

Same-sex dating at high school proms in Oregon is still rare enough to warrant attention, and this year there is twice as much to celebrate

by E. Ann Hinds ▼ photos by Linda Kliewer

High school proms are a rite of spring, and for teens they are a rite of passage. For many sexual minority youth, however, this rite is a developmental milestone that is missed or incomplete because of society's bias.

Just Out is proud to acknowledge a group of young people who were able to overcome prejudice and politics to take their places in this annual rite. This year's celebrants at the West Linn High School prom included twins, lesbian Ilanya and bisexual Ina Strauss. Their dates were Alaina Cox and Mark Hoffmann, respectively.

Photographer Linda Kliewer captured some of the pre-prom rituals: Ilanya and Mark arriving in their tuxes, the exchanging of flowers, excited family and friends photographing the couples, as well as the four relishing the luxurious interior of their stretch limo.

Ileana and Keith Strauss are active members of Portland's Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays chapter and have worked hard to support their daughters in their school and social lives. Parents of all four of the teenagers, as well as friends and relatives, were at the Strauss home to see the couples off to the prom.

We've since heard that the May 3 event was a huge success. The happy couples topped it off by fixing themselves a sunrise breakfast of French toast at the home of Mark Hoffmann in West Linn. *Just Out* thanks all of those involved for sharing this event with our readers.



Rite Back!

Top: Ilanya and Alaina with familial paparazzi lined up near the limo; bottom: Ilanya, Alaina, Ina and Mark enjoy the luxury of the stretch limo

