

Pacific Center – Berkeley, California – 510-548-8283

## Pacific Center Says ‘Good-Bye’ to C.E.O., Frank Gurucharri

by *Ralph Thomas*, Board President

Frank Gurucharri, C.E.O. for the last 6½ years is leaving the Pacific Center and moving back to Florida to start a new job. We are all sorry to see him go, but he is leaving the Pacific Center a legacy of a strong organization and good will in the community. There will be a farewell party for Frank on Sunday afternoon, March 13<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Pacific Center. (For more information, check the PC website.)

Frank will be remembered by many for his teaching about “do the relationships first, then do the business.” Frank doesn’t just tell people this, he lives it. Frank has taught all of us about valuing the connections we have with others. “Do that and the business takes care of itself.” This philosophy is very practical and contributes to the smooth working relationships you may have experienced at the Pacific Center with staff and volunteers.

I first met Frank in July of 1998 through a mutual friend. The years 1997 – 1998 were very tough years for the Pacific Center. The Center was reeling from a debt of \$70,000, staff morale was low and many staff members had quit. There was no Executive Director and only three part-time staff at that time. The board president, Peter Dahlin, was filling the role of executive director and we were having a hard time recruiting people to join the board of what looked like a sinking ship. I invited Frank to join the board.

Frank met with Peter and me and told us that we needed an Executive Director more than we needed a board member and he offered to be

*‘Good-bye’ continued on page 6*

## Youth Program Update

by *Bridgette Bissonnette*, Youth Program Director

We’ve experienced some major changes since the last newsletter including the graduation of some incredible Voices Members, Junior Bo, Andy Duran, Jessi Stern and Zane Lewis. We’re so thankful for the time, energy and dedicated commitment they each gave to the LOUD program. Undoubtedly they will continue challenging, questioning and growing with the consciousness and confidence they’re known for.

We are eternally grateful to our last Youth Program Director Mateo Cruz, for his three years of outstanding service to the Pacific Center and the LOUD program. He has moved onto Health Initiatives For Youth (HIFY) in San Francisco. We miss him and wish him the best.

That leaves me with a new position, lots of new and dedicated youth and an incredible program. I’m excited to say that the new Voices leaders, our Coordinator Tommy Dongni-Wang and I will be working hard

*‘Youth Program Update’ continued on page 4*



**LOUD Voices Leadership team:**

Bit, Carlos, Emily, Isaiah, David Gonzales, Sammy, DB. (Left to Right)

The Pacific Center receives its operating funds from private donations, corporate donations, The California Endowment, the City of Berkeley, County of Alameda, State of California, Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, San Francisco Foundation, the Horizons Foundation and the Partnership Foundation.

## Welcome to New Board Member Tina Cansler

**Tina Cansler** is an Oakland native and comes to the Pacific Center with a passion for community development. An entrepreneur of sorts among the nonprofit sector, Tina has recently started her own business as a consultant for nonprofit organizations. While her heart is in the community, she also has a knack for oil painting and enjoys the arts in general. A socialite, Tina gives much of her time to her friends and local families.



## Peer Groups Under Review

by Amy Wooldridge

*The PC Board recently formed an Ad Hoc committee to look into how the peer groups can be encouraged to take more responsibility for supporting themselves. The committee is chaired by Amy Wooldridge. [Editor's Note]*

The peer support groups are an integral part of the Pacific Center. They are the foundation we are built upon, beginning with our very first group for transgendered folks over 30 years ago. Thousands of people have participated in the groups over the years. There is no grant funding for the peer group program, group members are asked for a donation at the end of the meeting. Our groups are donating less money to the Center than they historically have in the past.

Several Pacific Center board members, Brian Johnson, Michelle Dixon and I, met recently to brainstorm how we can support the peer groups while also encouraging the groups to be more invested in helping support the Center as a whole.

Michelle, Brian and I discussed what the Center offers the groups and what they can give back to the Center. The Center provides all peer support groups with facilitator training, ongoing facilitator support and in-services plus interns from the Mental Health Clinic to provide direct support to facilitators and help steer participants who need additional support into therapy. Other unrecognized services the Center offers is the free room usage, electricity for the lights, plumbing for the restrooms, training for front desk volunteers and the list goes on. All of these services that the Pacific Center provides cost money. And peer group participants (plus everyone who has and does come to the Center!) can give back to the Center by making a donation each time they come to a group. For just the cost of a cup of coffee, participants can help the Center keep these critical services available.

Just a couple weeks ago, I had a wonderful experience with the Women's Rap, which offered unconditional support to all women for over nine years. Recently the facilitator, Caren, chose to end the group due to consistent low attendance. She held a final farewell potluck and over 30

*'Peer Groups' continued on page 6*

**The Pacific Center for Human Growth**  
*Serving the Community since 1973*  
**510-548-8283**  
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The Pacific Center for Human Growth is a member of the National Association of LGBT Community Centers and the Gay/ Lesbian Therapist Association (GAYLESTA).

*Pacific Currents* is a publication of the Pacific Center for Human Growth. Questions, comments, or suggestions about content should be directed to the editor.  
Email: ralph@pacificcenter.org

Winter 2005

### About Our Mailing List

The Pacific Center does not lend, sell or give away its mailing list to any outside organization. However, the Pacific Center does allow organizations that are sponsored and operate under the Pacific Center umbrella to mail announcements to the Pacific Center mailing list. If you do not want to receive mailings from PC sponsored organizations please let us know. "Attention: Mailing List."

## Farewell from C.E.O. Frank Gurucharri

Dear Pacific Center,

Back in Florida, in the early 70's I remember reading about the Pacific Center in the *Advocate* and wishing I had a community center in my back yard. How much easier it would have been. Just as I was finishing a doctoral program in psychology with flying colors, the head of the department kicked me out because he found out I was gay. He wasn't going have any "sicko" graduating from his department, not under his watch. So, I left with my Masters degree to begin a wonderful 30-year career in mental health and substance abuse.

My day jobs were about training counselors in both fields. I also taught college classes, had a private practice and consulted on public policy for the State of Florida. Just by luck I had the opportunity to bring together the alcohol and drug agencies into a consolidated substance continuum in a 16-county area. Then, by some more luck, I had the opportunity to connect substance abuse with mental health in that same region. Things were going along well. Great job! Super partner! Lots of friends! No challenges.

Then my partner got an opportunity to come West to San Francisco to work. I was packed before he could hang up the phone. I was coming out here to retire early and play. Not even two years passed and I got bored. But then I met Ralph Thomas, president of the Pacific Center board, and I found myself walking up the front steps into the front door of a Center that was born on the same day as my birthday, April 7 — that same center that I had read about and longed for during a low time in my life. But now, I was volunteering myself as a free Executive Director to serve my own brothers and sisters. Finally! After six months as a volunteer I became an employee.

Well, that was 6½ years ago, after many challenges, many more successes and dozens of absolutely wonderful people. I would not change a minute of it! The Pacific Center is truly a place of healing and love. It has that wonderful chaos of community and family. It has the heartbeat of being human. My wish is that this aspect of the Center never change.

And now I'm walking out the front door to open another chapter for myself. I go back to Florida, to my home near beach and water. Bruce, a long time Florida colleague found me out here. He's a great CEO of a neat and now very large not for profit agency in Mi-



**Frank Gurucharri**

*The Pacific Center is truly a place of healing and love. It has that wonderful chaos of community and family.*

ami and Fort Lauderdale. Guess what! Florida is mandating that mental health providers and substance abuse providers join forces. They are calling it "Behavioral Health Networks." It's a big change and scaring a lot of people. Bruce wants me to create a network in Fort Lauderdale, where my partner and I have a home. That's why I told you all that stuff above. It doesn't scare me. I've already done it once. Plus, I love putting things together for a better community. So that's what I'm off to.

I want to take all of you with me, but I can't. But I can thank you for all that you have given me, for all that you have taught me. Thank you for letting me serve. There are not enough words and words are not enough! I love you, Pacific Center and that means I love all of you.

Keep your arms open. I'll be back for the Senior Men's Support Group.

—Frank Gurucharri

Pacific Center's *pre-practicum* interns are Joyce Martin, Yin Siu, Montserrat Diaz, Luo-wen Wong. Together, this amazing group of interns (therapists-in-training) secured a \$1000 donation from a business-owner earmarked to beautify rooms at the Center. Interns and clinic staff worked hard over several weekends to paint and redecorate several counseling and group rooms. Congratulations on a fantastic job!



### *Pre-practicums*

Joyce Martin, Yin Siu,  
Montserrat Diaz, Luo-wen Wong

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## Youth Program Update

*(continued from page 1)*

on the programming for Voices, the Attic & the LOUD program as a whole. We are concentrating on political education, anti-oppression work and peer advocacy in the next year. We will be reaching to agencies around the Bay Area to network and bring an extensive and knowledgeable base of allied organizations and service providers together in the coming months.

With winter gone and summer just ahead, the LOUD (Loving Ourselves & Uniting Diversity) Program is in full swing. We have new things happening, old things to rely upon and the energy to sustain and grow.

Here are some highlights:

**THE ATTIC** Drop in hours Monday – Saturday 4 – 9 p.m. Use the computers, do some homework, watch TV, play Video games, hang out with folks... Come by!

**QUEER YOUTH RAP** Saturdays 5 – 6:30 p.m. For all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Allied youth 23 & under.

**SATURDAY MOVIE NIGHTS** Beginning @ 7 p.m. with pizza & snacks, hosted by Isaiah. All are welcome, 23 & under.

**15 & UNDER GROUP** Fridays 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. This is a chance to talk, eat, hang out, go round the Bay Area & do things with people who are Queer, Allies or Questioning 15 & under. Hosted by Sam'el and Bit.

**COUNSELING FOR YOUTH** Free counseling for youth 23 and under involved in the LOUD program.

**VOICES LEADERSHIP** Seven creative and motivated youth leaders run the Attic and LOUD program through their weekly Wednesday meetings at 5 p.m.

**YOUTH SPEAKERS BUREAU** Training young people to use their stories to present workshops in schools and organizations on Queer-phobia and anti-oppression.

As you can see we have a lot to offer. Thanks for all your continued support of Queer Youth & the LOUD program. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us here ([youth@pacificcenter.org](mailto:youth@pacificcenter.org)), check the website or come by and check out what's happening.

Bridgette Bissonnette  
Youth Program Director  
[Bridgette@PacificCenter.org](mailto:Bridgette@PacificCenter.org)  
(510) 548-8283 x514

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Kirston Berzon's Birthday

Donations for Jan., 04 – Jan., 2005

## HIV ANNOUNCEMENTS POSITIVE

**Positive** is a psychotherapy group in which male-identified queer individuals living with HIV/AIDS can explore feelings about relationships, intimacy, sex, health, and wellness.

Starting March 2005

Tuesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m. @ The Pacific Center  
2712 Telegraph Ave @ Derby

Fees are based on a sliding scale of \$10-45 per session. MediCal will be accepted in most cases.

For initial consultation call 510 548-8283 ext. 512 or 532. Wowlvenn Katzmilller, MFT trainee, and Jason Ranieri, MFT trainee, are students of Transpersonal Counseling Psychology at John F. Kennedy University and are supervised by Licensed Marriage Family Therapist, Nina Rodrigues, MFT38288.

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### HIV Support Group for Gay and Bisexual Men

Tuesday, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

The Pacific Center for Human Growth  
2712 Telegraph Ave. @ Derby

Prior enrollment is necessary.

Contact Peter Carnini 510 548-8283 ext. 240

This group is free. Donations are appreciated!

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### Mr. Sex @ the Steamworks

**Mr. Sex** is a psychotherapist who is at the Steamworks Bathhouse on Friday evenings. This is a safe and confidential space to talk about sexual issues, drug use, relationships, or whatever is on your mind. For more information contact

Peter Carnini, HIV Services Coordinator  
@ the Pacific Center, 510 548-8283 ext. 240.

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### Peer Groups Under Review

*(concluded from page 2)*

women were present to show their love for the group, see old friends and share stories about the vital role of the Women's Rap for them. It was a moving experience and proved to me yet again how important peer groups are for our communities.

At the next facilitator in-service training we will be talking about the role facilitators play in "passing the can," and we will discuss the active support we need from facilitators and groups to keep the Pacific Center a viable, vibrant and responsive LGBTQ community center.

## Good-Bye to Frank

*(concluded from page 1)*

a volunteer Executive Director since we didn't have money to pay an E.D. After six months we were able to offer Frank a half-time salary for the full-time work he was doing. After nearly another year we were able to make the position full time and the rest is history.

An Executive Director has to pay attention to finding money to keep things going, and Frank has done a great job in that area. The annual budget has grown from a low of \$250,000 to \$500,00. (I fondly remember the day in 2001 when we received the check from the California Endowment for \$225,000 for our first two-year grant. It was the largest grant Pacific Center had ever received.) Because of Frank, the Pacific Center now has funding relationships with the Horizon's Foundation, The California Endowment, the San Francisco Foundation, The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Foundation, the Partnership Foundation and the City of Berkeley.

Frank made major changes in the Mental Health Clinic, transitioning it from a private practice model of therapy to a public clinic model. The Clinic revenue has nearly doubled in the last two years because we see more clients and operate more efficiently. We also have a great training program for the interns that Frank has strongly influenced. There has also been amazing growth in the Queer Youth Program and the level of HIV/AIDS services offered.

A good measure of the effectiveness of a manager and the strength of a person's leadership can be found in the thoughts of the people that work for him and work with him. Come to the farewell party and talk to board members or staff members if you want to know how amazing he is.

There is never a good time to have a man with such talent, skill and wisdom leave an organization, but as a result of Frank's leadership and hard work the Pacific Center is in a good position with both strong programs and stable funding behind them. The staff are talented and hardworking and a great group of people and the Center has a good reputation in the Community. We are in a good position for going forward.

Frank, we wish you the best of luck.

We will miss you.

## Volunteer with your community!

Give a little and we can give you so much...

Be part of your lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

Make new friends. Learn more about the East Bay LGBT community.

Play an integral role in keeping it strong.

Learn new skills. Improve current skills.

Volunteer as a valued Front Desk Volunteer just three hours a week.

Greet visitors to Pacific Center

Help callers find LGBT resources.

Make a difference in your community.

Give vital information. You can be part of the solution!

For more information on volunteering, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator

Michael Drennan at 510-548-8283 x225

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## 15 & UNDER QUEER, QUESTIONING & ALLIES YOUTH GROUP

**WHAT'S UP?** Come talk with folks like you about what's going on in our communities, go round the bay area, plan activities and eat some food with friends. This is your group, so come do your thing!

**WHERE?** The Attic Youth space at the Pacific Center's LOUD Youth Program. 2712 Telegraph Avenue (@ Derby (across from the Willard Pool) in Berkeley.

**WHEN?** Every Friday from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

**WHO?** YOU (of course), your friends and your hosts Bit and Sam'yel.

### QUESTIONS?

Call (510) 548-8283x514

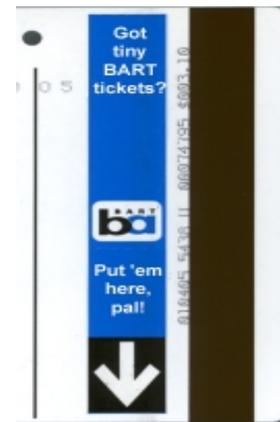
Email: [youth@pacificcenter.org](mailto:youth@pacificcenter.org)

Online: [www.pacificcenter.org/queeryouth.html](http://www.pacificcenter.org/queeryouth.html)

## Help PC by Volunteering Your Home for a Social

We need a community member willing to offer their home for our spring Therapist Partnership Network gathering. You need do nothing but attend and enjoy. We will supply food and beverages and take care of clean up afterward. If you can help out, please contact Pacific Center board member E.J. Koch, MFT at 510-287-8833.

The Therapist Partnership Network is a special group designed for psychotherapy professionals in our community who have an interest in supporting culturally competent therapy for individuals in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community who are most in need. For an annual contribution of \$100 members support the valuable work done by the Pacific Center's mental health clinic.



## Attention BART riders!

If you ever have leftover blue BART tickets with small, unusable amounts left on them, don't throw them away. Donate them to Pacific Center! One of our volunteers will collect and redeem them, then exchange the ticket so that Pacific Center will get a cash donation.

So look for the donation box at Pacific Center and drop in your tickets (blue tickets only), or mail to:

Attn: BART/David V.  
Pacific Center  
2712 Telegraph Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94705

*Make a Difference for Pacific Center*

## United Way Planned Giving

You can use the **code 3473** for your United Way payroll donations to **The Pacific Center**. If your employer participates in payroll deduction donations to the United Way, you may designate that your personal donations go to The Pacific Center. Your donation will help ensure that the Center is able to continue offering support, information and services to your community.

Your support is crucial to enable the *Pacific Center* to continue its role as a vital resource to our community. Please take a moment and send your donation today.

- |  |  |
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**THE PACIFIC CENTER FOR HUMAN GROWTH**

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