A BETTER NEW YEAR

CELEBRATING OUR 35TH ANNUAL AIDS WALK

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LGBTQ+ HIV COMMUNITY
MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR, DAVID HARROD

It is human nature to reflect upon the milestones of life as the calendar shows another year coming to a close. After the many challenges that 2020 brought, I entered 2021 hoping for something better but not getting my hopes too high. Then barely a month into 2021 something great happened. I received the honor of being appointed as Board President for Radiant Health Centers. There are not words to sufficiently describe my respect and admiration for each member of the board. I am proud to be part of this dedicated group of individuals who volunteer their time, talent and energy toward making Radiant Health Centers the premier center of excellence for LGBTQ+ health care in Orange County.

This year the board spent many hours developing and creating an updated strategic plan. This is a common task to undertake every few years to sharpen focus on how to carry out our mission. At Radiant Health Centers our mission remains the same, which is to provide the LGBTQ+ community with comprehensive medical services while continuing to serve those living with and affected by HIV. The board has been provided with in-depth overviews of current programs along with the vision of where services might be expanded, or new services can be added.

Thanks goes to the kind people at Desert AIDS Project (DAP Health) and the Los Angeles LGBT Center for opening their doors and sharing expertise and best practices. It should not go unsaid that the leadership of Radiant Health Centers’ CEO, Phil Yaeger, along with the dedication of the executive staff has been instrumental in building the agency’s vision for our strategic plan. Additionally, I am thankful for the more than 50 employees at Radiant Health Centers. These are the people who directly deliver upon our vision and mission working with those in our community who are most in need of our services.

Thank you for the role you play as supporters of our important work. You are the fuel that moves us forward and strengthens our outcomes.

Most Sincerely,

David Harrod
Board Chair

OUR VISION LGBTQ+ healthcare equity and the end of the HIV epidemic in Orange County.
The Nonprofit Success Pack was specifically designed to meet the “unique” needs of Nonprofits, aka NGOs or charities, to aid them in being successful with their mission. There is a lot to unpack just in the name itself! It’s a “Pack” because it consists of several puzzle pieces to meet those needs, sitting on top of Sales Cloud.

The first question that may come to mind, if you’re not working at a nonprofit, is “are nonprofits and businesses really that different?” The short answer is “no.” However, the way they do business can sometimes be quite different.

Nonprofits deal with people in a variety of groups: donors, volunteers, clients, sponsors, board members, and advocates, just to name a few. Some people connected to a nonprofit may fall into more than one of those categories. So you want to be able to associate a person with both the company they work for and where they have great influence to get funds donated, as well as the household where someone else may be a great advocate of your work (e.g. the person who donates the funds, may not be the same as the person with whom you regularly contact).

Add in the fact that Salesforce was designed to deal with business (Accounts), and it creates a great case for an out-of-the-box solution (the NPSP) to help adapt Salesforce for nonprofit needs, meeting many of the most common nonprofit scenarios. The Radiant Health Center team is looking forward to taking advantage of the wide range of capabilities available through the Salesforce Nonprofit Success Pack donor database to better serve those who support our work.

Staying current with technology is important for all businesses, including nonprofits that are subject to complex fund development management and tracking. This year we made the transition from an outdated donor database to the new and improved Salesforce platform with a specialized component for nonprofits.
Healthcare Remains a Persistent Struggle for Transgender Individuals

Research conducted by the University of California has yet again highlighted some of the healthcare challenges facing transgender people. This research indicates that transgender individuals still routinely face a lack of cultural competency, misgendering, treatment refusal and perceived systemic barriers from many providers. As the leading Orange County LGBTQ+ medical clinic, Radiant Health Centers is proud to provide safe, compassionate and stigma-free care for our transgender community.

A Center for American Progress survey found that half of all transgender respondents had experienced mistreatment from a healthcare provider. Negative experiences frequently lead to individuals avoiding further interactions with medical professionals, and to mental health issues and substance abuse. While laws aim to protect all individuals from gender discrimination, in practice they are often not enforced by medical professionals or insurers.

Transgender individuals report facing wide-reaching mental and physical conditions that lead to a drastically reduced quality of life. Recurring challenges include high levels of stress, anxiety, clinical depression and suicide. In fact, up to 40% of survey respondents report attempting suicide or experiencing psychological distress. Frequent cases of discrimination, intimidation and physical violence inevitably place a considerable burden on the physical and mental wellbeing of an individual.

Patients within the healthcare system may require a supply of hormones, counseling services and voice therapy. Additionally, high levels of HIV, STDs and substance abuse all require considerate and compassionate care. Unfortunately, many transgender individuals report dissatisfaction with the medical assistance they receive on these matters.

A climate of stigma, discrimination, prejudice and ignorance is a daily reality for countless transgender people. And while continuous attempts at education and understanding can lead to improvements in healthcare, education and the workplace, it is clear that more work is required.

Persistent attacks on physical and mental wellbeing cause high levels of stress and anxiety that resonate throughout a transgender individual’s life. Access to healthcare providers who understand these challenges is essential for rebuilding the trust eroded by poor treatment and hostility.

The legal system and healthcare providers can make important steps to reduce barriers to physical and mental healthcare. Funding increases for counseling and mental health services, training for staff, additional support for community health centers and improved laws to prevent discrimination and violence are just a few ways to make a dramatic difference to the lives of transgender individuals in Orange County – and across the country.

Radiant Health Centers is the leading LGBTQ+ medical clinic covering Irvine, Santa Ana and throughout Orange County. Our trained staff provides valuable services including HIV and STD testing and treatment, family planning, counseling and mental health services. To make an appointment, call us at (949) 809-8764 or request an appointment online at www.radianthealthcenters.org.
As research into COVID-19 is published, there have been clearer signs of the risks for the HIV community. Significant statistics show that people living with HIV had a 30% greater chance of developing severe symptoms.

To address the concerns of many people living with HIV, the CDC has published guidance for maintaining good health while undergoing HIV treatment. Among the most important steps is getting fully vaccinated as soon as possible. A weakened immune system could, however, make people with HIV more vulnerable even after vaccination.

Therefore, mask wearing, social distancing and good hygiene should still play a vital role. As always, maintaining good health through diet, sleep and HIV medicine are key to a strong immune system.

While people living with HIV may feel disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, other factors are at play. Researchers at the Yale School of Medicine and University of Michigan – working with limited data – found that factors like old age, heart disease, diabetes, liver disease and other comorbidities were more significant factors in the hospitalization of those living with HIV.

Nonetheless, the pandemic has put serious strain on many within the LGBTQ+ community. Economic uncertainty, mental health struggles and social isolation are familiar issues for many, and the pandemic has only exacerbated these issues. Thankfully, events like our AIDS Walk Orange County and Annual Gala offers the opportunity for individuals and sponsors to support the much-needed services offered at Radiant Health Centers.

Radiant Health Centers continues to support the LGBTQ+ HIV community, with staff and volunteers dedicated to providing support and care. People living with HIV are encouraged to make use of the many medical and social services available. These services include testing and treatment for HIV, STDs, and Hepatitis C, mental health counseling, sexual health services and support services such as housing, food, transportation and benefits counseling. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit many people hard, but the Orange County LGBTQ+ HIV community has continued to show resilience and togetherness throughout.

At Radiant Health Centers, our trained staff serves the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in Orange County with care and compassion. For more information we invite you to visit our website at www.radianthealthcenters.org. If you would like to make an appointment, call us at (949) 809-8764.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ HIV Community

Following the latest research, the World Health Organization (WHO) is recommending that people living with HIV be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccines. In the global fight to stem infections, members of the LGBTQ+ community undergoing HIV treatment are advised that the benefits of vaccination radically outweigh any slim risks.
Our 35th Annual AIDS Walk Orange County Raised Funds to Help Orange County’s HIV Community

Radiant Health Centers celebrated their 35th Annual AIDS Walk Orange County on Saturday, September 18. Everyone was excited that it was once again an in-person event at Bill Barber Memorial Park. The event included a “fun walk,” live entertainment, games and more with people participating individually, in teams and in memory of loved ones. The event also showcased an AIDS Walk memorial with AIDS quilts created by friends and family members of those who had lost a loved one to HIV/AIDS.

Hundreds of participants united to raise more than $120,000. These funds will help provide health and social services for our LGBTQ+ community and improve the lives of thousands of individuals and their families impacted by HIV in Orange County.

We want to sincerely thank each person who was able to participate in AIDS Walk OC this year, including the dedicated people who walked and volunteered at the event. Special thanks to our event sponsors, ADP, Shopoff Investment Realty, Gilead, Avita Pharmacy, Kaiser Permanente and Room&Board.

We count on your support and are grateful for your generosity.

Giving Thanks to our Loyal Supporters

On World AIDS Day, December 1st, Radiant Health Centers hosted our annual donor recognition reception at the beautiful Center Club in Costa Mesa. We welcomed a fully vaccinated crowd of more than 60 donors to our first in-person donor reception in nearly two years.

Jose Trinidad Castaneda, Council Executive Assistant to Irvine Vice Mayor Tammy Kim, presented Board President David Harrod and CEO Philip Yaeger with the City of Irvine’s first ever World AIDS Day proclamation. World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for us to unite with our supporter who join us in the fight against HIV. Together we demonstrate our support for people living with HIV and commemorate those who have died from AIDS related illness.

All of us at Radiant Health Centers are grateful for our supporters and community advocates who join us in the fight to stop HIV so that future generations can live in a world free from this disease. Together, we will insure health care equity for Orange County’s LGBTQ+ community.
Wendy Lords reflects on 30 years of service with Radiant Health Centers

When I saw the job posting 30 years ago for a position at AIDSS Services Foundation/Radiant Health Centers, I immediately had a sense that this could be a place where I would feel at home as a lesbian. I quickly found myself amongst friends in an environment where my talents and presence were valued and most importantly, I could be myself.

Over the years, the Radiant Health Centers team has built a family of services under one roof, which provides a safe place for our clients to seek wellness. Today Radiant Health Centers is recognized as the leading provider of LGBTQ+ health services in Orange County and I’m proud to have been part of this important journey.

We’re thrilled to announce that Radiant Health Centers’ Annual Gala will be back in person and will be held on Saturday, January 29th at the beautiful Grand Gimeno in Orange. Join us for fun, festivities, and reconnecting with old friends as we raise funds to support LGBTQ+ health equity and HIV care in Orange County.

To celebrate coming together again, this year’s Gala theme is Club Radiant. Dust off your platform dancing shoes and break out your favorite 70’s attire as we revel in the golden age of disco and boogie oogie oogie the night away beneath a glittery disco ball. In addition, we’re planning a fantastic line up of entertainment to help you shake your groove thing!

We’re also excited to announce that there will be two fantastic honorees this year receiving the Radiant Compassion Award – Alison Arngrim and Tony Morrison.

Alison is an actress and author best known for her portrayal of Nellie Oleson on the television series Little House on the Prairie. After her friend and “Little House husband” co-star, Steve Tracy, passed away due to complications of HIV/AIDS, Alison became a life-long AIDS activist and advocate working with numerous AIDS/HIV and LGBTQ+ organizations.

Tony is two-time Emmy Award winning producer for Good Morning America who for the first time this year shared his experience living with HIV. Since going public with his HIV status, Tony has been working hard to educate others about HIV/AIDS through his public platform and was recently named Plus Magazine’s Person of the Year.

This will be a night of the ages, so purchase your table today! To make sure everyone has a safe and enjoyable evening, Radiant Health Centers will follow strict CDC guidelines for COVID-19, and proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the event will be required for attendance.

We hope to see you there! Please visit our website for more information at www.radianthealthcenters.org
During this year-end sales event, Subaru of America will donate $250 to your selected charity, and I hope you’ll choose Meals on Wheels that supports Radiant Health Centers food pantry.