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A Fine Sentiment



Duke students at the free T-shirt handout

Gays and Lesbians at Duke Score Big with a Little Pro Gay Message

By Andrew Rapp
Bay Windows

A small number of people cheer on Rev. Fred Phelps or Miss Anita Bryant. An even smaller number march in Pride parades or write angry letters to U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum. But a large number of people, perhaps a majority, would say being gay is, well, just fine by them.

Now a couple of former

Bostonians have found a way to let just such people wear their beliefs on their sleeve, or rather emblazoned across their T-shirt. Leila Nesson of Cambridge and Lucas Schaefer of Newton have distributed over 1,800 T-shirts to fellow students at Duke University, in Durham, with a simple but powerful message printed on the front: "Gay? Fine by me."

Nesson, a PhD candidate in history says the idea arose at a dinner party among a diverse group of friends. She and her friends were lamenting the fact that, with the exception of a visible openly-gay minority, the majority of students at the

school assumed everyone around them to be straight. As Schaefer describes it, "Duke needs a more open atmosphere for everyone, gay and straight. There's definitely some pressure to conform on campus." Gay-positive sentiment at the school was untapped, Nesson says, because "a bigger population of students just didn't show up."

Over dinner, Nesson, Schaefer and their friends began batting around ideas for a slogan that would tap into this indifferent majority. "We started with something like 'gayness is OK' and worked it

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Tradesmen Donate \$3,700 to The House Of Mercy

Charlotte's Tradesmen Leather/Levi Club celebrated their 17th anniversary May 2,3 & 4 at the Sheraton Airport in Charlotte. Participants from 12 states came to support the club which has been a "parent" to many similar clubs through out the South East. The Tradesmen aggressively fundraise for local charities, primarily The House Of Mercy hospice in Belmont, NC. Through fundraisers on their monthly club nights (the first Friday of each month at The Charlotte Eagle) and the annual weekend anniversary they donated \$3700.00 to The House Of Mercy. House of Mercy's parent organization, The Sisters Of Mercy, match all of The Tradesmen's donations. In the past four years The Tradesmen have contributed over \$15,000.00 to The House Of Mercy and other local charities.



Outgoing President Jim Grigg, Director of Nursing Shirley Stow, Development Dir. Cynthia Cox, and Executive Director Stan Patterson visit in the garden behind the residence. The garden bench was contributed last year in memory of a founding member of the Tradesmen who was a resident at House of Mercy.

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