

# Perceptions Newsletter

Perceptions Inc. P.O. Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641 (989) 891-1429



**August 28, 2003**

## **Second Parent Adoptions**

Many Gay and Lesbian Couples want the joy of children in their home. They believe that family life is a precious gift to a child. CARE is an organization dedicated to securing second parent adoptive rights for the couple and assure the stability of a loving and caring home.

The presentation should provide valuable information for each of us whether we're involved in adoptions or not. The more we know, the more supportive we can be!

Get a handle on Why, What and Who is CARE at  
<http://www.secondparentadoption.org>

**July 2003**

## **Boundaries and Self Esteem**

Mary Jo Hall

It's interesting how parents and family are so important in how we see ourselves as adults. Those were and are the influences that help each of us shape our sense of self or Self Esteem. With that sense, we set boundaries, respect boundaries or disrespect the boundaries of others.

With a wonderful wit and candor, Mary Jo Hall keyed in on a basic tenant of any relationship – Respect for Boundaries. Defining boundaries as the line that separates us from safety and non-safety, she offered excellent examples of how and why we set our limits at certain points. The major boundaries we set include physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries. In her discussion, we were asked to consider how we manage our boundaries. Are they flexible or stiff, clear or vague, wavering or permanent? Solid emotional health insists that we make clear our boundaries, charge others to respect our boundaries, and refusing to shift them for the benefit of others.

Mary Jo Hall is an ACSW serving as clinical supervisor with Family Care Services in the Saginaw area. The Perceptions audience would like to thank her for an excellent opportunity to look at the important relationships we have and consider how we deal with the issue of Boundaries.

## **B.A.S.I.S. Booster Request**

Bearing gifts, Tom Brubaker from B.A.S.I.S. came by the July Perceptions meeting to promote the B.A.S.I.S. Booster Club. The gifts are an example of this group's efforts to make a positive difference in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STD's in the community. This is especially important in heterosexual women where the increase in HIV/AIDS is growing at an alarming rate. The group plans to have a monthly activity to achieve its goal, but needs volunteers to help reach the counties it serves.

B.A.S.I.S. does a lot for the GLBT community and this is our chance to help.  
Go B.A.S.I.S.! For more information, contact B.A.S.I.S at 894-2991 or e-mail [TJNeal@aol.com](mailto:TJNeal@aol.com).  
<http://www.basisinc.org>



**Opening doors for the  
Mid-Michigan GLBT  
Community**

## **Calendar Highlights:**

- **Tues. August 12<sup>th</sup> 7pm**  
GLBT Volleyball Night,  
Vet's Park, Bay City
- **Fri. August 15<sup>th</sup> 7pm**  
Womyn's Circle, Bay  
County YMCA
- **Tues. August 19<sup>th</sup> 7pm**  
GLBT Volleyball  
Night, Vet's Park,  
Bay City
- **Wed. August 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm**  
Meet & Greet, Bay  
City Coffee & Tea
- **Tues. August 26<sup>th</sup> 7pm**  
GLBT Volleyball  
Night, Vet's Park,  
Bay City
- **Thurs. August 28<sup>th</sup>**  
Perceptions General  
Meeting

To receive email alerting  
about upcoming events,  
send your email address  
to [PerceptionsSV-  
owner@yahoo.com](mailto:PerceptionsSV-owner@yahoo.com)

## From the Desk of the Co-Chairs

Mindy Pennington, Paul Wright

### Area Women Express Ideas and Initiatives at Strategy Meeting

The Women's Strategy Meeting on August 4, 2003 brought many women to the YWCA to talk about their needs, issues, burning desires, and future plans for the women's community.

The discussion kicked off with a quick overview for the purpose of the meeting, and what was planned for the evening. Cassy Fecht, Diedra Knox, and Chris Brennan facilitated. Perceptions sponsored the open meeting so women could come and answer several questions:

- What makes it difficult for you to participate in Perceptions' activities?
- What is missing from the local women's community?
- What are the best lesbian or GLBT activities you have attended?
- What kinds of activities, events, or behaviors turn you off?
- Are there activities you love to do; or, interests you have that are unfulfilled?

All meeting participants were given a pad of sticky notes to write their comments, then all notes were posted on the wall. Volunteers sorted the comments into categories so we could better determine the specific actions that can be taken. The statements below were taken directly from the participants' remarks that were grouped in various categories

#### **What makes it difficult for you to participate in Perceptions' activities?**

Men rule [the organization, events, meetings]; rotate the meeting places; distance: Midland is a good location for some; family obligations; do later events; my opinion doesn't count; afraid to be out; have childcare needs; low self-esteem; distance; Bay City and Saginaw is closer; don't like to attend events that I don't think enough women are going to go to!; shyness; time/days (weekends and afternoons are easier); don't like to travel alone/at night.

**Major themes/burning issues:** men making too many of the decisions; family obligations (if meetings go until 9:00 that's too late for my kids to be up during the school year); many women are shy or just afraid to go to the meetings because they don't know anyone or are afraid of being out.

#### **Events**

Have a planned topic for events like the Womyn's Circle; current events night [discuss issues]; go to concerts, Renaissance Festival, karaoke night, dinners out, Cedar Point day, or movie night as a group; more women-focused social events too; Lesbian Mom's Network (check Ann Arbor for ideas); more single social events; bring in lesbian authors or speakers; have support groups (like for breaking up or relationship issues); have women-only dance; movie night; sex workshop; retirement issues workshop/speaker; explore ways to meet other single women (other than bars); book club; talent show; have "Best Gay \_\_\_ award" night; sporting activities like golf

**Major themes/burning issues:** Coordinate events with other organizations; have more social activities-- especially activities for singles (not just women); dances, bringing in lesbian authors and speakers, and having more cultural/topical and social activities. ***Continued on next page...***





## Opening doors for the Mid-Michigan GLBT Community

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### **Joint events with men and women working together**

Men and women events with more women's input; dance lessons (formal and line dancing); go out dancing in a group to a gay bar; have an email "post-it/sign up" for going out dancing; do joint speech events on different levels--novice to expert; camping, canoeing, potlucks, skiing (mixed women and men); dart night; murder mystery event; bike tour (easy one that fits all levels of bicyclists); pool/billiard tournament in gay bar at night; bowling (men and women with groups with different ability levels)

**Major themes/burning issues:** have more social activities, especially dances; have women and men participate together; have sporting activities for all fitness levels.

### **What can Perceptions do better?**

Programming: social issues, political issues, all Perceptions ideas have been great!; all Perceptions events are too early for me because of work schedule; support women's groups like Underground Railroad (similar to how Perceptions supported BASIS); do sports in ability categories; be umbrella to women's events; have childcare coordinator (parents take turns); childcare for social activities; people say that events are boring--they want social events, fun events; have children's programs; more lesbian speakers at Perceptions meetings; women speakers at meeting; meetings are too late for kids

**Major themes/burning issues:** childcare during meetings and for scheduled social activities; have more social/sport activities; have more lesbian speakers at meetings.

### **What is missing from the local women's community (this became the Need More Outreach category)**

Address more issues (married/divorced LGBTs etc); encourage other women to come; information sharing; more activities and events that include our straight families; educational speakers/topics of interest; more collaboration with college organizations like Delta, SVSU, etc; speakers on the GLBT (mostly lesbian) family; have classes on car care/maintenance, home repair/painting, etc; carpool for meetings and events; have activities for National Coming Out Day; have events/activities on coming out issues.

**Major themes/burning issues:** including our children and our straight family members and friends; family issues; collaborate with other organizations

### **What are your burning desires for the community? Are there activities you love to do; or, interests you have that are unfulfilled?**

Follow up with people who want to help or volunteer; expand our membership in the community; have dance lessons; make Perceptions more aware of diversity issues; go to or have concerts and dances; have women's resort getaway like Duneswood or DNR resorts; go dancing at clubs as a group with people our own age; start a mom's group; have singles activities; workshops on legal services/custody issues; have topical discussion groups; canoeing, biking, skiing; be with other lesbians for support; educational programs: retirement, investments; have a Coming Out Sponsor program; personal relationship workshops such as having kids together/keeping love alive; have Spanish-speaking services; maybe Spanish-language classes; health fair for GLBT's; lesbian authors and speakers; more social/singles events; exercise/walking/hiking for different ability levels; day trip to Ann Arbor for women's bookstores; have Mother-Daughter activity (so our mothers will meet other lesbians and develop better understanding).

### **Next steps:**

All participants agreed that there should be another meeting in three months (November 2003), to see how far Perceptions and the women in the community have come to fulfilling some of the needs expressed in the meeting.

These are all excellent suggestions and there are several events and activities that are repeated--these should be the obvious targets for all of us in the women's community. Get together with one another and strategize--what program can you develop that is meaningful to you? Can the women in this community get together and start, for example, their own Lesbian Mom's Network or National Coming Out Day celebration? Find out how other cities do it.

Perceptions can help you by getting the word out to area lesbians and the broader community--ask us how we can you make your endeavors successful. Perceptions exists not only to educate ourselves and the broader community but also to bring the community together.

This is a starting point for all of us. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate and/or sent in ideas via email; I hope to see great progress by the next meeting in November.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**DO YOU HAVE AN EVENT YOU'D LIKE ADDED TO PERCEPTIONS CALENDAR OF EVENTS?**

**Submit your event to [board@perceptionssv.org](mailto:board@perceptionssv.org)**

**Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> GLBT Volleyball** 7PM, Casual, co-ed gathering at Vets Memorial Park in downtown Bay City. The courts are located between the ball diamonds and the community center.

**Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup> 28th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Walhalla, MI** The mother of all womyn's music festivals, attracting over 5,000 women from around the world. Diverse programming that runs the musical gamut, hundreds of workshops, a weeklong film festival, and a crafts fair with 125 artisans. See [www.michfest.com](http://www.michfest.com), or call 231-757-4766 for directions.

**Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, Town Hall Meeting with Lambda Legal** Mona Noriega, Midwest Regional Director, and Camilla Taylor, Staff Attorney, are coming to Affirmations for a Family Law presentation. Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 9 PM [Click here for more info.](#)

**Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup> "Candy Corn, Christ, and the Convolved Creation of Golf!"**, written by Dave Garcia, gay activist and former PFLAG Tri-Cities speaker, Performance Network, Ann Arbor, Thurs-Sat at 8, Sun at 2, cost \$18 Reservation: (734) 663-0681 <http://www.webspawner.com/users/pflagjacksonaug08>

**Friday, August 15<sup>th</sup> Womyn's Circle** (3rd Friday of every month) Sponsored by the YWCA of Bay County and Perceptions. A low-key "safe space" to talk about coming out, life as a lesbian, and just plain life. From 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. For more information, contact the YWCA at 989-686-4800.

**Tuesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> GLBT Volleyball** 7PM, Casual, co-ed gathering at Vets Memorial Park in downtown Bay City. The courts are located between the ball diamonds and the community center.

**Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> Bay City Meet & Greet** Our exciting social gathering at Bay City Coffee & Tea, 810 Saginaw St., Bay City. This non-smoking coffee house has a variety of drinks; tasty, innovative sandwiches, deliciously fresh sushi, and desserts for those with a sweet tooth. Come join the fun!

**Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup> PFLAG Meeting** 2-4:30 pm, UU of Midland, 6220 Jefferson, Midland.

**Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> GLBT Volleyball** 7PM, Casual, co-ed gathering at Vets Memorial Park in downtown Bay City. The courts are located between the ball diamonds and the community center.

**Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup> Perceptions General Meeting** 7PM UU of Midland, 6220 Jefferson, Midland. Presentation by CARE discussing adoption rights for GLBT couples.

**Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> Perceptions Golf Outing** Contact Jeff Illig or Doug Barron at [board@perceptionssv.org](mailto:board@perceptionssv.org) or further details.



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