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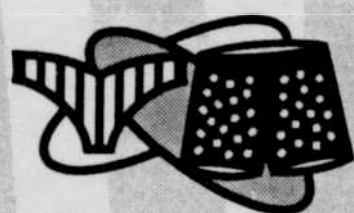
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NORTHWESTnews

HELP WANTED

Creating Change organizers recruiting volunteers
for November conference by Jim Radosta

The Creating Change 2002 Host Committee is seeking 300 volunteers who are interested in helping out during the 15th annual conference, which will be held from Nov. 6 to 10 at the DoubleTree Jantzen Beach in Portland. About 2,500 community builders and leaders from around the country are expected to attend.

The focus of this year's conference is "Building an Anti-Racist Movement: Working for Social & Economic Justice & Freedom." Organizers promise inspiring keynote speakers, useful skills trainings, networking and caucus sessions, cultural events and more than 100 information-packed workshops.

According to host committee co-chairwoman Alissa Haslam, volunteering not only helps strengthen the queer movement, it saves money, too. The conference costs \$200 through Oct. 15, when the rate increases to \$250. The limited income rate no matter when registration occurs is \$100.

For large groups, discounts are available if payment is received all at once: \$1,250 for 11 people and \$2,500 for 22 people. Names must be provided by Oct. 1.

However, folks who commit to four hours of volunteering can attend that day's conference for free. Duties include handing out workshop evaluations, staffing registration tables, greeting out-of-town guests and patrolling the area to make sure rooms are secure.

"One of the great things about volunteering...is that if there is a workshop you really want to go to, you can sign up and volunteer as a room monitor," Haslam says. "It's a first-come, first-serve basis."

The host committee won't know the specifics of who is needed for what job until the weekend before the conference. Everyone must attend a one-hour orientation between noon and 6 p.m. Nov. 3 at the hotel.

"We're very open to spreading out your volunteer time," Haslam says. "Like if you want to do a couple hours in registration in the morning and then do like an hour in the afternoon, we're pretty amenable to that."

The first step for interested volunteers is to submit their name, address, telephone number and e-mail address to the host committee. The information will be compiled in a database and forwarded to Julie Childs of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, who will send out updates every couple of weeks.

Volunteers don't need to wait until November to get involved, either. Haslam told Just Out that people always are encouraged to join the host committee, which now is meeting biweekly instead of monthly.

"Anybody who wants to come and join a subcommittee is more than welcome to," she



Alissa Haslam is one of the busy committee members preparing for the largest annual gay, lesbian, bi and trans activist conference

says. "We are sort of in the thick of things right now, but we still have new people showing up to host committee meetings every month."

One volunteer opportunity is fast approaching: The host committee needs people to help distribute brochures to neighborhood businesses Sept. 21. Organizers plan on hitting Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard and Belmont Street, Northeast Broadway, Northwest 23rd Avenue, the Pearl District and any other appropriate areas.

Haslam, 27, has immersed herself in volunteerism since moving to Portland from Bellingham, Wash., in February. When a friend e-mailed her about Creating Change, she saw a perfect opportunity to get involved in local politics.

"More than anything I started doing it just to keep myself busy and get involved in some of the local organizations in town and as a way of networking and meeting people," Haslam says. "I had never really heard of Creating Change. This was totally new to me, and I was really excited to have the opportunity to help make it happen."

In addition to her Creating Change responsibilities, Haslam works full time at Broadway Books and volun-

teers at Planned Parenthood and Basic Rights Oregon. "When the conference is over, I'll have to find something else to fill that time," she jokes.

So, is volunteering for Creating Change a beneficial experience? Haslam thinks so.

"It's been really nice...to just see how many people out there are willing to give their time and are committed to the cause for the queer movement," she says. "Everybody that I've met through the host committee has been wonderful." □

For more information about the CREATING CHANGE conference, call 503-282-1542 or e-mail creatingchange02@yahoo.com. To register visit the Internet site www.creatingchange.org. The next host committee meeting will be held from 7 to 8 p.m. Oct. 2 in the first floor conference room at 123 N.E. Third Ave. Newcomers should arrive 15 minutes early to catch up on what's been happening so far.

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS