



www.centerlb.org

December, 2010

Dear Friend of The Center,

Happy Holidays! With the Holiday season officially upon us, we thought we would take this time to reflect on all we have to be thankful for, and tell you what 2010 meant to **The Gay and Lesbian Center of Long Beach**.

2010 was a year unlike any other. While it was one of the most challenging years in recent memory for The Center, it was also a time of celebration, collaboration, and re-birth.

For the past 12 months we have had the great fortune to reflect back and celebrate the milestone of our 30th anniversary. And, in a strange way, we believe that year 30 was somehow similar to year one all over again. Because of what we faced coming out of 2009, we were forced to re-examine every aspect of the Center, and its operation in order to reinforce its foundation. Through strict fiscal management, we now find ourselves in a much better financial position. However, finding the resources to operate the Center is a never-ending process.

Even with this year's rough economy, we were able to continue to deliver great community events as well as our signature programs and services to the Long Beach Community. This year, we launched our free, rapid HIV testing and counseling program at the Center through the addition of an LA County contract. This is the first time since 2005 that we have had free HIV testing available at The Center.

In addition to our growing youth program (MYTE), our low cost Mental Health Counseling program, free legal clinic and newly updated David Bohnett Cyber Center, The Center continued to play host to over 20 social and support programs ranging from a coming out group, to living with AIDS, bi-sexual chat, and many more.

Our roster of events in 2010 ranged from social gatherings, such as our 30th Anniversary Reunion and Beach Bash, Valentine's Day Speed Dating, BINGO, and the QFilm Festival, to events dealing with issues of social justice. For example, we took a leading role in both the Prop 8 Rally and the Vigil of Remembrance for the recent LGBT teen suicides.

All of these events, programs and services require money; a resource that was in short supply this year. As you consider your options for your 2010 holiday charitable donations, we urge you to consider supporting our mission here at The Center with a one time donation, or sustaining donation of \$100 or more. Please remember that private donations, like yours are crucial to maintain the general operating fund of The Center, and essential to keeping our mission alive and well.

We'll be talking with you again in early 2011, with more about what we have planned for the year. In the meantime, thanks for your continued support and have a safe and joyous holiday season.

With Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Sylvester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ron Sylvester
Chairman of the Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phyllis Schmidt". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "P".

Phyllis Schmidt
Interim Executive Director

Why We Matter

Actual statements of support from Center patrons

"The Center in Long Beach is helping me to improve my self-esteem and identify as a gay man."

"I am grateful to the Center for assisting my son with free counseling services. My son was going through a difficult time and was living in the streets. The Center was a safe haven for him where he could find someone to talk with, use the telephone, play games and meet some other young queer youth. My son is now back home and is a work in progress. Thank you Center!"

"When I walked in here two years ago I had just come out after a lifetime of not being able to even say the word gay in relation to myself. After participating in groups and volunteer activities I realized how special this place is to the community and for the movement."

"The Center represents the community spirit. Here I can meet with others and share experience and hear diverse points of view. I've been in Long Beach a very short time but have met some wonderful people through the Center"

"The Center, Long Beach has been an integral part of me loving myself. Through my participation in support groups like Men's Rap and Men over 40. I am grateful! Thank you!"

"The gay and lesbian center has provided me resources for people living with HIV and has provided me with AA meetings. Thank you."

"The Center has been an important resource for me when assisting students with thoughts of suicide. A few of these students have come out to me and I'm happy to be able to tell them that there is support available for them here."