

THE FOUNDING OF MCAVHN

A Volunteer Network to Give Aid and Comfort Before There Was a Cure

You may have heard Dr. Trotter speak at the 2015 Event of the Heart or perhaps you read our spring newsletter recounting the founding and early days of MCAVN (the Mendocino County AIDS Volunteer Network, as we were originally called). Rosalie Anchordoguy, a key player since the beginning, has been sharing her recollections of that historic time in hopes of keeping the memory alive.

The first known AIDS case in Mendocino County came in on the Greyhound from Sacramento and showed up one day at Plowshares. AIDS had by then become well known among the gay populations of the larger urban areas and the state of California had just issued grant funding to begin statistical tracking and case reporting statewide.

Rosalie was working at Public Health at the time. They were in the beginning stages of setting up a testing program when she received a call from Martin Bradley of Plowshares asking what services were available for the newly arrived man with AIDS. She had to reply that there really weren't any services yet.

It was becoming apparent that the times were a-changing. Dr. Marvin Trotter, Dr. Mary Newkirk and P.A. Lynn Meadows were working at the Mendocino Community Hospital (where the county administrative center is now). They were starting to see others coming in with AIDS, people who were already very, very sick. Along with a concerned group which included Deborah Mead, Jim Kramer, Steven Day, Michael Huddleston, Rob Jones, Terry Brown and Alan Swanson they got together to brainstorm what could be done and that was how MCAVN was born in the spring of 1987.

Craig McMillan was the Mendocino County Health Officer at the time and he felt strongly that AIDS was a public health issue. Many agencies were trying to distance themselves from the AIDS epidemic. President Reagan had not even said the word "AIDS" yet. Dr. McMillan was able to allocate the start-up money for MCAVN from the public health budget. "It was historic. We got money from the county before Sonoma County did and Craig McMillan needs to be applauded and commended. He was very important at the beginning of this grass roots venture."

Rosalie continues, "At first we didn't really have a place. Marvin and Mary had an office on South Dora. They gave us an answering machine and let us plug it in there. We spent a lot of time developing a volunteer program. We did a volunteer training at Esther Faber and Ana Mahoney's house. We trained people to come in and do home care. We modeled it after Face to Face in Sonoma County. We knew that people needed a lot of support to be able to do this work and then support to be able to process their experiences so that they wouldn't immediately feel overwhelmed and run out the back door and never come back."

We opened an office on South State Street in Ukiah, operated a residential patient shelter for three years and then about 20 years ago moved into our current location on Clara Street.

In the early days an AIDS/HIV diagnosis was an almost certain death sentence and we would see 8-10 MCAVN clients lose their lives to the disease each year. People were very, very sick and volunteers were doing things at home that prior to that had



Lest We Forget

The AIDS Quilt in Washington DC- every square in memory of a loved one lost to AIDS

been done in ICU. Rosalie recalls, "We were teaching people how to run IV pumps at home or at the shelter. AIDS has really done a lot to revolutionize home health care and to teach mere mortals how to handle some of these situations."

to be continued



GET THOSE COSTUMES READY

And join us for our 2nd Annual Halloween Party
 Pictured: some of the dancers, revelers and prize winners from 2014



PLANNING FOR A NEW SHELTER IN UKIAH

“The only lasting solution to homelessness is permanent housing. Far too often, however, we attempt to treat the symptoms of homelessness instead of its root cause. For years, homeless service providers worked to offer medical and mental health care, addiction counseling, job training and countless other services to people living on the streets. Most homeless people were told they had to earn their way to permanent housing.... While the intentions behind this approach were good, the unfortunate result was that very few people ever escaped the streets.” 100khomes.org

link above for more information).

Overview of accomplishments:

Among the many activities of this past year, the group was able to plan for, advocate and fundraise for the temporary re-opening of the Buddy Eller Shelter for 4 months last winter. The working group has also made plans for safe parking and camping options to be available for those with working vehicles.

The group has recently found a probable site for the opening of a new winter shelter; collaboratively supported and staffed through the efforts of MCAVHN and our current partner organizations - Plowshares, Redwood Community Services, Project Sanctuary, Legal Aid of Northern California, Mark Roloff (past executive director of Ford Street Project and the Buddy Eller Shelter), multiple private citizens and faith-based communities, and with the support of the Ukiah City Council and the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. It is our communal hope that we will secure ongoing stability and year-round access to these life-savings services.

MCAVHN will be the lead agency for this effort; working with our partner organizations to eventually create a new non-profit to continue the services and oversight into the future.

MCAVHN has been the lead agency for an effort which began over a year ago to address the emergency and temporary needs for homeless citizens in our community who are the most vulnerable: those having chronic illnesses and/or mental health challenges which continue to make significant barriers to the access of permanent housing. This becomes especially urgent as winter is again approaching. As one committee member stated during the presentation to the board of Supervisors: *I'm going to go home to a nice warm bed and it hurts my heart to think about the people who will be out in the rain with nothing but a sleeping bag.*

The Homeless Services Action Group is a group of agencies and private citizens, working alongside MCAVHN, who want to move forward with ideas for new and sustainable solutions. These solutions must be concentrated to support and assist persons during the acquisition of permanent supportive housing through the lens of a “Housing First” model (see

MCAVHN SERVICES

- Care Management/Advocacy
Including Specialty Mental Health
- Food Resources
- Behavioral Health Court
- Transportation Assistance
- Client Social Events
- Drop-in Center
- Consumer Education
- Support Groups
- Hep C and HIV Treatment Support
- Syringe Exchange/Overdose Prevention
- Educational Presentations
- Community Health Outreach
- ROSOC Case Management*
- Training for Interns
- Community Service Hours

*ROSOC - Recovery Oriented Systems of Care,
Helping individuals reduce harmful practices
and meet their life goals.

Ways You Can Help

- Attend Our Halloween Fundraiser
(see flyer on page 4)
- Volunteer at MCAVHN House
(training provided)
- Donate at Any Time
(use PayPal online or send us a check)
- Donate an Auction Item for
Event of the Heart
(see insert)
- Become a Sponsor for
Event of the Heart
(see insert)
- Buy Tickets Early for
Event of the Heart
(available in January)
- Watch for Other Events
During the Year
- Consider Serving
on the Board of Directors
(contact Libby or Judy
at 462-1932)



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SPECIAL THANKS

to

- Ukiah Valley Medical Center, Newsletter Sponsor
- Andrea Summer, Volunteers and Generous Item Donors for our Yard Sale
- Human Race Sponsors and Racers
- Elton John Foundation, Comer Foundation, Janssen Therapeutics,
Partnership Health Plan, County of Mendocino
- Volunteers:
Cyn Rattey, Larry Cristiani, Bette Fleischacker, Mike Berard,
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Ana Fierro, Bobby Douglas, Adam Weber, Andrea Summer

Interns:

- Antoinette Moore, Douglas Foote, Michael Miller, Misty Johnson





P.O Box 1350
Ukiah, California

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Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network and Pride Alliance Network Presents:



**Doors open at 7:00 p.m.
Saturday Afternoon Club
107 S. Oak St.—Ukiah**

**Costume Contest presented by PAN
Full Bar Food Music \$15**

MCAVHN's Mission: To provide services & comfort to persons & families affected by HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and/or the co-occurring disorders of mental illness & substance abuse.