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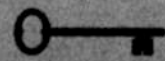
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the Armory, 128 N.W. 11th Ave. Tickets are \$65 from www.equityfoundation.org through March 6. For more information call 503-231-5759.

CAP Objects to Closure of Threatened Clinic

Cascade AIDS Project strongly objects to a plan reported Jan. 18 for Oregon Health Sciences University to close Portland's Russell Street Dental Clinic and northeastern Oregon's Union Family Health Center.

"The closure of Russell Street would be a disaster for 3,700 low-income Portland-area residents, including 650 people living with HIV/AIDS, who rely on the clinic for their dental care and treatment," said CAP executive director Jean Ann Van Krevelen. "Cascade AIDS Project is asking to partner with OHSU to ensure that Russell Street remains open."

Van Krevelen spoke with OHSU president Joe Robertson Feb. 5 to convey her belief that the clinic provides critical services to people with HIV.

The clinic was threatened after the Oregon Supreme Court ruled Dec. 28 to lift a liability cap allowing patients injured at OHSU to seek unlimited liability claims against the hospital. The prior cap was \$200,000.

OHSU reacted to that decision by attempting to cut \$30 million in other areas.

Despite a rough financial road for the clinic after Multnomah County canceled its \$1.1 million contract in 2005, it expects to break even in 2008. It is not clear whether it can remain open until a new cap is defined.

According to clinic director Robert Johnson, it remained viable after it lost the county contract by adjusting and revising its fee schedules and business practices to balance its budget.

"After taking difficult but necessary measures in 2004 to increase revenue and decrease expenses, the annual deficit each year since 2005 has declined," said Johnson. "The operating deficit for 2007 was about \$60,000. Our actuals have met or exceeded our business plan, so we expect to break even in 2008."

Van Krevelen added, "We are absolutely open to partnering with them, and they're aware of that."

In addition to serving as the leading dental provider for people living with HIV in the Portland area, the clinic also trains dentists and dental hygienists about how to care for people living with HIV, who often have complex oral health problems. Untreated dental problems can result in serious infections for people with compromised immune systems, according to Johnson.

"Russell Street Dental Clinic has been a part of this community since the very beginning of the AIDS crisis," said Van Krevelen. "We are approaching this challenge with the assumption that OHSU will join us to ensure that the clinic continues to operate on Russell Street as long as we have low-income people living with HIV who need its services."

Edúcate Ya Heads to Cuernavaca for Gay Mexican History

As opposed to the brash directness of American gays, queer culture in Mexico is less flashy, more muted and, some would say, more closeted than in the States.

But a newish program run in partnership with a Portland nonprofit has begun making headway in outing Mexico's fascinating gay culture and history to interested Portlanders from all walks of life. And it's sending residents by the dozen for weeks-long Spanish language and cultural immersion programs in Cuernavaca, an idyllic "city of eternal spring" in south-central Mexico, long recognized as a rest haven for artists. Writer Charles Samuels, jazz legend Charles Mingus and gay Argentinian author Manuel Puig (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*) all spent their last years in the rustic colonial town.

Called CETLALIC, the immersion programs include several queer-focused windows into Mexican history and culture, which are being run in partnership with Portland's Edúcate Ya, a non-profit Latino community-based organization.

Rafael Arellano-Barerra, a gay Cuernavaca native and Edúcate Ya's founder, said queer Portlanders have responded enthusiastically to the programs that "connect them with the LGBTQ community in Cuernavaca." In the upcoming programs focused on gay men and lesbians, running June 21 through July 12, participants will have the chance to take part in lectures on the history of the queer movement in Mexico and hear from queer Cuernavaca residents about their stories and lives while sharpening their Spanish skills in small morning tutoring sessions. For the grand finish, participants have the chance to take part in Mexico City Pride, one of the world's largest Gay Pride celebrations.

For lesbian Helena Lee, the three-week-long experience was a transformative one. "I was impressed with the school's commitment to social justice issues," she said, "and the teachers were the most delightful people." Lee also enjoyed the program's lectures and museum trips as well as getting to know the other students in the program from around the world, many of whom also identified as gay or lesbian.

But she says the ways in which queer Mexicans express their identity might be shocking to Americans. "It's still much edgier in Mexico than it is in the U.S."

And although she was open about her orientation during the program's duration, she held back somewhat when in public. "I'm not sure I would have shared [my sexual orientation] so freely or advertised it."

Tuition for the three-week program starts at \$1,730, with additional costs for room and



CETLALIC summer program participants learn about Mexico's queer culture and history.