

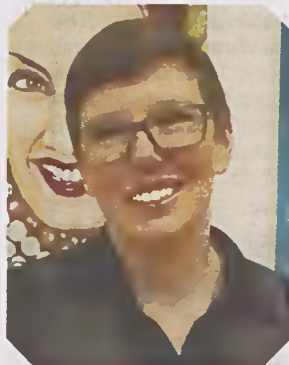
OUT *for* CHANGE

Young LGBT professionals making a difference

by Matt Comer :: matt@goqnotes.com

A new generation of leaders are taking the reins. Whether they work from an Uptown tower or other corporate digs, a small-town city council or the offices of a community non-profit, the more than dozen young people profiled in this issue are among some of the brightest and most visionary young leaders under 35. There are many more, of course — far more than we could ever possibly profile. Each are deserving of praise for the work they do. Read more about our profiled young leaders below and visit online at goqnotes.com/outforchange/ to learn more about each.

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Amanda Breeden
Age: 30

Occupation: Non-profit staffer
A transplant to Charlotte, Amanda has called the Queen City home since January 2009. She was raised in a rural farm community in Franklin, Neb. — population, 1,004. After working for a variety of non-profit agencies focusing on human rights and social justice issues, Amanda is now employed as a research officer for the College

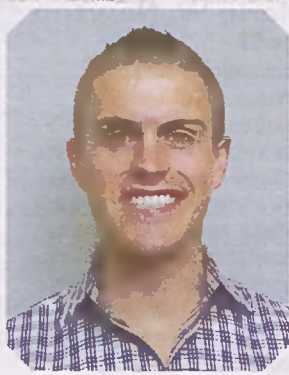
of Health and Human Sciences at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and two master's degrees in women's and gender studies and youth and human service administration. In the community, Amanda has been active with the Charlotte Business Guild, where she came on as a board member in 2012. She's currently the vice president. Prior to her work with the Guild, Amanda served as a board member and fundraising committee chair for Carolinas Care Partnership. Amanda says she's most passionate "about creating a professional presence for the LGBTQ business community and nurturing a climate that is both supportive internally (LGBTQ businesses supporting LGBTQ businesses) and inclusive of the ally community." She's been hard at work promoting the Guild's LGBT Economic Study (available at charlottebusinessguild.org), which she says will provide important LGBT economic statistics and benchmarking information that is otherwise missing. Amanda knows the world is changing and sees data that proves it, but adds, "I do feel a strong sense of responsibility to promote social change on an individual level. . . . And the importance of allies cannot be overlooked, if we are to achieve our end goal."

Amos Cooper, Jr.
Age: 34

Occupation: Banking

A native of Raleigh, Amos has worked for Square 1 Bank for six years. He's currently the assistant vice president and relationship manager at the bank. Prior to his current employer, he worked for Bank of America. He attended C.E. Jordan High School and North Carolina Central University. In the community, he volunteers with the

LGBT Center of Raleigh on its outside events committee for Out! Raleigh. "Being able to partner with the LGBT Center has allowed me to bring to light some much needed refreshing changes to the community as well as providing the Center with additional support in their programs and endeavors," Amos says of his volunteer work with the group. Amos also plans and organizes various events and fundraisers in the Raleigh area. He says he wants to "bring more awareness and togetherness to the community." He even sees his passion for equality extending to work. "Thankfully I work for a very liberal company that does offer domestic partner benefits," he says. "We are a growing startup and I hope one day that we have a diversity committee that I can be a part of."



Josh Lemke

Age: 30

Occupation: Banking

Josh, a native of Hartford, S.D., is a recent Charlotte transplant, moving to the Queen City in 2006, where he is employed as a vice president at Bank of America. For the past year-and-a-half, Josh has served as a board member and treasurer with Time Out Youth. He's also a Class 2 participant with the Community Building Initiative's Leaders

Under 40. "I would describe myself primarily as a professional who is aspiring to be an advocate," Josh says. He's most passionate about young people's health and well being. Youth, he says, are robbed of opportunities when they have to "deal with the challenges that come with being LGBT." Josh also volunteers with Bank of America's LGBT Pride Employee Network. He says, "we can't only rely on others," adding, "As individuals, we need to get involved and we all need to be a part of change. I encourage everyone to find something they are passionate about, whether it is in the LGBT Community or not, and figure out how you can contribute."



Cate Eble

Age: 32

Occupation: Non-profit staffer

Cate has been a business analyst for the American Red Cross for three years. In that time, she's also made a mark in the local LGBT community. She served as chair of community outreach and helped to organize volunteers and marketing for the Unity Party, an LGBT welcome event prior to the 2012 Democratic National Convention

in Charlotte. She also served as a member of the LGBT Community Center of Charlotte Board of Trustees. Currently, she's a member of the Human Rights Campaign's North Carolina Gala Steering Committee, where she is co-chair of the gala's Student Leadership Summit. She believes there should be more representation for the entire community. "No one should be left out of equality," she says. "Lesbians and gays are very strongly represented in our community, but we must remember the bisexual, transgender and queer members of our community when fighting for change." Cate's most passionate about workplace non-discrimination, especially for transgender community members.

Anthony Dondero

Age: 24

Occupation: Student

Anthony is a student at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology and has been active in a variety of campus organizations, including PRIDE, Trans*Port, UNCC Vox, To Write Love On Her Arm and the Collegiate Recovery Community. But, it has been Anthony's work with the UNCC Trans* Committee that caught our eye. Anthony has been instrumental in helping to create better access for and understanding of transgender students on the Charlotte campus. Anthony says he was first inspired to be involved after noticing a significant lack of transgender visibility on his campus. "There weren't any trans* students at the time who were willing to out themselves in order to create that change because there were no visible trans* people on campus at the time."



Lee Storrow

Age: 23

Occupation: Politician

The youngest openly gay elected official in North Carolina, Lee is

currently serving his first term as a member of the Chapel Hill Town Council. Lee also works for a non-profit and on health policy. He's a native of Asheville and a graduate of the University of North Carolina, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. He also currently serves as a board member and secretary for Youth Empowered Solutions! and is a member of the board of directors for the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina. He's most passionate about ending the gay blood ban. Before being disqualified himself, Lee was a regular blood and platelet donor. In 2010, he testified in front of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Blood Safety and Availability Advisory Committee. Speaking out is essential to making change, he says: "Our personal lives are political, and it's important that gay North Carolinians get involved in the progressive community."

Daniel Valdez

Age: 27

Occupation: Non-profit staffer

A native of Acapulco, Mexico, Daniel has lived in Charlotte since 1999. He's a graduate of Central Cabarrus High School and the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, where he received bachelor's degrees in history and Latin American studies. He's currently the advocacy program manager at Crisis Assistance Ministry, but worked in the past at Carolinas Care Partnership and the Latin American Coalition. Daniel volunteers with a variety of LGBT and non-LGBT organizations, including the Charlotte Lesbian and Gay Fund, the GayCharlotte Film Festival, the NC Region II MSM Taskforce, the Mexican Cultural Society of Charlotte, the Bruce Irons Camp Fund and Charlotte City Councilmember LaWana Mayfield's 2011 election campaign. Daniel shuns the labels of "activist" and "advocate." Instead, he says, "I would describe myself as an active citizen of my community," adding, "As an immigrant, professional, Latino, male I hoped to bring even more diversity to groups that sought to advance equal rights and build bridges in the LGBTQ community," Daniel says.



James Miller

Age: 29

Occupation: Non-profit staffer

James is a native of the Outer Banks of North Carolina and attended Currituck County High School and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. He's also a graduate of Brandeis University. He holds bachelor's degrees in philosophy and marketing and graduate degrees in social welfare policy and non-profit management. James currently works as the executive director of the LGBT Center of Raleigh,

where he's been employed for one-and-a-half years. He also gives back, often working longer than 40 hours. "Anything I work over 40 hours is donated," he says. "Whether it is opening the Center for our amazing Transgender Initiative or leading an intense Youth Empowerment Camp for LGBT leaders, my job is to empower others to reach their full potential." James says North Carolina faces "many uphill battles," including transgender and HIV-inclusive employment and housing non-discrimination, LGBT and second-parent adoption rights and AIDS drug assistance funding.

Richard Grimstad

Age: 34

Occupation: Accountant

A Salem, Ohio, native, Richard bounced back and forth for a few years between his home state and Charlotte. But, he finally landed here for good in 2002. For six years, he's worked as a tax manager at GreerWalker LLP. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's in accounting from the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. In the community, Richard currently serves as co-director of Charlotte Pride. Last year, he co-chaired sponsorship development for the festival. Elsewhere, he serves as the treasurer and a board member for Carolinas Care Partnership. He's also a board member for the Rotary Club of Charlotte, where he also serves as treasurer. Richard says he's passionate about community visibility. "I feel that putting a face on our LGBTQ community will go a long way towards full equality and is one of the easiest things we can do to create awareness," he says. "If you can be seen, you can be heard. If you can be heard, you can inspire and create change, compassion and understanding."

