

Chick-fil-A's politics do not diminish customer service



By Morgan Andrews
STAFF WRITER

Chick-fil-A is under fire from the gay community for only supporting heterosexual marriages and Christian-based associations. But bashing Chick-fil-A for the use of their money seems quite unreasonable.

One Chick-fil-A in Pennsylvania sponsored a marriage tutorial in February. This group is known to be outspoken and against homosexuality; it caused quite the uproar in the gay community, according to The New York Times.

Part of Chick-fil-A's motto — "To glorify God by being a faithful steward" — speaks directly to the character of the association, and how the running of the corporation is set on a firm base.

The company is known for supporting community events and starting their own special organization, the WinShape Foundation. Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy founded the WinShape Foundation in 1984, with the main goal being to "shape winners."

The foundation is for anyone that feels like their life needs change or to assist in building leadership skills. No matter the lifestyle choice that one chooses, anyone is welcome to the WinShape Foundation.

"The issue here is respect," said Martha Lang, visiting assistant professor of sociology and anthropology. "Will I disagree with people for thinking the LGBT (community) is sinful? Sure. But when it comes down to agreeing to disagree, we need to find ways to agree with individuals."

The gay community has the right to say what they want, but Chick-fil-A is not known for mistreatment of customers due to their particular lifestyle choice.

"I feel like they have good service," said senior Brian Daniel, vice president of Pride. "I don't go there often, but when I do, they always seem friendly."

Customer service is one of the most important elements to why Chick-fil-A loves to do what they do.

"Obviously, news of this is frustrating to hear, but at the end of the day, they are a business and who they choose to do business with is up to them," said Daniel. "I must say that I do not agree about who they have catered to, but the bottom line is that it's a business."

Because Chick-fil-A is a Christian-based organization, there is a policy stating that all Chick-fil-A establishments are to be closed on Sundays.

This policy started when Truett Cathy opened his first restaurant, according to the Chick-fil-A corporate website.

"I think (giving the employees Sundays off) is amazing," sophomore Kent Peterson, a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, said. "It still generates enough revenue to grow as an organization while taking the Sabbath off."

Going to church and building a relationship with God is something that is exceedingly important in the Christian faith. Employees are not required to go to church on Sundays; it simply gives employees the opportunity to know who God is. Thus, there are many individualistic workers for Chick-fil-A that can have their own lifestyle choices and not support what the organization sustains.

"I have never witnessed any employee of Chick-fil-A be mistreated or mistreat a customer due to religious beliefs or lifestyle choices," said Jamie Surprenant, a former Chick-fil-A employee and the wife of an FCA mentor. "In fact, the only Christian employee when I was working was the manager. None of the other employees had a religious belief."

Choosing to be a consumer of Chick-fil-A is left up to the discretion of individuals. If members of the gay community do not want to buy from Chick-fil-A, then that is okay, but boycotting Chick-fil-A for supporting any type of organization is quite judgmental.

Mental health becoming a priority



By Brandy Mitchell
STAFF WRITER

When I first heard the descriptions of the Arizona shooter's mental health condition, cold chills ran through my body, because not long ago I used many of the same words to describe a loved one.

The majority of people suffering from poor mental health do not resort to violence. However, they often suffer alone due to inadequate support systems. Anyone who has dealt with mental health issues understands the importance of having treatment options.

Because the first feelings of depression, anxiety, or psychosis often occur while a student is of college age, it is vital that Guilford have support services in place to assist students with their mental health.

This need has produced the Active Minds club, support groups, and "Lunch with Counselors."

My aunt once said, "People do not see mental conditions the same way they see physical conditions." This observation continues to stick with me.

"For lots of complicated reasons, many of us in this society seem to believe that we should be able to handle everything in our lives on our own," said Director of Counseling Gaither Terrell in an e-mail interview. "We should 'be tough.'"

This stigma is one of the things Active Minds is working

to eliminate.

"This semester we are hoping to bring more focus to this aspect of the club, and bringing the ideas surrounding mental health to the forefront of peoples' minds when they think about Active Minds," said co-president Claire Norwood in an e-mail interview.

"We are planning on having movie screenings and then discussions and a Q&A time afterwards to increase the dialogue about mental health," said Norwood. "The dialogue and conversation is what we want to have stimulated at Guilford, by showing the importance of it and the effects it has."

Furthermore, Active Minds and the Counseling Center are working together to set up support groups.

"One that focuses specifically on suicide and survivors of it, in any sense, whether that be people who have attempted or people who know someone who has or it has affected their lives in some way," said Norwood.

However, these efforts can only be effective when they are taken advantage of by the student population.

"So far, our biggest obstacle is getting people involved," said Norwood.

Guilford students are at an advantage by having access to the services and support provided by Active Minds and the Counseling Center. All students should take advantage of these resources — if for no other reason than to educate themselves about the stigmas surrounding mental health.

"Everyone on our campus is a part of the student support system and we all want to give the message that there is help available and there is no shame in asking for that help," said Terrell. "Just as you would seek help for a broken bone or diabetes, you should feel free to seek help for mental health concerns without shame."

Maybe if the Arizona shooter had received treatment when his behavior first changed, while in college, a tragedy could have been prevented.

Staff Editorial

In the Middle East, Twitter is the tool, but it is not the revolution

Revolution found a new voice in the past months, as social media and other alternative communication resources helped to rouse protests throughout the Middle East.

With Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Bin Ali forced from office, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak enduring a third week of demonstrators demanding his resignation, headlines around the world have read similar to The New York Times' "Movement Began With Outrage And a Facebook Page That Gave It an Outlet."

The new use of social networks is both innovative and exciting; however, an important distinction must be made between the causes of revolution and the tools of revolution. In this case, decades of frustration and impeded rights were the causes, while Facebook, Twitter and the TV/Internet network Al Jazeera were merely tools.

This distinction should be made not to undermine the effective use of social media, but rather to focus attention on the message of the revolution and the individuals shouting it from the streets.

To name these the Twitter or Facebook Revolutions is to forget the courage of Mohamed Bouazizi, whose self-immolation in front of a Tunisian government building sparked a call for freedom that has spread to Egypt, Yemen, Jordan and Algeria. Similarly, to credit Al Jazeera with the effectiveness of the Egyptian protests is to undermine the perseverance of the thousands that have filled Tahrir Square for weeks.

More importantly, the spirit of the revolutions must be in the spotlight, rather than the tools of the revolution. These are not revolutions of social media; they are revolutions of liberty and equality, of opportunity and expression.

Arab youths are risking everything to confront authoritarian rulers that have taken away the basic rights of their people for too long. The people of Egypt are educated and competent, and yet live in poverty without the ability to make the changes they want and their country needs.

What the world is witnessing may very well be the spread of democracy throughout the Middle East, toppling of autocracy and stale, old regimes. As such, we must not celebrate the vehicle of change until after it has been accomplished. Instead, we must devote our energy to lifting up those principles that we hold dear, but that have been buried under the hatred, extremism and a false sense of stability perpetrated by numerous Middle East governments.

Freedom and equality can only flourish in the Middle East if it's homegrown, not imported from abroad. To credit these social networks is to celebrate what we created, and we must instead celebrate the change that they demanded.

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