

# Perceptions Newsletter

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



August 2003

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent Adoption and Michigan Law

Kathleen LaTosch walked up to the podium to present a poignant story to the Perceptions audience. Classic tale of girl meets girl, become best friends only to realize a deep attraction to each other. Couple comes out, commits to each other and decides that a child would add a deeper dimension to an 11 yr commitment. Kathleen becomes pregnant and they anticipate a healthy baby like all couples, they buy the crib, and shop for clothes and she's glowing. Then suddenly, her story turns into a horrid nightmare whose tragic end was not expected. Kathleen relayed the tedious efforts necessary to best establish the rights of both women in this child's life. Document after document drawn up, worries about whether the law would recognize any of them, consultations with physicians, families and each other to assure that neither parent was lost in the process. Each moaned under the anxiety as they realized that every event in this child's life would have to be prefaced with a notarized document and there was no guarantee of acceptance. Kathleen and her partner lost their full term baby just before it's birth.

Not an uncommon story says CARE attorney Jane Basset. The role that CARE has in the issue of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent adoption was compounded by the recent actions of Supreme Court Judges Maura Corrigan and Archie Brown when each stepped into a lower court to disallow the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent adoption process available in Washtenaw County. Though antiquated, it was at least an avenue for securing a home and stable environment for children living with non-married uncles, GLBT, grandparents, etc.

Presently a very delicate issue, CARE is looking for ways to resolve the conflict without endangering those who have had successful judgments as well as other courtrooms where the process may be working. Children are the real beneficiaries and this is not a gay agenda item. Ms Basset stressed the need for personal and public activism to clean up this process.

Many of the members of Perceptions have a special interest in this subject, but all of us should advocate for its resolution if we feel it is right. Along with the speaker, we urge you to visit CARE at <http://www.secondparentadoption.org>. Look for ways to become educated about this issue and look for ways to help. Kathleen LaTosch and her partner have our warmest wishes for recovery from such pain.

### Next Month's Speaker Presentation

Jay Kaplan, noted attorney with the ACLU will speak on the group's efforts in such cases as the Texas Sodomy Law, Safe School issues for GLBT youth, Same-Sex marriage in Canada and Vermont. Be prepared with questions on these and other concerns.



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

#### Calendar Highlights:

- Mon., Sept 15<sup>th</sup>, Odessa Nesbitt displays art at Good Beans Café
- Tues., Sept 16<sup>th</sup>, Free Pool at 505 Club
- Wed., Sept 17<sup>th</sup>, Bay City Meet & Greet
- Fri., Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, Womyn's Circle
- Thurs., Sept 25<sup>th</sup>, Perceptions General Meeting
- Sun., Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, PFLAG Meeting
- Wed., Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, Freeland Meet & Greet
- Sat., Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, Great Lakes regional PFLAG Conference

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

[m](http://www.perceptions.org)

**From the Desk of the Co-Chairs**

Mindy Pennington, Paul Wright

**New Perceptions Board Member**

Please welcome **Ricardo Bowden** as a new board member. Many of you met Ricardo when he presented information on The Hearth Home at a monthly meeting. Ricardo's personal and professional commitment to healthy living is an inspiration to all Perceptions members!

Mr. Ricardo Bowden holds the position of HIV Prevention Manager at The Hearth Home in Saginaw, Michigan. The Hearth Home is a service delivery site of Health Delivery, Inc. In that capacity Ricardo provides HIV prevention education to active substance abusers, men who have sex with men, and other at-risk communities. In addition to his duties at the agency, Mr. Bowden is an educator and trainer for the African American faith-based HIV prevention initiative Gospel Against AIDS in Detroit. He is a contributing author to the African American faith-based training manual entitled "Affirming a Future of Hope" created by the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta Georgia, in cooperation with the Centers for Diseases Control, and is a member of the training team delivering education to African American religious leaders regarding the issues of HIV infection and substance abuse, nationwide. He is involved in HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities throughout the State of Michigan including the East Shoreline Chapter of the American Red Cross in Bay City, Stories From The Heart in Detroit, and is an executive committee member of the State of Michigan HIV/AIDS Council.

For the past 15 years Ricardo has been active in HIV/AIDS prevention and care planning and service delivery. He has been a continuous member of the Ryan White CARE Consortium in the 6<sup>th</sup> region of Michigan since 1997, and has served that body in a variety capacities including chairperson in 2000/2001. Mr. Bowden has written two HIV educational brochures including the innovative "RAP ABOUT AIDS" designed especially for our youth, and has authored newsletter articles entitled "AIDS and African Americans: A Community in Crises", and "A Stress Free Conversation."

Ricardo has a Masters Degree in Public Administration obtained at Michigan State University in 1979, received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Urban Studies from MSU in 1975, and is currently certified as a Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist.



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

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## Point of Information

### [American Cancer Society's Relay For Life](#)

Julie Trudell from the American Cancer Society took a few minutes to point out the many services offered by the organization. Julie provided some information about the excellent opportunity our group could have by forming a team for the Relay For Life to be held next year in July (Bay City) and August (Midland). What a wonderful way to be involved in the broader community and make Perceptions public at the same time.

Come on and join now to raise money for the ACS. Ask friends and coworkers alike to sponsor your participation in this great effort. Oh, and the ACS Cancer wall will happen October 11<sup>th</sup> at Fashion Square Mall. Join in and put that stylish Perceptions T shirt out there for the world to see.

## Perceptions Receives Programming Grant

Gays, Lesbians & Allies at Dow (GLAD), a Dow Chemical Company employee network, has generously provided grant money to Perceptions to be used toward our educational programming. Funding of this type affords us the opportunity to fulfill part of our mission...educating our members and the greater community regarding LGBT issues. If any of you have ideas for our educational programming, do not hesitate to contact a board member. We need your input and your participation. So, be sure to thank any GLAD member you may know. It is this type of sponsorship that allows Perceptions to continue to serve our community.

**Jeff Illig**

Financial Coordinator

# 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)**

**Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> MCC Bingo Night**, 6 pm, 4225 State St, Saginaw There's no cost for admission. Bingo cards will cost a quarter a sheet. The sheets have three individual cards on them. Most games will be 50/50, with the winner getting 50% of the proceeds from the game and the church getting the other 50%. The church will use its proceeds for seed money for more social events! We'll also be selling pop and offering free popcorn for those who buy pop. For more info, call the church at 989-793-4400 or e-mail Rev. Beth at [revrake@aol.com](mailto:revrake@aol.com)

**Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup> Local Lesbian Student Displays Her Art**... Odessa Nesbitt (co-chair of SVSU's Gay-Straight Alliance) has her art work on display at Good Beans Café, 328 N. Grand Traverse, at the corner of 1st Avenue in Flint (810) 237-GOOD (4663).

**Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> Free Pool/Billiard at 505 Club**, 7 pm, 505 E. Shiawassee, Lansing (517) 374-6312. Perceptions members and others are invited to play. Tuesday is **free pool night** at the club. We'll meet around 7:00 pm. Deidra, Nikki, MB, and Karin K will go and hope you'll join them. Any questions? Call: (989) 773-0135.

**Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> Bay City Meet & Greet** 7-9 pm An informal gathering of the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome in this smoke-free environment. Located at 810 Saginaw Street (between Center and 5<sup>th</sup> Aves.), the Bay City Coffee and Tea offers a variety of delicious drinks, sandwiches and desserts.

**Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> Womyn's Circle** 7-9 pm Safe location for coming out, sharing lesbian issues, talk, etc. at the YWCA of Bay County, 3405 Midland Rd., Bay City. Contact Anita Bowden at 989-686-4800

**Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> Perceptions General Meeting** 7-9 pm Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland

**Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> PFLAG Meeting** 2-4:30 pm Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland

**Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> Freeland Meet & Greet** 7-9 An informal gathering of the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. Join us for an evening of talking with friends, meeting new friends, and drinking good coffee. The Coffee Galley 121 1/2 S. Main St. Freeland (behind Eudici's Pizza).

**Saturday, October. 18<sup>th</sup>, Great Lakes Regional PFLAG Conference** Family voices for Equality, Pontiac, MI. Paid Tri-Cities PFLAG members will be reimbursed for the conference. <http://www.pflagdetroit.org/GreatLakesRegional.htm>

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