

PACIFIC



CURRENTS

Fall 2005

Pacific Center – Berkeley, California – 510-548-8283

New Executive Director, New Clinic Director Take Charge

by *Ralph Thomas*

August saw the start of Juan Barajas taking over as Executive Director and Judith Weatherly, MFT stepping into the position of Clinic Director for the Mental Health Clinic. (More about Juan on this page and about Judith and changes in the clinic starting on page 4.)

Our new Executive Director, **Juan Barajas**, brings over five years of non-profit management experience and nearly 10 years of working with the LGBT community to the Pacific Center. With a degree in psychology from Stanford University, Juan has worked with the LGBT community as a health educator, HIV/AIDS outreach worker, and program design consultant. Most notably, he led the development of a Palo Alto based LGBT youth support group into a multi-service LGBT youth organization offering youth groups, counseling, mentoring, leadership training, and advocacy. In just four years, the organization's revenues grew by over 500%, which supported hundreds of youth with high quality services.

Our new Clinic Director, **Judith Weatherly** is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) and

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Pacific Center Community Town Hall Meeting

Discussion of new initiatives at PC
Meet Board and Staff

Wednesday, November 30, 6:00 p.m.

For more info & location please visit:
www.pacificcenter.org

From the Executive Director

by *Juan Barajas*

Growing up in a rural Oregon town during the 1980's and 90's, I had little idea that community centers for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender folks existed or that there were even other gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people in the world. Sure, I'd seen caricatures of gay people on television shows like *Three's Company* or *Friends*, and I'd heard that San Francisco had a big parade. But, it wasn't part of my everyday reality, which was about fitting in with friends, getting good grades, and dreaming of escaping my farm town for the big city. Had someone told me then that instead of being a psychologist that I would be leading an LGBT organization, I would have never believed it. First of all, what did that mean? There were LGBT organizations? (Remember, I was living in a small farm town in Oregon.) Secondly, how could I be so open about being gay that I would have a professional life devoted to it?

Of course, today I can't imagine any other job or place I'd rather be. Serving as the newest Executive Director for the Pacific Center is both a wonderful gift and a great challenge. Our political landscape is a mix of increasing hostility towards our equality and improved acceptance and awareness of our existence. As a result, leading an LGBT Center in 2005 requires me to be a diplomat, cheerleader, fundraiser, organizer, business manager, counselor, and politician. Those are many hats to wear, all of which are important and necessary.

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The Pacific Center receives its operating funds from private donations, corporate donations, the City of Berkeley, County of Alameda, State of California, Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, San Francisco Foundation, the Horizons Foundation and the Partnership Foundation.

Center to Launch Diversity Initiative

The Pacific Center is forming a Task Force to develop recommendations to help strengthen the Pacific Center and make it more accessible to the broad spectrum of our community. This Cultural Competency Task Force will look at question such as:

- How can the Center be welcoming to everyone who comes through our doors?
- How can our HIV program be more effective in communities of color?
- What do we need to do to strengthen our youth and peer groups and to build relationships across groups that use the Center?
- How can our clinic interns better reflect the diversity of the community we serve?
- What can we do to grow the Center Board of Director to fully represent the diversity of our community?

These and other questions will be the focus of the new Task Force. We will ask a group of Center users, staff, Board and community members to pose inquiries and develop recommendations that can strengthen the Pacific Center and make us more accessible to the broad spectrum of our community. The Task Force will utilize professional staff from *CompassPoint Nonprofit Services* and will operate over a period of 6 – 12 months. Do you want to be a part of this important work? Do you know someone who can help? Let us know what you think. Contact Juan Barajas, Executive Director at the Pacific Center: juan@pacificcenter.org

Transitions

by *Ralph Thomas*, past Board President

The last half year has been challenging and I am grateful for all of the volunteers, board members and staff at the Pacific Center that are so hard working, caring and supportive.

We started the search for a new Executive Director in April. You know the end of that story if you read page one of this newsletter, and we are very happy to have Juan on board. During the five months when the Center had no senior executive the staff members did a fantastic job of holding everything together and continuing to serve our community.

In early summer we said goodbye to **Meg Patterson**, MFT, previously Clinic Director. Meg worked hard to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible. Meg had been at the Center for over a year and I appreciate all the work and dedication she brought to the Center.

David Dao, applicant for MFT license, the Associate Clinic Director, stepped up to fill in as Interim Clinic Director and spearheaded the search to hire a new Clinic Director. During this process volunteers from our therapist faculty were generous with their time and expertise to help ensure the Clinic continued operating as it should. I especially want to express my appreciation to **Mary Bradford**, MFT, Ph.D. for her guidance and support to both David and myself during that challenging time.

I especially want to say *thank you* to David from myself and on behalf of the staff and the interns for his heroic efforts this summer keeping the

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The Pacific Center for Human Growth

Serving the Community since 1973

510-548-8283

fax 510-548-2938

info@pacificcenter.org

www.pacificcenter.org

Board of Directors

Katharine Gale, President
 Scott Vachon, Vice President
 Amy Wooldridge, Secretary
 Brian Johnson, Treasurer
 Ralph Thomas, Member

Pacific Center Staff

Juan Barajas, ED
 Judith Weatherly, MFT,
 Clinic Director
 Bridgette Bissonnette,
 Youth Program Director
 Peter Carnini, HIV Prevention/
 Client Services Specialist
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Pacific Currents Staff

Ralph Thomas, Editor
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 The Pacific Center for
 Human Growth

is a member of the National
 Association of LGBT Community
 Centers and the Gay/ Lesbian
 Therapist Association
 (GAYLESTA).

Pacific Currents

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Fall 2005

About Our Mailing List

The Pacific Center does not lend, sell or give away its mailing list to any outside organization. However, the Pacific Center does allow organizations that are sponsored and operate under the Pacific Center umbrella to mail announcements to the Pacific Center mailing list. If you do not want to receive mailings from PC sponsored organizations please let us know. "Attention: Mailing List."

From Board President Katharine Gale

After four years on the board, I am pleased to have been elected as the new Board President. It is a little daunting to follow in the footsteps of Ralph Thomas, our outgoing President, but I am excited to do it at this time when so much is happening at the Center. I wish to thank Ralph for his able leadership during so many years.

Our new Executive Director Juan Barajas and new clinic director Judith Weatherly are bringing great leadership and vision to the Center, while consolidating our current programming. We are thrilled to have them with us. As Juan says in his letter, our programs continue to serve critical needs in the East Bay LGBT community, and to touch the lives of so many people.

But we also face challenges. The recent departure of three board members who raised concerns about the Center's diversity and communication calls upon me and the Board to redouble our efforts to make the Pacific Center welcoming to all. I am committed to following our strategic plan goals to make sure that we are always improving.

To focus our efforts, the Board has adopted a four-pronged work plan for the year. Our energies will be directed to:

Fundraising: The Center needs to increase the funds we raise from our community. The Public and Foundation grants we receive are key to our programs, but without individual and corporate donations – funds that come with fewer strings – our core operating functions can't keep pace with our programmatic goals. With Juan's leadership, the Board will be stepping up to raise more money for the Center's needs. I hope we will have your support.

Board Development: We need to grow the Board and ensure that it is representative of all of our community. We will be actively recruiting board members who have key skills (accounting, legal, marketing, etc.) and who represent the range of our constituencies, including people of color, trans and bi folks, straight allies and people with disabilities. Please see our recruitment notice on this page.

Clarify Policies: We will be clarifying and formalizing some of our policies and procedures at the Center and on the Board over the coming year. Look for new information about peer group partnerships and improved security at the Center.

Cultural Competency Task Force: We will be seating a task force of Center users, staff, and community members to look at diversity and cultural competency at all levels in the Center. We will have professional facilitation from *CompassPoint*, paid for by a special grant we have for this purpose. We will be recruiting for the Task Force over the next few months and look forward to its recommendations for how we can improve. (See article, page 2, on task force in this newsletter.)

I look forward to working with Juan, the staff, Board and the entire Pacific Center community over the coming year. I welcome your thoughts and comments about our Center and where we should be going, and I invite you to join our efforts. Please contact me at katharine@pacificcenter.org to share your ideas.

Pacific Center Seeks Board Members

Maybe the Pacific Center was there for you in a critical time of your life. Maybe you are still a user of our services. And maybe you have skills, great connections or a critical community perspective on the Center and its work

If this is you, we need you for the Board of directors! We are actively seeking to double the size of the board and to increase its diversity and skill base. Can you help us?

Consider joining the Board or proposing someone else to us. Contact board president Katharine Gale via email at

katharine@pacificcenter.org



Katharine Gale joined the Board of the Pacific Center in 2002. She joined the Board to assist with addressing the facility needs of the Center, and explore the potential development of a larger Center with multiple uses. Professionally, she is a consultant who assists housing and homelessness programs. She has been active around queer and gender issues for more than 20 years, including hosting the first campus-wide forum on bisexuality at New York University, participating in Pride event planning in both New York and San Francisco, and advocating for and managing HIV/AIDS housing programs.

Pacific Center Welcomes New Clinic Director Judith Weatherly

[Editor's note: Judith Weatherly, MFT joined the Pacific Center staff in August to run the Mental Health Clinic. Below is an open letter to the community from Judith.]

I am very excited to join the Pacific Center community as the new Mental Health Clinic Director. I come to the Center with a strong commitment to community mental health and a passion toward issues of social justice. I trained in Feminist Psychology at New College of California, San Francisco and have a strong background in the treatment of trauma and abuse. I also have a California Teaching Credential and have taught classes from kindergarten through graduate studies. Mental Health is the field that has truly grabbed my heart and mind, however.

I have lived with my partner in the East Bay for over twenty years. I have been a part of the LGBTQ community for over thirty years; working and watching with wonderment at the growth and development of our community. I am delighted to be at the Pacific Center during a time that feels like such an important time in our community's empowerment.

I entered the field of mental health with the belief that issues of injustice and inequality affect our lives in very significant ways. I continue to be a strong advocate for expanding the understanding of the many

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Judith Weatherly

Pacific Center Youth Speaks at 'Out in Oakland'

by Juan Barajas, Executive Director

Stepping towards the microphone outside of Oakland's city hall with a hundred person crowd gazing upon him, Pacific Center youth participant Carlos shared his reflections on the reality of living as an openly gay teenager in the Bay Area. After thanking his parents who attended the Oakland gathering to support him, he talked about being an outspoken advocate for LGBT issues through our Pacific Center youth program and at his school. By challenging anti-gay harassment and homophobia in his every day life, he is finding his power in helping others and improving our community. While never easy, he understands and embraces that for positive change to happen in his life, he must step up and help lead the way.

After witnessing several homophobic comments and acts, he realized he needed to come out as a gay person so that his peers could understand the reality of their prejudice.

Carlos shared one particular story where he was afraid to come out at a leadership in government camp for young men. After witnessing several homophobic comments and acts, he realized he needed to come out as a gay person so that his peers could understand the reality of their prejudice. His eloquent description of openly declaring his sexual identity at a large gathering showcased the amazing strength of today's LGBT youth and the impact a youth program like ours can have on preparing young people for these moments. Carlos' leadership that day and every day is a celebration of our accomplishments since Stonewall and an exciting glimpse at the successes yet to come.

As our youth program, L.O.U.D. (Loving Ourselves & Uniting Diversity), continues to evolve and mature, we are increasing our focus on helping young people like Carlos develop their leadership potential and skills. Through our leadership training group, workshops, projects, and speaking opportunities, Carlos and others like him will help pave the way for other youth to come out and find community. With over 375 youth served last year, the Pacific Center is making a difference and shaping a future generation of powerful leaders and advocates for the LGBT community.

+ Positive +

A psychotherapy group for gay, bisexual, and queer men living with HIV.

Positive is a psychotherapy group in which gay, bisexual and queer men living with HIV/AIDS can explore feelings about relationships, intimacy, sex, health and wellness.

**Starting November 7, 2005
Mondays 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

The Pacific Center
2712 Telegraph Avenue at Derby

Fees are sliding scale (\$10/\$45 per session. The group is limited to nine members and runs for eight weeks.

**For initial consultation call
(510) 548-8283 ext. 527 or 513.**

Christopher Arrillaga, Psy.D. Trainee and Meg Hodges, Psy.D. trainee are students of Clinical Psychology at John F. Kennedy University and are supervised by Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Judith Weatherly, MFT32439

HIV and AIDS Long-Term Survivors Psychotherapy Group

This eight week group is intended for positive gay, bisexual, and queer men who have been living with HIV and AIDS for more than ten years.

Issues discussed in this group may include: HIV Health Issues, Medication Compliance and Managing Medication Side-Effects, Co-Occurring Mental Health Issues, Disability, Self-Esteem, Relationships, HIV Disclosure, Sex and Sexual Behavior, and Building a Support Network.

**Starting November 9, 2005
Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

The Pacific Center
2712 Telegraph Avenue at Derby
Fees are sliding scale.

**For initial consultation call
(510) 548-8283 ext. 240.**

Co-facilitated by Pietro (Peter) Carnini, MFT Intern, reg. #44440, and Howard Curtis, MFT Intern reg. #43327.

Peter and Howard are supervised by Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Judith Weatherly, MFT32429

Intern Program Trains Future Therapists

Few outside the Pacific Center are aware that the Center has a training program that provides education and training for intern therapists on LGBTQ mental health. The interns that provide the sliding scale therapy at the Pacific Center are a dedicated group of hard working volunteers. The Pacific Center matches them up one on one with volunteer licensed therapists from our community (our "Faculty") and provides a regular schedule of training on LGBT topics. This program:

- ◆ provides therapy, sensitive to our issues, for members of our community
- ◆ provides training of future therapists with a focus on sensitivity to our community
- ◆ gives us an opportunity to contribute to the training of straight allies
- ◆ creates a safe, supportive learning environment for future queer therapists

The Mental Health Clinic is a vital program that grows each year, offering training to more and more future therapists. This year we are pleased to welcome back five interns: **Sierra Black, Howard Curtis, Scott Moresi, Lisa Sebasco, Shin Yi Tsai.**

The continuing interns are joined by eleven others: **Revi Airborne, Christopher Arrillaga, Nicole Donahue, Janet Elliott, Michelle Gayle, Meg Hodges, Lilia Leshan, Sharon Perlman, Genette Reddin, Rainbow Schwartz, Amber Vinson.**

Welcome all to the Pacific Center Family!

NEW BUSINESS HOURS

Please visit us during our new hours

4 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Monday through Friday

New Clinic Director Judith Weatherly

(continued from page 4)

ways in which issues of oppression impact the lives and emotional well-being of us all. For the LGBTQ community, the effects of homophobia are often not understood and/or addressed by mental health professionals. Other arenas of injustice and inequality, whether it be race, class, ethnicity, age, size, religion, or ability, do not escape my concern when providing mental health services to our community. While focusing on the needs and goals of the individual, I encourage mental health professionals not to lose sight of the impact on the individual from the external world.

I want to continue the commitment of the Pacific Center to providing mental health services that respect the differences within our community. I look forward to working closely with the Pacific Center staff, the many volunteer mental health professionals from the community and with a wonderful group of committed interns and trainees! It is the strong commitment from such a large and varied group of people that so attracted me to the Pacific Center. I feel honored to be a part of the Pacific Center commitment to training mental health professionals who will truly respect us and understand the effects of homophobia upon our health and our greater well-being.

—Judith Weatherly, MFT

**Visit the Pacific Center
online at**

www.pacificcenter.org

From the Executive Director

(continued from page 1)

Fortunately, my psychology degree from Stanford University and the guidance of many great mentors have helped immensely and continue to serve me well. I'm also blessed with the loving support of my partner, Kevin, whose passion for life and intoxicating laugh keep me feeling grounded, strong, and inspired. And, of course, our adorable English Bulldog, Paco, brings me balance and laughter with his demands for attention, treats, and love.

As I look towards my future with the Pacific Center, I'm excited to work with you in reaching our next stage of success. As one of the oldest LGBT centers in the nation, the Pacific Center has pioneered the way for many of today's LGBT leaders and organizations who are working hard for our recognition and equality. I want to build upon this powerful history and create a Pacific Center, which not only supports and unites our community, but provides a strong foundation for organizing and social innovation. The Pacific Center has always been a welcoming home for our diverse LGBT community, a symbol of our well-earned pride and resilience, and a beacon of hope for those just beginning their journey into freedom.

As we move into the future, I'm excited to build a Pacific Center which meets your needs and challenges you to take action. We must invest in our facility so it better reflects our pride, offers more community building opportunities and unites us to effectively advocate for LGBT issues by speaking with one powerful voice. By working together as a dedicated team of diverse individuals who are positive and motivated, we can achieve great success and blaze the path for powerful social change.

I'm looking forward to meeting you, hearing from you, and working with you to continue the Pacific Center's legacy as an amazing home for our East Bay lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

Warmly,
Juan Barajas,
Executive Director
juan@pacificcenter.org

HOLIDAY CONCERT

'MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT'

Lakeshore Ave. Baptist Church
3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland

Saturday, December 10 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 11 at 5 p.m.

For tickets please visit www.oebgmc.org
or phone 800-706-2389

The Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus

Serving Our Community: Program Updates

The Pacific Center's high quality programs and services continue to meet the needs of our diverse LGBT community with the support of our talented staff, passionate volunteers, and dedicated board. We've had a very successful year with thousands of people being served from all over the Bay Area.

*over 1,000 hours of
mental health services*

Our mental health clinic continues to be the only provider of LGBT counseling in Alameda County, which fills a critical need not addressed directly by other organizations. Last year, the clinic provided nearly 1,000 hours of mental health services and is well on the way to exceeding those numbers this year. Under the skilled leadership of our newly hired Mental Health Clinic Director, Judith Weatherly, 16 highly talented mental health interns and their volunteer clinical supervisors, the Pacific Center mental health services will continue to help many people in need.

The youth program, **L.O.U.D.**, continues to support those young folks who are beginning to come out as well as those who are eager to join the movement for equality. Working with the Youth Program Director, Bridgette Bissonnette, we are focusing on increasing the support structure for our teens, strengthening their leadership training, and providing LGBT education for our schools and organizations. Last year, the program reached 325 young people and provided LGBT education for 20 schools and organizations.

*The youth program reached
325 young people ...*

Our HIV services are meeting the unique needs of men who are affected by the disease. Through our one-on-one counseling, psychotherapy groups, educational workshops, and social events, HIV positive individuals and those at risk can find the care and support they need here at our Center. Under the direction of our HIV Services Coordinator, Peter Carnini, our program has partnered with other East Bay HIV/AIDS organizations to provide hundreds of hours of service.

Deserving of our respect and praise, volunteers continue to organize and offer over 15 different peer support groups for the community. Reaching nearly 150 people per week, individuals come from all over the Bay Area to connect with others in our LGBT center through groups like *Express 20's* and *Lesbians of Color*.

We hope you will join us for our upcoming events and participate in our Center's programs. Feel free to contact us with questions: info@pacificcenter.org or call (510) 548-8283.

New Staff

(from page one)

has a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara and also a California Teaching Credential from UCSB. That combination was a nice foundation to build upon when she got her master's in the Feminist Psychology program at New College of California in San Francisco.

She has had a private practice for over ten years providing services to adults, children, couples, families, and groups and has worked with a diverse population including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and age. Judith says "I look forward to sharing more of my experiences with the Pacific Center community and to learning from the great number of skilled and talented people involved with the Center."

Transitions

(from page 2)

Clinic and the Pacific Center running without an Executive Director. The Pacific Center family bid farewell to **David Dao** in August; he resigned from the Center to focus on studying for the examination for his therapist license. He worked very hard over the past years and displayed a strong commitment to Pacific Center. David started at Pacific Center as a Marriage and Family Therapist Intern. He eventually became a staff member, in various capacities, in the Mental Health Clinic. We will miss his dedication to interns and clients.

The last transition is the one where I am no longer the president of the board. It feels good to step back a little to work on other projects. I will continue my involvement with the board. I think there are exciting times ahead for the Center. I encourage you to get involved and to continue to support the Pacific Center however you may.

—Ralph

United Way Planned Giving

You can use the **code 3473** for your United Way payroll donations to **The Pacific Center**. If your employer participates in payroll deduction donations to the United Way, you may designate that your personal donations go to The Pacific Center. Your donation will help ensure that the Center is able to continue offering support, information and services to your community.

Your support is crucial to enable the *Pacific Center* to continue its role as a vital resource to our community. Please take a moment and send your donation today.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the Pacific Center (up to \$99) | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor (\$500 – \$999) |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$250 – \$499) | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Circle (\$2500 and above) |

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THE PACIFIC CENTER FOR HUMAN GROWTH

2712 Telegraph Avenue
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PLEASE SHARE WITH A FRIEND!

