

Community United Against Violence

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Founded in 1979, CUAV is the oldest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) anti-violence organization in the country. Born in the wake of the tragic murders of Harvey Milk and George Moscone, CUAV's early focus on addressing hate violence was expanded five years later to encompass domestic violence as well. We continue to play a seminal role in local and national coordinated efforts to increase community safety.



5 Easy Ways to Support CUAV

CUAV staff say farewell to Sarah, a longtime volunteer who moved to Philadelphia this spring. (left to right: Vanissar, Pablo, Liu Hoi-Man, Terry, Jennifer, Sarah, Tina, and Andy)



1. Donate clothes and other items to the Community Thrift Store at 623 Valencia Street. Make sure to mention CUAV as the beneficiary. Call (415) 861-4910 to make sure that your donation will be accepted.
2. Become a Speakers Bureau volunteer and educate young people about what it means to be LGBTQQ. For information, contact Connie at (415) 777-5500 ext. 303.
3. Become a volunteer counselor for our 24-hour Crisis Line and support victims of hate and domestic violence. For information, contact Vanissar at (415) 777-5500 ext. 323.
4. Join our Board of Directors and play a leadership role with the nation's oldest LGBTQQ anti-violence organization. For information, contact Andy at (415) 777-5500 ext. 318.
5. Make a tax-deductible financial contribution. Better yet, arrange a monthly credit card payment to make your contribution painless and easy.

COMMUNITY UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE

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Shawna Virago
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CUAV NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

SPRING/SUMMER 2005

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of meeting and mentoring many young people in my capacity at CUAV. Several years ago, I met an extraordinary young woman, Lateefah Simon, who was working at the Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD), a peer-run organization helping troubled girls and young women.

At the time, the organization was housed under CUAV's roof; Lateefah was an outreach worker. Before joining CYWD, she had watched friends lose their children, homes, and lives to gentrification and drugs.



Terry and Tamiko before Lateefah Simon's farewell celebration at CYWD.

Through her drive and determination to help others avoid simi-

lar fates, Lateefah would later become the Executive Director of CYWD, at the age of 20, and a recipient of the MacArthur "genius" fellowship in 2003, the youngest woman so honored. I salute Lateefah and all of the young people who continue to be a source of inspiration for me—and all of us at CUAV.

Warmest regards,

Terry Person Harris

CUAV to be Published in Upcoming Book

CUAV staff members, Tina D'Elia and Andy Wong, recently co-authored a chapter entitled "Unite Against Violence" in *50 Ways to Support Lesbian and Gay Equality* (Inner Ocean Publishing, 2005). Here is an excerpt of the chapter:

"From hate crimes to partner abuse, violence or the threat of violence greatly impacts LGBT individuals. It can keep us from coming out and engaging in healthy, fulfilling relationships. It can make us afraid to hold hands with our partners while strolling down the street and to express our love in other healthy ways. It

can destroy the sanctity of our homes. And, in the most extreme cases, it takes our lives or the lives of those we love. Only by uniting against violence against LGBT people—and by taking action against all forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, and ageism—can we achieve true equality.

The first place we should always be safe is at home. Because LGBT relationships face such intense societal scrutiny, it can be particularly difficult for us to admit that domestic violence impacts some of us. Partly this is because both the LGBT community and members of abusive

couples fear that evidence of trouble in our relationships will provide our adversaries with ammunition to use against our relationships and our families. The cultural idea that only men are abusers also contributes to a lack of awareness of domestic violence in lesbian relationships, and many people incorrectly assume that gay men's domestic violence is a fight between equals, and thus a victimless situation. In truth, as LGBT people fall in love or lust, we can also fall victim to the same unhealthy dynamics of power and control that lead to violence in straight relationships. Speaking

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Staff Profile: Connie Champagne



Connie Champagne, CUAV's Speakers Bureau Director, also moonlights as a singer, actor, and all-around entertainer.

Connie started at CUAV as a volunteer in 1989. Prior to coming to CUAV, she was a graduate of Mills College and earned her MFA from the American Conservatory Theater (ACT). She taught creative drama in public high schools, summer theater programs, and at the Young Conservatory at ACT.

Connie is a notable entertainer as well. Her favorite role? "Neely O'Hara (in San Francisco's long-running production of *Valley of the Dolls*), of course!" Connie is particu-

larly well-known for her performances as Judy Garland. The *New York Times* lauded her performance as "a subtle masterpiece of parody and homage."

Since her arrival, Connie has been an instrumental force in developing relationships with Bay Area schools on behalf of the Speakers Bureau. In 1998, CUAV developed a curriculum with the San Francisco Unified School District to have CUAV volunteers speak in elementary classes as well. With support from community based organi-

zations such as API Wellness Center's AQUA25, LYRIC, Trikone, and many others, the Bureau has connected to a broad range of speakers. CUAV organizes twice yearly trainings for new volunteer speakers, and currently speaks to an average of over 3,000 students Bay Area wide per year.

For information on how to volunteer for CUAV's Speaker Bureau, please contact Connie (415) 777-5500 ext. 303 or connie@cuav.org.

Published

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out about domestic violence and seeking LGBT-friendly counseling is the path to strength and healing.

The understanding of hate violence and how it impacts LGBT people has evolved over the decades. While strangers attacking us on the street or other public places still make up the largest portion of inci-

dents reported, we now know that anti-LGBT hate incidents occur in schools, workplaces, prisons, and home settings—and that perpetrators are sometimes loved ones, known community members, or members of the police force. At Community United Against Violence (CUAV), we receive over a thousand calls each year from courageous survivors seeking emergency help from our crisis line counselors. It's our mission to offer survivors support through free counseling, legal advocacy, and emergency aid. Since people

who know an LGBT person are less likely to become bashers, we also have a local Speakers' Bureau that visits elementary, middle and high schools to help forge connections between LGBT people and children and teens.

As the LGBT community becomes more visible and vocal, we can also become targets of those who are vehemently, even violently opposed to change. Only together, with the help of our straight allies, can we cope with and work to prevent the violence around us. "

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Monica Magtoto, a former youth organizer at CUAV, is recognized by SF Youth Commission.



Former Organizer Recognized by Youth Commission

Monica Magtoto, a former Love & Justice Project organizer at CUAV, was recently recognized by the San Francisco Youth Commission at the 4th Annual Youth Recognition Day.

Selected as an honoree by Supervisor Bevan Dufty, Monica was also featured in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on December 10, 2004.

At CUAV, Monica worked with youth of color in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and edu-

cated her peers on relationship violence and safer sex.

In addition to being an organizer and educator, Monica is also a poet, artist, and musician. CUAV congratulates Monica for her well-deserved recognition.

Jamaican LGBT Activists Come to Town



Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG)

Following CUAV's efforts to protest Jamaican dancehall artists who incite extreme violence against gays and lesbians through their lyrics, the organization joined Amnesty International USA's OUTfront Program this February to co-sponsor a panel presentation with

representatives from the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG).

Karlene and Gareth, Co-Chairs of JFLAG, traveled from Jamaica to speak of their harrowing experiences as victims and witnesses of anti-LGBT violence in their country. They described how law enforcement actively participate in frequent gay-bashing and how government officials in their country often contribute to the atmosphere of intolerance.

Although the situation remains grim for LGBT citizens in Jamaica,

the Advocate recently reported that record companies have pledged to stop releasing or reissuing homophobic songs from the following artists: Beenie Man, Sizzla, Elephant Man, Buju Banton, Bounty Killer, TOK, Capleton, and Vybz Kartel. The agreement comes in the wake of a global campaign to boycott their music, which CUAV played a role in.

To find out more about how you can help stop homophobia and hate in Jamaica, make sure to check out Amnesty's OUTfront Program at: www.amnestyusa.org/outfront.

Rolling Stone on Gwen Araujo's Murder

In its February 2005 issue, *Rolling Stone Magazine* published an article on Gwen Araujo's murder. It was reported that more transgender people are killed in hate crimes each year than all other groups of people combined. Most often, the victims are young transgender women killed by men who had sex with them.

Shawna Virago, a project director at CUAV, was quoted as saying, "A lot of times, these murderers can't



Shawna Virago reflects on anti-transgender violence in the *Rolling Stone*.

handle their own desires. They turn their anger on the victim rather than the society that is making them feel stigmatized by their own desires. And when they do, it gets ugly."

CUAV will continue to be vigilant in its response to transgender murders, and will coordinate an active courtwatch when Gwen Araujo's murderers go up for retrial. Alameda County District Attorney Chris Lamerio is committed to retrying the case in May 2005. If you are interested in volunteering for the courtwatch, please contact Tina D'Elia at (415) 777-5500 ext. 304 or tina@cuav.org.

Foundation, Corporate Giving Update

CUAV was once again the recipient of a generous grant from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. This year, we were awarded a two-year, \$100,000 grant from the foundation in support of our hate violence programs. We are grateful to the board of the Haas, Jr. Fund, as well as Tim Sweeney, Darlene Hall, and Lisa Marquez-Valenti for ensuring us this vital support.

In addition, the Youth Initiated Projects (YIP) of the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) recently awarded CUAV a \$7,500 grant for our Love & Justice Project to prevent and end relationship violence in our LGBTQ youth communities. Our thanks go out to YLI and their youth funding board for their support.

CUAV would also like to thank the

following restaurants and vendors for supporting our crisisline counselor trainings: Aperto, Catch, Chaya Brasserie, Dottie's True Blue Café, Fuzio, Goat Hill Pizza, Jillians (donated Billiard Room party to CL volunteers), Katz Bagels, La Mediterranee, Olive Garden, Pancho Villa Taqueria, Spike's Coffee, Tully's, and Valentina.



The Body Shop is one of CUAV's longest standing corporate sponsors.