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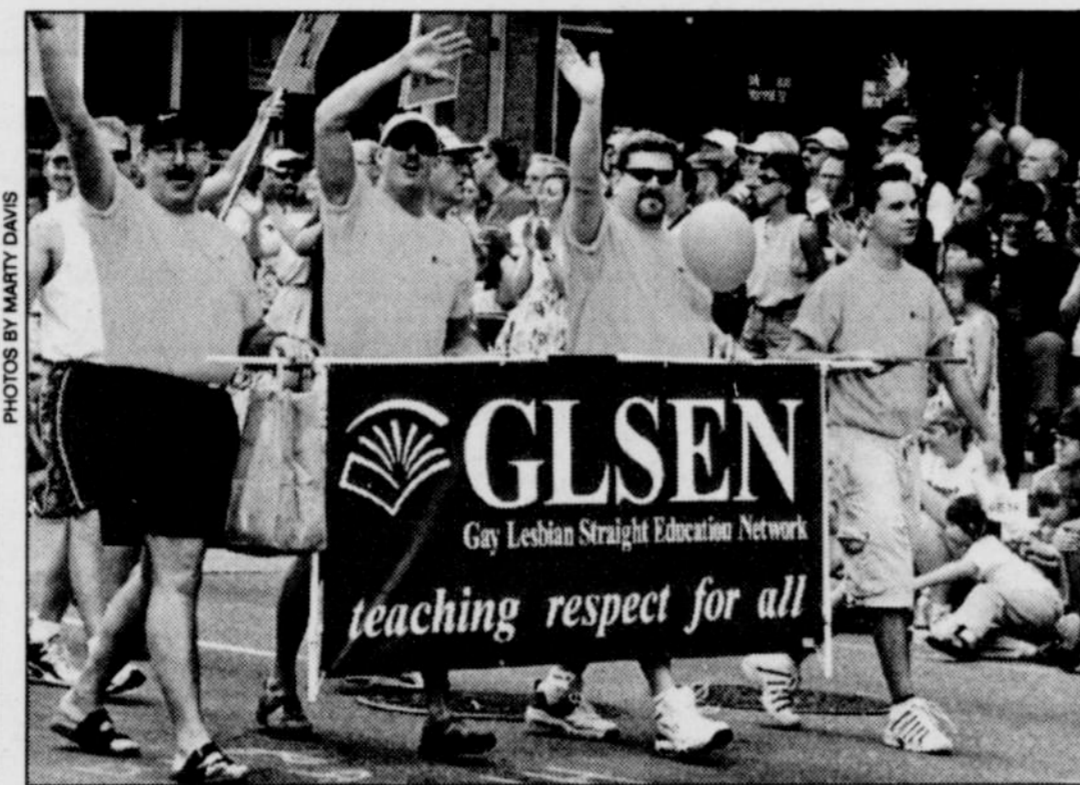
THEY'VE GOT SPIRIT

Pride Northwest honors outstanding individuals and organizations
by Jonathan Kipp

Pride Northwest will honor two individuals and two organizations this year with the Spirit of Pride Awards. Kathy Belge; Jesse Navarro; the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network; and the Friends of People with AIDS Foundation will be recognized during Pride 2001.

FAMILY PRIDE 2001
The annual honors are presented for outstanding contributions within the lesbian, gay, bi and trans community. The awards are based on factors such as visibility, years of voluntary service, leadership and service to the wider community.

Belge is the program manager of Vanguard Youth Services, best known for operating the Sexual Minorities Youth Recreation Center. The Syracuse, N.Y., native has worked with queer youth for most of her adult life. After moving to Portland in 1993 she started working with Phoenix Rising and co-facilitated Q-Krew, a queer youth recreation program. Belge later was hired as a case manager for



PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS
GLSEN works to make schools safer for queer kids

Roots & Branches, a program of Network Behavioral Healthcare focused on queer youth. She helped teens finish school, find jobs, arrange stable housing and pursue personal goals. It was her dream job, she says.

Belge also is responsible for starting a short-term foster care program for queer youth.

Navarro is the personal care director for Outreach Ministry. He has been a caregiver since he was 15, when he cared for an older man suffering from cancer after school and on weekends.

Although Navarro (also known as Carmen Miranda Maria Conchita Montoya de la Salsa Coma la Virgin Hurst) once considered a career as a beautician, he changed his mind after



Kathy Belge

moving to Portland. A job at Central City Concern led him to an AIDS hospice and later to Outreach Ministry, where he has worked since 1988.

Navarro also finds time to do volunteer work. Esther's Pantry, People Living with AIDS Foundation, Our House and Cascade AIDS Project are but a few of the organizations that have benefited from his hours of service.

In each job, whether paid or volunteer, Navarro has worked to help his communities—both the Hispanic gay community and the gay community at large. "I hope and pray that someday people will put as much effort into the welfare of family, friends and neighbors as they do for sports, entertainment and careers," he said.

GLSSEN works to ensure each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

The group has been active in Portland for five years. In 2000 it focused its

activities on the No on 9 Campaign, even hiring a full-time staff member to work on the effort.

GLSEN educates teachers, students and the public at large about the damaging effects homophobia and heterosexism have on youth and adults. It works to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes in creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

The Friends of People with AIDS Foundation has been helping clients since 1990. The group provides services to those who aren't getting what they need from other resources.

The foundation has few overhead expenses because it utilizes volunteers, has no rent and receives many in-kind donations. The group helps pay for emergency food, clothing, household goods, veterinary pet care and cremations, among many other services.

Last year's Spirit of Pride Award winners were Kristan Aspen, Nerissa Ediza, Kari Kruse, Renee LaChance, Sister Paula Nielsen and Derek Travers V.

The 2001 recipients will be recognized during Pride festivities June 17 at Waterfront Park. Belge and GLSEN will be honored at 2:40 p.m. on the New Stage. Navarro and the Friends of People with AIDS Foundation will receive their awards at 3 p.m. on the Main Stage. **J**

To nominate an individual or group for next year's SPIRIT OF PRIDE AWARDS send e-mail to pridenorthwest@usa.net or write to P.O. Box 6611, Portland, OR 97228.

JONATHAN KIPP is a Just Out staff reporter who can be reached at jonathan@justout.com.

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