

VCH's SMART Fund Supports the Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered, Bisexual (LGTB) Generations Project

Helping aging LGTB people feel safe and accepted is the goal behind the Generations Project. The project is based out of The Centre, a community resource providing support, health and social services, and public education for the well being of lesbians, gay men, transgendered and bisexual people and their allies in Vancouver and throughout BC.

“Historically, many LGTB people were closeted due to oppression and homophobia,” explains Chris Morrissey, Project Coordinator, “they feared losing their job, and in some cases they feared for their personal safety.” Studies show that LGTB people generally experience

lower health status because of barriers to accessing appropriate care resulting from oppression and discrimination. Combine these with the invisibility of aging, and the results can be devastating.

“This project reflects an innovative approach to age-specific service delivery, education, and community development,” explains Lezlie Wagman, SMART* Fund Coordinator. “It will increase health and well being for aging and older LGTB people through the development of program and services, education within the LGTB communities, and sensitivity training with care providers and facilities.”

The LGTB Generations Project is off to a great start with new staff in place at each of the partners agencies and a first ever all generations Pride event at the 411 Seniors Centre at the end of July. Morrissey has been busy meeting with community members and service providers who are interested in developing resources for aging and older LGTB people and

opportunities for younger and older LGTB people to come together in safe, supportive, and mutually beneficial ways.

A poster depicting LGTB people has been developed for community centres and other groups who provide services to an aging population. Pamphlets were also produced through the Generations Project for home support workers and peer counselors. “The response has been positive,” says Morrissey, “both by LGTB workers who see these brochures in the organization and feel there is a level of acceptance, but also by healthcare workers who read the information and find it helpful for knowing how to deal with LGTB patients and clients.”

For more information, call The Centre at (604) 684-5307 or visit their web site at: www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com

**VCH's SMART Fund supports cost-effective, innovative strategies for promoting and improving population health. The projects typically improve health determinants and build community capacities, skills and assets so communities can better identify and manage their own health needs.*



For copies of the poster, call 604-684-8449

Project objectives:

- To decrease barriers and increase access to culturally sensitive support and care that will contribute to health and well being for aging and older LGTB people
- To increase awareness about the needs of aging and older LGTB people within the LGTB communities, and with care providers and seniors' facilities
- To decrease isolation for aging and older LGTB people by developing a model of cultural sensitivity for senior-serving organizations
- To build community capacity through the provision of age specific assessment, counseling, therapy and referral; the development of a mentoring program, intergenerational activities, and peer support through Information and Referrals services