



PHOTO BY JIM RAPOSSIA

Day of Silence organizers Leanne Neifert and Adam Okoye share strategy with other young queers Jan. 31

Youth also shared ideas with each other in preparation for the ninth annual Day of Silence, when students across the nation don't speak for an entire school day to draw attention to the discrimination and harassment faced by queers. This year's protest will be held April 21.

Day of Silence organizer Leanne Neifert of Kent, Wash., suggested that Gay Straight Alliances join forces with other progressive clubs in order to boost participation. "Don't assume that a club is going to be an ally or an enemy...until you talk to them," she said.

The conference was planned by Basic Rights Oregon's Youth Advisory Committee, which will hold its next meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. Feb. 15 in Suite 610 at 310 S.W. Fourth Ave. It is seeking speakers and performers for the Night of Noise, a rally that will follow the Day of Silence.

The next big event for queer kids is the Tainted Love Winter Formal, which will be held from 8 to 11 p.m. Feb. 13 at Mount Hood Masonic Lodge, 527 S.E. 43rd Ave. The soiree, sponsored by the Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center, will feature a rock band, a disc jockey, a giant game of Twister and free HIV testing.

For more information about the Day of Silence, e-mail Adam Okoye at adam@dayofsilence.org. For more information about the Youth Advisory Committee, call Melissa Shepherd at 503-222-6151. For more information about Tainted Love, call Jessamyn Thompson-Jacobs or R.E. Szego at 503-872-9664.

PORTLAND COMMUNITY CENTER FUND LAUNCHES NEXT PHASE

The LGBTQ Community Center Fund will hold a public forum at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 12 in the Multnomah Building boardroom, 501 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd., to discuss how a facility could help queer organizations in Portland.

"We are restarting the community forums we did last year," fund board co-chairman David Martinez told *Just Out*. "We want to get as much involvement as we can and keep people engaged in the feasibility process."

A preliminary questionnaire has been drafted asking organizations how they think a community center can help their missions and constituencies. Other topics covered include collocated and offering services at a center. The board intends to solicit input from the nearly 200 organizations in the region that address queer issues.

"Each phase of the feasibility study is crucial," board co-chairwoman Gwenn Baldwin said. "There are many examples of wonderful queer community centers around country. There are also many examples of centers that

don't exist or no longer exist because of inadequate planning."

The fund began its efforts last summer with a communitywide survey of queers in the Portland area. Baldwin says the results revealed that "the community was very clear about its priorities and how important a community center could be to meeting our needs."

The fund also received status from the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization and collected pledges and commitments of about \$17,000 from individuals, corporations and the city of Portland.

"We are engaged in a thoughtful and strategic process," Martinez said. "It's likely that people would like something visible to appear faster, but our goal is to have a sustainable, productive and effective center that will be supported by community. For us to get there, these are the steps we need to take."

Baldwin added: "We believe that Portland deserves the very best center possible for our community. That means it has to be geared specifically to our community and all the volunteers and supporters that make a community center possible."

For more information visit www.outwithit2003.com.

COMMUNITY CENTER MIGHT CLOSE IN APRIL

Oregon's only queer community center might close April 30 if it can't raise enough money to keep its doors open for another fiscal year. The Ashland-based Lambda Community Center Association board made the difficult decision at a daylong planning retreat Jan. 24.

At its zenith, the Abdill-Ellis Lambda Community Center had more than 1,000 members and an annual budget that exceeded \$100,000. Today, total paid membership has fallen below 60, and financial woes forced the facility to move into a church basement. The center is named in honor of lesbian activists Michelle Abdill and Roxanne Ellis, a Medford couple who were shot to death in 1995.

Board members formulated a plan of action to make the center self-supporting:

- By the end of April, the center must raise \$10,500—the amount that is needed to maintain services at its most basic level for one fiscal year. All money will be returned to donors if this goal is not met.
- Volunteers must come forward to fill vacancies on the board and to help in committee work, mailings, projects and events.
- The sexual minorities community must make permanent commitments to sustain the center.

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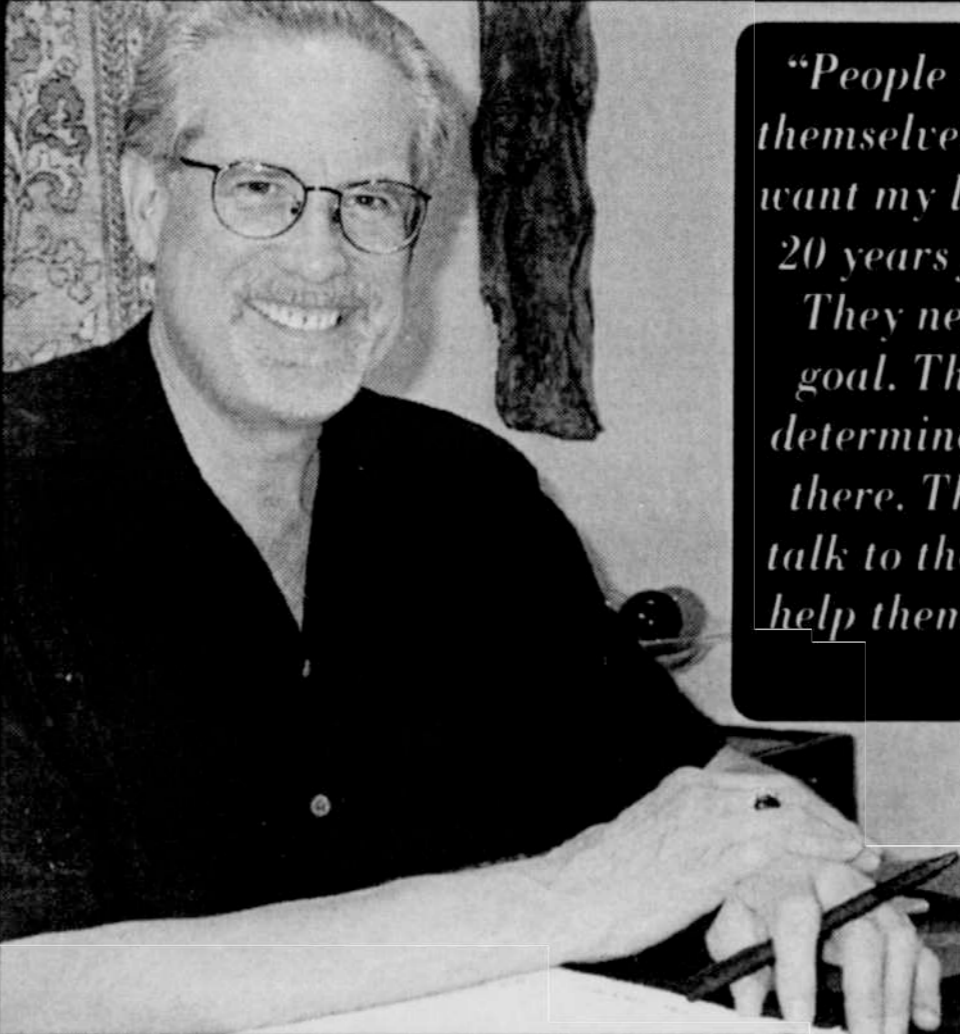
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