

Catamount Arts
presents

**Northeast Kingdom
RAINBOW FILM FESTIVAL**
May 5 - 11
SCHEDULE

Friday 6:30pm *DANGEROUS LIVING* with director John Scagliotti
8:30pm *TRANSAMERICA*

Saturday 7:00pm & 9:00pm *TRANSAMERICA*

Sunday 1:30pm *TRANSAMERICA*
4:00pm *THE ULTIMATE LESBIAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL*
7:00pm *BREAKFAST ON PLUTO*

Monday 7:00pm *WE ARE DAD*

Tuesday 7:00pm *UNVEILED*

Wednesday 6:30pm *SUMMER STORM*
8:15pm *LOGGERHEADS*

Thursday 7:00pm *FLOORED BY LOVE & SUCH GREAT LOVE*

All admissions \$5.00. A detailed flyer describing the films is available by calling Catamount Arts 802-748-2600 or at www.catamountarts.com. The Northeast Kingdom Film festival is underwritten by a generous grant from The Samara Foundation and support from here! Network.

Catamount Arts
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catamountarts.com

COMMUNITY

Menspace: Brattleboro Men's Program Thrives

BY JASON WHIPPLE

In 1995, the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont started up the Men's Program to concentrate on HIV prevention work with gay and bi men in the Brattleboro area. Today, the Men's Program employs two ¾ time coordinators. Alex Potter, a lifelong Brattleboro resident who began volunteering with the Men's Program back in 1995, is the Newsletter and Social Events Coordinator. Howie Peterson, a resident of Chesterfield, NH, is the Small Groups and Outreach Coordinator. Alex and Howie handle the everyday aspects of the Men's Program but look to the Core Group - a small group of volunteers from the community - for guidance on how the Men's Program can further the positive impact it has had on the gay and bi men's community in the area. I recently stopped by the new Menspace and had a chat with Alex and Howie.



PHOTO: JASON WHIPPLE

"What I'd really like to do is reach more and more guys who don't feel at all connected to the local men's community, and help them get connected with at least a few other gay and bi guys for friendship and support."

HOWIE PETERSON, OUTREACH COORDINATOR

JASON: Let's get right to the point. Why do we need the Men's Program? Why is it relevant?

HOWIE: Treatment for HIV infection has gotten so much better, but it is still a very serious disease that I want to help guys avoid. We need the Men's Program because it's really important for gay and bi men to have opportunities to meet, connect and have fun with other guys, and to build community - a community where guys support each other in staying healthy and connected and practicing HIV prevention behaviors. **Alex:** We're a fabulous, vibrant presence here in southern Vermont, and the community is richer for our existence. We also hear from men outside the central Brattleboro area that the Men's Program is relevant to their lives, through both the newsletter and the events. Some guys drive quite a ways to come to our events, just to socialize with the men of this area, as we're known as particularly friendly and welcoming. Other men have gone out of their way to let us know that receiving the newsletter is their one tan-

gible connection to a gay community in their small rural town.

JASON: What types of programs and services do you currently offer?

ALEX: The first service I always think of is our monthly newsletter. Previously *HotFlashes*, this publication was just recently renamed *Connections* by our Core Group, as they felt this name better represented our mission and purpose. Free and anonymous HIV Counseling and Testing is another service offered through our program. We offer Orasure, the oral test, which is safe, easy, and accurate and does not require any needles. No names are taken, and all tests results are provided by number. **HOWIE:** We're also holding eight to ten monthly events that bring guys together where they can socialize, have fun and have access to condoms and information about healthy living. We have occasional larger events like the Harvest Fireball and the Belle of Brattleboro Cruise. We do outreach at community events like the

annual Bear Film Festival and the upcoming Green Mountain Rural GLBT Film Festival, providing info about the Men's Program as well as HIV prevention info and supplies.

JASON: What types of programs and services would you like to offer?

ALEX: I would love for us to be able to offer more events of interest to a younger age range of gay and bi men. We know from feedback we are receiving that younger men are not getting the HIV prevention information they need, and that at the same time are often feeling fatalistic about HIV and future infection. We are making a large effort to determine what sorts of events and gatherings might bring in a younger range of guys. **HOWIE:** Yes, we're really looking to hear more from the younger gay and bi guys in the area. We'd also like to hold events geared to other segments of the community - for guys into bears, leather, working out, theater and art - whatever!

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