

local news

Close to home

Vancouver's Evergreen AIDS Response will tailor programs to the specific needs of its Clark County clients

by Inga Sorensen

Alan Rose knows that convenience is often vital to people with HIV and AIDS. He also realizes that the disease affects every community—no matter how large or small.

"I think that it would be fantastic to see [HIV/AIDS] community-based organizations everywhere. It's just not possible for one organization to effectively serve many different communities, because they are so diverse," he says.

It will be a while before community-based organizations, called CBOs, are indeed found in each community across the land. Nonetheless, Rose came one step closer to seeing his hope transform into reality following the recent launching of Evergreen AIDS Response, a newly established community organization located in Vancouver, Wash.

Evergreen AIDS Response, which operates from a five-room office at Burnt Bridge Plaza, will sponsor support groups and provide a variety of services to people with HIV and AIDS.

"Our initial plan involves developing volunteer support services and networking with other existing organizations," explains Rose, a Vancouver resident and the fledgling group's program coordinator. "We really want to get the whole community involved—business, churches, schools, other social service providers—to ensure that Evergreen AIDS Response becomes a part of the Southwest Washington community."

Rose says an attempt was made a decade ago to establish a CBO in Southwest Washington geared toward assisting people with HIV and AIDS. He says, however, that plan fell flat for a variety of reasons, including a general lack of awareness about the disease and the threat it posed to the overall community. That lack of awareness in turn dampened a sense of urgency often needed to get such ventures successfully off the ground.

"People's understanding about the disease—and its pervasiveness—has really grown over the

past few years," says Rose. "The time was right for this."

Clark County, where Vancouver is situated, has had 226 reported cases of AIDS, resulting in 125 deaths. In Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties combined, there have been 241 reported AIDS cases including 135 deaths.

The Southwest Washington Health District, which provides a host of health-related services to residents in that three-county area, has reportedly provided case management to more than 150 people living with HIV and AIDS. Additionally, it has sponsored HIV/AIDS community education and needle-exchange programs, testing for HIV, and counseling/volunteer programs.

Rose says Evergreen AIDS Response will take over the volunteer program while the Southwest Washington Health District will continue offering the other services.

Evergreen AIDS Response was created after many months of dialogue and planning among members of the Health District, the Southwest Washington Consortium on HIV/AIDS—which comprises health care, social and mental health service professionals; people with HIV/AIDS; and community leaders—and the Portland-based Cascade AIDS Project, Oregon's largest HIV/AIDS non-medical service provider.

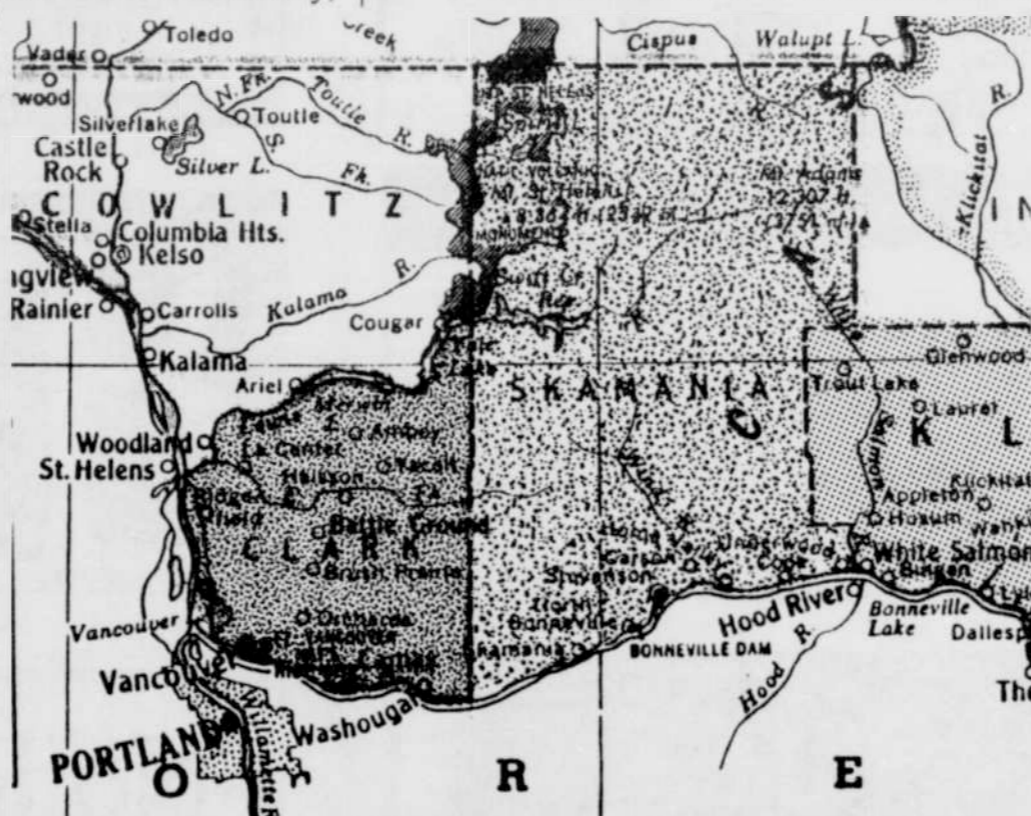
The Southwest Washington Consortium recommended to the Health District that a CBO be established in Southwest Washington. Using an

estimated \$30,000 in federal Ryan White CARE Act Title II funds, the Health District contracted with CAP to start up the new CBO. Title II funds are issued to states to help them improve the quality and availability of existing health care organizations and support services for individuals with HIV and AIDS, as well as bolster home and community-based care services.

An additional \$33,000 in Title II funds will be used to assist Evergreen AIDS Response's operations this year. Other funds, says Rose, will be generated through grants. He says until the CBO establishes its own board and nonprofit tax status—within a year or so—CAP will act as Evergreen AIDS Response's fiscal agent and will handle many administrative responsibilities.

"People have asked me, 'What's in it for CAP?'" says Rose, a CAP employee who is well aware of critics' claims that CAP is trying to cover too many bases—and garner as much funding as it can at the expense of other HIV/AIDS service groups.

"CAP understands that it's vital that there be



community-based organizations in place," he continues. "One large organization can't do it, and different communities have different needs."

For instance, says Rose, in Clark County an estimated 21 percent of the AIDS cases are women, compared to 6 percent for Multnomah County.

"It's a different population," he says. "CAP has traditionally been viewed as very gay male-oriented, and women [in Southwest Washington]

haven't generally crossed the river to use CAP's services."

That may have to do with a woman's limited resources, or a sense that she didn't "fit in" at CAP.

"Evergreen AIDS Response will hopefully be a place where a variety of people will feel comfortable," says Rose. "We don't want to be identified as serving one particular population."

He adds: "I think sometimes people in Portland don't realize that Vancouver has its own sense of community. We're dealing with fantastic growth, and the community is developing a sense of identity. Many people don't even go into Portland."

According to Rose, two existing support groups are being transferred from the Health District to Evergreen AIDS Response. One group is for those living with HIV and AIDS, and the other is for the loved ones of people with HIV and AIDS.

Rose hopes to develop other support groups that are designed specifically to serve women with HIV, gay and bisexual men living with HIV and AIDS, and sexual minority youth.

Volunteers will be trained to provide a variety of services to people with HIV and AIDS. For instance, volunteers may run errands such as buying groceries and preparing meals, or drive people with HIV and AIDS to medical appointments.

"There are so many needs out there that people with HIV and AIDS have," says Rose. "We would love to have people volunteer to help out."

Judith Billings, Washington's superintendent of public instruction, was on hand during Evergreen AIDS Response's open house on April 3.

Billings, who was diagnosed with AIDS in early 1995, believes she contracted HIV in the mid-1980s while she was trying to become pregnant through the donor insemination process. Two months ago she publicly disclosed that she had AIDS, and the news shocked many.

"We are just so delighted that [Billings] said she was coming. We wanted her here so badly," says Rose. "I mean, here she is, a high-profile person, who isn't backing down from doing what she wants to do. She's even announced she's going to run for Congress. She's a great role model."

Rose says Evergreen AIDS Response is seeking donations of comfortable used furniture.

Anyone who can help is encouraged to do so. Evergreen AIDS Response is located at 5305 E 18th St. in Vancouver; phone (360) 735-9170.

A rich life to be remembered at service

Journalism, poetry and activism combined to create a diverse life for Rosanne King. Her cerebral work kept her rooted to the planet since her body was often dogged by health problems associated with type I diabetes. King died of causes related to the disease on March 29, at her home. She was 43.

King was a prolific freelance writer and a tenacious investigative journalist for over 25 years. Her poetry was published in magazines, literary journals and anthologies. She worked as a west coast correspondent for McGraw-Hill World News and was a frequent contributor to *Just Out*.

Her journalism career began in the ninth grade, when she won a contest for nonfiction writing in the Los Angeles school system. She majored in journalism at California State University.

King was a civil rights activist working for the rights of Native Americans, women, and lesbians and gay men. You could spot her at marches and rallies around Portland, and anywhere that injustice needed to be protested.

King leaves behind a close-knit family of relatives and friends including her parents, Frank and Carma King; her sisters, Melanie and Lisa;

her brother, Mike; her lover, Resa Allen; and friends Ronda Parsons, Mike Gill, Cassandra Curry, Linda Bush and Marge Bush.



A memorial service to honor the life of Rosanne King will be held at 1 pm on Wednesday, April 10, at the Hennessey, Goetsch and McGee Mortuary, 210 NW 17th Ave., in Portland.

Renée LaChance

Conference seeks to foster healing process

The 1996 Living Fully Conference is set for April 18-21 at the Breitenbush Retreat Center, a holistic retreat center featuring natural hot springs that is located about 90 miles southeast of Portland.

The conference, sponsored by Project Quest, is designed for those whose lives have been touched by HIV and AIDS. Workshops will address such topics as HIV and women, the Native American sweat lodge, nutrition and yoga. Healing services such as massage, aromatherapy and acupuncture will be available throughout the conference. For registration information, please call Anne or Elizabeth at (503) 778-7290.

Inga Sorensen

Equity supports Urban League program

The Equity Foundation has given a \$3,800 grant to support the Urban League of Portland's Rainbow program for sexual minority youth.

The Rainbow program is a support group for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.

"Statistics tell us that gay, lesbian and bisexual

teenagers are very much more likely to run away from home, drop out of school, and suffer substance abuse and suicide," says the program's coordinator, Shala Moaydei. "This grant, and gifts from several local individuals, will help us to continue providing services to youth in this situation."

The Urban League of Portland is a nonprofit, community-based human service, economic and social justice agency serving youth and families, students, job seekers and seniors in the metropolitan area.

Inga Sorensen

The Pink Webazine hits the Web

A new publication called *The Pink Webazine* is being published on the World Wide Web by local journalist David Batterson. The "webazine" contains queer news, opinion and graphics that can be downloaded.

Articles thus far have featured openly gay state Rep. George Eighmey, Our House of Portland and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. *The Pink Webazine's* Web address is: <http://pages.prodigy.com/webazine/homepage.htm>.

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