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Domestic Partners Qualify
for Family Membership

NORTHWEST newsbriefs

Continued from Page 7

ination in employment, housing and credit. "Kerry was one of only 14 senators to vote against [the Defense of Marriage Act], even when he knew [his vote] was going down in flames."

Hall says Howard Dean, who has received strong support from queers, has "hoodwinked the GLBT community" with a record that is "paltry and null." She added that it was "cowardly" of the former Vermont governor to sign the state's landmark civil union bill four years ago in the privacy of his office rather than in a public ceremony.

OUR HOUSE AWARDED \$1.3 MILLION HUD GRANT

Our House of Portland, a residential care facility for people living with AIDS, has been awarded a \$1.3 million federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of AIDS Housing. It was one of only seven organizations nationally to receive competitive funding this year.

"We feel very fortunate," development director Joe Jefferson told *Just Out*. "This grant legitimizes for us what has been a two-year process of assessing the current housing and service needs of people living with AIDS."

Pam Negri, HUD public affairs officer, said: "Their program recognizes the need to provide supportive services to help persons living with HIV/AIDS continue to live independently as well as providing facility-based housing for those needing on-site sub-acute care. Our House presented a solid application, which met all the criteria for the grant—a demonstrated need with a plan to address that need, leverage other resources and demonstrate results."

The money will be used to launch the organization's Neighborhood Housing and Care Program, which will add 25 new units of affordable housing—with on-site direct care—to the city's housing inventory in the next three years. Additionally, the funds will be used to renovate and expand the 45-year-old Our House facility, which provides 24-hour nursing for people living with advanced AIDS.

Jefferson said Our House had recently identified a gap in housing and health services for people living with AIDS who could live independently but also need active health management care. "We found that one out of three patients discharged from Our House would return because of a lack of appropriate care. [The new program] will fill this need by weaving together stable housing and health services."

Jefferson stressed that the HUD grant will fund only expanded Our House services, while state contract and private contributions will continue to pay for existing services. Our House will soon launch a major campaign to raise an additional \$2 million needed for the Neighborhood Housing and Care Program. It hopes to break ground for the affordable housing units in approximately one year.

For more information contact Joe Jefferson at 503-234-0175 or jjefferson@ourhouseofportland.com.

NATIONAL YOUTH HIV/AIDS CONFAB COMES TO PORTLAND

The 11th annual Ryan White National Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS will be held Feb. 13 to 16 at the Portland Hilton.

Keynote speakers include Hydeia Broadbent (12:30 to 2 p.m. Feb. 14) and U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith (10 to 11:30 a.m. Feb. 16). Broadbent, 19, was born with HIV and has been featured on *Oprah*, *Good Morning America*, *Today* and *20/20*. Smith, R-Ore., is an original co-sponsor of the

Early Treatment of HIV Act, which would allow states to extend Medicaid benefits to those who are living with HIV but do not have an AIDS diagnosis.

"This conference is the single most important gathering in the nation for youth affected by HIV, youth working toward prevention and our allies," said conference co-chairman Sean Cox, executive director of the Portland-based nonprofit For Us Northwest, which serves children affected by HIV/AIDS. "I stepped up to be a co-chair because this conference was integral to the formation of For Us Northwest. It will serve as a similar catalyst for other youth in the audience...we're looking forward to sharing our knowledge."

With more than half of 40,000 U.S. HIV infections each year occurring in people younger than 25, the conference provides a way for youth "to be leaders and to show that you can still live powerfully with the virus," co-chairwoman Amanda Schnell says. Peer-led workshops and interactive breakout sessions will provide the anticipated 600-plus attendees with an opportunity to identify and share the most effective and timely resources in the fight against HIV among young people.

"There will be an emphasis on action this year," Schnell told *Just Out*. She said a youth-driven "activism room" will be set up to give conferencegoers immediate actions to take, such as writing letters to members of Congress.

Registration costs for the weekend are \$350. For more information call 202-898-0414 or visit www.runyc.org.



Amanda Schnell says the Ryan White National Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS will emphasize action

QUEER YOUTH FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

About 150 queers and allies came together for the Oregon Queer Youth Conference on Jan. 31 at Catlin Gabel School.

The event drew kids from towns throughout the state, including Medford, The Dalles, Philomath, Corvallis, Springfield, Eugene and Phoenix. Workshops covered topics such as "Talking with Bigots," "New Labels, No Labels: Why Isn't LGBT Enough?" and "Mango! Tango! Breaking the Social Taboos of Contact Through Dance."

"A lot of the youth who came had never been in a room with 150 queer and queer-positive people," conference organizer Melissa Shepherd told *Just Out*. "I heard that from quite a few people. It's just a mind-blowing experience when you're 16 to walk into the room. That in itself made it worthwhile."

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS