

MCC

Metropolitan Community Church of the Upstate



**You
Me
Us
God ...
Miraculous!**

Come celebrate God with us in a loving, kind, affirming and accepting place where worship is our most important priority. Diversity is our strength. All are welcome in God's house, regardless of gender, color, creed or religious background. **ALWAYS!**

Metropolitan Community Church of the Upstate

2180 East Poinsett Street Ext. (Highway 290), Duncan, SC 29334
Telephone: 864.439.5080 • E-Mail: mccupstate@bellsouth.net

Founding Pastor: Rev. Donna Stroud, M.Div.

Sunday Evening

Choir Rehearsal: 4:45pm • Worship: 6:00 pm

Wednesday Evening

Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Directions

From I-85: Exit 63 (Duncan/Moore) toward Duncan.
Go 4.3 miles. The church is on the left.

SOUTH CAROLINA

AFFIRM exec aims for success

by David R. Gillespie

John Capitan is a pleasant, soft-spoken young man whose educational background reveals his Southern Baptist roots. He first attended the Southern Baptist Convention affiliated Anderson University, before finishing his undergraduate education at North Carolina's Mars Hill College, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 1992.

Now he's the new executive director of AFFIRM Youth, a social/support group for LGBT young people headquartered in Greenville, S.C.

It's been an interesting journey and he's got a distinct vision of where AFFIRM can go in the future.

He came to AFFIRM after being a mental health counselor at Marshall Pickens Hospital, a manager at a local Belk's department store and involvement with AID Upstate, an area HIV/AIDS client service provider. It was while volunteering at AID Upstate that he became aware of and interested in AFFIRM.

Like so many others, he began volunteering at AID Upstate because several of his friends became HIV-positive. Always a self-described "people person," Capitan, through a couple of AID Upstate employees who also served on the board of AFFIRM, learned of the organization and that it's then-director Mike McVicker was leaving.

So the conversations started.

Kevin Lancaster, Linkage coordinator for AID Upstate and an AFFIRM board member, said that the "timing worked out really well." The board was seeking to combine what had been the programmatic leadership of McVicker with the traditional duties of an executive director, including organization and fund raising/marketing.

The arrival of Capitan comes at a time when AFFIRM is moving its physical location, although the location is a well-guarded secret.

"We want people to know we exist," said Capitan, "but youth are still targets to a certain extent."

Lancaster said the group would "rather err on the side of caution" when it comes to revealing its location. "There are still idiots out there," he said.

But Capitan realizes that there is a need for a certain level of visibility. "We kinda need to out ourselves, too," he said.

So how does a young LGBT person find AFFIRM? Capitan said it starts with a phone call. He arranges to meet the youth in a neutral location and then, comfortable with the person's intent, gives them directions to the meeting location. AFFIRM does not offer transportation.

Meetings are currently held twice a week. Tuesdays, at 6 p.m., are given over to educational efforts. Fridays, at 8 p.m., are for social activities. According to Capitan, there is a core group of about 12 young people, ages 19-21. AFFIRM serves those 16-22. Although there

are more females than males, since Capitan has taken the helm, more young gay males are attending, he said. Most, he added, are out to their families.

An effort was made to reach out to local school counselors and psychologists to let them know about AFFIRM and its mission to LGBT youth. "We sent out more than 100 [announcements]," Lancaster said, "but only received 12 to 15 responses."

Capitan said plans call for reaching out to local college gay-straight alliances. Such groups exist at Greenville Technical College and near-by Clemson University.

One cause for celebration was the high turnout for AFFIRM's yearly Prom, held in May. This past year more than 60 young people attended.

With its new space, Capitan said the group will start developing more activities and be open more hours.

All of this requires money. The budget for fiscal year 2005 was \$49,000. The money came from donations by board members, individual community member donations and from grants secured. The latter source represents approximately 60-70 percent of AFFIRM's funding. So, Capitan said, the group is exploring additional fundraising options. ■

info: AFFIRM Youth, P.O. Box 4094, Greenville, SC 29608
864-467-9004 . email: affirmyouth@affirmyouth.org
website: www.affirmyouth.org



John Capitan is the new executive director of AFFIRM Youth, a social/support group for LGBT young people headquartered in Greenville, S.C.



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Calendar

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THURSDAYS

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Disco Diva Show at 12 Midnight

Karaoke Tuesday - 11 pm • Sinful Sunday Dance Night - \$2.50 Vodka

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - No Cover (excluding special holidays or events)

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www.timeoutmbc.com

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS

Sat., September 23

Coti Collins and Vicki Williams

Fri., September 29

Tezra Devoe

Sat., September 30

Scarlett Dailey

Fri., October 6

Jacki O'Knight

Sat., October 7

Red Ribbon Benefit Show



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