

# Vermont CARES Names Interim Executive Director

BY: JUANITA L. LERCH  
OITM Staff Writer

The Vermont CARES Board of Directors has named Kendall Farrell as Interim Executive Director, effective December 1, 2001. Farrell replaces David Hooks, who resigned in early November for health reasons.

"I am happy to be able to provide additional support to Vermont CARES during this time of transition," said Farrell.

"Vermont CARES is fortunate that an individual with a long history of service is able to step into the position and provide a period of seamless leadership to Vermonters living with HIV and those at risk," said Hooks.

Farrell has been with Vermont CARES for more than five years, working in Services before Development. "Kendall's enthusiasm and willingness to accept this responsibility is clear indication of her deep and continuing commitment to this agency and its mission," said Joseph Boisse, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Vermont CARES.

"From my perspective, David really understood the importance of prevention in fighting HIV/AIDS in Vermont, and the value of building collaborative relationships with community partners as an important part of improving the quality of life for Vermonters who are living with HIV/AIDS. He brought compassion and a gentle leadership style to Vermont CARES. He will be missed, but we understand and respect his choice to step down. I have every confidence in Kendall Farrell's leadership as Interim Executive Director until the position can be filled permanently," said Amy Livingston, Program Director, Prevention, Vermont CARES.

Joseph Boisse, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Vermont CARES, stated that, "The Board was very disappointed that David had to resign for health reasons. We were very pleased with the leadership he provided. In his brief tenure, David carried through a lot of initiatives started by Tim Palmer [previous Executive Director]. He continued to provide a very strong leadership that was the hallmark of Tim Palmer. David strengthened our relationship with the State Board of Health and other organizations that provide services to the HIV positive community. We have also begun a nationwide search for a successor to David Hooks."

Vermont CARES is the state's largest AIDS Services Organization, serving 10 of 14 counties. Its mission is "to improve the quality of life, create compassionate communities, and prevent the spread of HIV by working with people affected by HIV/AIDS as catalysts for social and individual change."

For more info on Vermont CARES, log on at [www.vtcares.org](http://www.vtcares.org) or in Burlington, call: 1-800-649-2437 or (802) 863-2437. In Rutland, call: (802) 775-5884, in Montpelier, call: (802) 229-4560, in Colchester, call: (802) 655-8328 and in St. Johnsbury, call: (802) 748-9061.

# A SafeSpace Opening Up

BY JADE WOLFE  
OITM Staff Writer

SafeSpace, a new organization for L.G.B.T.Q. & Q. survivors of physical, sexual and emotional violence will be opening it's own offices by the end of this month. Kara DeLeonardis, newly hired full time co-ordinator is presently working out of the offices of RU12? on the waterfront in Burlington. The mission statement refers to SafeSpace as "a social changes and social services organization working to end physical, sexual and emotional violence in the lives of LGBTQQ community members." said Kara. "This morning we amended part of our missions statement so that it reads 'lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, queer and questioning'. The process of hiring two part-time advocates has begun. Resumes are due by January 10th.

Kara, along with the two part-time advocates will provide three areas of services: 1) direct services through advocacy, information and referral 2) community education and outreach regarding L.B.G.B.T.Q. & Q. domestic violence for other community providers such as counselors, law enforcement services and medical response services 3) promotion of systems cooperation to establish "co-ordinated community responses".

In 1995 a subcommittee was formed out of the Chittenden County Domestic Violent Task Force to focus on same sex domestic violence. Initial discussions focused on specific needs of the LGBTQQ community which were not being met. For the first few years, the subcommittee worked to raise awareness regarding same sex domestic violence. Various community education events including panel discussions were held to inform the general public of domestic abuse issues in the LGBTQQ community. A Samara Foundation grant provided monies for a fund raiser position. The Center for Crime Victim Services, a Victim of Crime Act Money federal grant has now been received. The Gill Foundation is providing a matching grant for the five year federal grant, providing \$73,000 annually. The funding is rounded out with a local Ben & Jerry's grant. These monies will support the hiring a full time co-ordinator, two part-time advocates and the soon to be acquired office space.

"The Women's Rape Crisis Center" has been very instrumental in our efforts. They are the administrating agency of our funding. Their Director, Celia Cuddy has been very generous with her time as SafeSpace has begun taking shape. We even have the loan of their book-keeper. The collabera-tive efforts of Women's Rape Crisis Center and RU12? speak to the merits of established agencies working together. RU12? has benefited from Ms. DeLeonardis's physical presence in their offices. "The exchange of temporary office space for me and people having a face to greet them when they stop by RU12? has worked out well I believe," Kara commented. The subcommittee itself will be transitioning into an advisory board for SafeSpace. The new organization is hoping to become 'free standing' by the end of June of this year.

An M.S.W., Kara joined the subcommittee in 1997 as a community member. She has worked as an advocate for Vermont Cares for the past three years. "At Vermont Cares I met gay men who had been in violent situations. There were not services available to meet their needs. This was very motivating for me as a subcommittee member. The actual numbers of alleged same sex violence cases are yet to be reported. SafeSpace will be able to provide these statistics."

Anyone interested in applying for one of the part-time advocate positions may contact Kara DeLeonardis by phone: 860-7812, email: [ssdsdtf@yahoo.com](mailto:ssdsdtf@yahoo.com) or posted mail: SafeSpace, PO box 158, Burlington, VT 05402. In addition to the salaried staff, SafeSpace will be developing a volunteer base.

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