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munity,” Hastings says. “I was looking for some ways to meet some people, and the band showed up early on my radar. I started hanging out with them, and they were just incredibly warm and gracious. They were really glad to have me and I was really glad to be with them.”

“The swing band is very small, so it’s much more like family,” he says. “They’ve been so welcoming to me and such an encouragement.”

While the decision to come out was difficult, Hastings says, it was the best decision he ever made. He says the feeling he has now is a feeling of lightness. He compares it to a beach ball being submerged beneath the water and being released to float to the surface.

“I love being able to be me,” he says. “I love being able to be who I am. I had a friend, who said ‘I knew straight Dave the liar, and now I know gay Dave the truth teller – and he’s a lot more fun to be around.’”

To Hastings, being in the band is not about being gay (the band is not exclusively for gays and lesbians) but is about being able to do music with people who understand who he is.

“There’s a freedom to be honest with each other that I really enjoy,” he says. “We enjoy making music together, and we have a lot of fun with that.”

Today, when Hastings sits at his piano and looks out his window to Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard, the view reminds him of his recent journey.

“The view out my window is always entertaining,” he says. “There’s so much light here in my studio space, so many windows. It’s a good metaphor for me being out of the closet and living in the light, how my life has changed in the past year.”

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