

Gay, lesbian centre needs home

HEATHER VANDERMEER

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Out On The Shelf needs a new home. And volunteers with the gay and lesbian resource centre see that as an opportunity for growth.

"The news that we had to move our premises honestly came as a bit of a surprise, but we're open to the fact that we can grow and give our resource centre more face in the community," said Dave Vervoort, promotions co-ordinator for Out On The Shelf.

Since Aug. 16, 2005, the Out On The Shelf library and resource centre has rented premises from the Community Mental Health Association at 147 Wyndham St. N. But due to budget cuts, the space is no longer available for rent.

Out On The Shelf is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization with magazines, books, Internet access and meetings, said finance co-ordinator Lori Guest.

"It's going to be great to expand -- it will be really exciting. . . . We've only been there a year and already we've noticed that we've grown a lot," she said.

Out On The Shelf volunteers are hoping they can raise \$30,000 by the re-opening on June 1, Guest said.

"We all see it as a stepping stone -- we're glad we could get our name out in the community and now we've accepted that we have to move on and make ourselves better known," Vervoort said. Hopeful the partnership with the Community Mental Health Association will continue in new ways, Vervoort said they are grateful they had the space for their opening.

"Our biggest thing is getting a partnership or a donation to rent space downtown and on the main floor where it's accessible. We need to have a place where people know where we are," he said.

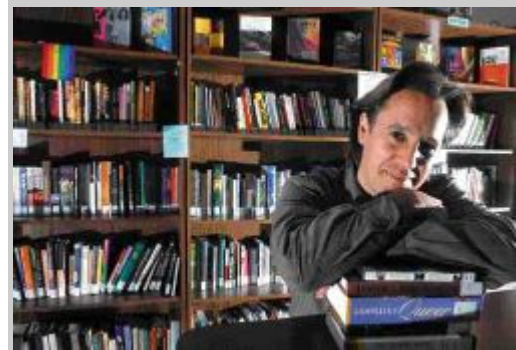
"Before us, there wasn't a lot of resources for the gay, lesbian and bisexual community in Guelph. We've really become part this community."

Vervoort said the community can lend a hand by hosting fundraisers such as dinner parties or making donations.

The resource centre has 200 members and more than 1,500 resources.

To find out how to help, visit www.outontheshelf.ca.

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DAVE CARTER, GUELPH MERCURY
Dave Vervoort is promotions co-ordinator for Out On The Shelf. The resource centre needs to relocate.