

LGBT-005 Margaret “Peg” Dierkers Collection

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Archives and Special Collections
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COLLECTION REGISTER

Name:	Dierkers, Margaret “Peg”	LGBT-005
Material:	Papers (1990-1995)	
Volume:	0.25 linear feet (1 document box)	
Donation:	Donated by Margaret “Peg” Dierkers, 2013 and 2015.	
Usage:	These materials have been donated without restrictions on usage.	
Processor:	Sarah Wakefield, December 2020	
Support:	Funding to process this collection was provided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.	

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Margaret “Peg” Dierkers was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1957 and attended a Catholic school as a child. She earned both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Ohio State University and eventually enrolled in a doctoral program in Human Development and Family Studies at Penn State University. Dierkers relocated to the Harrisburg area and soon began working for the South Central AIDS Assistance Network (SCAAN).

In the mid-1980s, concerned members of the Harrisburg gay community began organizing informal meetings. Troubled by the lack of services available for HIV-positive persons in their area, the group first helped meet the needs of their friends with the illness. As the disease entered mainstream consciousness, the group grew rapidly and began serving the larger community as the South Central AIDS Assistance Network (SCAAN). In 1988, SCAAN used grant funding to hire its first three full-time staff members and served 13 clients; by 1995, the group was run by 12 staff members and assisted by 150 volunteers, aiding more than 255 patients.

Client services aimed to support patients through financial assistance with rent, groceries, utility bills, and healthcare premiums. SCAAN also provided medical supplies such as bed pads, crutches, and wheelchairs. The organization also organized a buddy system, connecting volunteers with patients. Buddies provided assistance with a variety of tasks, ranging from light housekeeping to the management of complex treatment regimens.

SCAAN staff served as advocates for their clients, helping them navigate welfare, social security, and other bureaucracies, as well as assisting terminal patients with end-of-life planning. SCAAN also provided valuable educational resources, informing clients about their medical options with their annual Bulletin and organizing trainings at schools and churches to educate the general public about the disease. After merging with the Lancaster AIDS Project to become the AIDS Community Alliance, the organization is known today as the Alder Health Group.

After leaving SCAAN in 1994, Dierkers continued working for other social justice causes in Central PA, including the Domestic Violence Coalition, before ultimately returning to Ohio.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

This collection contains two series: South Central Aids Assistance Network (SCAAN) Newsletters, which consist of HIV/AIDS Treatment Bulletins and SCAAN Spotlight newsletters, while the South Central Aids Assistance Network (SCAAN) Reports series contains an annual report of the organization's finances, services, programs, and awards in 1995.

For related research materials and information on SCAAN, explore the following collection, also located in the Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections: LGBT-054 Martha "Marty" Tornblom Collection.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

Series 1 South Central Aids Assistance Network (SCAAN) Newsletters

1.1 HIV/AIDS Treatment Bulletin

- 1.1.01 Apr. 1990
- 1.1.02 Nov. 1990
- 1.1.03 Dec. 1990
- 1.1.04 Apr. 1991

1.2 SCAAN Spotlight

- 1.2.01 Fall 1990 (pages missing)
- 1.2.02 Winter 1990
- 1.2.03 Spring 1991
- 1.2.04 Winter 1992

Series 2 South Central Aids Assistance Network (SCAAN) Reports

- 2.01 Annual Report - Jan. 1995