

news notes: from the carolinas, nation and world

compiled by Lainey Millen :: lainey@goqnotes.com | David Stout :: david@goqnotes.com | Matt Comer :: matt@goqnotes.com

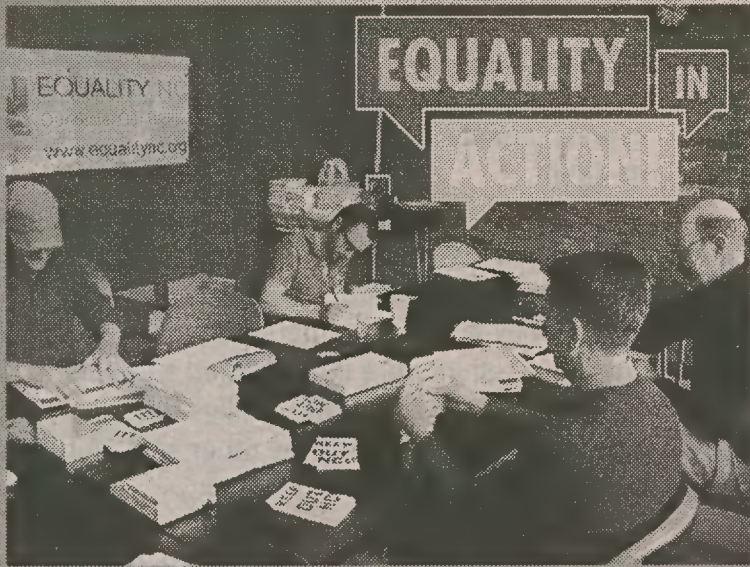
Advocacy group on pulse of equality efforts

RALEIGH — This year, amidst the rise of a Republican-led legislature which has already brought an anti-LGBT constitutional amendment to the floor of both chambers, Equality North Carolina (ENC) has its plate full.

Want to lend your support to help thwart anti-gay legislators' designs? Then take action with ENC by joining their email and postcard campaigns to convince lawmakers to work on the side of fairness and equality. At press time, over 10,000 Equality in Action cards has been sent out to a variety of people to help educate them about how bad the anti-LGBT amendment is to North Carolina's LGBT citizens. All across the state, there have been stops on the Equality in Action Tour. These local town hall meetings help to raise funds for initiatives, educate participants on hot topics and energize those who want to become engaged in the valuable work of ENC.

Daytime office volunteers are still urgently needed to mobilize the postcard campaign. Future nighttime volunteer opportunities are also available. Contact organizer Josh Wynne at josh@equalitync.org or 919-829-0343, ext. 113 to learn more.

Additionally, there's no time like a party, and ENC is encouraging everyone to host a fundraising party to help collect the necessary war chest that is needed to defend its initiatives. For details on how to throw one of these fun-filled events,



visit equalitync.org/news1/theres-never-been-a-better-time-to-party-for-equality.

ENC also encourages everyone to support the companies who lend their hand to champion equality in the workplace. It is currently seeking companies who are willing to take a stand against the anti-LGBT amendment. North Carolina has a number of companies who score high on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Index. But, that might not be enough. Employers who want to get on board should contact Kay Flaminio at kay@equalitync.org. Whether one can take a public stand or help ENC communicate with key legislative leaders, help them take bottom line strategic action that will make a real difference for protecting the dignity of North Carolina's LGBT community.

For more information, to volunteer or to make a contribution, visit equalitync.org.

— L.M.

between a man and a woman or be chaste." References to sexual orientation would have been removed if it has passed.

All 173 presbyteries across the U.S. will have to come to a consensus by May. The approval of a total of 87 presbyteries are needed for the proposal to take effect.

— L.M.

Triad

New center improves AIDS care

GREENSBORO — Moses Cone Health System has partnered with three agencies, including Triad Health Project, to open their new Regional Center for Infectious Disease. The facility, which opened April 4 across the street from Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital, promises to greatly improve care for people with HIV, AIDS and other infectious diseases.

By partnering with other HIV/AIDS providers, it will offer multiple services for patients in one convenient setting.

The Center has a nurse practitioner and also has space for two case managers from Triad Health Project and one mental health counselor from Family Service of the Piedmont. Those two community agencies worked with The Infectious Disease Clinic in the past when it was located in the basement of Moses

Cone Hospital.

The long-term vision to develop the center came from Dr. John Campbell, an infectious disease physician with the Internal Medicine Training Program at Moses Cone Health System.

The Cone Health Foundation, Central Carolina Health Network and the University of North Carolina are providing funds including federal funding totaling \$1,237,468, a total 55 percent of the Center's budget.

— compiled from release

Triangle

Public forum held

CARRBORO — Students and youth gathered at Open Eye Cafe, 101 S. Greensboro St., at an open mic Speak Out after the Day of Silence. It was sponsored by iNSIDEoUT.

On the previous day, countless participants across the nation refrained from speaking for a full day to raise awareness and express their solidarity with LGBT youth who remain muted and isolated. Every day, they face disproportionate rates of harassment and bullying in schools, as well as an increased tendency for self-injury, suicide and depression. The Speak Out was an opportunity for students to share their stories with an audience in public about their experiences observing the Day of Silence and being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning or allied in school, more generally.

The event is a project of the Gay, Lesbian,

Straight Education Network (GLSEN). In 2005, GLSEN's National School Climate Survey found that more than 64 percent of LGBT students reported verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and 29 percent reported missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety.

Discrimination and harassment is widely overlooked by school administrators due in part to the lack of effective bullying policies, said iNSIDEoUT representative Amy Glaser. The *School Violence Prevention Act*, which was passed in 2009, is supposed to help protect youth against bullying. Equality North Carolina has prepared a kit to assist systems in the implementation of the law.

For more information, visit iNSIDEoUT180.org and equalitync.org.

— L.M.

Conference tackles bullying

RALEIGH — North Carolina State University held a statewide conference on March 29 to assist educators and students in dealing with harassment in elementary and secondary schools.

Attendees focused on finding ways to implement the state's *School Violence Prevention Act* throughout an entire school. Also, intervention and parental support methodology were addressed.

WRAL reported, "Justine Hollingshead, director of N.C. State's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Center, said school administrators, teachers and counselors need to take the initiative to stop bullying."

Worsening the issue is the "advent of online bullying."

Morgan Hayes, a seventh grade student at North Garner Middle School, attended the event for a Girl Scout project with a friend. She is spearheading an effort to have her school become a no-bully zone.

— L.M.

Exec supports gay rights

RALEIGH — Workplace Options President Alan King says that "being gay doesn't define my ability to do my job well. I don't wrap myself in a rainbow flag," the *News and Observer* reported.

His company is the lead sponsor of OutRaleigh, which is taking place on May 14. And, that is only the tip of the iceberg. He thinks that this event is just the place to make a "visible statement in the community we live...and celebrate diversity...thus being viewed as a model in the business world."

Workplace Options is an employee assistance program company and provides wellness programs, backup care for children and elderly parents, diversity training, financial counseling, mental-health support and more.

It employs 325 people worldwide. Most of them, 240, work in Raleigh.

They have concern over the Republican-controlled General Assembly's efforts to restrict gay rights, like the gay marriage ban.

The *News and Observer* said, "A recent survey of N.C. workers by Public Policy Polling, a firm that's owned by [Workplace Options CEO] Dean Debnam, showed that about one in four said they would be uncomfortable if a co-worker or boss was openly gay."

Charlotte

TOY seeks volunteers

CHARLOTTE — Time Out Youth is currently searching for volunteers to staff its 20th Anniversary Gala Weekend, June 10-13.

The highlight of the weekend is a gala fundraiser, an evening honoring what Time Out Youth has done and continues to do to strengthen the community.

On June 11, Glam, an alternative prom for youth, is slated as part of the festivities.

Sponsors, either individual or corporate, are also needed for their platinum event.

The organization is also co-sponsoring the premier of "Rent" on May 12 at Theatre Charlotte. Appetizers, dessert and a silent auction are being planned. Volunteers are needed between 5:30-10 p.m. Complimentary tickets for another show will be made available to those who serve.

For more information, email volunteers@timeoutyouth.org or visit timeoutyouth.org.

— L.M.

Couples wed in D.C.

CHARLOTTE — Seven couples spent the weekend of April 1-3 in the nation's capital while they tied the knot with family, friends and clergy as witnesses.

The couples were forced to travel to D.C. for their ceremonies because North Carolina does not recognize marriages by same-sex couples. An anti-gay constitutional amendment proposed in the state Senate would

make such a ban more stringent, banning recognition of "domestic legal union" by same-sex couples, including civil unions, marriages and domestic partnerships.

The ceremonies were officiated by Rev. Nancy Ellett Allison of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ, Rabbi Judy Schindler of Temple Beth El and Rev. Robin Tanner of Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church.

Several other local congregations supported the initiative, including Pilgrim Congregational UCC of Charlotte, Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte, Unity Fellowship Church Charlotte and Wedgewood Baptist Church. Sponsoring organizations included RAIN, Time Out Youth, attorney Connie J. Vetter and the Human Rights Campaign.

On April 4, a special "Celebratory Champagne Toast" was held. During the event, Rev. Jay Leach, along with Rev. Dr. Chris Ayers and others, blessed and toasted the couples upon their return.

— M.C.

Eastern

Presbytery says no

ELIZABETHTOWN — The eastern North Carolina governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gave a thumbs down to a proposal from the national church body to allow gay and lesbian clergy.

The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina voted against the proposal by a nearly 2-to-1 margin. The church's current Book of Order states that its clergy must be in a "faithful marriage