

Issue Jun 10 - Jul 10

AAC NEWSLETTER



All for one and one for all

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NETREACH:
Reach out and
touch somebody

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**27th International
AIDS Candlelight
Memorial**

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25 YEARS
OF ACTION



It's huge. 85 Federal laws that discriminated against same-sex couples in social security, taxation, family law, the workplace, health, ageing and more have been reformed. To celebrate, 85 artists have created 85 T-shirts inspired by the changes. Find out which ones fit you.



wearitwithpride.com.au

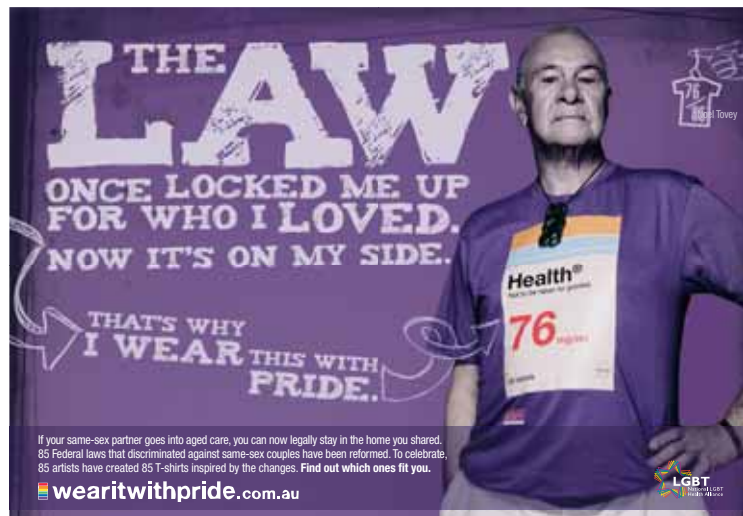
gay? bi? under 26? out there!

June 26th & July 3rd
10:00 am - 4:00 pm



a free workshop for guys under 26
attracted to other guys
we discuss relationships, sex, coming out,
and getting involved in the community...

For more info or to book:
AIDS ACTION COUNCIL WESTLUND HOUSE keiran@qnet.org.au or 6257 2855



If your same-sex partner goes into aged care, you can now legally stay in the home you shared. 85 Federal laws that discriminated against same-sex couples have been reformed. To celebrate, 85 artists have created 85 T-shirts inspired by the changes. Find out which ones fit you.

wearitwithpride.com.au

HAARTtoHeart

The team from the AIDS Action Council, an HIV Consultant Dietitian and Registered Nurse from the ACTGP are offering a free, on the spot check of your heart, together with cholesterol and sugar testing.

This simple procedure does require fasting, so you will need to come prior to eating breakfast - the finger prick blood test needs you to have fasted for at least 8 hours. However, any usual morning medication may be taken with a sip of water.

Following your blood test you are invited to join with us for a yummy and healthy breakfast!

You will also receive a copy of your results for further consultation with your own Doctor.

To express interest in participating in this testing, please phone **Nada** or **Marcus** on 6257-2855

email: nada@aidsaction.org.au or marcus@aidsaction.org.au

And.....

Let us know if you would prefer the Clinic to take place on a **SATURDAY** morning or **WEEKDAY** morning.

Thought-provoking presentations to watch on TED



■ **ELIZABETH PISANI:** Sex, drugs and HIV -- let's get rational
Armed with bracing logic, wit and her "public-health nerd" glasses, Elizabeth Pisani reveals the myriad of inconsistencies in today's political systems that prevent our dollars from effectively fighting the spread of HIV. Her research with at-risk populations - from junkies in prison to sex workers on the street in Cambodia - demonstrates the sometimes counter-intuitive measures that could stall the spread of this devastating disease.

■ **EMILY OSTER** flips our thinking on AIDS in Africa
Emily Oster re-examines the stats on AIDS in Africa from an economic perspective and reaches a stunning conclusion: Everything we know about the spread of HIV on the continent is wrong.



■ **KRISTEN ASHBURN's** photos of AIDS
In this moving talk, documentary photographer Kristen Ashburn shares unforgettable images of the human impact of AIDS in Africa.



TED is a non-profit series of conferences which bring together 'thinkers' and 'doers'.

These are just some of the great presentations available on www.TED.com.



Up Front

There was a policy initiative announced in 2008 that interested me greatly. This was the National Compact. We can all be forgiven for thinking it disappeared amongst a raft of other programs and policies deemed problematic like the ETS. However, almost unnoticed in March this year, was a report from the Productivity Commission which formed the basis for the Prime Minister's launch of "The National Compact: Working Together". In his speech, the PM said;

"Today marks a new era of collaboration between the Australian Government and community and not for profit organisations, which help many of the most needy and disadvantaged people in Australia."

The compact is a statement of principle above all, and recognises the importance of community in increasing community capital, which thereby provides for a society that can more easily meet the aspirations and wellbeing of its members.

I find the idea of community capital quite significant, particularly in its ability to recognise a whole range of assets that may otherwise be taken for granted. As the chart illustrates, total capital is made up of three broad categories, and

we work predominantly in the area of Human and Social Capital.

Human capital is each individual's personal skills and abilities, physical and mental health, and education. **Social capital** is the connections in a community - the ways in which people interact and relate to each other. The simplest connections are connections to family, friends and neighbours. On a larger scale, we form connections through community and volunteer organisations.

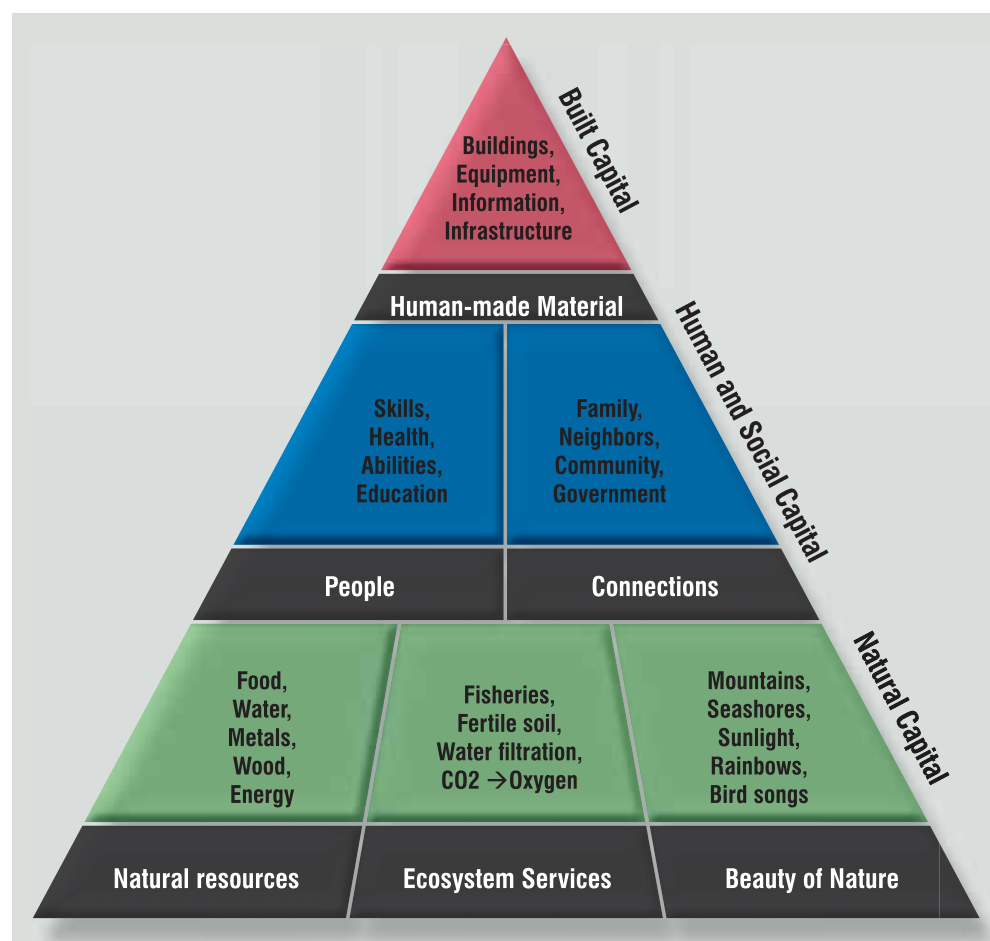
The recognition of human and social capital lies at the very heart of the AIDS Action Council, and I am delighted that for the first time they are explicitly incorporated in our strategic plan. For example, our focus areas include statements such as; to resource affected communities by providing support and education opportunities... and; facilitate a supportive environment for the sexuality and gender diverse communities in the ACT.

During one of our stakeholder consultations assisting in the development of our strategic plan, Tim Bavinton of SHFPACT commented on a tension he observed between our goals of facilitating and our goals relating to direct service provision. This is perceptive and identifies something that we confront regularly. We work to a community development model, in which we believe that through the empowerment of individuals and communities, all members are able to experience greater health and wellbeing. For many of the communities we serve, we are not members ourselves as individuals or as an organisation, but for others we are. This is a reason we choose our language carefully and avoid giving an impression of speaking for people who speak for themselves. Facilitation lies in promoting an environment where communities can express themselves safely and confidently and an environment where they are heard.

In this context, addressing issues around social and human capital is very much core business for organisations like the AIDS Action Council. Communities comprise people and connections and often our role is simply to join people together. We do this by providing the use of Westlund House, advocating on particular issues, administrative support and developing and distributing information resources.

We also are a part of a network of community organisations in the ACT, and so we see the advent of the National Compact as something quite promising. At the very least, we hope that it will lead to a greater appreciation of the role of the community sector, a commitment to greater resources and an understanding of its need for strength and independence.

Andrew Burry



The Community and Us

Lexie Jury

The first time I heard about SWOP I was a receptionist at a studio. When SWOP came in to visit the workers and I got an almost polite 'hi we are SWOP and we are here to see the workers'. That was the interaction between SWOP and management at any studio. When I became a sex worker however there was a full 360 degree turn. SWOP would sit and chat with me, passing on Ugly Mugs (information about dangerous clients) and other pieces of information that were important. But the thing that stands out to me the most was the difference in the way they treated me.



One of the other things that stand out in my memory was when I reported an Ugly Mug to SWOP which eventually led to him being charged. The workers were great in taking the information and they supported my decision to charge him, but there were no suggestions as to where I could go for support outside of the sex worker community. And as wonderful as they were, the SWOP workers were not counsellors.

Fast forward a couple of years and now I am part of SWOP. When I started with SWOP I was here only for the workers. I didn't think that I would need to interact with any one else, after all this is the sex worker's outreach project.

I soon realised to make a meaningful difference to sex workers in the ACT, SWOP would have to try something new and not just sitting there and agreeing with how unfair things are for the workers. One of the things we were finding that workers were not happy with was how they are treated when they disclose they are a sex worker to service providers, like doctors. SWOP also found that there were some places we could not get into or where management were not as welcoming to SWOP as some others.

The first thing we dealt with was management. They are the first people we see at the door they essentially have the power to decide to let us in or not. We stopped treating the receptionists like

they were the enemy and now stop and ask how things are going. We now try to include management in what SWOP is doing. Managers will let us know if they think we need to redo the new workers training or if they are concerned about workers not doing health checks on the clients and so on.

The next thing to do was to create links with people who sex workers interact with or could have contact with. This led to the Sex Workers Awareness Training. We get people who have contact with sex workers to come along to this training as we can bust myths and show people

how in control we really are. This has worked really well. We now have a list of sex worker friendly people who we can recommend to workers. In turn workers are happy to see the people on this list and feel that they are not being judged and can disclose their sex worker status. We have had everyone from the police and sexual health doctors to nurses, rape crisis and disability support workers.

When I started with SWOP I did not realise just how important including the community outside sex workers was going to be. It has proved to be as important as doing outreach to the workers.

Wills...
finance...
housing...
workplace...
family...
relationships...
immigration...
reproduction...
...advice.

Getting ready for the cooler weather?

To wile away the cooler months why not take the time to sort through the things you may have been putting off, legal discussions need not hibernate for the winter. Take advantage of the free legal advice service through the AIDS Action Council of the ACT for its members and communities. Not a member of the AIDS Action Council? It's easy to join call 6257 2855 or join on the night.

30 minute consultations are available from **6.00 pm** on the following evenings:

Thursday 24 June
Thursday 22 July
Thursday 26 August

Solicitor in attendance
John Davey of Herm Legal & Migration Services has extensive experience and a strong track record in advocacy, particularly in areas of discrimination affecting GLBT communities. John is also a registered migration agent (# 0851129). We thank Herm Law & Migration Services for providing this service on our behalf.

Appointments are recommended. Call Westlund House on 6257 2855 during business hours to make an appointment or for more information.

Herm Legal & Migration Services

AIDS ACTION COUNCIL

WESTLUND HOUSE
RESOURCE CENTRE

AIDS Action Council of the ACT
P 02 6257 2855 | F 02 6257 4838
aidsaction.org.au

All for one and one for all

Keiran Rossteuscher

In January, the Australian Federal Government released their report (with stylish matching brochure) *A Stronger, Fairer Australia*. This is their version, I mean vision, of a 'socially inclusive' Australia. This long awaited report, which was launched with all the fanfare and excitement that comes from wearing a beige cardigan to church, was going to herald Australia into a new, enlightened and inclusive era. After so many years of neo-conservative governments fostering fear and otherness, we were finally going to emerge, eyes blinking into the light.

Now I have worked in the community sector for over six years and I can tell you 92 pages of report, 24 pages of gloss and umpteen number of hours of the PM's staff time does not social inclusion make. If you write a report and no one knows about it, does it make a sound?

So what is this magical panacea of all social ills we call social inclusion? Social inclusion is the idea that by ensuring that people are included and able to meaningfully contribute to the broader community, such as through work (paid and unpaid), education, group participation or something like that,

they will be overall healthier people. By people being healthier mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually and so on, they reduce the burden poor health has on society (read, the budget).

At the risk of sounding cynical, with our ever fiscally aware politicians talking about increasing the productivity of the nation (ask not what your country can do for you, but how much you can do for your country), social inclusion is at the fluffy end of the spectrum for making people more productive and minimising the chances they will be exposed to various risks that lead to poor health, and therefore, are less productive. This is opposed to the more hard-line methods of increasing people's productivity such as whip cracking and making people work longer hours.

Now social inclusion isn't the problem, it is the approach being used by the government I have issues with. I have never felt very comfortable when large, cold mechanisms such as government and bureaucracy try to do the warm and fuzzy stuff. I find it particularly disconcerting when it is talked about as a new innovation. Anyone who has ever worked with people, especially those at risk or disadvantaged, respond to this 'innovation' as stating the bleeding obvious!

The LGBT community has been particularly good at social inclusion, even if it has not always been considered in these terms. Everything from groups like BearsCanberra and the Qwire, which have been around forever and a day, to more recent developments such as the Canberra Kings and FUSE Magazine all help include people into a thriving community. These provide chances to meet and interact with like minded people, engage in discussion, take on responsibilities and feel connected to a larger network of people when people can often feel so isolated by their sexuality or gender identity from the broader community.

If that group you have always wanted doesn't exist yet, why don't you try starting it yourself? It could be the group or venture that we have always needed, tapping into that unmet need. If you need help, the AIDS Action Council and Westlund House are great resources.

So did we really need to wait on tenterhooks for our Fairy Rudd-Mother to deliver this report? Well it sure does look and sound good, but I think that the LGBT community in particular can carry on business as usual.

What is social capital?

David Mills

The traditional wisdom is that money makes the world go 'round, and after years and years of economic 'rationalisation' it's a hard attitude to get past. The reality is that money is just easy to measure. Whether we are looking at a small business or a huge country, we look to the financial bottom-line to determine whether it is in a good or a bad position; but does it really tell us the full story?

Increasingly we are recognising that there are things that are difficult to value – even impossible – in dollar terms. Well, slowly. Putting a dollar value on our environment seems ridiculous, but we try; how much is clean air worth? How much is it worth to save an endangered species?

Social capital is one of these things that are difficult to measure. It tries to describe the relationships between people and the value they hold. For example, it has been argued that the social capital in the average suburb has generally declined over the years from where neighbours would once care and look after each other to being lucky to have even met.

Social capital is the sense of looking out for one another and being part of a wider community which is vital for our health and wellbeing. It is even argued that it is the 'glue' that holds society together.

Why is our social capital eroding? Why are we becoming increasingly isolated as individuals and less involved in the communities around us? Pushed harder and harder to work towards financial gain, those of us working have less time and energy to contribute to the society around us. Fewer people not in employment volunteer their time and skills because volunteering is not seen as valued (from the perspective of the AIDS Action Council, let me tell you that it is valued!) or because of competing needs.

The AIDS Action Council is built on social capital, and it is one of our biggest assets. Recognising the importance of social capital to our health and wellbeing we use community development to build the collaboration and networks between organisations, community groups and individuals. Being there for one another really is priceless.

NETREACH: Reach out and touch somebody

Keiran Rossteuscher

The internet has been accused of stealing the thunder of many institutions that were once relied upon to provide help to those who had nowhere else to go. I think particularly of telephone help lines. For a whole range of reasons, people have moved away from resources like THROB and WISH in the ACT, and GLCS in NSW. It is easier to tap in a search term than it is to tap out a number and speak to someone – even if it is anonymous. It is also now possible to talk to ‘people like me’ by using chat rooms, especially those found on personals websites, like Gaydar.

Now it is this safety that comes from being able to sit behind the anonymity of a profile, and not worry about wayward phone numbers being listed on bills and so forth that the Council is looking to capitalise on as we continue to look at ways of connecting with the community. This is a strategy known as Netreach.

Netreach is not a new concept. It is similar to what many people understand as outreach, going out and engaging target groups, but rather than going to nightclubs or beats, we are doing it online. Many of the AIDS Councils around Australia have been experimenting with different methods for Netreach on the various websites that appeal to many of our target groups. Now many of the sites have established their own rules about the way

Netreach is able to be done, and we feel the time is ripe to have a go.

We have been working thoroughly on our old guides for the volunteer THROB and WISH operators to make them appropriate to the issues we are dealing with today, but also so they are relevant to the online format. Netreach will be able to cover issues around coming out, accessing support or the community, as well as basic information about HIV, STIs, sexual health and other issues relevant to the punters.

We will most likely start our Netreach on Gaydar. Volunteers will be cycled and have an anonymous profile that indicated that they are volunteers of the Council. This will minimise chances of people getting attached to one particular volunteer if they know what day and time they would be on. Punters will be available to contact either via the chat rooms or through emails to their profile, but the role will be quite passive as the rules for Gaydar are such that the volunteer isn't allowed to initiate conversation, the punter must approach them. All our volunteers will be given appropriate training, have access to their guide, will log their conversations and will also regularly debrief with their supervising staff member at the Council to make sure they are ok with how it is all going. One of the biggest benefits to using volunteers over staff is that it allows this work to be done outside of



regular business hours, when the chat rooms are more likely to be filled with guys.

But this is only the start. As soon as Manhunt and other websites become accessible for this kind of work, we will look at entering into those sites as well. And as technology continues to evolve, so does our work. GRINDR, an iPhone application that shows guys how far away other guys with the application are (think Gaydar in your hand and with GPS) and the ability to chat, is seen as a potential opportunity for future Netreaching.

If you would be interested in being a Netreach volunteer, or would like more information about the Netreach program, please contact David Mills on 6257 2855 or email david.mills@aidsaction.org.au.

In the August/September 2009 edition of the Newsletter, Andrew Burry was quoted in an article about the Council's progress with technology about the exciting possibilities that technology like web 2.0 held for us and the work that we could do. Nearly 12 months later Facebook is now considered part of our regular communications cache, much like posting messages on ACTQueer. We continue, however, to look at the possibilities that technology has and the ways that we can take advantage of it to help us in the work that we are doing.

- Aidsaction.org.au is our flagship for online work. Think of it as an online foyer to Westlund House, it is used to promote our work, campaigns, where you can find out all about us, PLWHA ACT and SWOP ACT as well. Our site was recently optimised for easier use on Smartphone's.
- The Yahoo Group ACTQueer, is still used as an online noticeboard to promote opportunities for the community, when we are running events or programs, when new resources are available and when we need to call for help.
- Qnet.org.au, our youth website, provides a great deal of information to LGBT young people and the moderated forums continue to be used as a way for them to connect with one another and discuss issues that affect them. The Council regularly posts on there about events and opportunities that are of interest to the young people.
- Facebook has proven to be quite hit and miss so far. It has helped us raise awareness of events, and the work that we are doing to people who may otherwise have little understanding of the day to day work of the Council, but we are not sure if it represents any more bums on seats or hands on deck. We also know that those people connected to the Council's staff profiles (Keiran Rossteuscher Aac and David Mills Aac) and the Westlund House Resource Centre groups' page will often not be connected to ACTQueer.
- The AAC has for many years had a presence on and off at Gaydar, where we have historically targeted the men who use that site with ads to promote groups, STRIP clinics, PEP and a range of other of interest items. To date though, this has been a reasonably passive presence, where we are interspersed between ads for porn, adult toys and dance parties.

27th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial



Nathan Boyle, Amnesty International ACT



Keynote Speaker Brady, HALC



This year, more than 100 people came together on the 16th of May at services at the All Saints Anglican Church and the National Museum to remember those who we have lost over the years to HIV.

Brady from the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre was the keynote speaker, describing many of the barriers people who are living with HIV even today still face. Nathan Boyle from Amnesty International ACT introduced the Canberra Declaration on HIV and Human Rights and invited attendees to sign it. For more information about the Canberra Declaration, please visit www.aidsaction.org.au.



Heartmoves: Exercise for people with chronic conditions

HEARTMOVES



What is Heartmoves?

Heartmoves is a low to moderate intensity exercise program, managed by the Heart Foundation, which is suitable for people with risk factors for or stable chronic conditions, (including heart disease, obesity, diabetes, respiratory conditions, falls prevention and arthritis), or those who have not exercised recently. Heartmoves is also suitable for younger people who may want a gentle introduction into exercise, including people who are obese.

Participation in a Heartmoves exercise session can: lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol control, manage weight, improve wellbeing and quality of

life, manage diabetes, improve balance and flexibility, improve sleep, improve bone mineral density with arthritis management, and prevent falls.

Heartmoves is social, friendly and non-competitive. The leaders are trained to offer different versions for each exercise, to meet all individuals' needs and allow individuals to exercise at their own pace. These include seated versions of the exercises.

Classes are currently available in Conder, Gordon, Fadden, Weston Creek, Bruce, Narrabundah, Chisholm and Queanbeyan.

For more information on Heartmoves please refer to the website

www.heartmoves.heartfoundation.org.au

or contact

Diane Percy at the Heart Foundation ACT on 62692653

or

diane.percy@heartfoundation.org.au



Dieticians Clinic

Tuesday August 10th 2010

Jenny McDonald is a well known HIV Dietitian and Treatments Officer who has worked in the area of HIV nutrition for many years. She has been conducting clinics for People Living with HIV/AIDS and the AIDS Action Council for a number of years.

Jenny will be in Canberra to conduct another Clinic at Westlund House on Tuesday 10th August 2010.

Appointments are available from 9.30am – 3:15pm

For bookings and further information please contact Marcus or Mick at People Living with HIV/AIDS on 6257 4985.

FOR YOUR DIARY

June

- 16 **Volunteer Meeting**
6:00 – 7:30 pm Westlund House
- 17 **Stitch & Bitch, knitting and conversation for gay men**
6:00 – 8:00 pm Westlund House
- 24 **Free Legal Clinic**
6:00 – 9:00 pm Westlund House
- 26 **Out There workshop for guys under 26 years old**
10:00 am – 4:00 pm Westlund House

July

- 1 **Stitch & Bitch, knitting and conversation for gay men**
6:00 – 8:00 pm Westlund House
- 3 **Out There workshop for guys under 26 years old**
10:00 am – 4:00 pm Westlund House
- 4-11 **NAIDOC Week**
- 29 **Stitch & Bitch, knitting and conversation for gay men**
6:00 – 8:00 pm Westlund House
- 15 **Stitch & Bitch, knitting and conversation for gay men**
6:00 – 8:00 pm Westlund House
- 18-23 **XVIII International AIDS Conference, Vienna Austria**
- 21 **Volunteer Meeting**
6:00 – 7:30 pm Westlund House
- 22 **Free Legal Clinic**
6:00 – 9:00 pm Westlund House

August

- 12 **Stitch & Bitch, knitting and conversation for gay men**
6:00 – 8:00 pm Westlund House
- 18 **Volunteer Meeting**
6:00 – 7:30 pm Westlund House
- 26 **Stitch & Bitch, knitting and conversation for gay men**
6:00 – 8:00 pm Westlund House
- 26 **Free Legal Clinic**
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Westlund House
- 28 **Annual AIDS Action Council Trivia Night Extravaganza**