

# outstanding Empowering Youth

**T**he supervisor of the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center began as a volunteer 10 years ago. She reflects on her high hopes for the center and high esteem of the youth it serves.

**My name is** Zan Gibbs.

**I am known as** the pillar of SMYRC. People say, "Zan will always be here" or "She's a rock," probably because I'm the only one still here since the beginning.

**My cause is** empowering queer and trans youth to be leaders and activists. When I got to Portland and started meeting a lot of queer and trans youth, it was so clear that they were organized and active but needed a space where they could be respected and supported and hang out with each other after school in a drug- and alcohol-free environment.

**I am 31 years old. I feel like** I'll always be inspired by the youth movement—you can be invested in youth at any age.

**My childhood ambition was** to live in the Amazon rain forest. I just read in the latest *National Geographic* a huge article about the state of the rain forest, and now I have to say I'm slightly reinvested in that goal.

**My first same-sex crush was on** Winona Ryder...*Heathers*, I love it.

**My proudest moment was** signing up for the Ironman triathlon. Much of why I did that was about overcoming my asthma. I couldn't run half a block when I started training. It was a lot of hard work. It took me three years to run three miles.

**My biggest challenge is** completing the Ironman triathlon. It's also challenging to watch how the world's wealth is distributed and knowing SMYRC could do so much more if we had the resources.

**A perfect day in Portland would be spent** in the sun, riding my bike. And winning the lottery.

**My vice is** exercise, my bike and vegetarian food. Since I don't smoke, drink, do drugs or sugar at all, that's my mental health release.

**My inspiration is** the youth I see every day—hearing their success stories, watching them grow up, seeing them face



MARTY DAVIS

Known as "a rock," Zan Gibbs is a SMYRC mainstay.

insurmountable challenges and watching them empower each other. Seeing them performing drag to Britney Spears pretty much rules.

**The last queer event I participated in** was watching queer comedian Peterson Toscano perform at SMYRC. I learned a new word—heteroflexible—as part of my gAy,B,Cs.

**The last philanthropic event I participated in** was acquiring a nonprofit organization. I now have a second, unpaid job to rebuild Students Run Portland, which trains at-risk youth to run the marathon.

**My highest hope for the cause is** that SMYRC will become fully funded and sustainable and that we will own our own building. A consistent source of money would allow us to open the drop-in center five nights a week. 10

—Malka Geffen

# just asking

*Just Out* asked members of Shabbatluck, a queer Jewish social group, "What was your most memorable Valentine's Day?"



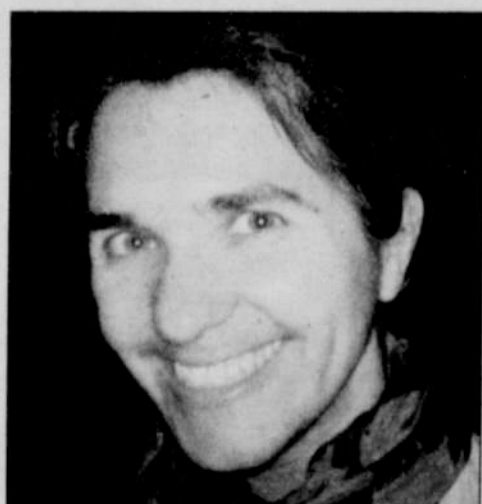
**MARCY FEIBELMAN**  
National College of Natural Medicine Student

"I was a senior in high school and in my first relationship. My boyfriend sent me a dozen roses with a card that said, 'Love, John.' My mom took pictures of me smelling them."



**ELIZA GREENWOOD**  
Documentary Filmmaker

"What I remember is my great aunt sending us a cheesy card with a \$2 bill in it. My worst Valentine's Day was when she stopped."



**KIM TOEVS**  
Queer Hipster

"I remember a Valentine's Day when my parents made construction paper cards with doors that opened to little critters and Valentine's sayings. My dad was a physicist, so that was really sweet."



**PERCY WISE**  
Trans Law Student

"I remember when I was in first grade, writing a Valentine to a kid named Scott but spelling it Scoot.....and being made fun of."

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