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Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records

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Guide to the Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records

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Collection number: MSS-2010-10-25

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San José, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records

Dates: 1970-1999

Collection number: MSS-2010-10-25

Creator: Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center

Collection Size: 17 box7.71 linear feet(approx)

Repository: San José State University. Library.
San José, California 95192-0028

Abstract: On March 1, 1981 the Billy DeFrank Center opened its doors. Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center was organized in response to the housing discrimination that gays and lesbians faced in Santa Clara County. The Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records document the grassroots efforts of its founders to build a community center that supports the vast and diverse needs of the South Bay community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The central mission of the Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center is to work toward promoting a "positive social identification" by promoting civil rights to advance liberty and justice through collaboration and unity. The Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records (1970-1999) consist of news clippings, newsletters, and magazines. Included are a variety of related publications with an emphasis on program initiatives and health training resources, including ephemera and pamphlets. There is a sizeable photographic collection that contains pictures of social events hosted by the Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center, including Gay Pride San José and other social outings. This collection is arranged into three series: Series I, Organizational Records, 1978-97; Series II, Educational Outreach and Publicity 1971-1999; and Series III, Publications, 1970-1999.

Physical location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records, MSS-2010-10-25, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing History

Collection processed by Jeannette Eaton, finding aid EAD encoded by Jeannette Eaton, and reviewed by Danelle Moon.

Organizational History

The Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Center opened on March 1, 1981 in downtown San José, California. The center was posthumously named after Billy DeFrank, the stage name of William Price (1936-1980). From San José, William Price was a well known African-American drag entertainer as well as a prominent gay rights activist who dedicated his talents to the development of gay communities throughout California. He was considered one of the "best-loved goodwill ambassadors" for the LGBT community. At the time LGBT activists were generally influenced by the political legacy of Stonewall. The Stonewall riots, the escalation of a series of violent confrontations between gay rights activists and police that began on June 28, 1969 outside the Stonewall Inn (a bar in New York City), became the genesis of an international gay rights movement focused on social justice and human rights for the LGBT community. The founders of the DeFrank Center concerned with practical challenges and most concerned about the lack of housing and employment protections for lesbians and gay men living in Santa Clara County envisioned transforming the legacy of the Stonewall riots by creating "a place to call home". The grassroots efforts to establish this LGBT center were driven by forces from within the Lambda Association Board of Directors of San José, San Jose Staté University's Women's Center, and other local activists. The center became the fulcrum whereby the large and diverse community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered in the South Bay could find refuge. The inception of the center's success was marked by an increase in activist support from local political figures such Mayor Janet Gray Hayes in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The center continues to offer a safe haven for a large and diverse community.

The mission of the Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center is "to strive to be the community's premier resource hub and a recognized leader in promoting health, strength, diversity and inclusiveness". The DeFrank Center affords its members opportunities to develop "positive social identification" and is committed to political advocacy on behalf of the community and to continue the struggle for civil rights. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people of all ages benefit from the resources and support services offered by the center staff of activists and volunteers. The Center facilitates vital sexual education programs through workshops and other social engagements for a broad-based community.

In collaboration with the Family and Children Service, the DeFrank Center provides a safe and confidential space for youths to gather and receive counseling, as well as educational and professional medical resources. In addition, another youth centered program, the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, helps to empower youth activists to fight homophobia and transphobia in schools. The adult programs similarly provide a confidential space for HIV testing, and support groups for men and women including transsexuals, drug abusers, and groups focused on the family. The DeFrank Center provides community referrals to local agencies that address Aids/HIV, child and teen services, crisis centers, domestic violence, shelters and other similar services.

Scope and Content of Collection

On March 1, 1981 the Billy DeFrank Center opened its doors. Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center was organized in response to the housing discrimination that gays and lesbians faced in Santa Clara County. The Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center Records document the grassroots efforts of its founders to build a community center that supports the vast and diverse needs of the South Bay community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The central mission of the Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center is to work toward promoting a "positive social identification" by promoting civil rights to advance liberty and justice through collaboration and unity.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three series: Series I, Organizational Records, 1978-97; Series II, Educational Outreach and Publicity 1971-1999; and Series III, Publications, 1970-1999.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Gay rights--United States
Civil Rights--Gay Rights
Gay Rights
Gay and lesbian rights
Gay liberation movement
Gays--California--History
Gays--Civil rights
Gay and lesbian studies
Queer studies

GLBT studies
LGBT studies
GLBT studies--California
LGBT studies--California
Community Action
AIDS activists
Bay Area Nonprofit Organization
Billy DeFrank LGBT Silicon Valley Community Center

Bibliography

Billy DeFrank Silicon Valley Silicon Valley LGBT Community Center <http://www.defrankcenter.org/>
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Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
<http://cowboyfrank.net/archive/ComingOut/02.htm>
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1386501/Stonewall-riots>
Sahl, Ted. *From Closet to Community: A Quest For Gay & Lesbian Liberation In San José & Santa Clara County*. Campbell: Ted Sahl Gallery, 2002.

Other Finding Aids

Ted Sahl Collection, MSS-2001-01-01, San José State University Special Collections and Archives.
Guide to the Mark Porsche Papers, MSS-2003-04, San José State University Special Collections and Archives.
Guide to the Institute for Health Policy Studies - AIDS Resource Program Records, AR 92-20, UC San Francisco: Special Collections.
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Periodicals Collection 1968-2003, MSS-2005-05 San José State University, Special Collections and Archives.
Guide to the Janet Gray Hayes Papers, MSS-2002-01 San José State University, Special Collections and Archives.

Series I: **Organizational Records 1978-1997**

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series documents the administrative aspects of the Billy DeFrank Community Center from the Articles of Incorporation to the DeFrank Center Acorn Club Procedures and Correspondence, and Community Center General Regulations. This series also includes information on board members, donors, and volunteers, as well as fundraising proposals and annual reports. Additionally, there are some related documents including budgets and invoices showing expenses that are partially restricted.

A researcher interested in understanding the organizational structural of non-profit organizations and evolving collaboration with associated partners and how resources are allocated might discover connections within administrative operations, mission initiatives, and fundraising efforts.

Arrangement

Files are arranged by format and chronologically by date.

Access Note

Files including invoice and financial information are labeled partially restricted.

Box: 1 **Organizational records 1978-1990**

Box: 2 **Financial and membership information (partially restricted) 1990-1997**

Series II: Educational Outreach and Publicity 1971-1999**Physical Description:** 7 boxes**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series documents the diversity of education outreach and programs initiated and endorsed by Billy DeFrank. Scholars interested in documenting AIDS research and HIV educational campaigns will find this series extremely valuable. This series consists of reference, research, and educational resources from conferences such as the Ryan White C.A.R.E. Act Title I Manual (U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Materials also include information on planning committees and task force coalitions such as the *Lesbian Connection*, Gay and Lesbian Directory for the Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators, and papers from The Lambda Association organization. The materials represented provide a snap-shot of the grassroots activism connecting it to the San Francisco LGBT community through photographs, political ephemera, poetry, and other printed materials. The photographs document various events and socials such as the San Jose Rally and Gay Pride March and related events and campaigns. Included is an autographed picture of Joan Baez, a well known folk singer and prominent activist in the struggle for gay and lesbian rights.

The Billy DeFrank Center activism is connected to the larger gay rights movement, which has a long history throughout California. The Gay, Lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered social and political networking arrived on the LA Hollywood scene in the late 1940s through the prominent homophile organization that came to be known as "The Mattachine Society". This reform movement was a dynamic concept and the brainchild of Harry Hay, an actor and music instructor. Hay is credited for framing this society as the "International Bachelors Fraternal Orders for Peace and Social Dignity".

In the 1950s, the homosexual community made up of men and women within the outskirts of Los Angeles formed important communal ties based on their sexual orientation. The Mattachine Foundation was formulated as a theatrical space "after traveling performers in medieval Europe who staged satires wearing masks". While a commentary on the symbolic gesture of American homosexual's instinct "to mask" themselves as a defense mechanism in a hegemonic society, the Mattachine Foundation provided a space for social and political reform. Its members borrowed from Marxist concepts, delineating homosexuals as an oppressed class. The consciousness of this group permeated Southern California and spread to the San Francisco Bay area. Eventually, chapters sprouted up nationwide, advocating legislative reform in the east coast and specifically in Washington D.C. By the 1970s the U.S. Civil Service amended the American Psychological Association definition of homosexuality, no longer delineated as a mental illness.

Arrangement

Files are arranged by format and chronologically by date.

Boxes: 3-4**Binders and unbound training materials addressing AIDs and related research 1993-1997**

Boxes: 5-7**News clippings (original and photocopy), news releases, crime reporting, articles, legislation and campaign initiatives, workshop materials, and other correspondence 1971-1999**

Box: 8**Ephemera-political reform buttons undated**

Box: 9**Photos from various social events 1987-1994**

Series III: Publications 1970-1999**Physical Description:** 8 boxes**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series documents the literary tradition of the gay community, which dates back to the founding of an array of gay and lesbian organizations, periodicals, and newsletters. Scholars interested in the development of the gay community in terms of LGBT South Bay history as it applies to political and social reform, locally, nationally, and internationally, will find this series engaging while extremely informative. The newsletters and magazines represented here reflect the local grass roots concerns while the history can be traced back to the earliest organizations established to defend LGBT rights.

The formation of Daughter of Bilitis (D.O.B.), the first national lesbian organization founded in the San Francisco in 1955, was an important breakthrough for the LGBT community. The group started with only eight members and included Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, the most well known founding members. The aim of D.O.B. was to offer broad based programming to lesbians and the public to engage in discourse on lesbian lifestyle and community. Part of their struggle for obtaining legal reform inspired this group to push for more research, locally, nationally, and internationally. An east coast chapter soon followed in 1958 in New York. D.O.B. chapters sprouted up all over the United States and as far away as Australia. D.O.B. first national convention was held in San Francisco in 1960.

Out of the early movement emerged a rich body of literature on sexual orientation that germinated identity and community building in a variety of locations throughout the U.S., developing a well communicated network. The newsletters, newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, and comics represented in this series reflect the grassroots social activism of the members of the Billy DeFrank Center in the South Bay and their connections within the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Examples include: *B.A.R. Bay Area Reporter*, *A Catalyst for all factions of the Gay Community*, and *Monterey LGBT Community Center Newspaper*. Additionally, there is a smaller subset of religious gay press material such as *Insight - A quarterly of Lesbian/ Gay Christian Opinion* as well as references to the religious gay press magazine *The Gay Christian/ In Unity Magazine*. Other magazines include: *Community Capital District Lesbian and Gay Bi-Monthly Magazine*, *Oblivion San Francisco*, and *The Gay Alternative*. Scholars interested in tracing the South Bay sentiments following the murders of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and County Supervisor Harvey Milk, will find a variety of articles memorializing their deaths. See the article entitled "In Memoriam Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, December 1, 1978" in *The Sentinental*, Vo. 5 No 24. Unique to the collection is the eclectic comic book selection, *Gay Cosmix 2* and *Hag Rag-Intergalactic Lesbian Feminist Press*.

With the influx of movements and activism in the 1960s, the New Left and feminists contributed to discourse that challenged the role of sexuality, and hegemonic forces within patriarchy. The LGBT, often referred to as the gay and lesbian movement, pushed for legal change, state by state, as well as overturned national legislation. Nonetheless, the rise of the religious right posed significant challenges to the gay rights movement.

At the forefront were Christian evangelicals who generally disdained any group that exhibited protests including the New Left, the women's movement, hippies, and anyone part of the counterculture. Anita Bryant, an American singer from 1950s known mostly for her top 40 hits, became an anti-gay crusader. She responded to victories gained in Florida which repealed a law that had prohibited gays from the adoption of children. She went on to establish an organization titled "Save the Children" applying her vilification of lesbians and gay men to legalize Prop 6 in California which would make homosexuals ineligible for employment in the state's public school system. The mobilization of organizational efforts to oppose such legislation provided the momentum needed to counter religious extremism. Ultimately, discrimination actually strengthened the alliance of gay and lesbian organizations and opened up the public arena to what had been a large group of closeted gays. Together, all of these actions to rid society of homophobia led up to homosexual activists picketing the White House and Pentagon in 1965, where for the first time ever, homosexuals protested for their civil rights, including within the military.

Arrangement

Files are arranged by format and chronologically by date.

Boxes: 10-12**News clippings, newsletters, and miscellany 1971-1996**
