



Case Statement



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By a conservative estimate, Stanislaus County is home to nearly 40,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people. More than another 75,000 live in the surrounding counties of Calaveras, Merced, San Joaquin, and Tuolumne.* The Stanislaus PRIDE Center (People Respecting Individuality, Diversity, and Equality) was founded in 2005 to assist this ever-growing GLBT population. Our purpose includes filling the gaps in existing services, fostering a more positive and cohesive GLBT community, and providing a facility to stand as a regional resource “hub,” thereby addressing the various issues our area’s GLBTs face.

Because of an absence of a centralized information source, the current resources, support systems, needs, and desires of the GLBT community have been hard to discern. Moreover, because available resources are limited, some people have no choice but to travel to find activities and events that speak to their lives. Some GLBTs may even decide to move out of the region to more welcoming places where their unique needs can be readily met. Others simply endure in relative isolation, unable to find a safe and comfortable place in which they feel a sense of belonging - a community in which they can participate fully and are encouraged to do so.

There are also those who can’t leave but are unable to find the support they need to lead healthy and productive lives. GLBT youth especially are vulnerable. Because of the continued and broad lack of acceptance, they may develop emotional problems or turn to substance abuse. Twenty-eight percent of all GLBT youth drop out of high school. GLBT youth are six times more likely to commit suicide and account for 30% of all youth suicides. Suicide is the leading cause of death among this population.

The Stanislaus PRIDE Center was created as a positive force against such disturbing trends. Our mission is to provide resources to strengthen and support GLBT persons in Stanislaus and surrounding counties. We are committed to bringing together and working with allied groups to reveal the true and diverse face of our community. Above all, we seek to foster an environment in which people can be who they are, freely striving to enrich their lives and contributing positively to the place they call Home.

*These figures reflect 2004 census numbers employed by e-Podunk.com which established the GLBT population index for Merced at 105(+5%), for Modesto as 106(+6%), and for Stockton as 115(+15%) - all higher than the national figure of 100 - resulting in an average of +8%.

The Need for a Center

In a 2004 survey of over 150 GLBTs and allies, nearly 67% of respondents specified a GLBT community center as a needed resource. These results were confirmed by a January 2005 conference of local GLBT leaders, followed by the SPC's first Survey of Needs in which 65% of 150 respondents indicated that they, themselves, would use at least some of the services a regional community center could provide. By extrapolating from these data, there was no doubt that our region needed a service organization such as the Stanislaus PRIDE Center (SPC). Services provided include:

- Support groups and peer counseling (93% indicated they would use such services or believe they would be used by others)
- Informational media about issues, news, and events of concern to GLBTs (89%)
- Referral services to local professionals, businesses, and organizations (90%)
- Health information, including information on HIV/AIDS, STDs, and safer sex (91%)
- Educational outreach to businesses, organizations and schools (85%)
- Cultural events, including readings, lectures, films, theatre and music (91%)
- Social and other community-building events (90%)

In developing and providing its programs and services, the Stanislaus PRIDE Center was especially sensitive to meeting the needs of ethnic/racial minorities and the disabled—groups long neglected and grossly underserved within the GLBT community as a whole. Understanding that no one is equal until all are equal, the Stanislaus PRIDE Center is devoted to ensuring fair treatment and access for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity/race, age, religion, or disability.

Current and Planned Programs and Projects

Our founding project is ongoing: developing our referral list, compiling informational resources, and keeping this material available at all times through our website, stanpride.org. We continue to update, develop, and enhance this informational clearinghouse regularly, perpetually increasing its value to our region's GLBT community.

Through Summer 2006, the most recent quarter for which data are available, the website was visited by approximately 575 unique guests each month, making more than 1000 visits and viewing more than 4000 pages—figures which have more than doubled during our first nine months online, and which continue to grow monthly. In addition to information about the Stanislaus PRIDE Center, the site features news, a community calendar, guides to services and resources currently available through other agencies, and our region's first and only directory of GLBT-friendly businesses, professionals, and organizations - the *PRIDE Pages*.

Originally launched as the *Equality Pages*, the *PRIDE Pages* currently list 117 businesses, organizations, and professionals, 85% of which were invited via direct mail.

To date, the response rate for the campaign is 5.25%--well above what is considered "successful" for direct mail. The directory is now available as a PDF and in a searchable html format on our website. A print version is anticipated for mid- to late-2007.

Since January 2006, the SPC has hosted a transgender support group. Led by transgender persons for transgender persons, the group meets twice monthly and has averaged 8 participants per meeting. Approximately 20 individuals have attended at least one meeting, and some have traveled from as far as the Bay Area to attend. The group is implementing an outreach program to spur further growth and awareness.

Since April 2006, we have published *PRIDE in Print*, SPC's quarterly newsletter, which keeps our donors and supporters up to date about SPC developments. Our newsletter is also distributed at regional GLBT-friendly businesses and organizations. Funded largely through advertising, *PRIDE in Print* sold out its first issue's ad space in three days. Within the week, the next issue had been sold. Each issue likewise brings a steady stream of response coupons, indicating desire to volunteer or donate to the organization.

In May 2006, we launched a series of monthly mixers, held at the Queen Bean Coffee House in Modesto. Our goal was to meet the expressed need for a family-friendly social networking opportunity for GLBTs of all ages, their families, and friends. Attendance averaged 14 per mixer. The program will be on hiatus through the 2006 holiday season. We expect to resume hosting the mixers in early 2007.

In June 2006, we hosted Stanislaus PRIDE Night as a combination fundraiser and celebration of GLBT Pride. Stanislaus PRIDE Night, an official Interpride event, was Modesto's first Pride celebration ever. It was attended by more than 400 people and netted more than \$11,000 for the SPC. Corporate "gold" sponsors included Ambeck Mortgage, Re/Max Executive Wallace-Kelly Real Estate, Gary Wagner Dermatology, John Willsen Dermatology and "platinum" sponsor Fat Cat Music House and Lounge, which generously housed the event. Plans are already underway for next year's celebration. We plan to include a family-friendly daytime event so that more people can enjoy Pride locally.

In support of other local groups, we have launched a program to distribute information about GLBT resources by placing literature racks in local GLBT venues. The first of these was placed in Modesto's Tiki Lounge, and our restocking data indicate that approximately 50 people per month make use of the literature. We are in the process of working with other local businesses to set up additional racks.

SPC leadership communicates regularly with local organizations and service agencies in order to build coalitions and centralize GLBT-relevant resources. We are working together to determine the gaps in resources and who is best suited to fill those gaps. This way, we can ensure that services are not being duplicated. Agencies with whom we have conferred include SCAP, PFLAG, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Haven's Women's Center, and El Concilio.

In addition, we are working with directors of the GLBT community centers in Sacramento and Solano and with the National Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Centers (NALGBTCC). Through this network, we are helping create a coalition of Northern Central Valley centers to pool resources and knowledge, so that each organization is strengthened and supported in fulfilling its individual mission.

Since our founding, we have simultaneously pursued a strategic media and public speaking campaign to further spread the word about our organization. To date, the SPC has been featured in multiple articles in the *Modesto Bee*, the *Bay Area Reporter*, and *Stanislaus Connections*. Our events and programs have been publicized through dozens of websites, as well as announced on local radio, furthering awareness of the organization and our mission.

All of our programs and projects have been and continue to be run by our Board of Directors, committee members, and volunteer staff, along with a few paid consultants for specific programs requiring professional expertise.

Several programs and services are slated to launch soon. These include:

- **Building Bridges** – providing GLBT-specific educational outreach tailored to be suitable to a variety of audiences; partly grant-funded. This is a diversity/sensitivity training program.
 - This program will be launched at California State University, Stanislaus, to educate and train undergraduate majors in psychology and education. Building Bridges will also provide in-depth training to graduate students in psychology that will help prepare them as professionals to understand and properly address the needs of GLBT clients. In the future, Building Bridges will be available to business professionals, corporations, and other non-profit organizations.
- **Helping HANDS** – providing referrals to medical and mental health professionals who are sensitive to the special health needs of GLBTs; partly funded through corporate sponsorships
 - This program will include an online database in which users can find appropriate local providers by entering criteria relating to their specific needs and desires. Providers will be required to complete a three part assessment and educational seminar. As developed by licensed MFT consultants to the SPC, it is planned that the seminar will count for CME credits under state licensing requirements. Our consultants will then interview candidates to determine their qualifications for the Helping HANDS network.
- **Mobile Technology Training** – teaching local GLBT groups, including Marriage Equality USA-CA, PFLAG, and others how to maximize their use of online technology for grassroots planning and organizational development; SPC's first grant-funded program

Our most important goal of all, however, was to establish a physical facility to serve as a central hub for the GLBT community. That main objective was achieved as of November 1, 2006. The Stanislaus PRIDE Center is now located in Modesto at 823 15th Street. It is a facility large enough to provide meeting space for current and emerging GLBT groups, as well space for modest-sized cultural and community events hosted by the SPC. Importantly, the venue makes it possible for the SPC to introduce additional programs and services, while enhancing the ones already in place.

As a result of our efforts, the SPC was honored with the Sloan Founder's Award at the 2006 Lambda Awards. The award is given by Sacramento's Lambda Community Fund to new GLBT organizations that show special promise of growth, strength and sustainability.

Our Governance

The Stanislaus PRIDE Center was founded by its first board of directors: Lisa Verigin, President; Jeff Gianelli, Vice President; Keith Highiet, CFO; Leslie Highiet, Secretary; Bobbie Felser; Linda Gianelli; Marilyn Mettler; Lewis Woodward; and Shirley Woodward. It's current Board and officers are:

- Keith Highiet, *President*
- Manuel Alvarado, *Vice President*
- Chuck Silva, *CFO*
- Leslie Highiet, *Secretary*
- Jeff Gianelli, *Board Member*
- Marilyn Mettler, *Board Member*
- Lisa Neary, *Board Member*
- Gina Polatta, *Board Member*
- RJ Moriconi, *Advisor to the board*

Collectively, our board has experience in business, communications, computers, education, finance, law, and personnel management. All members have experience with the operation and management of nonprofit organizations, including the establishment of other nonprofit corporations and grant funding. Officers are elected by the board to an unlimited number of staggered 2 year terms. Board members are not financially compensated for their service, and all contribute financially to the organization, making this a 100% giving board.

Currently, three committees handle the essential functions and duties of the SPC: Communications, Financial Development, and Programs and Services. At least one board member serves on each committee, joined by community members with skills, enthusiasm, and dedication to help the center grow. Committee chairs are board-approved and appointed by the President. All committee members serve an unlimited number of staggered one-year terms. Chairs report to the President of the Board.

Additionally, an Executive Committee - consisting of the President, Vice President, CFO and at least one Board Member - is called to meet as needed by the President.

Our Financial Structure

The Stanislaus PRIDE Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation and registered California public benefit corporation.

As an emerging public trust, fiscal responsibility, accountability and stability are all crucial to every member of our board. The first step towards upholding these values was to commit to being a 100%-giving board—a principle codified in the SPC's bylaws. As a start-up, our initial operating funds came from board members and a number of community members who believe strongly in our mission. The legal help we have received in the matter of incorporating and securing our tax-exempt status has also been generously donated.

We have since built upon our start-up funds by launching our first direct mail campaign, Jump Start 2006. In August of 2006 the Sustained Giving Circle program was enhanced to provide a more stable income stream by securing monthly donations via credit card.

To avoid over-reliance on any one source of funding, our CFO and Financial Development Committee have created a comprehensive fundraising structure. Our projected income lines include but are not limited to private donations, corporate sponsorships, public and private grants, and fundraising events.

We have further developed a three-part fundraising model. Monies received through grants and underwriting will typically go to providing programs and services. Unrestricted revenue received through events, targeted fundraising campaigns, and advertising in SPC publications will further support programs and services, as well as costs related to marketing and fundraising. The SPC's operational costs will be funded through ongoing monthly gifts made through our Sustained Giving Program. A three month budget reserve will be kept at all times, with any excess carried over to Unrestricted Funds.

Guided by this model, we aim to achieve complete financial sustainability for the SPC within three years.

Our 2005 budget showed a surplus for our first fiscal year. For subsequent fiscal years, we will establish a Contingency and Reserve Fund. At the end of each year, surplus from this fund will be transferred to a Trust Fund, towards the goal of providing a long-term, stable source of income for the SPC.

In 2006, our first full-calendar fiscal year, Stanislaus PRIDE Center has budgeted more than half of expenses to be used to pay for programs and services that we offer. We are committed to raising this to at least 65% in the 2007 fiscal year (our third year of operation).

Our performance as of 9/30/06 compared to FY06 budget is as follows:

Area	Budget	Actual	
Fundraising Income	\$23,407.50	\$19,051.16	82%
Grants	\$15,000.00	\$2,930.00	20%
Other Items	\$2,565.00	\$1,211.00	48%
Donated Items	\$2,812.50	\$3,563.00	127%
Expenses	\$25,057.50	\$16,699.64	67%
Donated Items	\$2,812.50	\$3,563.00	127%

As of 9/30/2006, SPC is holding \$26,040 in unrestricted cash. A portion of this will be used to completely fund programs and services currently in development.

The annual budget for the Stanislaus PRIDE Center is always available for public review and is available on our website.

A Dream Becomes Reality

For years, individuals have dreamt of establishing a local GLBT community center. Now, a group has come together to make this dream a reality through the Stanislaus PRIDE Center. For too long, the local GLBT community has lacked a focal point. It has been diffuse. The Stanislaus PRIDE Center now provides that central community hub which has been lacking. By bringing together and enhancing the welfare of all GLBT individual among us, we will bolster the well-being of the general community as a whole.

We hope you will join us in our mission to provide the resources and services that will make this vision a reality.