Kindness

by Aileen McPherson

Kindness – the act of appreciating,
caring, and loving others.
The opening of a door for another,
sharing a meal with one less fortunate,
and the gift of selflessness to all.

I admire no one individual, but many.
From the homeless on the street,
to the billionaire on the hill,
all have and will bring change
and the renewal of kindness to our world.
Kindness is healing words,
helping hands, open minds
and compassionate hearts.

Remember to openly practice
random acts of kindness
and senseless acts of beauty
for a better world.

Vendors give back with holiday zine

Street Roots vendors spent the summer and fall writing and creating art for "The Gift of Giving," our holiday zine. On Thursday, Dec. 1, Street Roots hosted a release party at the Erickson Gallery to celebrate the vendors' hard work. The event coincided with a First Thursday exhibit featuring the photography of Joseph Glode.

Vendors Marlon Crump, John Brown, Phoebe Oaks and Lori Lematta read their published pieces during the party. Sizzle Pie donated pizza and salad for the published vendors.

The limited edition zine will be available from vendors for $4 throughout the holiday season while supplies last.

Above, vendor Marlon Crump addresses the audience at the Street Roots zine launch Dec. 1. At right, Phoebe Oaks, whose work appears in the zine and on the cover, reads from the booklet.

PHOTOS BY DAN JONES

Answers to Page 15 Puzzles

3	2	8	6	4	7	1	5	9
6	5	4	3	9	1	2	8	7
1	7	9	8	5	2	6	3	4
9	3	7	4	6	5	8	2	1
5	1	2	7	3	8	9	4	6
8	4	6	2	1	9	5	7	3
7	8	1	9	2	4	3	6	5
2	9	3	5	7	6	4	1	8
4	6	5	1	8	3	7	9	2

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Identity crisis

Transgender advocates ramp up efforts to help people update their documents amid threats to LGBTQ rights from the incoming adminstration

BY AMANDA WALDROUPE
STAFF WRITER

The transgender community has gained more civil liberties during the administration of President Barack Obama than at any other time in history.

Through two executive orders, Obama has prohibited federal agencies and contractors from discriminating against workers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Consequently, transgender people have the right to transition at work, to be called by their chosen name and the pronouns of their choice, to have their employee records updated, to use restrooms and lockers consistent with their gender identity. And they have the right to privacy when it comes to their status as transgender people and their medical information.

PHOTO BY DIEGO DIAZ

Andrea Zekis, policy director at Basic Rights Oregon

The Obama administration has also streamlined the process for changing a person's name or gender on passports and with the Social Security Administration. And the Affordable Care Act bans sex discrimination in health care settings and in insurance plans. Almost every insurance company is now required to offer plans that include transition-related care and health services, which might include hormone therapy and sexual reassignment surgery.

Transgender people and advocacy organizations now worry that transgender people could lose many of those rights in one day – the day Donald Trump takes office as president.

Trump's anti-LGBT rhetoric is virulent, and he has pledged to rescind many of Obama's executive orders on the day he is inaugurated, Jan. 20.

Legal and transgender advocacy organizations have rallied since Election Day to help transgender people change their name and gender on identity documents – especially passports and Social Security cards, which have become easier to change under the Obama administration.

"I think we should be very concerned about (Trump) rolling back the executive orders that Obama signed," said Mat dos Santos, the ACLU of Oregon's legal director.

The ACLU of Oregon, as well as LGBT organizations such as Basic Rights Oregon and the Q Center are now encouraging transgender people to change their identity documents as quickly as possible before Inauguration Day.

Identity documents, including driver's licenses, birth certificates and passports, are an official reflection of a person's identity.

"They say who you are," said Andrea Zekis, Basic Rights Oregon's policy director. "Having documentation that allows them to navigate their lives with as little harm as possible has been important for many transgender people."

"If you've ever lost your wallet, you know how frustrating it is not to have your driver's license or your ID card," dos Santos said. "Folks who are going through the transgender process and who are trying to get on with their life now are suddenly afraid that they will lose their wallet permanently and that the critically important documents, like passports and Social Security cards, could be more difficult to obtain."

We use ID cards, whether it's a driver's license or a passport, all the time and with hardly a second thought. We flash them when buying alcohol, when depositing money at a bank, when being pulled over while driving, or when getting a prescription filled. Applying for jobs, renting or buying a home, opening a bank account, and securing health insurance all require proof of identification. People seeking social services, such as food stamps or Medicaid and retired people who begin receiving their Social Security payments must show ID.

If a transgender person's identity documents do not accurately reflect their name and gender, they could face discrimination and harassment, be barred from receiving benefits such as Social Security or be inadvertently outed as transgender if, for example, a background check undergone during the job application process reveals a different name and gender from the one a transgender person uses.

Inconsistent identity documents raise "problems we aren't talking about regularly," dos Santos said, which is a big reason dos Santos and others are encouraging transgender people to change all of their identity documents at once.

In mid-November, the ACLU of Oregon trained more than 90 attorneys interested in helping transgender people navigate the process. Since then, the ACLU of Oregon has matched lawyers with almost 300 people who want legal assistance. (Hiring a lawyer is not necessary to change name and gender on identity documents, but some people prefer the assistance.) "It's been a monumental effort," dos Santos said.

On Nov. 29 and 30, more than 250 transgender people attended clinics in Portland and Eugene on how to change names and gender markers on identity documents. Jointly organized by the ACLU of Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon and the Q Center, the clinics talked about the process and documentation needed to change every piece of identity documentation. Outside In hosted a Dec. 8 clinic on changing passports.

Attorneys and physicians were present at the clinics to answer people's questions and help them fill out applicable forms.

Dos Santos, Zekis and others said the questions and concerns transgender people expressed during these clinics ran the gamut – whether one document needed to be changed before another, whether one could change only their gender but not their name, whether it was necessary to have a letter from a medical provider stating that the person has undergone hormone therapy or a particular surgery, and so on.

"People not knowing where to start is the biggest thing," said Erica Weggener, Outside In's transgender services coordinator.

Zekis said transgender people already feel wary and deeply anxious about approaching government agencies, courtrooms and bureaucracies. On top of that, many people find the process necessary to change their identity documents convoluted and daunting.

"It's not really centralized," Weggener

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