

Joan Buffington

Joan Buffington
Joan Buffington

Who Cares? - Fridays, 12:00 Noon - 1:00 PM

Healthcare issues

Joan Buffington set the standard for news and public affairs coverage at KVMR. Accepting the 2001 Community Impact Award to KVMR from the NFCB, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, she said that "the role of community radio is not to speak for the community, it is to hold the airwaves open for community members to speak". Her insight has been quoted nationally.

The prestigious Community Impact Award came to KVMR for its coverage of mental health issues before, during, and after the shooting and killing of three people by a mental health client in 2001.

Joan continues to work on creating community support for mental health in her present position as Community Coordinator for the Mental Health Services Act. Her job for 2005 is to get public input on how to spend the money from the tax created by Prop 63 for new and innovative mental health services.

At KVMR Joan continues to produce and host "Who Cares?", a weekly call-in program covering issues of health and the politics of access to health care. "Who Cares?" is broadcast every Friday, except the first Friday, from noon to one. Since its beginning in 1988, "Who Cares?" continues to provide an opportunity for consumers and providers to speak as equals. It is videotaped by Pam Gorman and rebroadcast on NC-TV.

Joan Buffington was the News Director of KVMR from 1988 to 2002. During her tenure, KVMR News grew from a volunteer service to a paid news staff working out of an office with an independent, state of the art production room. During her tenure, KVMR News began and continues to use national and international sources including the BBC, Free Speech Radio News, and Democracy Now! Before and during her tenure as News Director, Joan organized regular volunteer trainings on news writing, production, and vocal delivery.

In 1988 Joan and her partner, Dan Scanlan, secured the first of three consecutive grants from Sound Partners for Community Health, a national organization funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support community stations working with community partners. From Sound Partners, KVMR received more funding than any other community radio station. With this financial support, Joan worked with a variety of community groups and helped mental health clients create an independent center, SPIRIT Mental health Peer Empowerment Center, which opened in 2004 and stands as a model for self help.

Joan Buffington was one of the founding members of the KVMR Women's Collective, which she coordinated from 1990 to 2002. She hosts The Women's Show once every two months. She secured a grant from the Women's Foundation of San Francisco to train women in news production. She and Dawn Fischer received an award for news and public affairs from the NFCB in 2001 for a series on remarkable women; produced with members of the Collective and community members. The series, called "Her Story" was produced again in 2002, and both series were distributed nationally.

Joan can be reached at the SPIRIT Mental Health Peer Empowerment Center, 530-275-1778, or by email at: whocares@kvmr.org.