

## news notes: from the carolinas, nation and world

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### Crossroads CLT, TOY host dialogue

CHARLOTTE — On Oct. 17, a forum was held among Crossroads Charlotte, Time Out Youth and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools at the Jewish Community Center entitled "Bullied Until Broken? The Impact of Bullying on LGBT Youth in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Community Responses."

The hopes of the event were high, so said TOY's Steve Bentley. Crossroads Charlotte's Executive Director Tracy Russ wanted to be sure to provide a space for safe conversation. All this came on the coat tails of media attention paid to anti-LGBT bullying and its sometimes tragic consequences.

About 60 attended and heard stories from area gay and lesbians teens about their experiences during the 90-minute panel, who also featured TOY Services Director Laurie Pitts, Deb Kaclik, a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools administrator and youth participants Dang Pham and Loan Tran.

"It's a chance to engage the broader community in a conversation," Bentley said. "Regardless of what the nature of the bullying is and the target of the bullying, its effects are hurtful and damaging and the consequences are severe."

Russ added, "We've always thought of Crossroads Charlotte as having the capacity to be part of the civic space in this community, much like a town square or public hall. It's where people can come together around any number of issues and the intention would be to involve as many people as we can from a diverse background across a variety of viewpoints and come together to talk about these issues. Maybe we arrive at a resolution, and perhaps we don't."

"I think that you can see a number of examples [of progress] that are very visible and some not so visible but important," he says. "The fact that there was a skyscraper uptown illuminated in the rainbow flag — that was a huge step forward. Does that affect policy? No. Does it mean that you have the right to do something that you didn't have yesterday? No. But it is an important acknowledgment by very senior, powerful leaders in this community that the LGBT community is a part of who we are."

Bentley hopes recent conversations on LGBT youth can turn from mourning those lost to keeping those still alive safe and included. Enforcement of local and state policies or laws protecting LGBT young people must be a priority, he says.

"One of the things we know about policies, whether in business or in schools, is that the decision on how to enforce those policies are left to individual decision makers, for example school principals," Bentley says. "How sternly it's enforced, how effectively consequences for violations are meted out can vary from school to school. It does invite the community to be able to step in and for every parent to have a conversation with his or her child's school."

Reporter Tim Funk wrote in the *Charlotte Observer*. "It ended with a prayer from Rabbi Judy Schindler that no more candles will need to be lit because others — friends, family, teachers, clergy, politicians — stood up and spoke out against torture and torment of the vulnerable."

Temple Beth El and Temple Israel joined Crossroads Charlotte and Time Out Youth to organize the event.

— L.M. & M.C.

which occurred in the early morning hours on Oct. 15 outside of a campus dormitory.

Two women, 18 and 19 years old, were exiting the dorm when a group of men allegedly began hurling anti-gay slurs at them. One woman was spat on when she confronted the group and was later hit by Bryan Berg, 18. Berg was arrested for assault on a female. He's been released under a \$27,000 bond.

Both women were treated at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. One was released, but the other remains hospitalized after suffering a broken jaw.

"We have to look at all the elements of the incident to see if they meet the federal requirements to be classified as a hate crime, including what was said and the actions that occurred. At this time, we believe it was an isolated incident," Assistant ECU Police Chief Dawn Tevepaugh told *The Daily Reflector*.

Updates to this story, if any, and more are available online at [goqnotes.com/8892/](http://goqnotes.com/8892/).

— M.C.

### Triangle

#### Mall apologizes for discrimination

RALEIGH — Officials with Cameron Village shopping center have apologized to a lesbian couple after they alleged a security officer there booted them from the premises after showing "gentle affection."

Caitlin Breedlove, co-director of the Triangle area social justice group Southerners on New Ground (SONG), and her girlfriend had just finished eating lunch at The Flying Biscuit on Oct. 13 when they sat outside the restaurant, hugged and shared a brief kiss. They allege a security officer and his supervisor asked them to leave the property after doing so.

*qnotes* contacted a spokesperson with Cameron Village property and security managers York Properties, but a request for comment wasn't returned. On Oct. 15, however, Cameron Village officials updated their Facebook fan page — which had become host to several comments chastising the mall for their actions — and apologized for the treatment Breedlove and her partner received.

"Cameron Village is a family friendly shopping center that welcomes the entire community," the Cameron Village wall post read. "We sincerely regret Wed. events & we have contacted Ms. Breedlove and have set a meeting. Cameron Village is committed to maintaining an open and welcoming environment for everyone."

Later in the comment threads on that post, Cameron Village said, "We wanted you to know that the officer involved was immediately suspended. The supervising officer and all security officers will receive additional sensitivity training."

SONG held a demonstration against the mall, demanding LGBT-inclusive sensitivity training for Cameron Village security officials, on Oct. 17.

For the full story, visit [goqnotes.com/8843/](http://goqnotes.com/8843/).

— M.C.

### Charlotte

#### Pageant rated tops

CHARLOTTE — Von Entertainment was awarded the Best State Preliminary in the Miss Gay America system on Oct. 17 at the Lifestyles Auditorium in Columbus, Ohio, at the national pageant held there. Owners Larry Tyger and Terry Eason, along with outgoing Miss Gay America Coco Montrese presented the honors. Von also captured the Best Set Design designation as well.

In order to gain a nomination a preliminary must obtain a perfect scorecard from their judges and their visiting system dignitary. Only three states are given the nod. This was only the second time in the 34-year history that the North Carolina pageant won. Rick Wilds purchased the system for the Tar Heel state on two separate occasions.

The national pageant, which was won by Cottin Collins from Raleigh, had all 52 contestants present.

— L.M.

#### Church welcomes lesbian pastor

CHARLOTTE — Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church, 9704 Mallard Creek Rd., has hired a new pastor.

Rev. Robin Noelle Tanner, 26, is a graduate of the University of Rochester and Harvard Divinity School. She and her partner, Stephanie, had already moved to Charlotte.

"I am honored and excited to be called by a congregation who believe in the power of love to heal and transform our world," Tanner said in a release.

Tanner was raised with the teaching of both Jesus Christ and Buddha. She says she discovered Unitarian Universalism while in

college and that it felt "like coming home."

The congregation unanimously approved Tanner's call. She says she is excited to serve.

For more information, visit [puuc.org](http://puuc.org).

— M.C.

### Triad

#### Isaacson highlights Gala

GREENSBORO — Sara Isaacson, a University of North Carolina ROTC student, will be a featured workshop co-leader at the upcoming Equality Conference & Gala on Nov. 13. She will be sharing information on how college students can lobby their legislators.

Isaacson was discharged for disclosing her sexuality to her commander last spring as a result of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

A plethora of panelist will be leading other workshops that day and include Mayor of Franklinton Elic Senter, Mayor of Chapel Hill Mark Kleinschmidt, Tryon Town Commissioner Doug Arbogast and Orange County Commissioner (and former Carrboro Mayor) Mike Nelson.

To register or for more information, visit [equalitync.org](http://equalitync.org).

— L.M.

#### GGF disperses \$52,000 to grantees

GREENSBORO — The Guilford Green Foundation (GGF) awarded \$52,000 to area LGBT community groups on Oct. 13, with Mayor Pro-Tem Nancy Vaughan in attendance.

Foundation leaders say the grants will be used to further community needs, interests and services across the Triad area. Vaughan praised the group and its "long-term efforts to unite community through its support of groups that promote fairness, diversity, and inclusivity."

Despite the recent difficult fundraising environment, GGF has increased its endowment to over \$325,000 and is able to continue its annual funding tradition. Since 1996, GGF has granted over \$600,000 to LGBT projects and programs. According to Funders for LGBT Issues, LGBT grantmaking by US foundations makes up only 0.2 percent of all dollars awarded by American philanthropy.

For a full list of grant recipients and grant totals, read more at [goqnotes.com/8936/](http://goqnotes.com/8936/).

In related news, GGF's executive director, Luck Davidson, has announced she is stepping down from her position to spend more time with her family. Board co-chair Ivan Canada will temporarily step in to the executive director's role.

— M.C.

### Eastern

#### Hate crime investigated at ECU

GREENVILLE, N.C. — Police have arrested one man in connection with a potential anti-gay hate crime and assault on two women on the campus of East Carolina University (ECU). Investigators are also looking for a second man they think was involved in the incident,

### ELECTION 2010

Local and state LGBT groups have made their endorsements in this year's midterm elections, to be held on Nov. 2.

This election season has been marked by extremely partisan rhetoric, negative ads and campaigning and a "Tea Party" insurgency as the nation continues to climb out of one of its worst economic recessions since the Great Depression.

Log on to [goqnotes.com/8935/](http://goqnotes.com/8935/) to see this year's endorsements from the Mecklenburg Gay & Lesbian Political Action Committee (MeckPAC), Greensboro's Replacements, Ltd. PAC and Equality North Carolina PAC. :