



Post Election: Getting Organized And Moving Forward With The Q Center

by Sossity Chiricuzio, PQ Monthly

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Our Queer/Trans communities are struggling to find answers and some sense of safety in this recent upheaval of the political landscape. Fear and anxiety levels are understandably high, and many people are feeling hopeless, or helpless, or unsure what to do next. This is when we most need community, and somewhere to gather, and some sense of what to do. I spoke to Justin Pabalate and Stacey Rice, the co-directors of the Q Center, about what they see as our next steps, and how they are responding to the many calls for help.

PQ: *What is the biggest single effect you've seen since the election results came in?*

Q Center: Hearts are heavy and people are scared but more than anything, people are coming together. Since the election, there have been countless national conference calls addressing legal concerns, and there have been multiple gatherings to support each other from friends hosting wellness nights to organizations like Q Center and Pride NW hosting safe space gatherings with pizza and hugs. This togetherness that we're seeing is a reminder that we are not alone. On a conference call this morning, we were reminded that if Hillary Clinton does indeed win the popular vote, then the

majority of the country that voted do indeed support her positions on immigration, LGBTQ rights, higher wages, and equal pay and respect for women. We are not alone in this struggle and we have millions of allies who are willing to show up for us. If there's nothing else, that alone is a major reason to have hope and look for opportunities in this very scary time.

PQ: *Have there been specific requests for services, and are those different than usual?*

Q Center: We've had lots of requests for self defense and trans legal questions. We're working with three different agencies who are offering self defense courses and we are working with community leaders who will be offering a documents clinic for our Trans community members. Those details are being worked out and we will share out the events on our events page.

PQ: *What do you see as the most important steps for the Q Center to take in the coming months?*

Q Center: Our ears and arms are wide open. We are seeking input from our communities, and we're meeting with organizations that work with communities of color and brainstorming ways to increase access to both safe spaces and activism, and we're looking for opportunities to educate our people on how to increase representation in our various levels of local and statewide government.

These next 2-4 years will be potentially very rough. With that in mind, we're going to be working with our community partners to formalize wellness clinics to be available for people. The first pay as you can clinic will be a drop-in ear acupuncture session held on Sunday 11/20 from 2-4 PM in the gallery at Q Center. This will be in partnership with The Equi Institute and services provided by Rowan Gaverard, LAC. This session will be pay as you can and no one will be turned away if they aren't able to pay.

PQ: *What kind of support would be most helpful from straight allies right now?*

Q Center: Get involved and start organizing yourselves. With the uncertainty that comes with this election, we are working on ways to increase our reserves in case there is a recession. Volunteering is

always welcome and please commit to making a monthly donation to Q Center or your favorite nonprofit.

PQ: Has there been any outreach from local politicians to the Q Center?

Q Center: Not yet. However, we have very strong relationships with our local politicians from city and county levels to the state and federal levels. If there are particular areas of needs that people are noticing and don't feel comfortable contacting your elected official directly, please reach out to us and we will forward them on.

PQ: Do you have any resources to share for folks looking for legal advice?

Q Center: Some of the national organizations that are putting out information are Basic Rights Oregon, the Equality Federation, Marriage Equality USA, The Center for Transgender Equality, and the Transgender Law Center.

PQ: Do you have suggestions for white and/or cisgendered community members in terms of how to support our most vulnerable community members?

Q Center: Yes, support organizations that are led by LGBTQ, POC and immigrant community members. We look to you for leadership and support. Please don't wait. We told you that there was still work to be done in LGBTQ communities and the at the intersections of race and economics and this election has underscored that message to the nth degree. Please show up for us so that our communities can rise, thrive and survive the emboldened blatant racism, homophobia and transphobia that are already manifesting.

Local resources and places to get involved:

pdxqcenter.org

inotherwords.org

sankofanw.wordpress.com

facebook.com/APIPRide/

latnet.org

smyrc.org

sageusa.org

equi-institute.org

pridenw.org

surjpdx.org

equityfoundation.org

cascadeaids.org

basicrights.org

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