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## Speak Out

### Safety in numbers

TO THE EDITOR:

The Fair Schools Act seeks to amend the existing education code's nondiscrimination law to include sexual orientation. This would help ensure all students are treated fairly in Oregon schools. In these times of school violence, intimidation and rising youth suicide rates, it's a basic issue of fairness that none of us concerned about our children's safety can afford to ignore.

Thousands of young people experience some form of harassment in Oregon schools each year because of some perceived difference such as race, physical ability, gender or sexual orientation. There is a law that prohibits discrimination for all of these forms of harassment and violence. It sends a clear message that no form of harassment should be tolerated in our schools.

Oregon schools should be safe and welcoming institutions in which all youth are able to grow and learn without fear. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anti-gay harassment puts students at greater risk for skipping school and drug and alcohol abuse.

The governor's Youth Suicide Task Force found that school-based harassment was a significant contributor to suicidal thoughts and actions. In fact, youth suicide in Oregon is the second-leading cause of death among those between 10 and 24 years old and the leading cause of death for youth who are gay or lesbian. Students who are harassed at school are three times more likely to attempt suicide than non-harassed peers.

Public schools have a responsibility to all our children to ensure their safety and to teach them the value of respect. We must

### transitions

## Amy Gerver, 1960-2001

Amy J. Gerver, Our House of Portland development director, was killed in a rafting accident May 5 on the South Fork of the Boise River in Idaho. She was 41.

She was born Feb. 28, 1960. She moved to Portland in 1992.

Before coming to Our House three years ago, Gerver worked for Meier & Frank and Loaves & Fishes. Co-workers described her as a dynamic political activist with a wicked sense of humor.

"This tragic and shocking news affects so many people in a multitude of ways," volunteer director Kathryn Siebert wrote in a letter to supporters May 8.

"Amy was an integral part of the Our House family—a force to be reckoned with and an extraordinarily good fund-raiser. She had just coordinated a most successful auction not two weeks before her death, an event that is our biggest annual fund-raiser and raised \$124,000 this year. In the next few days, you will be receiving a solicitation letter that Amy co-authored with one of our residents. It is a powerful, beautifully written letter that now proves to be her 'swan song' in her role at Our House."

She had a passion for traditional witchcraft, animals, Irish dance and white-water rafting. "I find some small comfort in knowing that she died doing something that she loved so much," Siebert said.



Gerver was a longtime member of the Portland Area Business Association, Willamette Valley Development Organization and Feral Cat Coalition. She also volunteered for Oregon Public Broadcasting.

"She had more integrity than anybody I ever met," friend Leslie Zemenek said. "She just dug into life; she just embraced it."

Gerver is survived by her brother, Grant of Flagstaff, Ariz., and parents, Carole and Spike of Los Angeles.

A funeral was held May 10 in Los Angeles, a soul release ritual was held May 15 at a private residence, and a celebration of life was held May 16 at Our House. Remembrances may be made to Our House and the Feral Cat Coalition.

## Reggie Cano, 1956-2001

Portland resident Reginald Kiapo Cano died May 12. He was 45.

He was born March 27, 1956, in Oahu, Hawaii. He moved to Portland 28 years ago.

Cano worked as a stylist at Broadway Hair and Tan Salon. He was also a member of the Pentecostal Church.

He was a female impersonator at Darcelle XV for eight years during the 1980s. He was voted Debutante IX (1981-82) and Miss Gay Portland XIII (1984-85).

Cano was preceded in death by his sister, Cinderella K. Davis, in 1992; brother, Frank, in 2000; and mother, Myrna, in 1999. He is survived by his partner, David Alan Smoot;

siblings, Kenona R. Anderson, Patricia L. McAnaney, Jeanette L. Loomis, Alexander Gasper, Dolores "Lani" Manuel, Donna Mae Kamana, William Hoolhuli, Debra N. Gayle, Angela Baker, Edwina Kahikina, Edward Kaulia and Kalani Kaulia; and grandmother, Annie Wright.

A gathering of family and friends will be held from 1 to 6 p.m. May 19 at 7315 S.E. Sherrett St. Final disposition will be by cremation; his remains will be scattered in Hawaii. Remembrances may be made to the Oregon Humane Society. Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes is handling the arrangements.

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