

OSSCC

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SUPPORT SAFE SCHOOLS

Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition

Summer 2007

Number 5

PURPOSE OF NEWSLETTER

In an effort to keep Coalition members and allies informed, OSSCC presents this newsletter to summarize our activities of 2006-07.

Edited by Joy Wallace,
OSSCC Board Vice Chair

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS INCREASE AGAIN

For the second straight year, OSSCC increased its membership, by nine percent this year, from 65 to 71 members—46 organizations and 25 individuals. Even better, however, was a 78 percent increase in membership contributions, from \$1,354 last year to \$2,050 this year.

These increases were due to Board members who personally present members and potential members. We need you and/or your organization to join our list of supporters.

For a membership brochure, contact us at: 503-232-4556 or www.oregonsafeschools.org.

2006-07 OSSCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joyce Liljeholm, Chair
Joy Wallace, Vice Chair
Tre Luna, Secretary
Lisa Gnall, Corresponding Secretary
Ray Johnson, Treasurer
Ron Bloodworth
Lissa Feldman
Theresa Molter

WEBSITE

Visit the OSSCC website for information about the organization, membership, Bylaws and resources to create safer schools; Safe Schools Training and GSA Network

6TH ANNUAL OREGON SAFE SCHOOLS TRAINING SET

Buoyed by a grant from the Portland-based Equity Foundation, OSSCC will be able to sponsor its 6th Annual Oregon Safe Schools Training on November 2-3 at the Community Center, Bend, Oregon.

The planning committee already has sent out a "Save the Date" flyer to an extensive list of schools and organizations in the state and will be meeting regularly to organize the two-day event. As with the previous Trainings, the focus will be on assisting youth/adult teams to learn strategies to educate their communities about LGBTQ issues. The Training will help team members:

- 1) Increase knowledge about LGBTQ issues and resources.
- 2) Identify effective ways for youth and adults to work together.
- 3) Network with teams from other Oregon communities.
- 4) Develop a project to address the health and safety needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

Surveys of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth continue to find that these youth are more likely to exhibit health risk behaviors such as harassment or suicide attempts than their heterosexual peers. Even with the establishment of many Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in Oregon schools, too many sexual minority youth are still marginalized and invisible in Oregon communities due to the negative social attitudes, violence and discrimination that they experience.

Groups from 43 schools and organizations in Oregon and SW Washington have participated and used the training to assist them in improving the atmosphere for GLBTQ students in their schools and communities. Past school and community projects have included developing and sponsoring a sexual minority climate survey, sponsoring a Day of Silence and presenting awareness assemblies.

Application information will be sent out in September, but to assure your receiving the follow-up information, send your email contact information to: 503-232-4556, info@oregonsafeschools.org or PO Box 203895, Tigard, OR 97281. Information can also be found at www.oregonsafeschools.org.

OSSCC GAINING ON NONPROFIT STATUS

Gaining nonprofit status for OSSCC has passed two hurdles with one more to go. Spearheaded by the OSSCC Resource Development Committee, a successful filing was made with the State of Oregon for Articles of Incorporation-Nonprofit status and a second successful filing was made with the federal government for an Employer Identification Number.

The final step is another filing with the federal government for the Recognition of Exemption-501(c)3 status, which is reported to be a long and detailed process. The committee has received professional advice from Jackie Wheatley, an accountant who was provided pro bono by the Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants.

OSSCC began the process for nonprofit status three years ago with the development and adoption of Bylaws and the holding of two Annual Meetings. The Rural Organizing Project will continue to serve as OSSCC's agent of record for tax purposes until the nonprofit status is secured.

Members of the Resource Development Committee are Ray Johnson and Joy Wallace.

THANK YOU EQUITY FOUNDATION!

This is the fifth year that OSSCC has received funds from the Equity Foundation to organize a workshop for school teams. Since our initial funding from Equity Foundation in 2002, it has been actively collaborating with us during the entire funding periods. As the first funder to support OSSCC, the Equity Foundation will always have a special place

ANNUAL NIGHT OF NOISE HELD IN APRIL

The Portland Metropolitan GSA Network put on a very successful Night of Noise on April 17. The youth had been celebrating the Day of Silence, having silently protested anti-gay bullying and harassment and celebrated the day with a Night of Noise. Student leaders from Grant, Cleveland, MLC and Catlin Gable high schools wanted to move this year's event to a new venue and City of Portland Commissioner Sam Adams offered Portland City Hall.

With talented bands from MLC, a sound system from SMYRC, feather boas from BRO and pizza funded by GLSEN Oregon, this was the loudest, proudest Night of Noise Portland has ever had. Dignitaries who commended the students were Dan Ryan, Portland School Board; David Martinez, the office of Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey; and Adams. SMYRC and OSSCC were proud to mentor these GSA Network youth leaders in planning the event.

OSSCC SPONSORS 2ND ANNUAL OREGON GSA SUMMIT

Oregon GSAs are talking to each other! Advocates and members of new and long-time GSAs, met on the Willamette University campus April 28 to work together to strengthen their groups. Funding for the project came from a Pride Foundation grant given to OSSCC with inkind support from GLSEN Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon and the Salem chapter of PFLAG. Keynote speakers were Tanya Mayo, California GSA Network; Kira Moyer-Sims, Oregon GSA Network youth leader from Metropolitan Learning Center; and Drew Lindell, Oregon GSA Network youth leader from Southridge HS. Seasoned GSA leaders led workshops for representatives from newly formed GSAs

Whether youth came from cities like Portland and Salem, suburbs like Beaverton and Keizer, or small communities like Banks and Molalla, all were delighted with the Oregon GSA Network t-shirts supplied by PFLAG State Council and PFLAG Portland. The youth celebrated network achievements of the past year that included a website at www.oregongsa.org, an email address at oregongsanetwork@gmail.com and an email list of over 80 school and community GSAs.

The youth have goals to increase youth leadership at the Summit, create regional mini-summits, develop an online interactive forum and continue to reach out to include more "kinds of people" from additional regions and cultures. The youth hope to have regular specific events to draw in more participants. They favor October/November, February/March and possibly a summer event. It is hoped that one or two delegates can represent Oregon at the national conference in Albuquerque in August 2007.

"All students deserve to go to school without fear of being bullied or harassed. I applaud the work of Oregon Safe School and Communities Coalition. Your work is making a difference and you can always count on my support and advocacy."

Maria Rojo de Steffey
Multnomah County Commissioner

FIRST BENEFIT PROCLAIMED A SUCCESS

On Wednesday, May 16, OSSCC held its first fun-filled benefit event at Zaytoon on Alberta Street that saw 29 people show up and raised \$1,035.

The evening began with Sneakin' Out playing a set of music and then being joined by Ashleigh Flynn for a few songs. Everyone was touched by a reading by Tom Spanbauer from his newest book, *Now Is The Hour*. Thank you to Zaytoon, Sneakin' Out, Ashleigh Flynn and Tom Spanbauer for donating time and space to benefit OSSCC.

WOLF CREEK JOB CORPS SCHOOL TEAM REPORTS ON ITS YEAR

When members of the Wolf Creek Job Corps GSA attended the OSSCC 5th Annual Safe Schools Training, November 3-4 in Eugene, their excitement was palpable. It was the first time that Wolf Creek had attended. The four youth and their adviser, Patti Zachery, a Job Corps career counselor, came away from the training with ideas, strategies, and best yet, a plan of action.

They decided to do a climate survey of Wolf Creek Job Corps as part of their Safe Schools project, to find out just what their peers thought of GLBT youth. Apart from their infectious enthusiasm, the youths knew their survey had to be created, distributed and compiled quickly.

As part of the Job Corps vocational training program, the Wolf Creek GSA does not have the same structure as a conventional, high school GSA. For one thing, turnover is high. Located near Roseburg, the Wolf Creek Job Corps Center program for youth ages 16-24 is meant to be a stepping stone along the way, not a stopping point for participants. Unfortunately, that also means that even the loose structure of the GSA tends to be even more fluid than usual. Less than eight months after the Safe Schools Training, almost all of the original attendees had moved on from the program.

However, neither their planning nor their excitement had been wasted. As a short-term result of their actions, the Wolf Creek GSA grew tremendously over the course of the year. As of March, the GSA was 20-30 youth strong. However, as with all things in Job Corps, no one knows how long the expanded GSA will last, least of all Patti Zachery.

"I don't know if the group will continue or not," she noted. Long-term effects of the project have rippled out to other Job Corps centers. Joyce Liljeholm, chair of the OSSCC, has been contacted by a staff member from the Tongue Point Job Corps Center, asking for more information for their GSA. Back at Wolf Creek, the Deputy Director of the site has asked the Wolf Creek GSA if they would appear in the Job Corps Times, a national newsletter for Job Corps.