



## HOW GAY WILL OUR NEXT MAYOR BE?

He won't. Jefferson Smith and Charlie Hales are both, well ... mainstream for human sexuality. This gives Portland's LGBT community our first chance to evaluate mayoral candidates in light of the new reality that — thanks to Mayor Sam Adams — being LGBT has moved towards the mainstream for Portland politics.

It's no news that both Hales and Smith value and respect the LGBT community, not simply because of the tide of history, but from personal relationships and values. How each reached this point provides an interesting story. Each of them was very happy to reach out to Portland's LGBT voters through *Just Out* to share how they became LGBT allies and their views on gender identity, queer homeless youth, HIV/AIDS, Chick-fil-A, and more.

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# JEFFERSON SMITH

*An interview with Portland mayoral candidate Jefferson Smith.*

**Just Out:** Do you remember how you first learned that some people fall in love with people of their same gender?

**Jefferson Smith:** Yeah, I do. It became personal for me with two different relationships. One was my older brother, who came out when I was in high school. And the other was one of my childhood best friends, who came out about the same time. I saw through their eyes, to some degree, what they were going through. And this was in the late 80's, not the 90's or 00's. Fortunately, they have loving families.

**JO:** There are estimates that as many as 40% of homeless youth are LGBT. What role does the City of Portland play in working with this population?

**JS:** A pretty important one. I think that there will be ongoing discussions with the city and county to make sure that we're manifesting our values, and doing the best that we can, in a nationally near-tragic context.

There is an additional layer of tragedy and opportunity with the significant reported overlap between homeless youth and youth that are LGBT. There is a chance to bring a meaningful portion of the city together around what being a compassionate city means. How do we manifest our values around that?

Having this conversation at Outside In, and understanding how these stories are usually linked to a family reaction to coming out ... and maybe even a community reaction ... this amplifies the reality that our city has a duty to serve our people, but also to stand for something, to be a place that is a little more loving, a little more tolerant, that is a little more on the front edge of an arc of history that is bending towards justice. And, so it means we have to find the best services there are.

**JO:** Do you see any specific opportunities to help homeless LGBT youth?

**JS:** I am pretty inspired by efforts around youth employment and around summer enrichment programs, which can engage people from all walks to give better opportunities and better tools; doing that can help bridge the gap of some existing services.

With homelessness in general I think there is a need to look at the best wrap-around services, helping people — yes, with housing — yes, with employment — and yes, with drug and alcohol treatment. If we do only one of those things, very often we're doing none of them. But, if we give more comprehensive service we do a better job not only of helping a whole person, but helping a person at all. Both the county and the city are moving in that direction.

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