

OutReach Report to the City of Madison on Basic Services Provided

October 7, 2008

From the City's Community Assistance/Access Page:

Program Area Goal: Foster & create conditions in which the community's most vulnerable individuals can access basic services to increase self-sufficiency, and improve their quality of life.

A. Higher Priority Goals

Improve access to & utilization of basic services by members of protected groups & other under served populations.

What we do:

- OutReach has **25 volunteers that are trained to provide information & referral** at our front desk. Their job is to connect visitors to appropriate resources for their given situation, and to provide the same services to clients that call in to our hotline. We have substantial information in the areas of housing, food pantries, employment, government and nonprofit assistance for basic human needs. Over the course of a typical week at the agency, approximately a dozen individuals will inquire about these resources.
- We have a cooperative relationship with both the **UW Counseling Psychology Department and Edgewood College's Family Center**. This program allows LGBT people with limited income to access supervised counseling services at sliding scale fees. Mental health is a major issue for the LGBT community. We field dozens of calls on a weekly basis looking for basic mental health services from our agency database and cost is frequently an issue.
- LGBT individuals who are currently **unemployed and/or homeless have access to the internet via our public computers and our information binders**. With the aid of staff and volunteers, they are able to connect to resources to address basic needs. Over the last year, typically 4-6 homeless individuals have used these resources on a weekly basis.
- **OutReach subsidizes LGBT youth (18-24 year olds)** with food, traveling expenses, registration fees, etc., to enable them to participate in outings and social events through our youth group **OutThere**. The group has existed for 18 months, and more than 200 youth have been served.
- We do outreach to ethnic communities through our participation in **Celebrate Madison, Fiesta Hispana, Allied Community Fest, Triangle Ethnic Fest, Juneteenth Celebration, Willy St. Fair, Africa Fest, and Madison Area Urban Ministry Info Fest** with our staffed public information tables. We are starting a second phase neighborhood outreach through contacts with local community centers. We plan to distribute resource materials and network with community members, with a goal of

increasing awareness of our services and to increase participation of ethnic communities in our agency and services.

- Over the past year and a half, we have provided tables at two dozen community fairs, exposing more than 2,000 people to our agency and its resources. Our table typically has info about **Dane County Fair Housing, National Black Justice Coalition, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Latino materials, City of Madison EEOC, Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, Rape Crisis Center,** and variety of local counseling and AODA resources.
- OutReach holds support groups at our offices targeted at marginalized groups within the LGBTQ communities -- **Friends To Be With** (people with developmental and/or physical disabilities) and **Rainbow Connection** (people with mental health issues) – to enable them to be more fully integrated in the larger community by decreasing their social isolation. The groups have attracted a core group of 5 - 10 people on a regular basis with a cumulative total of over a 100 client visits last year.
- We work actively as part of the **Dane County Homeless Service Consortium** to increase their awareness of our services and educate them to the specialized needs of the LGBTQ communities in this regard. We serve many homeless clients on a regular basis, and have a cooperative relationship with the Salvation Army to provide better service for mutual clients. Over the past year, we have had over 25 homeless clients at the agency and handled over 50 calls related to homeless resources.
- OutReach is setting up direct referral links with two AODA doctors to serve as assessment interviewers. This will provide our clients access to appropriate resources to assist them in their treatment and recovery.
- We have an active partnership with **Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS)** to serve as a safe space for initial interviews between agency advocates and individuals affected by domestic violence issues. We are also cooperatively working with **Rape Crisis Center**. We are developing in-service trainings for both agencies. We will be providing sensitivity training to their staff, and they will be educating our clients on the services they offer. We have our first in-service with DAIS scheduled for November and are currently promoting Rape Crisis's Chimera Self-Defense Program for women in our e-newsletter.
- OutReach operates a web-site specifically targeted at transgender sexual health issues (**genderwellness.org**) to facilitate access to information and services for this very underserved population. Over the last year, we have had some 2,000 unique visitors to the site.
- OutReach has a cooperative relationship with the **Madison Senior Center** through a joint program called the **LGBT Senior Alliance**. This program has provided semi-annual dinners at the Madison Senior Center since 2000, and offered social opportunities for this marginalized segment of our community. We typically have between 25 and 50 people attending these events. The project has also provided LGBT sensitivity training to health care workers at senior care facilities. We have started a semi-monthly discussion group in October, our first meeting had 8 participants.