

Goddard House Begins SAGE Accreditation as LGBT Friendly Community

- by *Lance Chapman*

As we seek to more fully embody the Goddard House core values, our leadership team will be engaging in a training process to become the first Assisted Living in Massachusetts to obtain an SAGE accreditation to better serve LGBT elders. Along with providing advocacy and resources for LGBT elders across the country, SAGE also offers training for providers, such as Goddard House, to become culturally competent and sensitive to the salient issues of LGBT Elders.

For over five years Goddard House has partnered with ETHOS in providing a low-cost brunch for LGBT elders here at Goddard House. One Saturday each month we serve as a safe and welcoming meal site for people to eat a healthy and delicious meal in community with each other.

Goddard House has also been a sponsor and advocate of LGBT independent film maker Stu Maddux who directed the acclaimed film *Gen Silent*. The film captures the plight of LGBT elders that grew up in an era of social- intolerance towards their lifestyle which has left a generation of people with emotional scars. This history makes joining, even a progressive community such as Goddard House, a move requiring a bold step of courage.

As I write this article, there are currently laws in various states other than Massachusetts, limiting the rights of same sex couples to obtain housing. A recent study shows 48% of older same-sex couples experience housing discrimination. In response to this Goddard House hopes to be the first of many nearby Assisted Living communities to go through the *SAGEcare* training program. Our hope is that by undergoing this training Goddard House will become well-known as an organization that welcomes LGBT elders to join this community and has prepared the staff to understand some of the unique issues faced by this group of people.

We are hopeful that the *SAGEcare* training and subsequent accreditation will be a next step in our journey as a community to become a place that nurtures a sense of belonging to anyone that chooses to call Goddard House...home.

Excerpt from the Goddard House Values Statement

Respect: We nurture a sense of belonging by treating all members of our community with respect, without regard for age, ethnicity, religion, income, ability, sexual orientation or gender preference.