

INTERNAL CONFLICTS CHALLENGE LGHP
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applications in the fall of 1988, and the organization's sudden expansion of paid personnel positions and programs throughout the last year.

"It is very difficult to weed out which created what" in terms of the financial problems, Thompson said. Once the shortfall was discovered, the entire board became involved in short-term fundraising efforts. A grant contribution of \$25,000 in the last month has greatly eased the pressure, Noto said.

Both co-chairs said that the financial crisis was not Duvall's fault. "There was no element of [the board's] being misled," Noto said, "but certainly the board derived a lot of its information from Jill" and professional fundraiser Marjorie Sheer. "We were kind of startled when we really had to start pedaling harder to get more money in."

The board's lack of expertise and the organization's mushrooming growth were important factors in the money crisis. Both Noto and Thompson are former treasurers of LGHP, "but the money was peanuts when we were doing it," Noto said. "The figures are much bigger now." The

organization never developed a budgeting process adequate to administer the funds and programs under the project's burgeoning control. New staff, new quarters, and expanded office expenses combined with a neophyte board with no sense of the financial danger the group was confronting. "We didn't know at what point to be scared," Noto said, "but it was obvious we were spending money quicker than we were bringing it in."

If there was a connection between the financial crisis and Duvall's departure, Noto said, it was the threat to her own financial future. "In the back of her mind she was certainly concerned with how much money would be available for her to draw a salary," although he is certain "she would have stayed through extremely murky waters." The budget problems threatened Duvall's security because the executive director's salary is such a large portion of the expenses, Noto said. "On top of all the stress was the sense that her job was insecure, that the funding might not be there."

Adding further to the stress was the nature of the board's attempt to gain control over the budget crisis by requiring Duvall and her staff to determine every cost that every program was

incurring, and embarking on an evaluation procedure that would cut or dissolve some programs if the situation did not improve. "The staff took these issues very, very personally," Noto said.

The chaos on the board, reflected by such drastic cost-cutting measures, was part of the reason the bad financial condition of the health project was not discovered sooner, Noto said. A 1987 decision to create The AIDS Services Project (TASP) as a subsidiary program made it possible for the board to consider transferring AIDS work to another sponsoring organization rather than see LGHP's AIDS programs destroyed. Noto said he recognized the virtue of the way the AIDS programs had been organized within the larger LGHP structure, allowing money to be funneled to TASP from "organizations that might not want to give funds to lesbian and gay health projects" but were willing to support AIDS services. "But that's always been sort of a confusing division," he added. The threat to the AIDS programs, which Duvall had helped nurse from their beginnings as loosely-organized bands of volunteers, had further aggravated the tension of the situation, Noto said.

Thompson agreed that board disorganization was a factor in both Duvall's sense of isolation and the failure to adequately control LGHP's finances. The board has undergone a massive exodus of people in the last two years, as the health project switched from an all-volunteer to a more formal board-of-directors structure. Noto, Thompson, and treasurer Joe Fellingham are the only experienced board members now involved in the group. Formal structures were inevitable, Thompson said, with the ballooning demand for services and the attempt to develop a structure capable of delivering them. Before August of 1987 the group had operated on a consensus, grassroots basis, with the people who conceived new programs largely responsible for all facets of their funding and implementation.

"We were getting too big for that to be successful," Thompson said. "The bigger an organization gets, the more formal it needs to become." Access to larger grants and other funding sources also demanded formality, she added.

The ten new board members had to be trained, in addition to finding enough expertise and

agreement among them to develop some goals. "I am extremely uncomfortable that we have not developed a board in the time-frame we projected," she said. "I've learned that the development of a board is a time-consuming, painful process and people aren't going to understand the ins and outs of it."

The evolving nature of the relationship of the Board to the executive director was also a factor; the loose steering committee structure was not really replaced with a board until January, "in response to almost six months of having a non-functioning steering committee," Thompson said. "Jill collected more and more of the programs" under her supervision in the face of the leadership gap.

Noto emphasized the changes in Duvall's and other personnel's responsibilities during the transition. There was no governing structure available to Duvall when she needed to discuss issues, he said; "everyone on the board works 40 hours per week, and we don't always log office time" in the volunteer LGHP board position. "We didn't tend to mingle with our office staff nearly enough; the staff didn't see much of us and neither did Jill," he said, creating a chasm between paid workers and the group's leadership. "The board's not paid; the staff is," so there was no board person available to work with the staff on a continual basis.

The board has organized into four committees, and is attempting to divide labor among its membership, Thompson said. They are planning to have a new executive director hired by June 15. Looking back on the period since January, she said, "I think we did a real good job of thinking through a lot of issues; but we missed some." The transition from a volunteer to boarddirected organization has been more difficult than anyone has projected and had taken a toll on all those involved, she said. She hopes the level of criticism leveled at Duvall and the organization as a whole will not be a consideration once a new executive director is hired.

"How tough can a person be" — how well a job candidate might respond to the tremendous pressures of the job — will be a key consideration as they work through the hiring process, Thompson added.

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