

NORTHWEST newsbriefs

LAKE OSWEGO SCHOOLS REWRITE RULES FOR GSA

Lake Oswego School Board members decided Dec. 8 to revise administrative guidelines that recently prohibited the formation of a queer-friendly club for kids.

When students at Lake Oswego High last year tried to form a Tolerance Club similar to a Gay Straight Alliance, principal Bruce Plato rejected the request because district guidelines mandated that all clubs be associated with school curriculum, such as the French Club or the Math Club. The new policy, which now is consistent with the city's other high school, allows any kind of club provided that it follows district guidelines, has a faculty adviser and receives approval from student body officers.

According to *The Lake Oswego Review*, an unusually large number of adults and students attended the board meeting to show support of the administration's decision, calling it a step forward for tolerance and inclusion. But several parents and former students disagreed.

"I don't think a club for gay and lesbian youth will change very many attitudes," Scott Stevenson said. "I feel very strongly that moral issues and social issues should be erected by families."

Superintendent Bill Korach, however, noted that the board's action wasn't specific to establishing a Gay Straight Alliance, but rather a policy change that would allow clubs of all sorts that were previously barred. "We're being more inclusive about student interests," he said.

School board chairwoman Linda Brown added that the board simply modified the manner in which a club is established. "We're not approving a Gay Straight Alliance. If that's what kids want, they can form one," she said.



Queer youth (seen here at the Night of Noise rally April 9 in Pioneer Courthouse Square) will come together next month for a conference in Southwest Portland

QUEER YOUTH CONFAB PLANNED

Basic Rights Oregon will bring together more than 100 sexual minority kids and their allies next month for the Oregon Queer Youth Conference.

The gathering will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Jan. 31 at Catlin Gabel School, 8825 S.W. Barnes Road, with registration beginning at 9. Lunch will be provided, and a fun evening event is being planned.

The conference will focus on high school students younger than 18, with some workshops rel-

evant to older youth and college students. Adult allies are welcome to attend and give their support through volunteering, leading workshops and learning to work better with youth.

Conference organizers say activists will get together with queer kids and allies from throughout Oregon to talk about what they are doing, what they want to do and how they can get there. The ultimate goal is to make schools safer and communities more accepting by encouraging youth to support each other.

BRO is accepting proposals from people who want to moderate a discussion, give a presentation, perform a skit or lead an art session. Work-

shops can cover any youth-empowering topic: lobbying, networking, juggling, zine making, starting and running a Gay Straight Alliance, how to participate in the Day of Silence and Night of Noise, activism through art, having queer parents, surviving as a queer youth in a rural area.

The proposal deadline is Jan. 9. BRO's youth planning team will review all submissions and notify those selected by Jan. 20.

Conference organizers will assist kids in arranging carpools from their homes to Catlin Gabel. They also will help youth who are coming from out of town find somewhere safe to sleep Friday and Saturday nights.

For more information contact Melissa Shepherd at 503-222-6151 or melissa@basicrights.org. To download registration and workshop leader proposal forms, visit www.basicrights.org. Send tax-deductible contributions to Basic Rights Education Fund, P.O. Box 40625, Portland, OR 97240. Donors should designate on the check that it is for the conference.

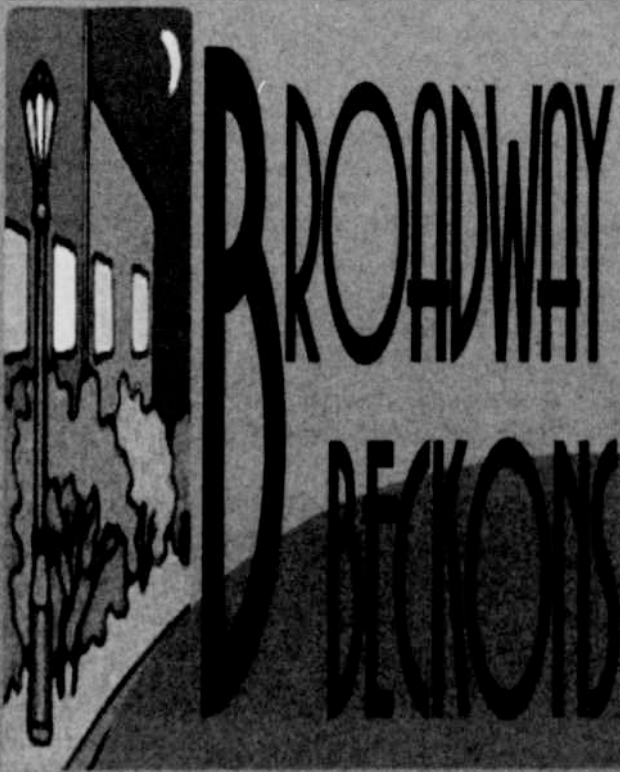
\$150,000 AVAILABLE FOR QUEER STUDENTS

Applications are now available for two scholarships that are open to residents of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska who demonstrate a commitment to human and civil rights for all people.

The programs, which are financed by the Greater Seattle Business Association and the Pride Foundation, focus on building leadership and promoting diversity in the Pacific Northwest

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