



**Barbara McCullough-Jones** at the DADT Repeal Celebration and Remembrance event at Q Center Sept. 20

from what we do. One of the ways we're going to look at collaborating with them is [that] we have the Kendall Clawson Library here, which has a lot of resources. Our library committee is going to go through and look at what we have that might be duplicate copies, or that might be better suited for that age group, or for an academic setting, and we'll help build a library extension out of Q Center. That's one of the ways we're looking at developing partnerships, to do this as a pilot project at that campus and then stretch that further.

**JO:** What are your thoughts on the debate about extending the invitation to talk with Mars Hill Church? What do you say to those people who feel betrayed that there's a dialogue at all?

**BM-J:** There's such a variety of experiences and opinions when it comes to issues of LGBT community and the faith community. There's a whole spectrum of where people fall on that line. Probably the two most vocal, emerging segments of our community have been those who ask, "What the hell are you even doing talking to these people? They're never gonna change their mind." The other part of our community that has come forward has been LGBT people in the faith community who've said, "This is an olive branch; this is the dialogue we should be having." Now, maybe we're not going to change their mind because of the way they interpret the doctrine they follow. That's the basis of who they are. But, if we as people who live in the same community can find some common ground, won't that lead us to more peaceful coexistence? In my view, the answer is yes.

I think people who have a lot of hurt and anger and pain around issues of faith—which are completely understandable, totally justifiable—they ought to have an outlet to express that as well. And Mars Hill needs to hear that.

**JO:** What did you take away from that [September 7] meeting, and what do you hope to take away from future discussions with Mars Hill?

**BM-J:** My big takeaway was here's this very evangelical person [the Rev. Tim Smith]

"One of the consistent things I heard was that they would like to see Q Center provide more leadership in terms of not just waiting for folks to come here and organize, but helping put out some of those ideas and some of those ways that our community and our allies can organize and use Q Center as that hub."

**-BARBARA McCULLOUGH-JONES**

who had agreed to come and meet with us here. First of all, I didn't think they would. I didn't think they'd meet, and I didn't think they'd come *here*. I thought when they came, they'd fold their arms, sit there and still act like, "I think you're the most disgusting thing on the planet." My big takeaway was none of that happened. So there is hope; there's hope for dialogue and for moving people's hearts and minds. That, to me, was the proof that we did the right thing.

**JO:** What would you say are the essential goals for Q Center in 2012?

**BM-J:** Financial stability. We're still on very rocky times as a country. We just need to be really smart about the way we do business, and how we grow or how we stabilize during that time. Second to that is to continue to find ways to reach out and be more inclusive of our community and our allies in the way that Q Center does business, and what our place is in the community. Third is finding more ways to develop allied relationships, and focus on getting outside of ourselves. Maybe a little less preaching to the choir and more finding more members of the choir [laughs].

We have an infrastructure. We need to figure out how to support it and how to make it stronger. Leadership development is high on our agenda—to get people in the room to have these tough conversations like Mars Hill. It's time. ☐

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