



July 2019

Donate Now!

Henry House - One Woman's Journey

By Bri Silva & Julie Dowling,

Co-facilitators of This Is Us, a support group for women living with or affected by HIV

Henry House is the place she went to die. It was a place that many, over the years, would also go to die in order to spare those they loved the burden of watching them wither away. It was situated among other ranch-style homes in a quaint residential neighborhood about 50 miles north of San Francisco. For three years Julie called this place home, a home that she shared with others who had received the same devastating news – their HIV was now advanced stage AIDS and they were dying. Today, 25 years later, people in the US living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) don't have to face this harsh reality any longer. With early intervention and medication adherence, PLWHA can expect to live just as long as their HIV-negative peers.

Early intervention means getting every newly infected person promptly into care. Medication adherence means consistently taking the medication regimen prescribed by your doctor. It sounds simple and it can be simple - if only it were that easy. There are many reasons why newly infected people don't seek out an HIV test; however, stigma against HIV is one of the biggest barriers to testing and treatment at every step along the way.

Julie might never have known her status if it weren't for that accidental needle stick in 1991...

Click [here](#) to read more

Register Your Support for State Legislation to Train Teachers on LGBTQ Issues

The cornerstone of The Spahr Center's work on LGBTQ Youth issues is a focus on building a safe and supportive environment in schools. We believe that, if teachers, administrators and support staff receive effective training about how to work well with LGBTQ students, we can lower current dropout rates and bullying. Our remarkable Youth Advocacy Coalition has trained 800 educators in the last two years, and is currently preparing to train additional teachers and administrators when school opens in the Fall.

Openly gay State Assembly member Todd Gloria has introduced [AB 493](#) to assure increased training of educators on LGBTQ issues statewide. Existing law establishes the policy of the State of California to afford all people in public schools, regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other specified characteristic, equal rights and opportunities in educational institutions. AB 493 would require every school to provide online training at least once every 2 years to teachers of pupils in grades 7 to 12, and to all other certificated employees at that school, on schoolsite and community resources for the support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) pupils, and strategies to increase support for LGBTQ pupils in order to improve overall school climate.

The Spahr Center prefers in-person training of educators on LGBTQ issues to online training, but nevertheless believes that AB 493 represents a big leap forward in building more supportive school environments for our youth. We encourage *Spahrkle* readers to help secure the bill's passage. The bill has passed the Assembly on a vote of 61 to 0, receiving bipartisan support. It is now being heard in the State Senate, where pushback from groups opposed to LGBTQ rights is strong. Please call Senate Republican Leader Shannon Grove today at (916) 651-4016, and ask her to assure passage of this important civil rights legislation.

The Spahr Center is Speaking Up About Our Clients' Needs Before Marin Government. Can You Help on August 19?

The Spahr Center is increasing its presence before Marin County Boards and Commissions, as well as with Department leadership, to educate public policy makers about the needs of LGBTQ youth and seniors, as well as people living with HIV, and encourage increased County support for our work. We are also participating in two processes this summer that will help the County to establish strategic direction and allocate funding for senior, mental health, substance abuse and community development programs.



On August 19, the Commission on Aging is holding a listening session in Tam Valley to hear the concerns of seniors living in this southern portion of the County. If you are a senior living in Strawberry, Homestead or Tam Valley, we encourage you to attend and speak up! Time and location are being determined. Email dvangorder@thespahrcenter.org to sign up, and Dana will make sure you receive all the detail about this important meeting.

THE CAUSE TO BE PROUD CAMPAIGN WAS A GREAT SUCCESS! Thank you to our many donors!

The Spahr Center's *Cause To Be Proud* fundraising campaign kicked off on March 1st with a direct mail campaign, and continued through June 30th, with our Pride Picnic pulling up the rear. We are thrilled to report the following:

On April 18th we participated in a national fundraising event, Give OUT Day, which is the only day of dedicated giving for the LGBTQ+ community. Our loyal friends and supporters did not disappoint, donating a total of **\$5,043** in a 24-hour period!

Next, we held a fundraiser at Falkirk Cultural Center on June 10th that re-introduced our supporters and new allies to our life-affirming work. The event was a definite success. We heard moving stories from some of our clients and participants about how The Spahr Center has been crucial to their well-being, raffled off five beautiful artworks, and enjoyed a charming evening among friends!

At Falkirk, we announced a fantastic \$5,000 grant from long-time supporters Miguel Ruelas and Sid Hartman, with a challenge to triple that gift - which we easily accomplished.

It is because of your care and support that we were able to exceed our goal for *Cause to be Proud*. When all was said and done, the entire campaign brought in a whopping **\$40,797.20!** This helped us to end our fiscal year on June 30 with a small surplus of funds that give us a nice head start on a new year of fundraising. We can't thank our many donors enough for their commitment to The Spahr Center's important mission.

Announcing Marin Sister Talk, a New Discussion Group for Women Over 50

The Spahr Center is pleased to announce that a new 8-session women's discussion group will be starting in September on Saturday afternoons. Here are the essentials:

Who: Marin County women over 50 who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or transgender/non-binary

What: Topics will be suggested by the group and may include themes such as creating community, the dating scene, or dealing with grief and loss, with an emphasis on how we can support one another in finding fulfillment in this phase of our lives

When: Saturday afternoons, 3:00 – 4:30 pm, twice a month, beginning in September (dates TBA)

Where: The Spahr Center - 150 Nellen Avenue, Corte Madera

Facilitator: Laura Fannon, Psy.D., Clinical Psychologist

Participants: Maximum of 15 participants, pre-registration required

Cost: There is no cost to participate, though donations are welcome

To register, or for more information, call (628) 214-8939 or send an email to sistertalk@thespahrcenter.org

Thriving in Marin! The Spahr Center's HIV Long-term Survivors Support Group

By Will Boemer, Group Facilitator

In December 2017, The Spahr Center re-started a support group for HIV Long-term survivors similar to one that had run for many years, and since its start, we've had some 50 clients involved. The former group was facilitated by new Spahr board member, and current support group member, Bobby Moske. Recognizing that anyone living with HIV or AIDS has lived through some frightening personal times the group meets to talk through many life issues and topics, some HIV-related and others not.

In an effort to acknowledge the successes we have had over the years, both individually and as an aging HIV populace, we are still very much aware of our issues and challenges - but work to put these in perspective. Group participants can't have survived all the "slings and arrows" of HIV/AIDS for years (and decades for many of us!) without having had some very successful survival strategies and experiences! And so, our name is now The Spahr Center's HIV Long-Term Survivors Support Group – Thriving in Marin, and our new motto is "*Striving to THRIVE in spite of it ALL!*"

As facilitator of this support group, I look forward to hearing from any and all HIV-positive Spahr Center clients who wish to participate in our gatherings. We meet twice per month, on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings, from 6:30-8 pm, at The Spahr Center located at 150 Nellen Avenue in Corte Madera. If you have questions or concerns I can be reached at willabo@pacbell.net

ARE YOU AN LGBTQ VETERAN? We Recruit!



LGBTQ Veterans of the North Bay are forming a social organization that advocates, educates and has fun. We believe we are Stronger Together. We have an opportunity to foster camaraderie, learn, grow and heal by sharing our stories and resources. Those of us believing that "*We're Not Done Yet*" can serve our communities in a variety of

ways, such as reading to a veteran in hospice, or driving someone to a medical appointment). This will be a membership driven organization, built from the ground up, with a **first organizing meeting on September 28th** in the Community Room at the Corte Madera Towne Center. We are nonpartisan, but

will educate and advocate for the full recognition and equal protection of all LGBTQ Veterans and Servicemembers.

Look for our booth at the **Marin Volunteer Fair on September 7th**, 11 am-2 pm (Children's Island at Marin Civic Center.) For more information, please contact Anders Winther at gaypatriotveteran@gmail.com or (415) 408-6078.

Senior LGBTQ Luncheon

Our next LGBTQ Senior (all ages welcome!) Luncheon is just a few weeks away! We'll be having an "end of summer" BBQ at the beautiful Marin Yacht Club. Join us for a wonderful lunch among friends on Wednesday, August 28th from 12:30 pm – 3 pm. Don't forget to bring your loose change and put it into one of BUDWING's World Banks! He will *double* or *triple* your contribution and all proceeds will go towards our Senior Program Fund. Please RSVP by Friday, August 23rd to Bri at bsilva@thespahrcenter.org or give her a call at 415-886-8554

(please advise in your RSVP if you have any dietary restrictions)

AIDS Walk May Have Been Cold and Foggy, But Our Hearts Were Warm - And There's still time to contribute

By Andy Fyne

It was a chilly, foggy and windy morning in Golden Gate Park as the kick off ceremony began for this year's AIDS Walk on July 14. However, the Spahr Center's team warmed up in no time as we started our annual 10K walk. We finished the morning, still in dense fog, but with bodies and hearts warmed by the dedication of the group. Also heartwarming was the fact that we raised **\$13,741** to benefit our HIV/AIDS programming. Each team member who sent an email to their friends and family members raised, on average, \$1250. That's amazing, though not entirely surprising because each member believes deeply in The Spahr Center's mission. Each member composed a fundraising email about why our programs and services are so important to them. That's the type of appeal that gets results.



My email was about our goal to get to zero new HIV infections and zero deaths from HIV disease in Marin. That is a powerful message, not just because it is important to me personally, but because we can achieve this awesome goal with sufficient resources and energy. And when my friends, acquaintances and family members read how important ending HIV is to me, they responded generously.

If you missed making a donation, our 11 team members can still collect funds until August 9. We would appreciate a generous gift that will move us closer to our 2019 goal of \$16,000. That, by the way, is another awesome goal we can achieve. Please click the button below to donate directly to any of the team members you would like, and celebrate the reasons why The Spahr Center is important to you.

[Donate to our AIDS Walk team](#)

Cartoonist's take



Support Groups

The Spahr Center offers a variety of social support groups. Below is a list of the groups, with a short description. Please click any of the groups to learn more!

HIV Groups

- [Latino Support Group](#) - this group is for Latinos living with or affected by HIV.
- [Women's Support Group](#) - this group is for women living with or affected by HIV.
- [Thriving in Marin](#) - this group is for any individual who identifies as a "long-term survivor" of HIV.

LGBTQ Groups

- [Caregiver Groups](#) - these groups are for parents/caregivers of gender expansive and/or questioning youth
- [Youth Drop-in Groups](#) - these groups are for any LGBTQ youth
- [Senior Discussion Groups](#) - these are facilitated discussion groups for LGBTQ identified adults of any age.
- [Men's Brown Bag Lunch](#) - this is a casual discussion group

for men that meet for lunch
and discussion.

Donate Now!

Upcoming Outside Events

Here are some events coming up in August that are not sponsored by The Spahr Center; however, we think they might be of interest to you.

- 8/13 - [Conversations from the Heart](#) - hosted by [SURJ Marin](#)
- 8/15 - [LGBTQ Senior Breakfast](#) - at Sam's in Novato
- 8/15 - [Healing w/ Feeling](#) - an Attitudinal Healing Support Group
- 8/20 - [LGBTQ Senior Game Day](#) - at Sam's in Novato
- 8/24 - [NB LGBTQ Senior Picnic](#) - Potluck style picnic @ Miwok Park
- 8/27 - [LGBTQ Women's Coffee](#) - at Sam's in Novato

Until Next Time.. Spahrkle!

The Spahr Center | 415-457-2487 | 150 Nellen Ave, Suite 100

