



Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender: Your quality of life matters.

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DECEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Counseling & Treatment

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Managing Holiday Temptations

For those who struggle with substance use, the holiday season can be a time of temptation, where alcohol and the possibility of escaping in a chemical haze abound. Because so many holiday celebrations include alcohol, its availability is more prominent than usual. In addition, many turn to alcohol and other drugs as a way to cope with the stresses the holidays bring.



If you are planning to give up your addiction as your New Year's Resolution, Montrose Counseling Center's Chemical Dependency Program may be just what you need.

The program is a state-licensed outpatient drug and alcohol treatment that includes an eight-week intensive outpatient program, individual counseling and transitional recovery aftercare services.

For those who already are in recovery, one of the ways to manage holiday temptation is to plan ahead. If you know that family gatherings stress you out, and that in the past you used drugs or alcohol to manage the stress, perhaps this year you may limit the amount of time you spend with your family. If you visit with friends who have a lot of cocktails, and you're sober now, bring your own beverage or mocktail.

Andrea Washington, LCSW, Chemical Dependency Treatment Program Coordinator, suggests, "In order to avoid relapse, people who have already admitted they have a problem with alcohol and other drugs should seek out 12-step meetings, which are available on holidays as well." She also suggests spending time with people who will remain sober or volunteering at local service organizations on the holidays.

"There is a marked difference between when people should get treatment and when they do," continues Washington. "People *should* get treatment *before* their drug use becomes a huge problem in their lives, but they often wait to get treatment until this is already the case." Washington suggests people consider treatment before they run into problems at work, with their significant others, with the law, medically, or financially.

What can the loved ones of people with addictions do to help? "Set better boundaries for yourself," says Washington. "Try not to enable your loved ones, but offer them support. Always, always encourage them to change unhealthy behaviors and to get help."

Montrose Counseling Center offers individual and group therapy for people who struggle with substance abuse. Our Intensive Outpatient Program is specifically designed to meet the needs of GLBT individuals and those living with HIV. When you are ready, we are here to help. Please call 713.529.0037 for more information or to begin the process by setting up an intake appointment.

Happy 30th Anniversary Montrose Counseling Center!



This month commemorates Montrose Counseling Center's 30 years of service to Houston's GLBT communities. MCC was the vision of a small group of community leaders, some of whom were also mental health providers, in response to the discrimination and, in some cases religious abuse, suffered by people at mainstream providers. When we first began, no mental health service provider in Houston was both accessible to and accepting of gays and lesbians. No service openly expressed concern for their problems and the belief that such problems might stem from factors other than sexual orientation. Montrose Counseling Center was created to be a safe and affirming environment where the mental health needs of GLBT individuals could be met.

MCC has continuously expanded to meet the needs of the communities it serves. As HIV/AIDS became widespread in our communities in the early 80s, we became one of the first service agencies in Houston to address the epidemic. When a client was set on fire by a neighbor who believed him to be gay, we began our Anti-Violence program so that survivors of hate crimes, sexual

What's New?

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Did you know?

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Clients past an hear your story has touched you Email us at mcc@montrose



Montrose The Joint Approval client sa Montrose report these concerns Renaissance Blvd.; O at <http://www.jointcor>



United Way of Greater Houston

assault, and domestic violence could receive counseling and support services. When it became clear that seniors were reluctant to make use of social services out of fear that they would have to go back into the closet, we began our SPRY program so that they would have a support system and service providers could receive training on how to treat GLBT individuals.

Montrose Counseling Center has come a long way in the last 30 years, and we are extremely proud that **in FY08, MCC impacted 45,233 lives:**

- 1,378 clients received **counseling** services
- 714 clients received **case management** services
- 1,397 participants were **tested for HIV**
- 26,298 persons took one of our **Education** classes
- 14,300 individuals received street outreach services through our **HIV Risk Reduction** program
- 944 callers dialed the **Gay & Lesbian Switchboard** for assistance
- 202 youth attended **HATCH** meetings or events

Today, MCC also has become a stable hub of Houston's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender communities, with our entire first floor designated for local GLBT nonprofit meetings, community organizations and events. We are proud that **Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender History [GCAM]** has made its home in the GLBT Cultural Center and we currently are speaking with **Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays [PFLAG]** about joining us. Whether your organization is looking for a permanent home or a one-time meeting space, we have options that'll meet your needs. Our largest room is perfect for a holiday party, dance, commitment ceremony, or movie screening. The smaller spaces are ideal for board meetings or workshops. **For more information about leasing and rental opportunities,** contact communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org or 713.529.0037 x372.

Better Business Bureau Publishes Stamp of Approval in HBJ Giving Guide

We are very pleased that Montrose Counseling Center is listed by the Better Business Bureau's top 50 Houston area Charitable Nonprofit Organizations in the 2008 - 2009 [Houston Business Journal](#) Giving Guide, based on income. Even more distinguishing, a comparison of those top 50 ranks us at number nine in terms of percentage of total expenses devoted to programs, that is the monies spent on programs divided by total expenses. Montrose Counseling Center has met and abides by the Better Business Bureau's [Standards for Charity Accountability](#). In FY08, 93 percent of our income went directly to client services, far exceeding the Better Business Bureau's recommendation of 65 percent. We know that when you are deciding to donate to a nonprofit organization, especially during the holidays, it is important that your donation be put to good use and to help the population you intend to support.



World AIDS Day Events Continue



Even if you weren't able to attend a local event on December 1, World AIDS Day, more observances are planned throughout the month.

A **Paper Chain of Remembrance** decorates Montrose Counseling Center's second floor lobby area through the month of December. Everyone is welcome to decorate a link in memory of someone or pass along a message of hope. The chain continues to grow each year as people from the community share their memories and experiences as a tribute to those who have been affected by HIV/AIDS.

In addition, Montrose Counseling Center is displaying, **HIV/AIDS Around the World** in the second floor lobby, showing the effect of HIV/AIDS in various countries. The display features both pictures and stories of how HIV/AIDS has impacted nations around the world.

Illuminations Project, Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall, Saturday, December 6, 7:30 p.m.

Montrose Counseling Center has been selected as one of the beneficiaries of Illuminations Project, a dance, music and comedy showcase held in observance of World AIDS Day. Performers donate their talent, time and energy and the Hobby Center donates Zilkha Hall. Tickets are \$25 - \$35. This year's Illuminations Project features Hope Stone, Resurrection MCC, Houston Ballet, The Debris Sisters, Houston Metropolitan Dance Company, Houston's Fly Boys, Shawn Welling's Planet Funk, City Ballet of Houston, Marcia Mink Anne Gill, Lone Star Lariats, Sara Sjolander, Urban Souls and Shy Anne. At the end of the performances, the audience is encouraged to come on stage to participate in a lighting ceremony to honor the memories of those we've lost to HIV/AIDS.

This year, the organizers of Illuminations Project, are reaching out to those who may not be able to afford to attend. Many people living with HIV/AIDS are on a fixed income or disability and live at or below the poverty line. The Empire of the Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star, Inc. is asking the community to consider purchasing tickets for \$25 to donate to People with HIV/AIDS. You may go to www.thehobbycenter.org and use the promo code "DONATIONS" to purchase tickets for people who otherwise could not be able to go.

Illuminations Project
"What does World AIDS Day mean to you?"

December 6, 2008
7:30 pm
Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets:
Orchestra \$35.00
Mezzanine: \$25.00

A Benefit For

- * AIDS Foundation Houston
- * Montrose Counseling Center
- * Legacy Community Health Services and AssistHers through ERSICSS

This years show is being presented in cooperation with
The Empire of the Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of the Single Star, Inc.
All donations may be tax deductible.
For more information please email at ILLUMINATIONSPROJECT@YAHOO.COM

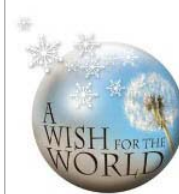
Featuring:

- * Hope Stone
- * Resurrection MCC
- * Houston Ballet
- * The Debris Sisters
- * Houston Metropolitan Dance Company
- * Houston's Fly Boys
- * Shawn Welling's Planet Funk
- * City Ballet of Houston
- * Marcia Mink Anne Gill
- * Lone Star Lariats
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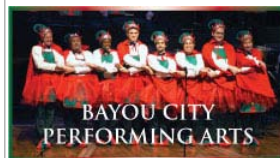
Bayou City Performing Arts Presents *A Wish for the World & WinterSong*

Whether you're in the holiday spirit, or in need of some holiday spirit, [Bayou City Performing Arts](http://www.bayoucityperformingarts.org) is presenting three concerts this season to ring in the holidays.



A Wish for the World is presented by the Bayou City Women's Chorus at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 6 and Tuesday, December 9 at [Unity Church](http://www.unitychurch.org). The first half of the concert will center on angels and spiritual forces of healing and peace for the planet, including "Wish Book," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and "An Angel Gets His Wings." The second half features traditional and secular tunes including "Sleigh Ride," "Boogie Woogie Santa," and "A Holiday Celebration: A Christmas on Broadway." Tickets for *A Wish for the World* are \$25.

At 7:30 p.m. On Tuesday, December 16, Gay Men's Chorus of Houston will present *WinterSong* at [Jones Hall](http://www.joneshall.org). The concert will feature many well-known holiday tunes and the festive camp the audience has come to expect. Celebrating its 30th Anniversary, Gay Men's Chorus of Houston will begin the holiday concert with a commissioned piece, "The Promise: A Christmas Miracle," by Robert Seeley. *WinterSong* will include traditional Christmas carols and crowd pleasers like "Deck the Halls," "Silver Bells," as well as other holiday favorites. This concert also will feature cameo appearances by the Bayou City Women's Chorus and the Bayou City Chorale (Bayou City Women's Chorus and Gay Men's Chorus of Houston). Tickets for *WinterSong* range from \$22 - \$55.



Tickets may be purchased through www.bayoucityperformingarts.org, or by calling 713.521.7464. Beginning Tuesday, December 2, all but the Jones Hall Performance Premium and Tier 1 seating will be **on sale**, buy one ticket at full price and get a second ticket for 50 percent off. To take advantage of this offer, you must call the Bayou City Performing Arts office at 713.521.7464.

Coming Out Support Group Begins January 28



As you look forward to the beginning of a new year, is one of your goals to become more open and honest about who you are? Coming Out is an ongoing process for anyone who identifies as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender. Every day, you are presented with choices about whether or not to "come out." When you're sitting in the dentist chair and she asks about your holiday, will you tell her that you and your partner went to Key West? When people ask if you are married, do you tell them about your life partner? Whether you are years into the process of "coming out," or whether you have just begun, you are welcome in this support group.

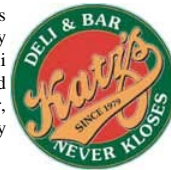
The group is open to all persons who identify as GLBT or questioning. It is a 7-week group from 6 - 8 p.m. every Wednesday, from January 28 - March 11. Participants may join at any time, and there is no fee to participate, although we will accept donations. You need not be a client of Montrose Counseling Center to join.

Each session will be composed of an educational presentation on a specific topic, followed by an open, confidential discussion of that topic. Some of those topics include Coming Out; Homophobia and Self-Loathing; Spirituality for GLBT persons; Gay History/Gay Pride; Coming Out to Others; Coming Out to Family; Coming Out in the Workplace; Healing the Hurt - Prejudice & Discrimination; Coming Out – A Lifelong Process.

registration is requested, but not required. For more information about the Coming Out Support Group, please call Jheri Bashen at 713.529.0037 x701 or Bianca Freer at 713.529.0037 x702.

Katz's Chooses MCC as December Charity

[Katz's Diner & Bar](#), located at 616 Westheimer in the heart of Montrose, has chosen Montrose Counseling Center as the December beneficiary of its charity tables. The next time you have a craving for fried pickles or a delicious deli creation, be sure to visit Katz's. Ask to sit at one of their charity tables, and Montrose Counseling Center will receive a portion of the proceeds from your order, at no additional cost to you. *Katz's never closes*, so support MCC by eating there any time of the day or night.



Save the Date - New Year's Eve

We are very pleased that the **SPRY Program** has been selected as a beneficiary of this year's **Houston Black Tie Dinner**, one of the premiere fundraising events for Houston's GLBT communities. This is the first time the SPRY Program has been chosen. This year's event, **BLACK TIES** and **BIG HEARTS** Charity Ball will be held on **New Year's Eve**, December 31, 2008 at Houston's new luxury Hotel ZaZa in the Museum District. For tickets and more information, please visit [Black Ties and Big Hearts New Year's Eve Charity Ball](#).



Montrose Counseling Center Featured on Fox26 News

On Wednesday, November 20, Fox26 reporter Randy Wallace came to Montrose Counseling Center to interview Executive Director Ann J. Robison, PhD, for a story he was doing about discrepancies in the Sex Offender Registry. The story aired on Tuesday, November 25 on the station's 9 p.m. news. To view the story, click [here](#).

Shopping Online Can Benefit You and MCC

This holiday season more than ever, people are doing their holiday shopping online. By using [Goodshop](#), you may avoid long lines and irritable salespeople, and a percentage of your purchase will be donated to Montrose Counseling Center by choosing us as your designated charity.



Goodshop allows you to shop at over 700 stores online, including Overstock.com, Target, Walmart, Best Buy, Macy's, Sears, Old Navy, and Barnes & Noble. Goodshop will donate up to 30 percent of your purchase. Yes, it's that easy. Shop for a good cause by *Goodshopping* for MCC this holiday season and all year long.

Goodshop is a part of Goodsearch. If you use [Goodsearch](#) as your online search engine, one penny will be donated to MCC for each search. Choose Montrose Counseling Center as your designated charity, and use Goodsearch every time you're online. If 1,000 people were to Goodsearch for MCC twice a day, MCC would make \$7,300 in a year. Get started today by [adding Goodsearch to your internet toolbar](#).

Give a Gift That'll Last Forever

How? Sponsor a room at MCC in your loved one's name. In this way, you or someone you know can become a part of our community's history by sponsoring a room at the only local organization proudly dedicated to Houston's GLBT communities for the last 30 years. Opportunities are available starting at \$5,000. Contact communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org or 713.529.0037 x372 for more information.

SPRY Celebrates the Holidays with Potluck and Entertainment



Are you 60 years or older and looking to build relationships with your peers? Join us on **Thursday, December 11, at 4 p.m.** for holiday cheer at the SPRY Holiday Potluck. Just bring a favorite dish to share and get ready to enjoy everyone else's delicious treats. Plus, this potluck is special in that Lone Star CyFair College's GLBTA group will be providing entertainment, in the form of a variety/ talent show. Don't miss it!

People are welcome to just show up, or they may Rsvp. If you'd like an email or phone call reminder about upcoming SPRY events, contact 713.529.0037 x350 or spry1@montrosecounselingcenter.org.

Remember, the **SPRY Drop-In Center** is open every **Thursday from 1-4 p.m.** except on Christmas Day

and New Year's Day. There will be coffee and opportunities to socialize with one another. Interested in volunteering to staff the drop-in center? Please contact 713.529.0037 x714 or 713.529.0037 x350.

Have old board games that you'd like to donate to the SPRY Drop-In Center? Contact 713.529.0037 x372 or communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org.

Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity CEU Class, December 19

Montrose Counseling Center's next [Continuing Education](#) training will be held at 401 Branard Street on Friday, December 19, from 1 - 5 p.m. The topic this month is **Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity**, and the speaker will cover the variables that influence cultural identity, including: race, ethnicity, gender, culture, ability, religion, age, HIV status, body type, sexual orientation and gender identity, and the issues that affect professionals' interactions with diverse populations as clients. Classes are open to everyone, and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for LMSWs, LBSWs, LCDCs, and LPCs. The cost for the HIV/AIDS training is \$30 if prepaid, \$40 at the door. A registration form is available [here](#). Please call MCC's Education Department at 713.529.0037 for more information.


Meeting Space for GLBT Non-Profit Groups

The [GLBT Cultural Center](#) is now open! Located on the 1st floor of MCC, at 401 Branard, this multi-use space is dedicated to GLBT nonprofit and community groups. Fully-accessible by elevator and stairs, a variety of rooms are available to rent or lease, from small meeting rooms to a large conference/event hall. Our largest room is perfect for a commitment ceremony or movie screening. The smaller spaces are ideal for board meetings or workshops. Amenities include electrical outlets, nearby public and private restrooms, kitchenette, and optional beverage service (coming soon). If you would like to **schedule a room**, check the [floor plan](#) (pdf) to determine which space best meets your needs and then check the calendar to determine its availability. Then, simply download [this file](#) and fax the first and last page to 713.526.4367. Someone from our staff will contact you to confirm your room's reservation. Email questions that are not answered in the attachment to mcc@montrosecounselingcenter.org.



Simple Ways to Support Us

Buy Holiday Groceries

 Who can think of the holidays without anticipating turkey dinners and delicious baked goods? The next time you visit your neighborhood Kroger, be sure to link your Kroger Plus card with MCC's account, and we will receive a donation every time you grocery shop through **Kroger's Neighbor to Neighbor Program**. Simply **Print this bar code** or [download this letter](#), and ask your checker to scan it the next time you use your Kroger Plus card. After that, every time you use your card, you will be supporting MCC!

Purchase Jewelry to Fight HIV/AIDS

Looking for the perfect gift for the person who has everything?

Buy him or her **The Bracelet™** with the ribbon. They are available through **Until There's A Cure®** Foundation, a nonprofit organization that raises funds



and awareness about HIV/AIDS. Mention Montrose Counseling Center with your order, and 25 percent of the sale will go to MCC. Bracelets are available in a variety of colors, designs, and materials. Visit [Until There's a Cure](#) to find the design that'll make that perfect gift.

Thanks 1,000,000!

We would like to thank all of our table captains at *The Secret's Out* for making this year's event a resounding success. We had a record number of attendees this year, thanks to your dedication and commitment. Thanks also to Suzanne Anderson, Justin Frazier, Lee McGuire, and Christopher Michael Wick, for speaking at the event. Thank you, Mario's Creative Catering and Elegant Linens, for the in-kind donations and to all of our attendees for their interest in and generous support of MCC.

Thanks also go out to Carl Han for hosting a brunch to benefit HATCH, the proceeds of which will go toward gas cards that will be provided to participants

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