

# The defense of LGBTQ rights falls on all of us

It's not that long ago that the LGBTQ community was subjected to sanctioned discrimination and violence.

It's been only 12 years since the first state in the union, Massachusetts, legalized gay marriage, defying the so-called Defense of Marriage Act that denied federal recognition of marriage equality.

## EDITORIAL

It's only been the past decade that real strides have been made on health care for same-sex partners and in repealing the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law, allowing openly gay individuals to serve in the military. In 2009, Congress passed the Matthew Shepherd Act, making crimes motivated by a person's gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability a designated hate crime. Matthew Shepherd, a gay teenager, was tortured and murdered in Wyoming in 1998.

Across the country, the LGBTQ community has held its ground against the hate – shedding stereotypes and fostering greater understanding along the way. Of course, it remains a work in progress. Which makes the resurgence of bigotry and discriminatory rhetoric within the incoming presidential administration not only disheartening, but a serious threat.

The LGBTQ community, and everyone in solidarity, is legitimately concerned about safety

and their civil rights. Even beyond actual changes to the laws, the election has radicalized the haters with some self-induced mandate.

In this edition, we report on the efforts of transgender advocates to help people update their identification documents before the new administration takes control. It's not just a housekeeping measure: Proper identification on documents is key to essential services, such as obtaining a driver's license, health care and Social Security benefits, not to mention personal dignity and integrity.

It's easy in our city to take these rights and liberties for granted. They seem proper, normal and inalienable, but it will take work to keep them that way.

In these chaotic times, we need to reaffirm that we are not going to tolerate violence of any kind against people because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. We shall reaffirm that commitment across all communities, in all our glorious diversity.

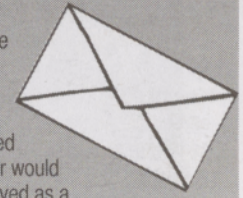
We have to stand together and call hate out when we see it. We have to remind ourselves that political will is driven by social power. And we need to celebrate real justice when we see it.

In the past, we have stood against the forces of bigotry and homophobia and won.

And, if called upon, we will do it again.

### Write in

If you would like to have something that you've written published in our pages, or would like to get involved as a member of our reporting staff, contact Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl at 503-228-5657, joanne@streetroots.org. We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



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# Your support keeps Street Roots going strong

We're asking readers to support Street Roots this holiday season. Supporting Street Roots has never been more important.

At the heart of Street Roots are the more than 600 people that experience homelessness and poverty that the organization serves each year through the sales of the newspaper.

Relationships are built between readers, Portland businesses and people on the

street. When you support Street Roots with the purchase of a newspaper, you are helping give someone a hand up. You are saying "I believe in humanity, one dollar and conversation at a time.

It's more than that. Street Roots provides Portlanders with some of the best local investigative news in the community. We connect people through conversations that are highlighted in the

newspaper, including our in-depth interviews, street poetry and commentaries.

Street Roots plays an important role for hundreds of people. We help prevent individuals and families from experiencing homelessness. We also give people on the streets the stability to access housing – sometimes for the first time in years. It takes a village, literally.

Street Roots also fully understands the role we play locally in providing readers with quality journalism and the voices of the people.

Street Roots has always stayed true to our mission of giving people an income, while also building upon the cornerstones of our coverage – the environment, housing and homelessness, immigrants and refugees, arts and culture, the freedom of the press, to name a few. We will continue to do that with your support.

For all of you who continue to support Street Roots, we can't thank you enough. It's your support that helps keep us strong. For readers that have never given a contribution to Street Roots, we ask for your support, especially in these troubling times.

Street Roots believes in the power of love and humanity. We believe that together, regardless of where you come from or our shared experiences, that we can change the world. We believe that regardless of who is president or which direction our country is headed, we will have to remain steadfast in building a more just world.

You can invest in Street Roots by giving a gift today at www.streetroots.org, or by sending a check to Street Roots, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209. You can also give a gift this year through the Willamette Week Give/Guide (www.giveguide.org).

Your donations go directly to support the vendors and the newspaper. We are a small train that carries a heavy load in the community, and it's your support that will help us climb to new mountaintops. Your support means the world. Join us. Thank you!

## DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer



Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at israel@streetroots.org or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.



PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

Street Roots vendors Ben Eiland, and Dominick and Julie Hart.