

northwest

Something's Gotta Give

Equity Foundation director had to reprioritize

by Teresa Coates

Linda Traeger is mighty busy these days. When the executive director of Equity Foundation took on the responsibility of caring for her rapidly aging parents, she did not anticipate giving up her day job. But between the demands of the nonprofit granting organization and the needs of her parents at this critical time, something had to give.

Traeger will be handing over the title of executive director at the end of the month and spending all of her time focused on helping her parents.

After four years in her position at Equity, Traeger has left an indelible mark. When she first joined the organization in 2003, she came into a group that, she says, "had a good foundation" and—with the help of committee members, donors, volunteers and the other employees—was able to bring some previous ideas and projects to fruition. Equity also received a grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust, which allowed it to increase its presence statewide and the size of its staff.

During Traeger's tenure, the number of scholarships available has nearly doubled, with money being granted to people who are not only supported financially but, as she explains, emotionally, knowing that the community is behind them, wishing them success as students and as members of a minority.

Traeger says she is proud of her time at Equity and the various improvements that have been made, including the acquisition of more long-term donations through trusts and the inclusion of more than 20 workplace-giving campaigns. These provide a stable influx of money, giving Equity the ability to respond to community needs, an important aspect for Traeger.

Giving to and supporting the queer community has been important to Traeger for her entire adult life. Her involvement in advocacy and the fight for equal rights began in Chicago, where she spent most of her life. She worked with the Illinois state attorney for the Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Issues and later worked for Chicago Connections as its executive director.

While she enjoyed living and working in Chicago, she and Dorrie Clark, her partner of nearly 30 years, had dreamed of living in the Northwest for years. In the late 1990s they got as close as San Francisco, where they lived for several years before returning to Chicago.

Not long after their move, Traeger's aunt, who

was then living in Oregon, became critically ill, so she and Clark moved again, this time to care for her aunt in her last days, a situation the two are now reliving with Traeger's parents.

Traeger says the time and emotional commitment of caring for her parents came as a surprise. She had no intention of resigning from Equity, but her responsibility was impinging on her work at the foundation, and she knew that family came first. Traeger contends that she can continue her work in the future but that her parents require her now.



Linda Traeger has resigned from Equity Foundation after four years of service.

At the end of the month, Traeger will hand over her title as executive director and take on the role of full-time caregiver. It isn't the end of her involvement with the queer community, though. Her focus will be at home, she says, but Equity "reflects my lifestyle and what I believe in." She won't be far from the fight.

Traeger is sure Equity will continue to improve without her; there are many programs she's started that will continue, including spreading the foundation's grant-making work throughout the state, working with sexual minority youth in the juvenile justice system and building more allies and donors.

A search committee is looking to hire a new executive director as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Equity is relocating Nov. 1 to the eighth floor of 620 S.W. Fifth Ave., a building also inhabited by Cascade AIDS Project. 10

Portland freelance writer TERESA COATES spends her days writing essays, coding Web pages and dreaming of Vietnam.

H. DWAYNE DAVIS, Broker**REALTY TRUST**
GROUP

AS YOUR AGENT I WILL:

- Listen to you
- Communicate throughout the process
- Be present through closing and beyond

Cell 503/319-4057

Office 503/294-1101

Email hddavis@realtytrust.com

www.realtytrust.com/hdwaynedavis



Let's talk about your needs and create a strategy for your future.

under **U** 4men
designer underwear & swimwear
507 sw broadway
NOW OPEN AT
bridgeport village
WWW.UNDERU4MEN.COM

LIVE FASHION MODELS

UNDERWEAR
"o" the month
Portland Designer
BAMBOO FABRIC

PULSE
**Finley-Sunset Hills
Memorial Park and Mortuary**

Private Family Estates, Custom Funerals and Cremations



6801 S.W. Sunset Highway
Portland, Oregon 97225

(503) 292-6654 ofc
(503) 314-0348 cell
(503) 292-9493 fax
mspiegel@stei.com

Michael Spiegel
Family Service Coordinator

Bouffant Salon

\$10 OFF
Haircuts

\$20 OFF
Haircolor

\$10 OFF
Waxing

\$50
Mani Pedi
Combo

B**503.224.4099**

33 NW 9TH AVENUE • SECOND FLOOR • PORTLAND

Hair • Nails • Waxing • Facials