



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

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## OCTOBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

### Counseling & Treatment

[LIFE Counseling](#)  
[HIV/AIDS Counseling](#)  
[Chemical Dependency](#)  
[Anti-Violence](#)

### Other Services

[Case Management](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Risk Reduction/Outreach](#)  
[SPRY Program](#)  
[HATCH](#)  
[Switchboard](#)  
[About Us](#)  
[GLBT Cultural Center Calendar](#)



United Way of Greater Houston

## Y-IKE-S!

Wow. It's been some month, hasn't it? As we near the one-month anniversary of Hurricane Ike's landfall, we would like to take a moment to thank everyone for their generosity of spirit and hard work in helping us reopen the moment our electricity was restored. We wish everyone a speedy recovery during this aftermath of the storm.

We know this hasn't been easy for a lot of our clients, friends, family and supporters. With varying degrees of impact, it's important to recognize that whether you sustained major or minor damage, lived for days on end without electricity, or were unable to go back to your evacuated home to check on your property after the storm, it is completely NORMAL to feel overwhelmed following a disaster. Even if others around you seem to be managing well, you probably don't see them at their worst. Try not to compare your situation with others, and realize that everyone needs time to heal, and there's no set limit on how much time it takes. Each person is unique.



Image courtesy of NASA



Stress doesn't always appear at the onset of a disaster. Some people may be in a state of shock for some period of time. It is not unusual for anxiety to appear several weeks or months after something as devastating as Hurricane Ike.

Who knew how important it would be to have a regular meal, shave, and a comfortable night's rest, especially in your own home? So many people are going through similar experiences; it may be helpful to talk to others or a therapist about what's going on in your life.

Some people may be tempted to try to escape their stress or inability to sleep by increasing their use of alcohol and drugs, or even prescription medications, following a disaster. Doing so, however, may cause additional strain on relationships, cause additional health problems, and create a greater dependency on alcohol and drugs in the future when coping with depression, stress or anxiety. If you find yourself having trouble controlling your alcohol and drug use, seek help. If you have attended 12-step meetings in the past or other substance abuse programs, now is the time to check in with your sponsor or attend a group. Montrose Counseling Center's state-licensed [Chemical Dependency Treatment Program](#) also is available.

One way to manage the stress of feeling like things are out of your control is to take control of things in your life that you can, such as eating well, getting exercise, and making sure you get enough sleep. Try to bring routine back into your life. Try also to remember that tension may be heightened when you interact with others, whether it's your partner, your family, local businesses, etc. Many people have a short fuse when they're overwhelmed, so keep that in mind for yourself along with the other people with whom you interact.

And again, if you find yourself in need of professional help, please contact [Montrose Counseling Center](#) to speak with a licensed therapist. We have more than 30 years of experience serving the Houston areas' Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities. Call 713.529.0037 to schedule an intake.

### Photo Gallery



Hurricane Ike blew out a couple of windows at MCC like the one above, also shown in close-up. We also had equipment blown off the roof, creating roof entry for the raging wind and rain to drench the contents of a storage room. See all the insulation and panels from the dropped ceiling in our parking area.



### What's New?

[Job Openings](#)  
[2008 CEU Training S](#)



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### Did you know?

Fortunately, Mo Center sustained during the storm have our power days and were a on Tuesday, Sep

### Clients past an hear your story

has touched you  
 Email us at  
[mcc@montrose](mailto:mcc@montrose)



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



With the help a Houston Food Bank representative, Case Manager Francis Bueno loads food into her truck, which will later be distributed to clients in need after hurricane Ike. After the storm, MCC provided clients with Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's), rice, bread, peanut butter, boxes of canned/ dried goods, cases of water, and buckets of cleaning supplies, such as masks, gloves, Clorox, Mr.Clean, spray bottles, sponges, trash bags and cleaning cloths.

## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Even with the hurricane taking the majority of our attention, we do want to talk a little bit about Domestic Violence in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, especially because we know that external stressors may have an adverse effect on an already troubled relationship. Domestic violence affects all types of relationships, including those in the GLBT community. Did you know that one in four gay, lesbian, and bisexual relationships, and one in two transgender relationships include some form of domestic abuse?

When we think about domestic abuse, we often focus on physical violence, but other forms of abuse may be just as damaging to victims and occur are even more common. All too often we hear from someone who says, "I'm not in a Domestic Violence relationship. My partner has never been physically violent with me." Violence is the same as abuse. Have you or someone you know ever been the victim of one or more of these types of abuse?



**Verbal abuse:** Using words to belittle, shame, or threaten the victim into doing what the abuser wants.

**Emotional abuse:** Using rejection, isolation, or exploitation to lower the self-esteem of the victim to make him/her more susceptible to doing what the abuser wants.

**Financial abuse:** Removing the victim's ability to work and/or restricting the victim's access to money.

**Spiritual abuse:** Not allowing the victim to practice his/her faith in the manner that he/she chooses and/or using one's faith as a means to set up roles in the relationship.

**Sexual abuse:** Forcing the victim to have sex with the abuser by coercion and/or forcible rape.

It is important to note that physical abuse rarely occurs separately from these other types of abuse. If you went on a first date with someone and he or she hit you, you probably would not go on a second date. Abusers often work slowly to break the spirits of victims before physical abuse occurs.

If you or someone you know needs assistance, please call **Montrose Counseling Center at 713.529.0037** to speak to an advocate who will discuss your options and help you put together a safety plan when you're ready to leave. You may qualify for a variety of services, including emergency shelter, hospital and police accompaniment, legal advocacy, case management, counseling, and support groups.

If you need to leave your current situation right away, please get to a safe location away from the abuser, and call the **Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston at 713.529.3211**.

Please know that you are not at fault, and you have the right to live free from abuse. We can help!

## GLBTQ Youth Leaders' Summit Saturday, October 4

If you are GLBTQ and between the ages of 16 and 24, please join us at the first meeting of the "**New Leaders' Network: Meeting the future of the GLBTQ community,**" which will be held this **Saturday, October 4, from 2 - 5 p.m.** in Room 101 of the **GLBT Cultural Center**, on the 1st floor of MCC, at 401 Branard. Organizer Pamela Paige Palmer, who is a graduate of HATCH's youth leadership development program, designed the event to bring together our community's youth so that they can share information about how to strengthen GLBT student groups and connect with community organizations. HATCH is sponsoring the event, but you do not need to be a member of HATCH to participate. Refreshments will be provided by the Houston Rainbow Pages and the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce. No need to Rsvp; all GLBTQ youth are welcome.

## Celebrate National Coming Out Day Saturday, October 11

Twenty years ago this October 11th, Dr. Robert Eichberg and Jean O'Leary organized the very first National Coming Out Day in conjunction with the Second National March on Washington for GLBT Rights. Celebrate this year's Coming Out Day by attending Pride Houston's annual "**Houston Coming Out! Celebration,**" on October 11 from 4 to 7 p.m. at a private residence in the Heights. Montrose Counseling Center has been chosen as a beneficiary of the event.



The Coming Out Party is a great way to meet new friends, reminisce with old ones, share coming out stories, or simply enjoy the refreshments that will be provided. You also may bid on the various pieces of art that have been commissioned especially for this event.

Tickets are \$20 and are available [online](#) or at the door. Click [here](#) for directions.

## *The Secret's Out* Rescheduled to Thursday, November 13


Out of respect for the vast number of Houstonians whose daily lives are still being affected by hurricane Ike and its aftermath, we have moved *The Secret's Out* from Tuesday October 7 to **Thursday November**

13.

RESCHEDULED AFTER HURRICANE IKE

**SAVE THE DATE**  
THURSDAY  
NOVEMBER 13

**THE SECRET'S OUT**



Come find out why Montrose Counseling Center is the **BEST KEPT SECRET** in Houston's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender communities.

6:30 p.m. Light Dinner & Presentation  
Arrive a half hour early for social time.  
Stay a half hour after for dessert and tours.

Montrose Counseling Center  
401 Branard St. • 1st Floor  
Houston, Texas 77006

Rsvp to your Table Captain or to 713.529.0037 x372 or  
communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org

Please add *The Secret's Out* to your social calendar on its new date. The event (including light dinner) is free, but we do hope to inspire you to support our work in the community. Tours will also be available. Please RSVP to [communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org](mailto:communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org) or 713.529.0037 x372. Seating is limited.

## SPRY Continues to Bring Together Our Community's Seniors




Although SPRY's federal funding came to an end in September, SPRY continues to help GLBT seniors, ages 60 and older, to experience prideful, bright, and bold rainbow years. During the three years in which MCC received funding from SAMHSA, we enrolled 350 individuals into the SPRY Program. The three-year grant from SAMHSA helped us develop the program and identify the needs of the community, as well as provided us time to seek ongoing funding from other sources. SPRY's **peer counseling, professional counseling, outreach, and case management programs** will continue uninterrupted, as we await word from United Way and the Area Agency on Aging for more long-term funding. Whether you would like to speak to a counselor, participate in a support group of your peers, or be connected with a social worker who can help you gain access to the services that will help you maintain quality of life, **SPRY** can help. For more information or to become involved with any of these services, please contact **713.529.0037**.

**SPRY Socials** are a great way to get connected with other seniors in the community. Stop by the **GLBT Cultural Center**, on the 1st floor of MCC, at 401 Branard, during one of the following events, or visit the **SPRY Drop-In Center every Thursdays from 1 - 3 p.m.**

**Thursday, October 9, 4 - 6 p.m., Halloween Potluck**  
No need to wear a costume, just bring some food.

**Sunday, October 26, 4 p.m., Miller Outdoor Theatre**  
Meet us on the left side of the hill as we prepare to enjoy the Sounds of Tejas with Vital on the [Miller Outdoor Theatre plaza](#). Don't forget to bring chairs, blankets, and a picnic supper!

### Wanted: Old Board Games & Playing Cards

 Why let them collect dust when they can be played in the SPRY Drop-In Center! Contact Ben at 713.529.0037 x350. Please be sure all pieces are intact.

### This Month's Continuing Education Features HIV/AIDS

Montrose Counseling Center's next [Continuing Education](#) training will be held at 401 Branard Street on Friday, October 17, from 1 - 4 p.m. The topic this month is **HIV/AIDS**, and the speaker will cover detailed information concerning HIV/AIDS, the immune system and the human body; transmission, prevention, testing, current trends in treatment, and statistics. 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.

### New Meeting Space Now Available 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](mailto:mcc@montrosecounselingcenter.org).



## 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.

## Simple Ways to Support Us... Have you done them yet?

### *Buying Groceries -- You Have to Anyway*

Through **Kroger's Neighbor to Neighbor Program**, you can support MCC every time you grocery shop! **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! Conveniently, you only have to scan the bar code once, unlike the Kroger SHARE cards of the past.



### *Goodsearching for MCC*



Make [Goodsearch](#) your search engine and [Goodshop](#) your online shopping tool! With Montrose Counseling Center as your designated charity, we'll receive money every time you run a search or make a purchase. Tell your coworkers, friends, and family about this easy way to donate to MCC without spending a penny!

### *Wearing Your Support on Your Wrist*

Purchase a bracelet and support MCC and **Until There's A Cure®** Foundation, a nonprofit organization that raises funds and awareness about HIV/AIDS. Be sure to mention Montrose Counseling Center with your order, and we'll receive 25 percent of the sale!



### *Giving*

MCC needs your support. If you would like to support a particular program or help us pay off the debt from our new building, please donate now by clicking on the Network for Good link at the top of the page. All donations are greatly appreciated and tax deductible! Are you interested in joining one of our giving levels or including Montrose Counseling Center in your will because you know that we are an organization that will continue to serve the GLBT community? Please contact [communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org](mailto:communitydev@montrosecounselingcenter.org) or 713.529.0037 x372.

### **Thanks 1,000,000!**

Once again we would like to thank everyone who contributed to helping make sure Montrose Counseling Center could open as soon as it could after Hurricane Ike. For the most part, that included dedicated MCC staff who left their homes and whatever situation they were left in to come in Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to clean up, board up broken windows, patch the holes in the roof, etc. Many sacrificed their own personal trauma to make sure that we could resume offering the culturally affirming, quality and affordable service that you have come to expect from Montrose Counseling Center.



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