Lesbian Aid and Service Society
LASS: “We’re here for each other”

Our mission
Our mission is to build a caring community of mutual support for lesbian and bisexual women in the Boston area who are 40 years old and over, and who are facing medical and life crises. LASS offers women a way to turn to our communities for help, assistance and support.

Purpose
We are creating the kind of mutual support found in neighborhoods and religious communities. Because the lesbian community is not physical or religious, there is a lack of opportunity for women in our community to find the support they need when facing medical and life crises. We encourage women to participate both as volunteers and to ask for help should the need arise.

Who we help
Lesbians and bisexual women who are 40 and over and have acute or ongoing health conditions, or life crises, such as the death of a loved one.

We may provide:
· After day or longer-term hospitalization, women need a ride home by a designated person.
· Once home, women may need a few hours with someone to help get settled in.
· Grocery shopping or other errands such as going to the pharmacy.
· Support and contact during recuperation.
· Help with decision-making that arises during medical crises.
· Help to find resources and information regarding medical needs.
· Meals for women who experiencing medical issues.
· Childcare and elder care during medical emergencies.
We do not fulfill requests for:
• Women who have resources adequate to meet their own needs.
• Women for whom LASS assistance may be desirable but is not essential.

Things that Volunteers cannot provide:
• Nursing of any kind or assessments of medical condition.
• Over-the-counter or prescription medications, medical advice, supervision for women in medical/psychiatric crises.
• Helpers are not permitted contact with bodily fluids or discarded medical supplies.

LASS does not offer professional services. We can provide emotional and informational support before, during or after medical appointments.

Our volunteers
Lesbians and bisexual women who have the time and ability to provide for the specific request and who support the mission and vision of LASS.

Responsibilities of women asking for assistance
• If possible, a two week notice with specific location and time requirements.
• In a crisis situation, this two week notice is waived.

The role of a liaison
• The liaison is the point person for an identified woman who has longer-term needs.
• All requests for assistance go to the liaison.
• Just as other requests are communicated, the liaison emails request(s) to the LASS Distribution List and the Ova4D Discussion Board.
• The liaison coordinates the assignment of these requests.
• If the need is great, two liaisons can be assigned.

Volunteer liability and responsibilities
• Being on time and making sure that you know what is needed.
• For women using their cars:
  • Car insurance coverage for passengers in case of an accident.
  • Good driving record.
Service costs

- The liaison will talk with the person about what she can afford, such as gas and parking.
- The volunteer can offer to cover the costs. When the person needs a ride and can afford paying for the costs, she does.
- If the person cannot afford these costs, the liaison can contact the LASS Treasurer (Gerry - ghoex@verizon.net) to be reimbursed. This process also applies to food prepared by a volunteer. Volunteers should save all receipts for reimbursement. Mileage costs are determined at .32 per mile.

Processes

- LASS is a group of lesbians and bisexual women (40 and over) which is evolving into a community that can ask and offer services to each other. All members are welcome to attend LASS organizational meetings and make decisions.
- LASS meets on the third Sunday of the month. Any member of Ova4D is welcome to attend and help make decisions. We try to reach decisions through consensus. If this is not possible, we make decisions through majority vote.
- Each meeting has an agenda and minutes. The agenda is available during the meeting, and minutes are disseminated to members who have joined the LASS Distribution List.

Facilitation of LASS meetings

- Members can facilitate a meeting if they have attended the most recent two meetings prior to the meeting they will be facilitating.
- The previous facilitator, the next facilitator and Leslie will meet to discuss the upcoming agenda. The facilitator will review the minutes directly after the meeting with Leslie.

Administration

- LASS has a Steering Committee whose purpose is to oversee the general functioning of LASS. Between meetings, the Steering Committee is charged with resolving issues that need timely resolution. The Committee meets on an as-needed basis, and at least on a quarterly basis.
Steering Committee Members:

Leslie Loomis (Chair) email: jaimelooohoo@yahoo.com
Gerry Hoex (Treasurer) email: ghoex@hotmail.com
Marian Craighill (Member) email: mariancraighill@comcast.net
Ellie Malick (Member) email: elmhu1@yahoo.com
Barbara Mantel (Member) email: barbaramantel@hotmail.com

If anyone needs assistance or knows of other women who need help, let LASS know by contacting Leslie at LASSboston@gmail.com