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


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**just asking** How do you feel about Nickelodeon's decision to air a special on gay families despite widespread opposition? Do you admire its bravery, or do you think the country simply isn't ready for a children's network to be tackling such a contentious issue?

I admit I am biased because I work with campus discrimination at Southern Oregon University, but I also work with children ages 10 to 15 through the National Youth Sports Program. These kids are all different, in different stages of their education and growth.

They are multicultural, they are from different areas of southern Oregon. Some of them are very polite, some shy, some outgoing, some mischievous.

Almost all of them already deal with sexuality. The girls are presenting themselves in a sexual manner to the boys, who are reciprocating with sexual innuendo.

The argument against having homosexuality discussed is that it is not an issue for children this age. It is.

I hear homophobic remarks out of their mouths. Not just "That's so gay," which is a symptom of homophobia and all too common in schools today, but I hear blatantly discriminatory remarks that intentionally are made with full knowledge of the sexual context of their language.

The kids will make jokes about anal sex between men, and usually it is directed at one boy from another boy who is asserting his dominance. These kids already are dealing with homophobia, and they ought to have information available to them about homosexuality that is not all negative.

DEANNA LEITNER  
Ashland

I think children need to learn about being gay and lesbian as early as possible. The longer we wait, the more time they have to learn hatred.

If we tell them as children that it is not wrong or a sin to be gay, then as teen-agers they will be less likely to pick on other gay students and just be more open about new things. I applaud Nickelodeon for tackling such a controversial topic and am sorry I don't have cable.

TANYA DAVIS  
Portland

Absolute bravo to the network. I now am more interested in Nickelodeon and its

Continued from Page 5

produce Portland Pride. He did leave the board for one year for personal reasons, but it was not in chaos.

He now has returned to Pride Northwest and was responsible for organizing this year's successful Waterfront Park Festival. I am grateful for all his hard work producing this event.

CARMELLA ETTINGER  
Pride Northwest Board President

**A farce to be reckoned with**

TO THE EDITOR:  
Christopher McQuain calls *The Importance of Being Earnest* "some ordinary costume



programming and will note the advertisers who support this venture.

The children are ready; sadly, however, the parents—through old and biased mental scripts—are reinforcing discrimination. Here's hoping the program will open up eyes and dialogue in the home.

JANELL WOOTEN  
Eugene

Nick's special wasn't just about gay families. It was about diversity, differences, acceptance, tolerance, "we are all not the same" and "it's OK to disagree."

Nick should tackle these issues. Kids need to know more than *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

They need to show it in schools across the country. A lesson in acceptance and love for all, no matter what.

EVA HOFFMAN  
Milwaukie

**next issue** What do you think about Ted Kulongoski's decision to return a \$15,000 campaign contribution linked to gay porn? Will it affect your vote in November? Respond at [www.justout.com](http://www.justout.com). (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

drama," but it is an extraordinary farce with characters in costumes whose problems are, to them, dramatic ["A Wilde Mistake," June 7].

He also raps the film's director for being "literal-minded," but Page 450 of the Oxford Concise English Dictionary states, "earnest...intensely serious." So I suggest he take another look at this movie, a brilliant rewrite that fleshes out the characters in the spirit of Oscar Wilde.

I have no idea of Mr. McQuain's résumé, but for us actors (I played the role of Jack) and us directors (I directed this play), he might have missed the point of Wilde: Serious characters concern themselves with trivia. Maybe he could concern himself with contemporary drama, far away from the style of farce.

BOB GEARY  
Portland