

No brain, no gain

Just Out Scholarship Fund is up and running

Good intentions can be slow in coming to fruition. When I purchased *Just Out* six-plus year ago, one of my goals was to establish a scholarship fund that would annually provide financial assistance to selected college-bound members of our community. Setting aside and budgeting money for these scholarships turned out to be more difficult than I had planned, and the fund has been languishing in the coffers of Equity Foundation for several years. Now, finally, thanks to a generous donation from a "Friend of *Just Out*," I am pleased to be able to announce that the *Just Out* Scholarship Fund is up and running and accepting applications.

I have created this scholarship fund as a means of encouraging students, including adults returning to school, who are gay, lesbian, bi or trans, or the children of thus-identified parents, to pursue their education at the post-secondary level. For this first award cycle, *Just Out* will be awarding \$5,000 in funds. I'm not setting any parameters on how many people will get how much money per award. These decisions will be made when the review committee has all the applications in hand and we're able to assess the candidates. There might be five awards of \$1,000 each, or there might be one simply overwhelming candidate with a story so powerful that he or she is awarded the complete sum.

A few of the qualifiers for these scholarships set us apart from other programs geared toward the sexual minorities community.

First, I am not limiting applicants to those residing in the Portland area. You do, however, need to be a resident of Oregon or Southwest Washington (Clark, Cowlitz or Skamania counties). My hope is that we'll receive applications from beyond the Portland metro area. Special consideration will be given to applicants from rural areas. I admit I'm projecting my own feelings, and memories, into this process, but the notion of helping free a sexual minority youth from the confines of Harney County pleases me greatly.

Secondly, these scholarships will not be limited to recent high school graduates. Each of us is on a life journey that takes us on different paths—and for some the path meanders a bit before becoming focused on an ultimate destination. If you're 46 years old and recently confident that you're being called to nursing school, then I want to hear from you, too. Your needs and your potential contributions are no less than those of someone younger and on a more traditional career path. I am myself a lifelong wanderer. I respect the complexities of the journey.

Finally, this fund acknowledges that not all are called to a career of academics. There is honor and integrity in all work, and as such we encourage students bound for trade and technical school to apply for funding, too.

To review all the criteria for the scholarships and download the application form, please visit www.equityfoundation.org. Applications must be completed and returned to Equity Foundation by Aug. 1. *Just Out* will notify recipients of the award by early September. Our readers will be introduced to the award winners in the November anniversary issue of *Just Out*.

June is Pride Month, and nothing brings me more pride than the notion of broadening the mission of *Just Out* and furthering the positive impact that we have on the lives of our gay, lesbian, bi and trans readers. Please apply soon.

When I made the decision to publish the May 6 article questioning the effectiveness of Love Makes a Family, I knew there'd be a backlash of anger, confusion and concern from the community. I anticipated a flood of mail and calls and God only knows what else.

We received instead a mere trickle of letters coupled with a few boorish examples of churlish bad behavior, including disruption of church activities and childish mocking of the name of the writer of the article.

I find it ironic that *Just Out* is accused of stifling dissent and difference of opinion at the same time we're being told not to promote dissent and difference of opinion. I was called to task for "airing our dirty laundry in public," a weary excuse for not facing problems head-on. It's June, it's Gay Pride, and it's time to take responsibility and accountability for the imperfection that exists within our little corner of the world—just as it exists everywhere else.

Our community has shortcomings. We have problems that need solving. We'll never make progress by hiding from the fact that we face issues of domestic violence, alcoholism, obesity, smoking, homelessness among our youth and myriad social and political travails. *Just Out* does not exist simply to provide book reviews and pretend that *Will & Grace* is a good television show. If you want dissent and you want difference of opinion, then expect to find it here. If you want a "pinkwash" of the ills that face us, you'll need to look elsewhere. This is our work, this is our mission, this is our gay pride. ☐

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PUBLISHER & MANAGING EDITOR

Marty Davis

NEWS EDITOR

Sarah Dougher

ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

Jim Radosta

STAFF WRITER

Jaymee R. Cuti

ART DIRECTOR

Bonnie Barrett

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Katy Maehl

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Larry Lewis

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

Ashley Austin, Kari Tate, Cshea Walker

CONTRIBUTORS

Yvonne P. Behrens, Stephen Blair, Meryl Cohn, Jodi Darby, Timothy Krause, Karen Kudej, Christopher McQuain, Gary Morris, Jenny Nguyen, Rebecca Ragain, Theresa "Darklady" Reed, Bob Roehr, Aaron Scott, Floyd Sklaver, Rex Wockner

DISTRIBUTION

Kristine Ashton, Allison Benn, Lisa Benson, Pat Kilmer-Cramer

REFLECTIONS



Celebrity judges and Salon Q guests cheer on Nathan Smith of Hobo's in the Absolut Vodka 25th Anniversary Bartenders Contest on May 31 at Aura.

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