



JUST FOR US

FOCUS ON ELECTIONS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Vol. 20 #2
2008

FOR PEOPLE WITH LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND/OR QUEER PARENTS

PURSuing POLICY AND POLITICS



KAHLIL SEREN HUFF
As an adult, straight man raised by my mother and her partner, and as a person interested in

policy and politics, I have some anxiety about the practicability of my political ambitions and the value of my political efforts. I live in Ohio, a state in which a constitutional ballot issue restricting marriage and the rights and privileges associated with it to heterosexual couples not only passed, but also helped George W. Bush retake the White House. In this environment, it is understandable that a certain amount of fear might infect the political attitudes of the children of gay parents. I am a firm believer in marriage equality, and seeing evidence that the majority of voters in my state hold a

contrary position is disheartening. But just as one person coming out of the closet makes it that much easier for others to do the same, being open and unapologetic about one's beliefs and background makes it that much easier for other children of LGBTQ parents to do the same.

To make it clear, I have never had a desire to hide my mothers' orientations for political (or social) gain, but I recognize the likelihood of future political opponents attacking my family should I ever run for office.

That notwithstanding, I hold on to the idea that fear should not hold one back from engaging in the political process with enthusiasm. If we allow that fear to stunt our political growth, we not only rob ourselves of the opportunity to change society for the better, we also steal the confidence from the political aspirations of future generations.

I take inspiration from my mother—a lesbian, a black woman, an attorney—who has been an example of sticking to your principles even when it is politically unwise. She has shown me that making a difference is important whether it is on a large scale or a smaller one.

Through her I have learned several lessons: Don't just vote; educate yourself about the candidates and the issues and walk into the ballot box an informed citizen. Don't just vote; educate others about the nature and gravity of the issues we face and influence them to add their voices as well. Don't focus on one issue to the exclusion of other important issues, because they are all interconnected—a civil rights issue is directly impacted by election protection and voter outreach.

Voting, working with grassroots

continued on page 6

SPREADING THE WORD THAT LOVE MAKES A FAMILY

BECCA LAZARUS



For the past few months I have been working with a not-for-profit organization in Connecticut called Love Makes a Family. They help with marriage rights in Connecticut, and I have done many things with them. For example, I got to hear Senator Edwards speak in Bridgeport about poverty and he was very inspirational. I also postcard for marriage equality. Post carding is getting signatures from Connecticut residents who support marriage equality. We then send them to the Senators and Representatives from the same area of where the Connecticut resident lives. This has done so much for the Senate and House to decide on this issue because it gives them the

chance to see how many people care about marriage equality. I also have made phone calls to citizens to encourage them to vote for a particular candidate for Senator for their district. Making phone calls is also important because it will help marriage be legalized in the state faster if we can get the right people in there.

I am glad that I work with Love Makes a Family because it makes me feel like I'm making a difference in this world. It makes me feel like I am getting rights for my family and others. I thank my dads for giving me this voice and COLAGE for teaching my how to use it.

Becca Lazarus is about to start high school in Connecticut where she lives with her two dads. She started the COLAGE Connecticut chapter when she was 11 years old and has been a long-time participant in COLAGE's program at Family Week Provincetown. She was also a featured participant of the COLAGE Speak OUT program's National Radio Tour co-sponsored with Freedom to Marry in 2006 and 2007.

INSIDE

- Civic Engagement Action Pages.....p6-7
- Events Scrapbook.....p8-9
- Scholarship Winners.....p12

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Family:
Every time there is an election, the mere act of heading to my poll place fills with me with excitement. There is something empowering and inspiring about taking part in this basic democratic act. Although my candidates and issues don't always win, I know it's important to show up to vote at each and every opportunity.

This fall is an especially important moment for COLAGE and *Just For Us* to turn our eye onto elections and civic engagement. The 2008 United States Presidential Election is already groundbreaking and I am optimistic about the momentum growing, especially amongst young people, to vote for change in our highest office. In California, as well as in Arizona and Florida, hate-based ballot initiatives are once again attacking our families' rights to equal protection through marriage even as COLAGE families are accessing their full marriage rights, celebrating the love and commitment we know is the most important feature of a healthy, happy family.

In this issue of *Just For Us*, you can read about youth and adult COLAGERS who are actively involved in politics and campaigns. I hope you will find their stories as inspiring as I do. To create a

movement for social justice, the work of individuals and groups who promote civic engagement, democracy and fairness in politics, and community organizing is crucial.

During this election season, I encourage you to be an active participant in our democracy. Speak OUT about the realities you and your family face everyday and what you want for your family, community, country and planet. Join COLAGE's efforts to protect marriage equality; share your story about a candidate for office that you are excited about; write an article for your school or local newspaper about the issues of the election that impact your life, or find another means of taking action and rising up that inspires you.

On Tuesday, November 4, as I enter my ballot booth, I will cast my vote, not just for myself, but for the thousands of youth, adults and families with whom I am so privileged to work through COLAGE. Change is possible and together we can make it happen!

In solidarity,

Beth Teper
COLAGE Executive Director

COLAGE

MISSION

COLAGE IS A NATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND ADULTS WITH ONE OR MORE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND/OR QUEER (LGBTQ) PARENT(S). WE BUILD COMMUNITY AND WORK TOWARD SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY.

CONTACT US:

1550 Bryant Street, Suite 830
San Francisco, CA 94103
t. (415) 861-KIDS (5437) f. (415) 255-8345
www.colage.org e-mail: colage@colage.org

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HOSTING FAMILY DINNERS

KATIE WATSON



I became involved in The Progressive Project (TPP) while running through Provincetown in 2004. “What’s TPP?” I asked my friend pitching the concept to me, “is it a non-profit? A 527?” the lawyer in me queried. That’s when I learned that “TPP’s about friends working to get a progressive into the White House, on school boards and city councils. It’s about claiming ourselves as ‘value voters.’ It’s friends merging joy and politics.”

My friend, Jasmine, went on to explain her analysis of the divided reactions of LGBT individuals to our homophobic society: assimilation versus isolation. Neither extreme alone advances our civil rights. TPP originated from a desire to blend those natural reactions to discrimination by bringing together LGBT folks and allies to celebrate (isolate) and then outreach to the broader community on important political issues (assimilate).

That year, TPP developed the Family Dinner as a civil rights innovation and hosted a series of them in Asheville, a small city in western North Carolina. The dinners engaged people in working against anti-marriage amendments on Southern ballots through intergenerational events. Through the dinners, they organized and funded two trips to Kentucky to work against an amendment on the ballot there. Those who didn’t get involved in Kentucky volunteered on campaign efforts in North Carolina.

As COLAGers, we’re in a unique position of having intergenerational contact within the LGBT community that many are not exposed to. My experience of learning about LGBT culture through my mother and her friends is very unique

compared to my friends who did not benefit from the same exposure to our diverse community’s history. TPP works to increase this intergenerational exposure for people.

This year, TPP is hosting Family Dinners in San Francisco, Boston, Asheville, and St. Louis to engage people in the Equality for All campaign and the Obama campaign. At a Family Dinner, LGBT individuals and allies come together to celebrate and act. At these events, people share a meal and connect to actions, including an on-going art project (“Witness”) and COLAGE phone-banking. The Family Dinner creates a new model for what it looks and feels like to engage in political life.

Again, COLAGers are in a unique position from which we can share our broad experiences with others. Family Dinners uphold a model of family that includes LGBT individuals, varied family structures and allies. In fact, the Family Dinner is a tool for enlisting allies as essential in both community and action.

While I am a bit nervous about hosting my first Family Dinner this September, wondering how many friends and friends of friends will come and sign up to outreach in Nevada or staff phones on election day or otherwise contribute, I am 100% confident that it is going to be an inspiring lot of people whose energy and enthusiasm for political and social change will have a positive ripple effect in our community.

To learn more, please visit TPP on-line at www.theprogressiveproject.org and check out local events at www.campaignwindow.com/sf.

Katie Watson grew up in Minnesota with a lesbian mom, and now works as a health care attorney in Berkeley, California and sits on the boards of directors of the AIDS Legal Referral Panel and The Progressive Project. She has been active in COLAGE’s volunteer led project for Healthy People 2020 and will be planning outreach trips to rural communities in California to organize against Proposition 8 this fall.

WORKING FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY

LIAM COOPER



JFU recently enjoyed the chance to speak with Liam Cooper, an adult queerspawn who has worked for the marriage equality movement for several years.

Liam first got involved with the marriage equality movement during graduate school out of frustration, since so many states were losing initiatives, and the issue was only being approached through lobbying. The first group he worked with focused on street activism—doing marches and rallies, handing out pamphlets, and working to creating community and discussion through forums and coalition work. The work was difficult in two ways: one, he seemed to only be having arguments, not conversations, with people in the streets; and two, it was hard to see where it was going—they would plan events like a march, but then have nothing to show for afterwards.

He moved on to a campaign to keep anti-discrimination laws on the books in Washington State. This job changed his cynical view of politics, and taught him the importance of putting resources into canvassing. As Liam explained, “People already inclined to be anti-LGBTQ won’t have their mind changed by seeing a poster or a parade—they really need that five minute conversation to convince them.” Door-to-door work also taught him the importance of having follow-up, something to ask people to do to keep them engaged. More recently, Liam worked for the LA Gay and Lesbian Center for Vote for Equality, where he got to do more voter outreach, and for the EQCA Institute as the Let California Ring Organizer, doing more fundraising and visibility work.

Liam reflected about the range of issues connected to marriage equality.

He gave the example of Michigan, where right wingers used an anti-marriage amendment to make it so public employers can’t recognize or grant benefits based on domestic partnerships or civil unions (even if they might want to), even though the amendment didn’t specifically address those types of partnerships. This, Liam explained, is why it is important to fight against these anti-marriage amendments, because they can later be used to further deny rights to LGBTQ people and others whose families aren’t structured around marriage.

We asked about the experience of working for the marriage movement as a straight COLAGER, and Liam remembered how many people would tell him NOT to talk about the challenges of growing up as queerspawn and the problems he faced because his parents couldn’t marry. Liam explained that in the marriage movement, queerspawn are a wildcard because talking about kids in reference to same-sex marriage can be polarizing.

Liam also expressed how it was often difficult to talk to so many strangers about his story as a COLAGER because he had to open himself up to being judged and hearing ignorant statements. Overwhelmingly though, he found it therapeutic as it helped him come to terms with how people do view queerspawn, and sharing his story started feeling more and more comfortable—he explained that, “Though sometimes you may hear negative responses, it’s great to hear the positive ones, and I could really see how my story moved people.”

When I asked about any advice he had for other queerspawn looking to get involved in this line of work, Liam shared that “initiatives can be scary to work on, especially because in the queer community they are often against us. But they are also cool to work on because they are a chance to do electoral work without having to affiliate with candidates or

continued on page 5



SPEAK OUT

This year is a big election—a new President will be elected as well as other officials. What would you like to ask or tell the candidates? What issues are most important to you and your family in the upcoming election?

.....
"I think that we've proven that both parents are important in the success of a family so, no, I don't believe in gay adoption." This quote was said by John McCain on Friday, July 11. Elections in my family mean that we get to see how candidates really feel about our way of life. Mr. McCain's quote says it all as to who my family's voting for.
Hayley, Age 13, Plymouth, MA

What steps are the candidates going to take towards moving to other fuel sources such as wind, water, hydroelectric?
Tim, Age 14, Newton, NJ

I'm not exactly clear on how John McCain feels about second parent adoption, so I would like to ask him about that. What's really important to my family is second parent adoption and civil rights.
Robert, Age 13, Flint, MI

I would ask Barack Obama: How are you going to deal with gay marriages? Are you going to treat gay families like everybody else? How are you going to support the troops coming back home? What are you going to do about global warming and funding for public schools?
Reilly, Age 9, Washington, DC

Definitely making gay marriage legal and making it more accessible, but also making it so people are not as close-minded about the subject. Second parent adoption is being legalized in Michigan, and we want it to be legalized all over the U.S. There needs to be a standard that just because you are gay you aren't prevented from adopting a kid. Also, domestic partner benefits like health benefits being available for same-sex couples and their children.
Sarah, Age 16, Howell, MI

WORKING ON THE HILL

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL TORRA



Michael Torra has been working for various members of Congress on Capitol Hill for almost 10 years, and has been the Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Linda Sánchez for the past three years. Just For Us recently had the opportunity to talk with him about his work and experiences in public service.

JFU: Why did you choose to work in public service? Did the experience of having an LGBTQ parent influence why you picked this profession?

Before going to college, I knew I wanted to do something in public service—it was just a matter of figuring out what. I first went to college to study international relations and thought I might work for the UN or in Foreign Service. In grad school I followed what Jesse Helms was doing to block Clinton from nominating an openly gay man as ambassador to Luxembourg. It upset me a lot that a man would be denied a position because of his sexual orientation. I thought, I could go into Foreign Service and face these problems or I could go into a line of work where I could be fighting people like Jesse Helms and say, "you're wrong."

I've always worked for members of Congress who were pro-LGBT. Being that I'm in the unique position of having an LGBT parent (my dad), I would never work for someone who wasn't supportive of LGBT people and issues.

JFU: What do you enjoy about your work, and why do you think your work is important?

I enjoy it because I know I'm doing something to try to make a positive difference in people's lives. It can be slow going day to day, and you don't see results immediately, but over time you really see, "wow, I am helping to make a difference here." When I first came to Congress about 10 years ago, there was a majority of officials in Congress that was very hostile toward the LGBT community. I and many others worked really hard over a number of years to try to make change and now we have a very different majority. Today we're debating bills to give employment rights to LGBT people. We're debating hate crime legislation and we are discussing legislation to protect kids in school who are being harassed because of their perceived sexual orientation. We've gone from an environment that was very much hostile to the LGBT community to an environment that is trying to help. We wouldn't be able to do that without LGBT people around the country engaging in the process.

JFU: Why do you think it is important for people to be engaged in the political process?

It's really important because if you are not engaged in the political process, then the people who are making decisions about your lives don't care about you. It's just that simple. If you don't get engaged in the process, you're invisible, you don't count, and nobody cares.

JFU: Why do you think the upcoming elections are important?

We're really at a watershed in which we have a Congress that is going to pass pro-LGBT legislation and we're going to need a president who is fair minded and willing to work with Congress to pass legislation that's going to help the LGBT community.

JFU: Is there anything else you would like to add?

It is also important is for people to be engaged. You have to vote and be an informed voter. It's good to engage with your elected officials. Write letters to them and urge them to support pro-LGBT policies. If you are lucky enough to have one of those good representatives, you should thank them, because it will help to encourage them to stay pro-LGBT. Finally, try to get other people engaged as well by encouraging them to do the same things.

Michael Torra, a native of Southern California, has worked on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC since 1999 for several Members of Congress and currently serves as Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Linda Sanchez. He has also worked on numerous political campaigns in four different states.

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

During Provincetown Family Week 2008, COLAGE Crew, the middle-school age group, participated in a workshop about youth empowerment, activism, and leadership. We learned about letter-writing campaigns, and we drafted a letter of things we would like to say to the next President of the United States about our families and about things that matter to us. **You can do this at home!** Write a letter about your family, the issues you care about and what changes you hope the new President will make. We'd love to get a copy of your letter and you can also send it to the candidates or any elected official. To get your creative juices flowing, here is the letter from COLAGE Crew:



Dear President, We want to tell you the truth about our families—families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer parents. It is very important for you to know that while our families may look different, we are the same as other families in every other way, and deserve to be treated the same. Our rights as a family are just as important as the rights of any other family. We also want you to know that having LGBTQ parents is an important part of our identities, but our LGBTQ parents don't define us or our families.

Our families are cool, awesome, unique, fun, and caring. They can be also just as great or just as messed up as other families. Our families are made in many different ways, and exist along a huge spectrum. It doesn't matter to us how a family is created—we believe that families are made of love, and that they are all equally important.

But in reality, our families, and we as COLAGERS, aren't always treated equally or fairly. People often make false assumptions about our families—like that all COLAGERS also identify as LGBTQ, or that all that our parents care about is sex. Many of us get teased in school or people are rude or mean to us because of our LGBTQ parents, but we don't deserve this, and we don't think it should happen.

It is also very important to us that we should be comfortable to talk about our families. We shouldn't have to feel afraid to speak out, but we also shouldn't have to explain our families when we don't want to. We believe that teachers should be aware of and comfortable with different families without us having to tell them.

COLAGERS are passionate about what we believe in, and for many of us, LGBTQ rights are one of the issues we are most passionate

about. Many of our families struggle with issues that are often invisible to others, like ensuring that both of our parents are legally recognized or getting health care for our entire family. We really want to emphasize how important it is to us that our country accepts us by guaranteeing equal rights to all LGBTQ people, and by legalizing same-sex marriage nationally.

LGBTQ issues are very important to us, but so are many other things that aren't necessarily related to being queerspawn. We are very passionate about social justice. We want to end prejudice and guarantee equal rights for everyone. We want to end all forms of discrimination, like racism, sizeism, classism, and sexism. We believe in the importance of women's rights, religious freedom, universal access to education, and the right to be safe in school. We care about helping people in our country and all over the world, which means we want improved children's rights and education, better treatment of the elderly and people with disabilities, and an end to poverty and world hunger.

Though we are too young to vote, there are still many national issues that we care about. We want lower gas prices, an improved economy, an end to the war in Iraq (and less war in general), a more fair tax system, improved health conditions and care, and more fair immigration laws. We also want the country to be a safer place, and we think that can happen through an increased focus on anti-violence, stricter gun laws, fixing the prison system, allowing all people to serve in the army, even openly gay people, and better education about and more effective ways to end cigarette and drug use.

We have many ideas of how you can be a better president and address these issues

that matter to us. We want you to be more thoughtful about global warming and put a much greater focus on protecting the environment and finding alternative sources of energy and fuel. We want you to end the war by making peace agreements in Iraq. We want you to be better prepared for disaster relief in the future. We want you to do what you can to help improve the economy. We also want a more comprehensive sex education, and a school curriculum that covers LGBTQ issues, including a discussion of queer parents and families. We want you to help improve living conditions, to establish fair paychecks for all, and to create better job opportunities. We also want you to think beyond the gender binary, and create a country where bathrooms and other public spaces are accessible to people of all genders.

We want you to fight for social justice around the world. We want you to not discriminate against people for being who they are, which means opposing laws that want to ban same-sex marriage. And if you are an opponent to same-sex marriage, then we want you to explain to us why you feel that way. We want more laws to protect people from discrimination, and a policy that really makes teachers and authority figures enforce and address issues of discrimination. We as COLAGERS care about people, and we want you as the President to show that you do too.

There are more of us queerspawn than you might think, and we are everywhere. We are excited to make our voices heard and to educate people about our families. Thank you for your time, and we hope that you will take some of our suggestions into consideration.

Sincerely,
COLAGE Crew 2008

Working For Marriage Equality, continued from page 3

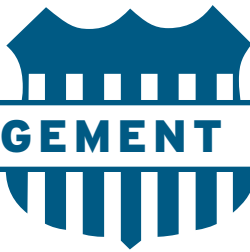
party politics. Electoral organizing is also a great way to help establish visibility and credibility for COLAGE and COLAGERS in your community because you get to see so many people and share your story, and educate people in the queer community about queer families."

Liam also encourages COLAGERS to explore

coalition work, which he found to be a very positive experience. For example, through his work in LA on marriage equality, he had the chance to work for a few months with Planned Parenthood to fight prop 85 (a failed measure that tried to require parental notification before a minor could have an abortion). He explained that being queerspawn will

always be a part of your identity that you can bring to many meaningful issues.

Liam Cooper was raised by his lesbian mom and her partner Nellie. He grew up in British Columbia, and earned degrees in History at UC Santa Cruz and the University of Washington in Seattle.



HOW IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT A COLAGER ISSUE?

Most of you are aware that the next election for President of the United States is happening very soon, on November 4, 2008. At COLAGE, we thought it wasn't enough to only talk about the election since many of our members aren't old enough to vote and we believe there are hundreds of ways for people to impact change outside of elections.

Civic Engagement isn't easy to define, but if you look closely at the words, you can see that it basically defines itself—civic refers to a group of people or community, and engagement means involvement. So, when a person does civic engagement, it means that he or she becomes personally involved in his or her community—at the local, state, national, or world level.

Voting is an important first step but a lot more can go into civic engagement. In fact, civic engagement is one of the core principals behind COLAGE. It is in COLAGE's mission statement that "we build community and work toward social justice." By doing civic engagement and becoming personally involved in your community, you are able to build that community, and work toward social justice by becoming engaged with issues and programs that matter to you and your family.

It is especially important for COLAGERS to engage with the countries and communities where we live. Where would COLAGE be if we didn't have people who care about this community to

work, donate, and volunteer for us? And the only way that we can build our COLAGE community is by COLAGERS like you caring enough to join us. But there are other reasons that civic engagement is important for COLAGERS. Our experiences and our families are political and politicized. Who is in office and what laws are being voted on often impact our families in unique ways when they either validate our rights and responsibilities as families or attack those rights.

Youth and adults with LGBTQ parents aren't yet seen as a movement and a unique community. Therefore we aren't often taken into consideration by politicians. We aren't always thought of as a group with voting or organizing power—but as COLAGE and COLAGERS continue to mobilize, we can change this.

By voting or campaigning for congress people and a president who agree with you on the issues that you care most about, or by joining, supporting, or volunteering for an organization that is working to pass laws or do education and advocacy on those issue, YOU are civically engaged!

Civic engagement is also about bettering your community. By becoming an active member in your community through volunteering in organizations, or making your voice heard in the newspaper or on the news, you are helping to educate your community about the existence of people with LGBTQ parents and make your community a more diverse and tolerant place to live.

YOUTH RESOURCES FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DO SOMETHING is a non-profit for youth to inspire them to action. It has tons of causes, and suggestions of things you can do to help out a cause you are interested in at www.dosomething.org

DECLARE YOURSELF is a campaign to get young people to register to vote and has lots of information about voting, and about the candidates and issues in the upcoming election at www.declareyourself.com

ROCK THE VOTE is a website that uses pop culture to engage young people in politics and to get them to vote at www.rockthevote.com

MOVE ON helps citizens get involved in issues they care about at www.moveon.org

YOUTH VOTE PROJECT is based in New York City, but you could start a similar effort to get high school seniors to register to vote in your town or region! Check out www.youthvoteproject.org

NEW VOTER PROJECT can help you learn more about young voters and how you can be part of youth organizing to impact democracy at www.newvotersproject.org

IDEALIST.ORG is a website that can be used to find nonprofit jobs, volunteer opportunities, idealist organizations, and more. They have a website just for kids and teens to find those same opportunities at www.idealists.org/kt

SERVENET is another great website to find volunteer opportunities at <http://servenet.org/>

Pursuing Policy and Politics, continued from page 1

organizations to influence voters and policymakers, and running for office yourself are all necessary parts of true democracy. The most important step is to act; without action you affect nothing. I may find that my talents and efforts are better suited to policy analysis or advocacy, but if I choose not to pursue public office, it will not be because I fear that someone will try to use my family against me.

Kahlil Seren Huff is the communications coordinator for Policy Matters Ohio, a research institute focusing on Ohio policy concerning working families. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in political science from Cleveland State University and has just been accepted into the Master of Science in Urban Studies program at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at CSU.

10 WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEMOCRACY

(EVEN IF YOU AREN'T OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE)

1 RUN for an elected position in your school or community: student government, your neighborhood association (if that exists), city council, board of education, etc. and use it to make positive change in your school or community.

2 FUND-RAISING is a great way to support a group or cause that you care about. You could organize a fundraiser on your own, or participate in one for an organization, many of which hold runs, walks, bike rides, bake sales, car washes, t-shirt sales, etc.

3 TELL PEOPLE why it is important for them to vote, even if you aren't old enough to vote yourself. Make a postcard with a picture of your family and a note about what is important to you in the upcoming election and send it to everyone you know who can vote.

4 VOLUNTEER. If you are in to politics, you could volunteer for a candidate running for office or for a political organization that advocates for a particular issue or stance. They always need people to help with phone banks, rallies, door-to-door efforts and more. If not, volunteer for a nonpartisan organization—anything from a group like COLAGE to your local food pantry to reading to people at a nursing home.

5 SHOW YOUR SUPPORT by wearing buttons or stickers for an organization, cause or event you care about, or help distribute and display flyers or signs about the cause or event.

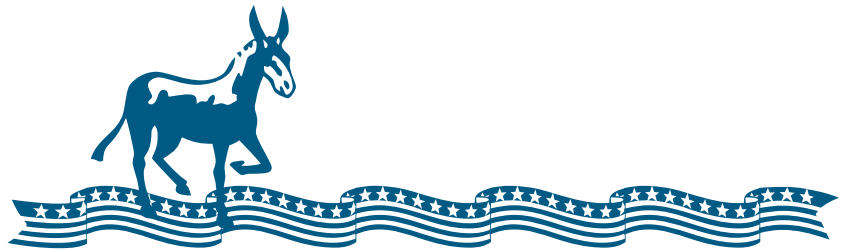
6 WRITE to or **CALL** your elected officials to talk to them about issues that are important to you.

7 WRITE TO THE MEDIA—to your local newspaper, TV or radio station about important local issues that matter to you.

8 PARTICIPATE in protests, petitions, or boycotts that you support.

9 WRITE about your **OPINION** on something that matters to you in your school newspaper or on a blog.

10 JOIN an organization that you support (like COLAGE, your school's GSA, or anything else that appeals to your interests), and be an active member.



REGISTER TO VOTE

Make your voice count! Vote! The next presidential election is on November 4th! Here's how to register to vote.

In order to vote, you must:

- be a US citizen
- be a resident in the state where you are going to vote
- be 18 by the time of the election (check with your state because some require you to be 18 at least 30 days before the next election)
- most states also require that you not be a convicted felon, and not be judged "mentally incompetent," although the laws and wording vary state-to-state

You must register to vote in every state except North Dakota, and most states require that you register at least 30 days before you vote (which would be October 5 if you want to vote in the presidential election). To register, you must complete a voter registration application (www.fabnit.com/nvra_update.pdf), or you can go to a website like rockthevote.org or declareyourself.com, which have online programs to help you register.

Follow the directions to complete the voter registration form, and then mail it to the address listed for your state. If you are registering for the first time, you have to also include a copy of a government-issued ID with your photo and address, like a driver's license or US passport. New Hampshire and Wyoming do not accept mail-in registration forms, so you must register in person. Some states, like California, do not require an address for your voter registration which helps people who are homeless or under-housed still partake in elections.

If you are out of state on Election Day (like at college or a boarding school), you have two options. If you are a resident of the state you are going to college in, you can register and vote in that state. It may be more difficult to register in that state if you get your mail through a school mailbox or a Post Office Box, but you can get a letter from the residential office at your college to verify your on-campus address. If you aren't a resident, you can vote by absentee ballot in your home state.

You can vote absentee if you are a resident of a state, but cannot vote in person on Election Day. To vote absentee, you might vote by mail, or in person on a day before Election Day. You must already be registered to vote, and fill out an absentee ballot request application for the state you are voting in. When you register in your state, you can request more information about voting absentee.

Declare Yourself is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose goal is to help U.S. citizens register to vote. You can register to vote on their website, and this link on their website (www.declareyourself.com/voting_faq/state_by_state_info.html) has information for each state on registration deadlines, voter requirements, and links to each state's election website.

After you are registered to vote, you will receive in the mail a notification about your polling place, where you will report to vote on Election Day. On Election Day, you should bring your photo ID and, in some states, your voter ID, which will be mailed to you.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4TH!



COLAGE EVENTS



After an adventurous (and competitive) Scavenger hunt, team members enjoy a ride on the Saugatuck chain ferry.



COLAGE youth march in the San Francisco Pride Parade.

Jasmine and Jesse show blue team pride at field day.



COLAGE Crew teammates have fun at the scavenger hunt.

Special thanks to all of our volunteers and facilitators at Family Week! It wouldn't be possible without all your hard work.

Aarin Schlosberg
 Aaron Diffley
 Aaron Sachs
 Alison Delpercio
 Andrea Wachter
 Avi Silber
 Caitlin MacIntyre
 Caroline Cox-Orrell
 Christine Bachman
 Christyanna Manoloulis
 Courtney Faria
 Dakota Fine
 Danielle Silber
 Debra Rosenberg
 Doug Fenton
 Elizabeth Castellana
 Emily McGranachan
 Fae Silverman
 Greg Holt

Hope Steinman-Iacullo
 Isabel Diffley
 Jamie Evans
 Jamie Larson
 Keott Gomez Starnes
 Kerry Cullen
 Kyle Michaels
 Laurie Tezak
 Lanie Yardley
 Liam Cooper
 Liz Wall
 Lydia DeCygne-Katz
 Monica Canfield-Lenfest
 Pamela Liebowitz
 Ruby Cymrot Wu
 Sam Mickle
 Shova Smith
 Whitney Moses
 Yonah EtShalom



COLAGEers come together to celebrate a wonderful week together in Saugatuck.

SCRAPBOOK



Camp COLAGERs play out in the Provincetown sun.



COLAGE teens enjoy an afternoon in Provincetown.



COLAGE teens enjoy a night of bonding and fun at the local bowling alley.



The Mayor of Saugatuck joined us during our reception and took a moment to pose for a picture with COLAGE youth!

UPCOMING COLAGE EVENTS

PARENTING WITH PRIDE CONFERENCE

Los Angeles, CA

September 13th

COLAGE sponsors the youth track at this annual LGBTQ family event produced by the LA Gay and Lesbian Center's Family Services Program

SOUTHERN COMFORT CONFERENCE

Atlanta, GA

September 30th- October 5th

COLAGE will present two sessions at this annual, national transgender conference.

www.sccatl.org

QUEER FAMILIES = HEALTHY FAMILIES

San Francisco, CA

October 11th

Sponsored by Gaylesta and its partners, including COLAGE, this event is for therapists, LGBTQ families, and allies. www.gaylesta.org/events.html

COLAGE CHAPTER INSTITUTE

Bay Area, CA

November 14th-16th

A unique opportunity for networking, skill building and empowerment for youth and adult COLAGE chapter leadership. Join us at the beautiful Pt. Montara Lighthouse just south of San Francisco for an unforgettable weekend of learning, community and fun.

PRIDE AND JOY FAMILIES WEEKEND

Radisson Hotel, Utica, NY

April 24 - April 26, 2009

COLAGE coordinates a youth track at this exciting new event!

FAMILY WEEK MICHIGAN

July 10th- 17th, 2009

Join COLAGE and Rainbow Families Great Lakes for the Midwest Family Week- fun and empowerment for the whole family! www.rfgl.org

FAMILY WEEK PROVINCETOWN

August 1st-8th, 2009

Join COLAGE and Family Equality Council for the largest gathering of LGBTQ families and COLAGE's annual community building and youth empowerment program for 3rd-12th graders.

www.colage.org/programs/events/

CHAPTER UPDATE: COLAGE BOSTON

ELIZABETH CASTELLANA

About five years ago I got an email from my dad telling me that someone he knew through the Gay Fathers of Greater Boston was starting a COLAGE chapter for his three daughters, and asking if I'd help him out. Since my dad came out after I went to college, I wasn't sure I'd be helpful to youth growing up with LGBTQ parents, but I wanted to support him so I said I'd do it. A few months later I got a phone call from Monica, an adult COLAGER working with him, asking me to help with the launch event. I showed up at the event, not really knowing what COLAGE was other than an organization for people like me, and we had about 100 people attend!

It wasn't always so successful after that; our chapter has changed and stabilized a lot. Monica and I put countless hours into events that sometimes had a disappointing turnout, and sometimes were powerful, life changing conversations. It has taken a few years to figure out the best way to run a chapter in Boston, but it has been worth it. I know we have both learned a ton about community organizing, and about the COLAGE community in Boston and its particular needs.

The most incredible part for me is the amazing community I have found through COLAGE. When I first heard about it I wasn't sure I belonged since



Teens at a COLAGE Boston Activity

I grew up with my dad being closeted. Since getting to know so many COLAGERS I have come to understand that our experiences are incredibly different, but we create a community based on what we have in common. This has been the feeling we have tried to maintain in the Boston Chapter, and I think we've done a pretty great job.

Last year we held about ten teen dinners, we had an awesome bowl-a-thon that raised lots of money for our chapter, and we hosted an outreach event where we used media from COLAGE and a teen panel to share our experiences with others in the community. We have so many wonderful youth leaders and supportive parents that the chapter ran better than ever. We've presented at a conference for educators, we've been brought out to Martha's Vineyard to speak to their

PFLAG chapter, and we marched in our fourth pride parade this year! During August, we were speaking at schools and even presented a workshop at the American Psychological Association.

This year we are growing the Boston chapter by opening it up to younger youth (nine and older) with a staggered schedule, and I can't wait to get to know these new youth. I was overwhelmed to see that so many of the youth from our chapter were at Provincetown Family Week, and I think they bring that love for COLAGE back to our chapter and make it the same kind of special community.

We have grown a little queerspawn family in Boston of some of the most amazing youth and adults I have ever met. I even got the chance to connect with the person who ran the Boston chapter 20 years ago when COLAGE was just starting. Having COLAGERS in my life as close friends has been really important and amazing, and I hope that the youth in Boston are getting a chance to have that through the chapter too.

Elizabeth Castellana is the vice principal of an inner city charter middle school in Boston. She is a graduate of Marlboro College and Harvard University who has a lot of experience with Outward Bound. She lives in Cambridge with her cats Saffron and Basil.

JOIN COLAGE FOR THE 2ND NATIONAL COLAGE CHAPTER INSTITUTE!

WHEN: Friday, November 14th - Sunday, November 16th, 2008

WHERE: Point Montara Lighthouse, Bay Area, CA

Building on the success of our first-ever Chapter Institute in Dallas, TX in 2006, this weekend will engage current and emerging COLAGE chapter leaders in a combination of skill-building trainings and networking retreat. While we aim to foster the skills of our chapter leaders to maintain, run and facilitate their groups, we also invite you to immerse yourself in COLAGE community, relax and celebrate the amazing folks who make the COLAGE Chapter network a reality.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE WEEKEND:

- The opportunity to meet other chapter leaders
- Share and learn best practices for all aspects of chapter coordination
- Build your skills in fundraising, outreach, group facilitation

and event planning

- Enjoy dynamic leadership training with special focus on incorporating COLAGE's curriculum and anti-oppression framework into your chapter
- Meet and learn from the COLAGE National Staff, a diverse team of seasoned organizers and movement leaders.
- Go back to your chapter with new tools, ideas and energy for success!
- Enjoy the beautiful setting and wonderful company—after all it's COLAGE, so we'll have lots of fun!

Some travel scholarships are available to interested individuals as well as support with fundraising in your local community to help you get to this exciting event. To learn more or to get registration and scholarship information, contact Meredith Fenton, COLAGE Program Director at 415-861-5437 x102 or Meredith@colage.org.

FINN'S GIRL

WOLFE VIDEO, 2008, 88 MINUTES

movie review

BY MARY NOVAK

Finn's Girl is, more than anything, a story about a difficult mother-daughter relationship, and about the challenges they both face in their personal lives. Zelly is an 11-year-old girl, whose biological mother Nancy has recently died. Nancy's partner Finn, who is Zelly's adoptive parent, is left to raise Zelly and manage Nancy's abortion clinic, where she works as a doctor. The film is about the drama with the abortion clinic, Finn's romantic life, Zelly's rebellion, and how Finn and Zelly relate to each other.

One good aspect of the film is that it doesn't try to normalize Zelly's family like many media presentations of queerspawn do, always representing us as a happy, white, middle-class family with two mommies or two daddies. Zelly's family has problems, as most families do, and the film highlights those problems—that her biological father and Finn don't really get along, and that Finn isn't the most attentive or present parent.

The film attempts to give just one snapshot of just one queer family rather than generalize about LGBTQ families; the fact that Zelly has lesbian mothers isn't the most central aspect of the plot, and isn't the reason for her rebellion. The movie is more about the relationship between Zelly and Finn, and that feels relatable to anyone who has had a complicated family situation or has dealt with the death of a parent and relationships with stepparents. As Zelly says to her friend at one point in the film, "Two moms are ok. It's only having one that's a drag."

The film also does a decent job of trying to address issues that middle-school-age COLAGERS might face—like teasing in school, a friend's conservative parents disapproving, or questioning your own sexuality—without making a big deal out of them or turning those moments into lectures. I was slightly disappointed with the film's end which was both a bit cheesy and left too many unanswered questions, but overall, the message the film sends is a good one—that families aren't perfect or easy, but they are created and sustained by love.

I would recommend the film for parents and older COLAGERS, as there are some parts that might be too mature for younger children.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE COLAGE PEN PAL PROGRAM

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELLEN FREYTAG AND CATHY SAKIMURA

Ellen Freytag and Cathy Sakimura have been coordinating COLAGE's pen pal program for the past seven years, and are now stepping down so that the pen pal program can be expanded and integrated with COLAGE's other programming. JFU got the chance to interview them about their experiences:

JFU: How did you get involved with the program in the first place?

Cathy: I worked at COLAGE the summer after I graduated from college. When I left, there wasn't really anybody to take on that program. I didn't want it to die out because it had been a really positive thing and it was great for the kids to have.

JFU: How do you match the pen pals? Do people usually request to be matched based on age, gender, family composition, interests, or what?

Cathy: Unless they specifically say they want something else, we stick pretty closely to similar ages and family situation—it seems important to do that in terms of making it a successful match. Of course somebody else who has the same kind of situation—not just if they have lesbian moms or gay dads, but also if they have a lesbian mom and are a child of a previous heterosexual relationship, or if they were conceived through donor insemination—those kinds of similarities that are nice for people to be able to talk to someone else who had that same experience. It's a great feeling to find a perfect match—two kids who have the same family situation but also have some other different thing in common.

Ellen: We match the applications in pools, and when you do a pool it's a fun sort of problem solving, matchmaker kind of thing, you try to make it work out so that everyone has a match. Some of the kids write really cute applications.

JFU: Do you ever get feedback from the pen pals you match? Do you have any favorite stories about any of the requests you've gotten or matches you've made?

Cathy: We definitely get people who write back to thank us and we've heard about some who have later been able to meet each other at family week and stay friends and that's always fun to hear about.

Ellen: One of the things I find is really rewarding is to know you are reaching all of these kids in rural places in the U.S. and through international applications and are touching a really different set of COLAGERS than the other programs. Many are kids who don't have a chapter near them or don't know a single kid like them and this is their first opportunity to reach out and talk to another kid with a similar family situation.

JFU: What role do you think the Pen Pal program has within COLAGE? Do you think it should continue?

Cathy: What Ellen was saying, it seems like an important vehicle to reach kids who wouldn't otherwise get involved or know other kids with LGBT parents, especially kids in more isolated areas. And it's also really good in that way because you have the fun experience of having a pen pal and somebody who shares this important part of your life that you may not be able to share with other people. I definitely think it's really important to continue for those reasons, and there's still a big demand for it because we hear from so many kids.

JFU: Is there anything else you want to add?

Cathy: I guess just that it was a really wonderful experience for us to have and I think we feel really privileged to do it and do it for so long and see the progression of it and to have had the opportunity. It taught us a lot about what people's experiences are and what they're going through and what kinds of support they are looking for.

Cathy is an attorney at the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and her partner Ellen is a graphic designer and online marketing consultant for both local and national non-profits. They have been co-coordinators of the COLAGE pen pal program for seven of their seven and a half years together. COLAGE extends a million thank yous to Cathy and Ellen for their years of volunteer involvement with this program.



COLAGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

COLAGE is excited to announce the recipients of the 2008 Lee Dubin Memorial Scholarship for undergraduate students with LGBTQ parents. All of the applicants demonstrated a strong commitment to building community and promoting equality and social justice for children, youth, and adults with LGBTQ parents. Our committee of volunteers chose four outstanding winners:

CAROLINE COX-ORRELL is starting her first year at the University of Chicago this fall. Caroline has a strong history of social justice work, which she looks forward to continuing in college. She was an active member of her high school's GSA, through which she became involved with GLSEN Boston. She served on the programming committee and as a youth member on the Board of Directors, and with support from GLSEN she worked to launch a networking series for GSA leaders. Caroline has also been active in COLAGE's Speak OUT program, through which she wrote an article



for TIME magazine about growing up with lesbian mothers, has contributed to local and national newspaper articles about queerspawn, and participated on a panel of COLAGErs at a LGBTQ conference in Boston.

ABIGALE SAUERBREY is starting her first year at the University of Minnesota this fall, where she plans to study biochemistry and molecular biology. Abigale is very proud of her family, including all four of her parents, and spoken out about her family on several occasions. She has been volunteering with rainbow families for five years, and has spoken on several panels, including one specifically about having gay parents.



COURTNEY FARIA is starting her first year this fall at Smith College, where she intends to study public health and international affairs. When Courtney was 10 years old, her mother came out as a lesbian, and she has been attending COLAGE's Family Week ever since. This summer was her first year as a facilitator, where she had the opportunity to help other youth find their voices as she did when she was younger. Courtney has fought for social justice in many ways, including collecting signatures, speaking with Representatives, and participating in rallies to gain marriage equality in Massachusetts. Courtney is also very passionate about volleyball, and as a high school junior, she wrote an article about



the experience of confronting her teammates about using words associated with LGBTQ people in a derogatory manner. Courtney is looking forward to finding a community at Smith where she can continue to promoting diversity, do activist work, play volleyball, and hopefully start a new COLAGE chapter in Northampton.

BRIANNA BUHR is finishing her sophomore year at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, where she studies music, theatre and ethnic studies. Growing up with lesbian mothers, her eyes were opened at a young age to injustice, which has grown in her a desire to seek justice and create community in the face of difference. Brianna is committed to combating homophobia, working for social justice and increasing positive awareness of LGBT families, which she has displayed through the active roles she has taken in her middle school GSA and the GSAs at both high schools that she attended. During high school, she took an active role in her school district by speaking on panels for teachers and youth, and presenting at GSA conferences in South Central Wisconsin. Throughout high school, she was a member of Proud Theatre, a youth run theatre group for queer youth, youth from queer families, and LGBT allies. She has also worked as a door canvasser for the Human Rights Campaign, for Fair Wisconsin working to educate people about the homophobic marriage amendment, and spent time as a counselor at Mountain Meadow Summer Camp, a camp for kids with LGBT parents and nontraditional families.



HONORABLE MENTIONS

COLAGE is also pleased to be able to recognize three honorable mentions in our 2008 scholarship program who will receive partial awards.



DANIEL POLOGE grew up in Milwaukee, WI with two moms. He has volunteered with Fair Wisconsin, Brothers of Kwanzaa and Peace Camp. Daniel is an outspoken advocate for families like his who will attend Clark University this fall.



NEKIA FRANKLIN is about to begin her first year at the University of Oklahoma where she will be a pre-med student. Her mother, who passed away from liver disease, was a lesbian. Nekia called the scholarship support from COLAGE, "the most meaningful of all of my scholarships because it speaks about my uniqueness of which I am proud."



CHEVELLE YOUNGBIRD is a native Hawaiian who grew up with her lesbian mother. She hopes to study graphic design in college and to continue to educate the public about the experience of indigenous Hawaiians.

COLAGE believes in the power and importance of young people speaking up and sharing their opinions. One of the essays for the 2008 Lee Dubin Memorial Scholarship was: "Imagine you had the opportunity to sit down with the next President of the United States. What response would you give if he/she asked you: If the world were a 'better place' for people with LGBTQ parents, what would it look like? Why do you believe this is an important issue?" We picked a couple of outstanding responses to share in JFU.

IMAGINING A BETTER PLACE

BY KAI STOLL

There are so many things in this world that could be changed for the better, and so many injustices that have controlled the welfare of our society for centuries. If I were to explain my view of a "better place" for LGBT families, I would have to start by making a push towards a better country as a whole. I think the progress we have made in terms of sponsorship and aid groups has been wonderful, and COLAGE has created a strong support group that helps to build confidence and pride in our youth. While this creates a great foundation, we need to set our focus on the real world, the groups in society that try and make people feel inferior by spreading bigotry and intolerance. This feeling of constant prejudice weakens the social confidence of youth, as one may truly start to think one's family is inferior to that of a person with straight parents.

Rallies and rebellions against discrimination help pride and self-assurance to grow, yet I don't trust that they do anything to change the minds of bigoted people. It is not feasible to remove years and years of bigotry and narrow-mindedness from the minds of human beings. We need to work on bettering ourselves, and not focus so much on fighting back. I feel that the more we retaliate, the angrier they get, and it just continues the circle of hatred and unfairness.

We have the amazing support of COLAGE, an organization that triggers self-confidence in youth and gives them the self-assurance to stand up to injustices. The next step should be going out into the world and proving that even the idea of inferiority is absolutely ridiculous. We need to show those who demonstrate prejudice how stupid their intolerance is. We have to be our own evidence—by the way we live our lives—that no one is better than anyone else. We must take away the fulfillment and satisfaction people get out of putting other people down. When you reason it out, that's what bigotry is, just a foolish tactic people use to bring up their own confidence by making others feel inferior.

When I imagine a "better place" for LGBT families, it would be a world in which there are no labels. I will know we live in a hate-free world when we are identified only as individuals, and when our sexuality is as important to other people as our shoe size. The change starts within us. It is easy to lead by example. Homophobia and racism are realities, and it may take forever to end these problems completely. We should focus on the present, and do what we can to erase stereotyping.

It is not necessary to prove to the world that we are equal, but to show it daily by continually demonstrating our character and integrity.

Kai Stoll grew up with his lesbian mom in New York, and is starting his first year at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut this fall. Kai has been active in doing AIDS awareness in high school, and has participated in COLAGE programming at Provincetown Family Week for five years.



RAISED BY A VILLAGE

BY CADY FONTANA

Nuclear family versus the village: Do we have to pick one or the other when it comes to raising children? Yes, according to most Republicans, we do. The mom and dad, Dick and Jane household is the idyllic situation in the Republican eye, but this leaves much to fantasy. The child raised by the single parent, or the child raised by grandparents, or the child of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ)

parents isn't part of this club, but does that make their upbringing wrong, or lacking in some respect? I was raised in a unique household, and am proof that nothing goes wrong when a child is loved and supported by a family other than a basic mom and dad.

The debate became publicized with Hillary Clinton's book, *It Takes a Village... And Other Lessons Children Teach Us*, published in 1996. In it, she advocates for a society where all of a child's needs are met, regardless of who is doing the "meeting." Conservative politicians have challenged Clinton's views, saying that what a child really needs is a strong family. Mitt Romney, who was a Republican presidential hopeful, came right out and said it, "What should be the ideal for raising a child? Not a village, not Parent A and Parent B, but a mother and a father." These strong "family values" that the Republicans preach devalue the sincerity of care that is possible when any combination of people work together to raise a child.

Would everything be better if all families were a mom and a dad? I guess we can't know, but I'd say that the answer is "No." Mother/Father families can be just as strange and abusive as any other, or just as nurturing and supportive.

I'm an honors student, a girl scout, I play cello, and I'm going to college. And I also come from an LGBT family. I've been raised by a village and am living proof of how successful it can be. I've had support from all sides, and more mentors than I can count. My cello teacher has been with me for 9 years and has never raised her lesson rates; my writing coach as well as my piano teacher donates their skills to my learning in exchange for nothing. They want to see me do well, as a parent would. Members of the LGBT community have taught me outdoor skills at survival camp, as well as how to garden in my own backyard. Some of these people were friends of my mom, and some of these people were friends of mine, but they all had a common goal: To raise me. Bob Dole once said, "If I could by magic restore to every child who lacks a father or a mother, that father or that mother, I would." Well, thank goodness Dole isn't a fairy, because my situation is just fine, thanks very much.

Cady Fontana was raised by her lesbian mom in New York, and is now entering her first year at Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. She is passionate about teaching diversity and battling homophobia by being a leader in her community.



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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Please contact Jack at 415-861-5437 ext. 105 or jack@colage.org if we've listed you incorrectly.

We look forward to acknowledging the many gifts we receive in our next issue of Just For Us. To make a donation in support of COLAGE's ongoing work for equality and justice, please use the enclosed envelope or donate on-line at www.colage.org/support

COLAGE NOTES

COLAGE HOSTS SUMMER INTERNS

COLAGE was pleased to welcome three interns to our office this summer. As participants in the Felicia Park Rogers Summer Internship Program, Sarah, Teresa and Mary spent 10 weeks learning about non-profit administration, programming and community by managing special projects and assisting with COLAGE's overall operations.



L to R, Mary, Sarah and Teresa

SARAH VAN HOUTEN is a proud bothie who found COLAGE last March while looking for a summer internship. Her parents were married for 25 years until they both realized their true sexual orientations and separated. They currently live in the San Francisco Bay area and remain good friends. Sarah will be a senior at St. Olaf College in Minnesota this fall and is majoring in psychology. This summer Sarah managed the COLAGE Media Files, worked with Camp COLAGE at Family Week in Provincetown and provided overall office and program support. "Working at COLAGE was an incredible experience. It was both empowering and inspiring to be surrounded by such a passionate community of other COLAGERS, and I was constantly amazed by the insightfulness of the youth I worked with at Family Week," Sarah said. "Though this wonderful summer has come to a close, I eagerly look forward to a long relationship with COLAGE and this remarkable queerspawn community."

TERESA HUANG is a recent transplant from New England who goes to Smith College, where she is immersed in women's and gender studies and other things

queer. She interned with COLAGE through Hampshire College's Reproductive Rights Activist Service Corps. Teresa reflected, "Working at COLAGE was a blast! It felt wonderful to be part of such a great group of activist-y people, and I definitely think my knowledge of LGBTQ issues has been rounded out a lot."

MARY NOVAK was raised in Maryland and is about to begin her senior year at Dartmouth College, where she studies math and women's and gender studies. While in the Bay Area this summer, she got to attend the wedding of her moms who relocated to the Peninsula. Mary's biggest tasks were editing this issue of Just For Us and helping with Family Week in Provincetown. In response to her internship Mary shared, "Working at COLAGE was fantastic! Throughout the summer, I have been so impressed by how passionate these COLAGERS are about their work for this community, and I have definitely learned a lot about the COLAGE movement, the broader LGBTQ movement, and activist work in general."

COLAGE HOSTS FELLOWSHIP ON TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION

COLAGE is thrilled to announce that Shova Smith will be joining COLAGE for a 9 month fellowship on Transracial Adoption. This new program will build on the success of our first fellowship for Kids of Transgender parents completed by Monica Canfield-Lenfest in May 2008. Shova comes to COLAGE from Minnesota where she was raised by lesbian moms who adopted her and her siblings from India. She is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, a former intern at Rainbow Families, an active participant with Desi Adoptees United, and recently volunteered for Family Week in Provincetown.



Shova Smith

In anticipation of her fellowship, Shova shared, "I am looking

forward to creating resources for people like me who were transracially adopted into a LGBTQ family and showing them they are not alone in their feelings and experiences. I am excited to be further involved in the COLAGE movement."

IN MEMORIAM



COLAGE celebrates the lifetime of activism of Del Martin, a hero of our community, who passed away on August 27th, 2008. We also express our gratitude to Del and her partner Phyllis Lyon for their long-time support of COLAGE.

Martin was one of the nation's first and most visible lesbian rights activists who dedicated her life to combating homophobia, sexism, violence, and racism. She is survived by spouse Phyllis Lyon, daughter Kendra Mon, son-in-law Eugene Lane, granddaughter Lorraine Mon, grandson Kevin Mon, Patricia Lyon and a vast, loving and grateful LGBTQ family.

"Today the LGBT movement has lost a true community hero," reflected Beth Teper, COLAGE Executive Director. "From an early age Del and Phyllis recognized their right to love freely, to organize their community and to advocate for their rights. I appreciate their long-time moral, emotional and material support of COLAGE and their recognition of the importance of youth and adults with LGBT parents in our movement. Our thoughts are with Phyllis and Kendra during this time of grieving and with the entire community as we reflect on Del's amazing contributions to social justice and LGBT rights."



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U.S.

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(520) 624-1779
tucson@colage.org

COLAGE Phoenix- Rainbow Fences
(480) 217-9340
rainbowfences@yahoo.com

CA
COLAGE LA
(323) 860-7397 la@colage.org

COLAGE SF/Bay Area
(415) 861-KIDS
monica@colage.org

CT
COLAGE Connecticut
(860) 922-3868
connecticut@colage.org

DC
COLAGE Metro DC
metrodc@colage.org

FL
COLAGE Fort Pierce
fortpierce@colage.org

COLAGE Jacksonville
COLAGEjax@yahoo.com

COLAGE Tallahassee
(850) 847-7640
colagetlh@yahoo.com

GA
COLAGE Atlanta
atlanta@colage.org

IL
COLAGE Chicago
chicago@colage.org

KS
COLAGE Kansas City

LA
COLAGE New Orleans
(504) 301-4767
daleliuzza@colage.org

MA
COLAGE Greater Boston
boston@colage.org

MD
COLAGE Baltimore
Baltimore@colage.org

MI
COLAGE Ann-Arbor
aacolage@yahoo.com
734) 945-2454
lavrack@umich.edu

MO
COLAGE St. Louis
(314) 518-2659
colagestl@yahoo.com

OH
COLAGE Cleveland
(216) 556-5692
colagecleveland@yahoo.com

COLAGE Columbus
colagecolumbus@yahoo.com

OK
COLAGE Tulsa
Tulsa@colage.org

NC
COLAGE Asheville
hdmichelle@yahoo.com

NH
NH COLAGE Seacoast
(603) 264-3148
nhcolageseacoast@comcast.net

COLAGE Monadnock
Cami@granara.net

NJ
COLAGE Northern New Jersey
www.rainbowfamiliesnj.org/what/index.html

NY
COLAGE NYC
(917) 923-5497
nyc@colage.org

COLAGE Ithaca
Ms. Robbie Sanders
(607) 273-4966
sakaro@aol.com

COLAGE Mid Hudson Valley
(845) 452-2928
hudsonvalley@colage.org

COLAGE of Western NY
(716) 826-6388
COLAGE.WNY@adelphia.net

OK
COLAGE Tulsa
Tulsa@colage.org

OR
COLAGE Portland
(503) 228-3892
info@LMFamily.org

RI
COLAGE Rhode Island/Ocean State
Jamie Carlson
rhodeisland@colage.org

UT
COLAGE Salt Lake City
Bonnie Owens
(801) 539-8800

GLOBAL

CANADA
COLAGE Toronto
(416) 767-2244 HYPERLINK
toronto@colage.org

SWEDEN & ENGLAND
COLAGE Sweden & England
Anna Carlsson
anna.carlsson@lycos.com

Chapters are autonomous local groups that affiliate with COLAGE and are self-run. We strive to keep updated on local contact information. If you have difficulty reaching the contact listed please let us know. Thank you.