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# RECLAIM

Increasing Access to mental health support  
so LGBT youth may reclaim their lives from oppression

## THINGS INSIDE INCLUDE:

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## In Review: 2010

By the end of 2010, RECLAIM will have provided almost 100 LGBT youth with mental and Integrative Health Services (IHS) support. Of these youth, 85% report having been harassed due to perceived sexual orientation or gender presentation. 85% also report having considered suicide.

RECLAIM has been able to be a stable source of care in the lives of these youth despite the fact that 60% are without insurance. Unfortunately, we have had to turn away 50 requests for service due to lack of capacity to respond.

We engaged the MN Non-profit Assistance Fund to evaluate our organization. The consultant, **Steve Boland**, affirmed our status as a fiscal sponsee, supported the role of the advisory board and found that we had sound financial practices and were fiscally healthy. He also recognized the need to add a staff person to assist with development and volunteer coordination.

After a few meetings at RECLAIM one youth said, "I'm so grateful to be a part of the RECLAIM community." We celebrate that we are not just providing services, but indeed belong to one another in important ways. Daily, participants comment on how much it means to them to have a place like RECLAIM available in their lives.



## Gender Exploration Group

Although RECLAIM is only just over a year old, this group has been meeting every Thursday night for the last eight and a half years and is co-facilitated by **Janet Bystrom, Alex Nelson** and **Mike Grewe**.

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, the group had a reunion in which over 20 youth returned to express their gratitude and share memories. So many of them started by saying, "If it weren't for group, I seriously don't

know where I would be."

This group is the place where young people begin to articulate their hopes and fears and encourage one another to find the strength to live their lives with authenticity and power.

### Gender Group Retreat

In August, RECLAIM hosted a two-day retreat with 9 youth in Northern Minnesota. Planned by youth with the help of **Alex Nelson**, the re-

treat focused on themes of consent, self-care/protection and overall health and wellness all through the lens of gender identity. **Diane Long, Susan Raffo and Nissa Phillips** led group and individual exercises to encourage developing skills in body awareness and self-defense. Simple pleasures such as swimming in the lake, eating healthful food and sitting by the fire, were deeply appreciated by many.



**Diane Long**  
IHS Practitioner &  
Volunteer  
Coordinator,  
RECLAIM

## Integrative Health Services

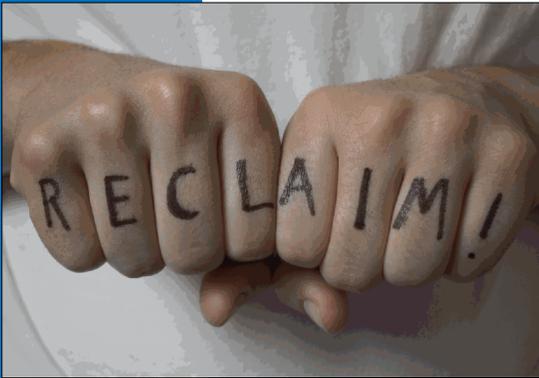
The majority of the youth who seek support at RECLAIM have experienced severe physical and sexual abuse. The effects of abuse and multiple layers of marginalization are often internalized and manifested through substance abuse, eating disorders, smoking, and self-harm. RECLAIM has begun intentionally pairing complementary modalities of care such as acupuncture, massage, nutrition and chiropractic care to enhance and accelerate the benefits of talk therapy.

In her role as Volunteer Coordinator, **Diane Long** engages professional practitioners who give their time to provide individual on-going consultations to youth. We wish to thank **Diane Long, Rhys Preston and Christy Lillibridge** for initiating IHS services at RECLAIM and the **Rainbow Health Initiative** for providing financial support to more formally develop this model of care.

**“ I had massage today through he integrated health clinic and it was a wonderful experience. Not only did she give me a massage, she gave me techniques to help relieve my stress in everyday life. It was very helpful. ”**

IHS Client

## RECLAIM Families Group



RECLAIM Families is a support group for youth exploring their gender identity and the people who love them. Our meetings consist of one shared hour and one hour in which youth and their support people break into separate groups. The group hit full stride this summer. Seven families have found comfort in shared stories and have

voiced appreciation for the opportunity to talk about whatever topics they find most pressing.

This group is led by 4 dedicated volunteers including, **Terry Dickelman, Florence Dillon, Jed Graham and Amelia McGinley**. They are each gentle and wise and create a safe and non-judgmental space and support the importance of family connection and communication.

## Community Trainings

In addition to serving individual clients, RECLAIM also performs trainings and provides consultation to promote awareness and skills around LGBT youth mental health. These are a few of the places we have been invited to speak in 2010.

Adler Graduate School

Beyond the Boxes  
Conference

Freeport West, Inc.

MN AIDS Project

MN School Social Workers  
Association

Ramsey County

Red Door Clinic

School Social  
Workers, Mankato

U of M Counseling

Avenues/GLBT Host Home

## Volunteers

RECLAIM owes much of its success to the dedication of volunteers who have contributed literally hundreds of hours of support. We wish to highlight some people who have made significant contributions and deeply regret any oversights:

**Gary Braley, Cory Bystrom and Christine Mounts** have collectively contributed well over 100 hours of hands on work and consultation related to computer systems, networking and development of client data base specifically tailored to meet the needs of RECLAIM.

**Terry, Jed, Florence and Amelia**, previously mentioned as volunteer facilitators of RECLAIM Families.

**Jennifer Mouchet, Jed Graham and Terry Dickelman** have been volunteer drivers assisting a youth to attend Gender group weekly for the last year.

**Marcy Micek** has given countless hours to enter all financial data into Quickbooks and reconciles our finances each month. She always comes with a smile and snack for group!

**Alex Nelson** is co-facilitator of the Gender Exploration Group. He has been steadfast in this role. Steadfast.

**V. Ruiz** dedicated many, many hours in the development of the website.

**Mondi Norton Westbrook** faithfully delivered a box of fresh organic vegetables donated by **Featherstone Farm** weekly all summer long. We were grateful to be able to support healthy eating to clients who do not have access to this kind of produce.

**YOUTH!** have been fully engaged in protecting what protects them. They have cleaned and painted, moved and assembled furniture, run errands, done data entry and given tech support on a weekly basis. Thank you all so much.

“ *I have reclaimed me. My spirit, mind, body and my relationships. I could not have thought in my wildest dreams as a kid, the reality I have now. You are who you see in the inside. You are a child of the universe, you belong.* ”

Gender Exploration Group Member

## Interns

RECLAIM is dedicated to supporting the professional development of those who wish to develop a competency in adolescent sexuality and gender identity. These interns have given much of themselves and we are grateful for their dedication.

**Deb Klein:** U of MN Master's in Social Work program 9/09-5/10

**Jed Graham:** Capella Master's program 1/10-7/10

**Nikhil Kaistha:** Adler Institute Master's program 5/10-current

**Mike Grewe:** Augsburg Master's in Social Work program 9/10-current

## Advisory Board

Our Advisory Board is made up of seven community members who are dedicated to providing mental health access for LGBT youth communities. They have spent the past year helping RECLAIM establish relationships with communities who have traditionally been underserved in mental health.



**Gilbert Achay**

Technical Assistance Partner, Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership



**Roxanne Anderson**

Community Activist  
Director of Rare Productions



**MJ Gilbert, MSW, LICSW**

Teaching Specialist/Field Coordinator, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota



**Lenny Hayes**

Therapist/Consultant, Adler Graduate School



**Linda Her**

Volunteer, Shades of Yellow and Education and Training Assistant, Hmong American Partnership



**Dr. Eric Meininger, MPH**

Adolescent Medicine, Gillette Children's Specialty Health Care



**Val Smith**

Case Manager, Youth and AIDS Project

# Your Support is Vital!



**Janet Bystrom,**  
**MSW, LICSW**  
Executive Director  
**RECLAIM**

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to RECLAIM. Your support is vital to ensuring our mission to provide barrier-free mental and integrative health access for LGBT youth. Donations can be made via sending a check made out to RECLAIM to our address below or by visiting the following link: [www.razoo.com/story/Reclaim-35](http://www.razoo.com/story/Reclaim-35)

## Special Thanks

RECLAIM would like to give special thanks to **AHS Foundation**, **Charter Oaks Foundation**, **Carolyn Foundation**, and **Rainbow Health Initiative**. Their generous support has helped make our success and services possible.

We would also like to specially thank **Beth Zemsky**, who donated her consulting services and home for the RECLAIM Advisory Board Retreat; **Susan Raffo**, who helped facilitate the Gender Exploration Group Retreat this summer; and **Matt Nielsen** for donating his cabin for the retreat.

Thank you to the **Aegis Foundation, Inc.**, the fiscal sponsor of RECLAIM. Aegis donated a portion of the proceeds from the 2010 Oscar Party to RECLAIM. This partnership has been stable, sane and a heck of a lot of fun.



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