

## NGLTF launches two new programs

by Jason Riggs  
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—The Policy Institute of the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force (NGLTF), a think tank dedicated to research, analysis, strategy development and coalition building, has announced the creation of two major programs — one targeting the needs of older GLBT people and the other concerned with GLBT family issues.

### Aging Initiative

The overall goal of NGLTF's Aging Initiative is to ensure that GLBT people are a visible and conscious part of public policy frameworks and service programs that serve the elderly. The initiative also will raise consciousness about all forms of ageism within the gay and lesbian community.

"The graying of the GLBT community presents new challenges to policy makers and to GLBT organizations," said Urvashi Vaid, director of the Policy Institute. "Current estimates put this population at more than one million people and that number will explode when large numbers of out-of-the-closet baby boomers reach retirement. This initiative makes a long-term commitment to research, policy development and advocacy to ensure that the needs of old GLBT people are addressed in our communities and throughout society."

The NGLTF Policy Institute will network with scholars and activists in the fields of gerontology and social services for the aging population to develop critical research on the realities facing GLBT people. Over the next several years, NGLTF will engage in vigorous advocacy and propose collaborations among non-profit agencies that serve and represent this population to make sure gay and lesbian people are included in their programs.

Rev. Ken South, a minister in the United Church of Christ, has been hired to develop the Aging Initiative. He is a policy advocate with 27 years of experience in social service systems who recently stepped down as executive director of the AIDS National Interfaith Network

(ANIN) after 10 years.

### Family Policy

Nationally-renowned lesbian attorney and family advocate Paula Eitelbrick has been tapped to direct NGLTF's Family Policy Program. She has worked on local, state and national family policy issues for the past 13 years — having worked as legal director of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund; public policy director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights; and most recently as legislative counsel for the Empire State Pride Agenda in New York.

"We are in the midst of a revolution in family creation within GLBT communities, but ironically, and inaccurately, our movement is characterized as being anti-family," said NGLTF Executive Director Kerry Lobel. "This program at NGLTF's Policy Institute takes aim at the myths that persist about our families and will formulate a genuinely pro-family public policy agenda from the vantage point of GLBT people's lives."

Vaid observed that Eitelbrick's expertise and personal experience (she and her partner have a two-year-old son and are expecting another child in September) will be invaluable in the efforts to organize around family issues. She pointed out that as of June 1999, almost 50 anti-GLBT family bills had been filed in state legislatures throughout the country. "This nationwide mobilization against our families comes directly from the anti-gay religious right and its think tanks," Vaid said. "It is an effective strategy because the GLBT political movement at the state level remains understaffed and underfunded."

The Family Policy program will pursue three main objectives: 1) provide data to help activists secure inclusive definitions of family in national, state and local policies and refute the right-wing's rhetoric; 2) actively build an effective and collaborative national pro-GLBT family network among gay and mainstream organizations working on family issues; and 3) educate the general public about the value and value of GLBT families. ▼

## GLSEN steps up efforts in South

by Jim Anderson  
Special to Q-Notes

NEW YORK—The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) "graduated" 15 Southern activists from its fifth annual Leadership Training Institute in College Park, MD. Seven representatives from North Carolina joined attendees from Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee and Texas on July 18-24 for a week-long training regimen aimed at increasing the ability of chapter leaders to organize effectively in hometown schools and communities.

According to Brenda Barron, GLSEN's newly-hired Assistant Director for Southern Organizing, the seven-day event is a critical part of the work to end homophobia in Southern schools. "The safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students is determined by local school boards and individual principals; this is not a beltway issue," she said. "The Leadership

Training Institute is one of the most important tools that GLSEN offers communities. It not only represents GLSEN's commitment to grassroots organizing, it helps create strong chapters with a strategic and highly-localized approach to fighting anti-gay bias in schools."

The need to organize with and on behalf of GLBT youth in Southern schools is great. According to GLSEN's 1998 "Back-to-School" report, which measured 42 of the nation's largest school districts, Southern schools fared well below the national average in protecting and serving GLBT students. Whereas the national failure rate rested at 46 percent, Southern schools rated far poorer with a 75 percent failure rate.

"Change in Southern schools has come slowly, with great struggle," said GLSEN National Field Director John Spear. "But with the Southern chapters having been well-represented at the Leadership Training Institute, the recent opening of our new field office in Atlanta, and with Brenda Barron leading our Southern organizing efforts, we're in a better position than ever to challenge anti-gay harassment in Southern schools."

GLSEN will also host its third annual national conference, Teaching Respect for All '99, in Atlanta from October 1-3. Expected to be the largest-ever gathering of activists dedicated to ending anti-gay bias in K-12 schools, the event will feature over 65 workshops, a keynote address by US Representative John Lewis (D-GA), entertainment by comedian Margaret Cho and a special workshop track on organizing in Southern schools.

For more information on GLSEN, access [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org) on the Internet. ▼



The NC contingent with three of their trainers. Top Row: (left to right) Kevin Jennings (GLSEN exec. dir.), Gary Palmer, Melissa Seibert, Joan Walker, Brenda Barron (GLSEN Southern Field Organizer), MK Cullen (Equality NC — Strategy Trainer). Bottom Row: Janet Joyner, Kathie McKinney, Mike Barringer, Nancy Origer Poole

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