center Board on a regular basis since October of 2012, but I attended GALAXY for a while when I was younger.

2. Why did you join The Center, get involved and join the board?

I joined because I had always felt a strong connection to the LGBTQQIAA Community in the other cities in which I lived, (Winona and Mankato, MN) but I never felt a real connection to the community in my hometown. I decided it was time to change that, so I volunteered for the Board. I continue to be involved because I think we are slowly creating great change in the 7 Rivers Region and I'm proud to be a small part of that. Also, I've made some great friendships.

3. How has The Center and your involvement effected you?

Being involved with the Center has affected me in many ways. I co-facilitate the GALAXY Youth Program, and getting to know our youth has been super rewarding. I've learned so much from them, and I try to teach them things too. It's important to me that local LGBTQQIAA youth have someone safe to count on. Alesha and I really try to have a positive influence on the youth, keep them informed on issues that impact them as young members of our community, and guide them to make healthy choices. We try to have some fun too. Being involved with GALAXY is a very fun challenge that has impacted me greatly. But also, being a member of the board has taught me a lot about leadership, business, and finance, and that's experience I never would have gotten anywhere else. So I've been very grateful for my time

4. What is your vision for The Center and the LGBTQ+ community?

I hope that The Center continues to grow and flourish, and I know it will under Jackson's leadership. I hope that The Center touches more lives in positive ways, the way it has touched my life. I hope more youth get involved, and we can grow our programming for them and other people who come to the Center to learn and have fun. I hope we continue to partner with other agencies in La Crosse and grow our network of LGBT and allied professionals through our Business Directory so new community members can feel.

5. Anything else you would like to share?

I've really loved my time at The Center and I hope to have more years of involvement! I look forward to everything that is come for the Center and our community.

New Group Announcements!

EmbrACE (Asexual Support/Social group) **NEW Group!!**

EmbrACE is a new group we are starting for individuals who identify as Asexual. The group will meet the 2nd Monday of each month from 6-8pm at The Center. If you'd like more information, please email us at ExecutiveDirector@7RiversLGBTQ.org.

Regularly Scheduled Groups-

Support

Galaxy (Ages 13-20) every Thursday from 6-8pm

Andromeda (Ages 18-25) Every other Thursday (10/2 & 16) at 4:30

Transgender Support – 2nd and 4th Saturdays at 12:00pm

PANDA – (Parents and Allies) 1st Monday of the month 6:00 – 8:00pm

EmbrACE – (Asexual) 2nd Monday of the month 6:00 – 8:00pm

Social / Drop-in

Mindfulness and Meditation – Saturdays at 11am

Gay Friendly Professional Network (GFPN) – We're taking December off so you can enjoy your holiday parties! See you again the 3rd Wednesday in January from 5-7pm at the Pump House Regional Arts Center.

Special Events-

Domestic Violence Discussion and Training – December 9 at 5:00pm at The Center – Diverse and Resilient Representatives are coming to the center to facilitate a discussion and training related to domestic violence in the LGBTQ community with an emphasis on college age community members.

Red Kettle Support – 12/10 4:00 – 6:00

The Center has worked with the local Salvation Army the last year regarding their desire to continue being an inclusive organization to our community in need. We've committed to help them with their Red Kettle Campaign and will be ringing the bell in the food court of the Mall on 12/10 from 4:00-6:00pm. All money collected during this time will go strictly to support services and not to church elements.

Bake Sale – Saturday December 13 from 11:00 – 4:00pm

A few volunteers and board members whose help has been critical to our organization the last year introduced us to a family struggling right now. Jake Hallam is a 35 year old father of 4 who was recently diagnosed with a form of brain cancer. This has put the family into a financial tailspin and we wanted to help. Join us on Saturday September 13 from 11 to 4pm for a bake sale and silent auction. All proceeds go to the family.

Holiday Open House – Monday December 15 from 6:00 to 8:00pm

It's the holidays and a great excuse to throw an open house party! Join us at The Center for refreshments, hot beverages and connect with some great people. All welcome!

**The Center's hours around the holidays will be limited to allow staff, volunteers and interns time with their families. Please see website calendar for most up to date hours.

Need a special Christmas,
Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or
Solstice Gift?!

Check out The Center Store!

We have all kinds of shirts, hoodies, bags and other cool stuff at the store. You can check out the new store by going to this web address, <http://7riversLGBTQ.org/store/>.

How you can help!

The Center and the services it provides is made possible through the generosity of individuals and businesses in our community. What we accomplish wouldn't be possible without supporters like you. There are a variety of ways to get involved either through donating time, skills or financial resources. If you would like to learn more about our work and how to support us, please visit our website –

www.7riverslgbtq.org

To learn more about how to get involved, please visit us at:

<http://7riverslgbtq.org/get-involved/>

Interested in supporting
businesses that support
your community?!

Check out our business
directory!

This business directory is new and list only local businesses that support the work, mission and vision of The Center. It's a great resource for new residents, tourists and community members who want to spend their money consciously.

Please check out our business directory when possible and use the businesses on that directory. Let them know you found and chose them through The Center's website.

We could also use your help in developing the directory. If you have a favorite business not in the directory you believe to support the community, please encourage them to join the center for a listing in the directory. Sometimes it's important for businesses to hear from their customers they appreciate supporting businesses that support equality and the LGBTQ community.

Special thanks to recent additions to the directory:

- Viroqua Food Cooperative
- Willows Center for Renewal
- Carol Ebert, Usana Health Sciences

What are your PGP's?

By Will Van Roosenbeek

PGP's are personal gender pronouns. Instead of assuming someone's pronouns people are introducing themselves and informing others about their pronouns. For example when introducing myself in a group I say "I am Will Van Roosenbeek and I use he/him and they/them pronouns." When we host an event and ask people to make a nametag we ask them to include their PGP's. We are accustomed to certain pronouns he/him/his and she/her/hers. However, not everyone uses traditional pronouns. Some trans* and/or non-binary people may use gender inclusive/neutral pronouns.

Some commonly used gender inclusive pronouns are ze/zie and hir. "Ze" is the subject pronoun and is pronounced /zee/, and "hir" is the object and possessive pronoun and is pronounced /heer/. This is how they are used: "Chris is the tallest person in class, and ze is also the fastest runner." "Corey is going to Hawaii over break with hir parents. I'm so jealous of hir." Another pronoun used is they/them/theirs. "Jess is going to the movie and they will buy our tickets on line. We will meet them there." Pronouns are important and our community is diverse. Practice talking about your pronouns and offer them when you introduce yourself!

Have a safe and happy holiday!

Love,
Your Center



7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

together.