

While some programming was enjoyed by the community before a location was secured, Q Center came into its own after opening its doors at 69 S.E. Taylor St. in March 2006. The 1,627-square-foot roll-out site has been a safe and welcoming community gathering place for queer programs, events, meetings and resources ever since. The center operates with drop-in hours Sunday through Wednesday, with plans to expand these hours in 2007. On average, more than 15 groups and organizations have used the space on a monthly basis. With the help of Gene de Haan, the center's first coordinator, Q Center used its inaugural year to build strong relationships with more than 40 community organizations, engage more than 100 volunteers and link new donors and media to the queer community. If you somehow missed the myriad programs and events or the first anniversary celebration and open house April 2, then read on to find out about all the excitement surrounding Portland's emerging community center.

### What Is Queer Art?

Q Center launched its arts and culture programming with the event "What Is Queer Art" in April 2006. According to Paul Fukui, chairman of the arts and culture committee, the question posed to the community was about the nature and qualities of queer art. "Is queer art by queer artists, for a queer audience, about queer issues?" Fukui asks. "Can it also be art created by a queer artist that has nothing to do with queer issues?" He says the committee continues to ask these questions as it moves forward with programming.

According to Fukui, the most consistent and visible event to date has been the revolving monthly exhibition of community artists. These exhibitions present both amateur and professional artists as well as collectives such as QuArt. Past shows have included *Love and the Anatomical Heart* and *Historic Images of Our Portland*. The April show, *Corpo e Anima*, is a series of photographs of baroque architecture and the human figure by Italian artist Antimo Cimino. Q Center holds opening receptions for its monthly shows every first Friday. Other arts and culture programs include a writing group and slam poetry group.

"We have been open a year, and now we're waiting for the community to show up," says Fukui. "We're looking forward to greater involvement with the queer arts community...a symbiosis where the community gives to the center and the center to the community."

Fukui argues that the visibility Q Center offers also makes Portland's queer community safer. "On volunteer appreciation night, the mayor and his daughter and her partner came. It is much less acceptable to assault me if I'm standing next to the mayor—personally, organizationally and culturally," he says.

For himself, Fukui began volunteering with Q Center to get to know more people. "I'm an introvert and have to force myself out to get to know the community. So that's what's in it for me, and I get to make a contribution to making a stronger community by giving what I know how to give," says Fukui, who is also an artist.

The arts and culture programming committee holds an open planning meeting at 6:45 p.m. on

second Tuesdays. For more information call 503-234-7837 or e-mail [info@pdxqcenter.org](mailto:info@pdxqcenter.org).

### We Are Family

Families have always come in all kinds. Queer families live in cities all over the country raising beautiful kids and building strong communities. Q Center supports Portland's queer families by providing them space to gather and connect. On first Sundays, Q Center hosts Family Playdate, where parents can bring their kids to enjoy crafts, music, toy stations, face painting, food and more. The second Sunday of each month, Parenting and Pregnant Lesbians of Portland gather at Q Center, and a Daddies and Papas Potluck is held on third Saturdays.

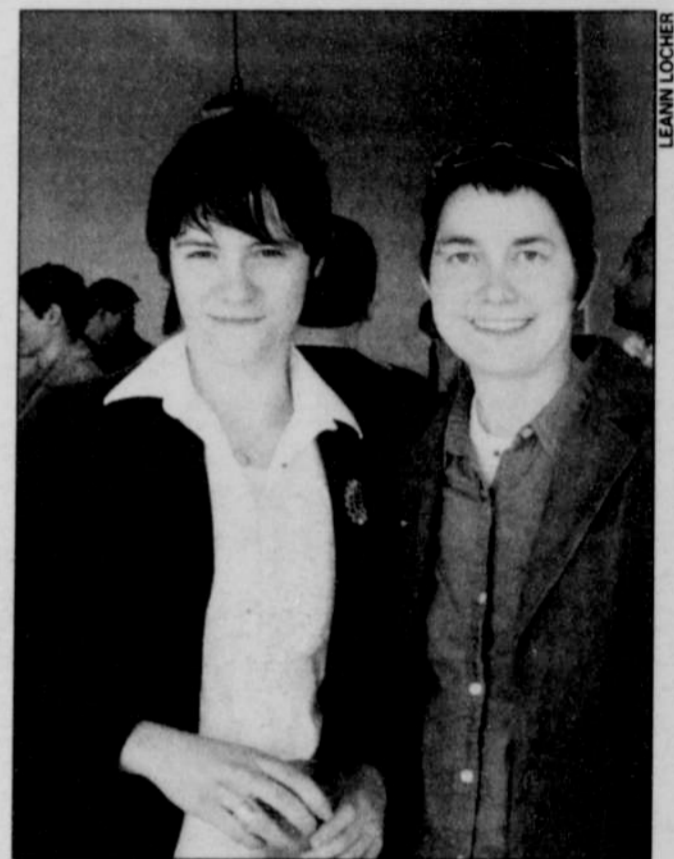
According to interim coordinator Tim Healea, the signature families program is Spooktacular, an annual Halloween party. "The Halloween pumpkin carving/contest party had a great response," he says. "It is hosted by Darcelle and Poison Waters, and we have carving, crafts and music." According to Healea, Mayor Tom Potter has attended Spooktacular both years with his daughter, her partner and their children.

Healea looks forward to future families programming, including a family Pride barbecue and a second college scholarship night. He hopes to bring in more speakers on family issues such as being a trans parent, adoption and strategies for communicating with schools about queer families.

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Board members LeAnn Locher and Bob Speltz bond at a board retreat on Sauvie Island.



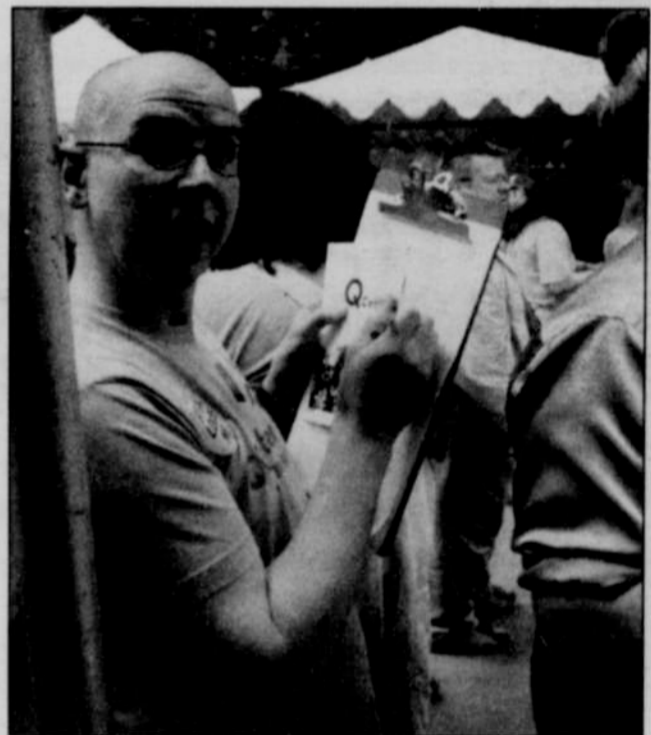
Former Q Center coordinator Gene de Haan (left) and core volunteer Boots Davis attend a queer art event.



In its early days, Q Center operated out of former interim executive director Susan Remmers' home office.



From left, Gene de Haan informally meets with current and former board members Tim Healea, Juan Martinez and Nicole Browning at Bakery Bar.



Ryan Crowley surveys Pride 2005 attendees on behalf of Q Center about Mayor Tom Potter's Vision PDX project.

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