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REGIONAL

Charlotte's community center needs your help

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tial opening, Kirsch left the Center and Charlotte to take a job with a California theater company.

In his absence the Center was managed by Monica Simpson until Kevin Ferguson took over as the next executive director. His tenure was brief — less than a few months — before both parties came to the mutual decision that the fit wasn't quite right.

Laura Witkowski grabbed the helm as the latest ED this past year.

Also on board for the past two and a half years is Linda Davis, who has served in the capacity of development assistant, fundraising director and administrative coordinator.

The Center survives on grants, fundraisers, personal contributions and membership dues. With the current economic atmosphere, funding has become more difficult to obtain and the Center is realizing the pains of ever-tightening purse strings.

The PRIDE Charlotte Festival, held in late August, proved to be a successful effort for the Center.

Next on the books is the annual Charlotte Business Guild (CBG) fundraiser for Time Out Youth and the Lesbian & Gay Community Center.

It takes place Saturday, October 21, at The Hilton University Place at 8629 J.M. Keynes Drive. The party kicks off at 7:30 p.m. and continues through midnight. Tickets are \$65 for CBG members and \$75 for non-members.

The event is described as a community celebration, with cash bar, dinner, dancing and an opportunity to socialize the night away.

On Nov. 4 is the Center's Fourth annual "Whatever Your Art Desires."

An art auction to benefit the Center, last year's event was so successful that organizers had to move off site to accommodate the crowds and art. This year's event, which will also feature live entertainment and, for the first time, a live auction portion, will be held at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church in Uptown Charlotte. Art enthusiasts are encouraged to come see and bid on one-of-a-kind art from all over the country.

The fun kicks off at 7 p.m. and continues through 10 p.m. at St. Peter's, which is located

at 115 West Seventh St.

While funds raised from these events certainly contribute to keeping the Center open to the public — much more help is needed.

Says board director Joe Campos: "It would



Historic St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Uptown Charlotte is the scene for the Center's 'Whatever Your Art Desires' art auction on Nov. 4.

help so much if people would utilize the Center. Rent the space, hold your events there. If you're not a member, join. If you've been a member and you haven't received a call to renew your membership, call in and renew it. Most importantly — get involved. If you don't have it in your budget to donate, then participate as a volunteer."

"People need to know what they would be missing if we didn't have a community center," says Davis. "They would be missing the glue that holds the community together, the common place for everybody and a voice for our community." ▀

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