

Bio for Dr. Marcy Adelman

Dr. Marcy Adelman, a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, is the co-founder of Openhouse and a pioneer in the field of lesbian and gay aging. For over 30 years, she has worked to make visible the lives, concerns and contributions of LGBT elders, and is a leading advocate for quality LGBT elder care and policies that safeguard equal treatment.

Marcy and her late partner Jeannette Gurevitch founded Openhouse in 1998 to address the housing and service needs of LGBT elders. Marcy's leadership and vision of LGBT affirming senior housing and city-wide senior services mobilized the community's fight for affordable housing and aging services to help LGBT seniors not just live but thrive at home and in their community.

Marcy's advocacy and research work were pivotal in educating service providers and city and state officials about the unique needs of LGBT elders. The Openhouse survey (2003), with over 1,000 participants was, at the time, the largest and most racially inclusive study of its kind. It shattered the myth of "gay affluence" and raised awareness that LGBT elders had a right to be included in affordable housing and subsidized senior programs. The under-representation of LGBT people in senior programs and senior housing could no longer be dismissed.

Moreover, the lack of services that were welcoming to LGBT seniors was not limited to housing. Both discrimination itself and the fear of discrimination prevented LGBT seniors from utilizing needed services all along the continuum of care — from housing to home health and in-home services, from assisted living to nursing homes, to social services, adult day care and dementia care. Rather than reinvent the wheel of services, Marcy established collaborative relationships with providers and agencies to educate and eventually train them in how to make their services and agencies more inclusive and more responsive to the needs of the LGBT community. As a result, long before Openhouse Community Housing opened its doors at 55 Laguna, Openhouse had succeeded in making the Bay Area one of the most LGBT senior friendly cities in the country.

This fall, Openhouse will break ground at 95 Laguna for a new five-story building with 79 affordable senior apartments. It will also include an activity center for LGBT seniors city wide which will be the epicenter of Openhouse's health and wellness programming.

While Marcy's term on the board of Openhouse expires in June, 2017 she continues to serve as an advisor to the organization, as well as involved in city, state and national advocacy work on LGBT senior issues. She served on the LGBT Aging Policy Task Force. Currently, she serves on the Dignity Fund Oversight and Advisory Committee for the City and County of San Francisco; the Advisory Council to the Department of Aging and Adult Service Commission; the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California and Nevada's Diversity and Inclusion Committee; and is a Senior Advisor to SAGE on LGBT Aging and Dementia.