Winter 2004

Reach Out: the newsletter of Maine Speakout Project (Winter 2004-2005)

Maine Speakout Project

Community Counseling Center

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Being an ally is the process of working to develop individual attitudes, institutions and a culture in which people... feel they matter. This work is motivated by an enlightened self interest to end oppression."

~J. Jay Scott and Vernon Wall

For the LGBT community, Allies are incredibly important and valuable. Speakout has many speakers who identify themselves as allies. They are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, couples and grandparents. While each has come to Speakout for an individual reason, they are united in their need to speak up for their loved one(s). They are united in the belief that LGBT people matter and have value. Often these allies, especially when paired with a gay man, lesbian woman or transgender speaker, are extremely effective. They are able to provide a credible role model to our audience members who want to be supportive but simply do not know how. Mainer are able to identify and relate to another face of the LGBT community through allies.

Allies are most often talked about in terms of being heterosexual. Sisters, brothers and parents are straight allies. I would like to challenge that notion for Speakout volunteers.

Certainly the LGBT community has straight allies, however, we all have opportunities in our institutions and motivations by an enlightened self interest to speak on behalf of our friends and family. That is the goal of the Speakout movement.

This spring, Maine Speakout Project will be selling cookbooks featuring recipes submitted by supporters. Following is a delicious and easy recipe taken from “Out of Our Pantries.”

7-Layer Mexican Dip
submitted by Tom Arvilsals, Warwick, RI

Ingredients
4 oz. cream cheese, softened
4 oz. sour cream
1 tbsp. taco seasoning mix
1 cup salsa
1 cup shredded lettuce
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1/2 cup sliced pitted black olives

Method
Mix cream cheese, sour cream and taco seasoning mix. Spread evenly on bottom of 9 inch pie plate. Layer remaining ingredients over mixture. Refrigerate. Serve with tortilla chips.

Speakout Goals for 2005

As we enter into a new year, Maine Speakout Project (MSOP) is strong, resilient and continues to work for tolerance and respect for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Maine and throughout the nation. We are not alone. We have the support of fair-minded Mainers. We have the support of other LGBT advocacy and education organizations like Equality Maine, Southern Maine Pride and Outright who share in this struggle. While each has its own mission, there is a common purpose. We each place high value on the lives of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies that are a part of the rich and diverse culture of Maine.

Over the last year, we also made strides in working with other social justice organizations. Groups such as Maine Coalition for Peace and Justice, the Maine Civil Liberties Union, Allen Avenue Unitarian Church and the People's Free Space have each reached out to MSOP and showed that others value and respect our community. The importance of allied organizations cannot be overstated. Without their help and outreach, we would not have reached 107 Speakouts in 2004. It is essential that we continue to reach out to new and different groups and build bridges with our powerful message of open and non-divisive communication, face-to-face interaction and honoring people's ability to change.

To this end, the following are some of our goals for 2005:

• To reach out to faith communities of all denominations in order to build connections.
• To offer more opportunities for speaking venues in rural communities.
• To train volunteers for the Everyone Counts in the Workplace program and create more venues for speaking engagements in businesses throughout Maine.
• To hold in-service trainings for all volunteers.

As you read over these goals, please take a moment to consider how you can help us achieve them:

• Can you help to arrange a Speakout at your church, community organization or place of business?
• Can you attend a Speakout as an audience member and show support for the other volunteers?
• Can you attend Walk with the Ones You Love or organize one for your neighborhood?
• Do you have a 1/2 hour, an hour or three hours to volunteer?

Maine Speakout is going strong because of the efforts of our volunteers and supporters. I thank you for your hard work and effort and hope to spend more time with you in 2005.

Pam McCann, Maine Speakout Program Coordinator
**Maine Speakout Project Advisory Committee**

Richard Bilodeau, Co-chair
Bob Carter, Co-chair
Eric Baxter
Elliott Cherry
Leslie Clark Brancato
David Cohan
Laura Gottfried
Tara Healy
Holly Howard
Connie Howe
Natasha Johnson
Lonnie (Lawrence) Leeman
Daniel Pelletier
Everett R. Perlman

**How to Give**

*Contributions can be sent to:*
Maine Speakout Project
340 Forest Avenue
Portland, Maine 04101-2006
Or, use the contribution envelope in this newsletter.

**How to Volunteer**

Help us to get our speakers invited to your club, church, school committee or workplace lunch-and-learn. Get trained to become a speaker. Volunteer to work an event. There is so much you can do to help!

For more information, call Pam McCann at 207.874.1030 or send an email to pmccann@commc. org.

**MSOP Mission**

*The mission of Maine Speakout Project is to create a society that is inclusive and respectful of people of differing sexual and gender orientations by providing opportunities for non-divisive dialogue.*

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**Speakout Volunteer, Jamie Gibson, Honored With Community Service Award**

On Saturday, March 5, 2005, Equality Maine will recognize Maine Speakout Project volunteer Jamie Gibson with a community service award for her outstanding service to Maine's LGBT community. Held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, Equality Maine’s 21st Annual Awards Banquet will honor eight groups and individuals for their efforts in the struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. Equality Maine is proud to celebrate Jamie's leadership, which crosses many organizations. Jamie has been an active speaker with Maine Speakout Project, co-chair of Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church's Diversity and Welcoming Committee, volunteer in Equality Maine's "Equality Knocks" grassroots organizing project and member of the planning committee for the 2005 Transgender Day of Remembrance. Congratulations Jamie!

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**Announcements from Portland Outright**

As of February 1st, the new address of Outright is 999 Forest Avenue. There will be a public Open House on Thursday, February 17th.

More info will be up on the website, www.outright.org, as details are finalized.

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**Special Thanks**

Thanks to the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation! MSOP received a $2,500 grant for statewide volunteer recruitment, training and retention.

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**Hannaford Bros Committed to Diversity in the Workplace by Ruby Parker**

The Hannaford Corporate Diversity Committee invited Speakout to Hannaford Bros last June to be part of a lunch and learn program, called Diversity Diner, to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion issues in the workplace.

Speakout's "Everybody Counts" is aimed at creating a more comfortable and productive workplace for our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered employees. In a relaxed, informal setting Speakout speakers shared their personal stories. The stories evoked many questions and lead to a lively discussion. Honest sharing took place, in part because of the openness of the speakers from Speakout and also because the speakers were not company employees. Several of the Hannaford associates commented that the session was very worthwhile, giving them an appreciation of experiences different from theirs. One of Hannaford's Diversity Committee goals is to offer opportunities to increase awareness, mutual appreciation and create an inclusive workplace. Speakout certainly helped that day.

Hannaford is committed to diversity in the workplace. The "culture thrives on mutual respect, teamwork, and productivity in the workplace among people who are diverse in work background, experience, education, age, gender, race, national origin, physical abilities, religious belief, sexual orientation and other real and perceived differences." (Hannaford's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy)
Speakout Recognizes Day of Remembrance by Joan G.

It was a dark and stormy night, as the old opening line goes. Actually, it was sunny and hot as we cruised up I-95 in Pam's car on the way to do a Speakout at Unity College.

Suddenly, the Mistress of Ambush turned to me and said, "So what do you plan to do for the Transgender Day of Remembrance (DOR) program?" Not wanting to let on that I had no idea of what she was talking about, I knew I had to come up with something clever very quickly. So I said, "I don't know."

Somehow she saw through my brilliant ruse and began to explain what the DOR was. She explained how, each year all across the country and the world, people honored the memories and grieved the loss of those who had been victims of mortal hate crimes simply because they were transgendered. I soon realized that this would not be an easy project to accomplish, but one that was well worth the effort. I resolved to look into the subject in more detail when I got home that evening.

After a slow start and a lot of "backseat driving" on Pam's part, we finally started to form the core of a committee to make this thing happen. There were brainstorming sessions and ideas were flying left and right. Just when we would come to a consensus on a plan someone would come up with a new idea and we were back to square one. The only thing that never wavered was the fact that we were running out of time.

The day Susie Bock from the USM library generously offered a suite of three rooms on the 6th floor as a possible location for our little event was when things started to gel. Now we had a space to work with and its finite dimensions served to limit many of our grandiose schemes and bring us back to earth. From this point forward, though you wouldn't have guessed it if you attended any of our meetings, we were making progress.

What made all the problems and tribulations we had along the way worthwhile was when we went from "Is anybody going to show up?" to "Where are we going to put all these people?" in a matter of 30 minutes. The turnout was tremendous and most gratifying. From that point on the ceremony developed a life of its own and took wing.

All who were involved can be proud of what we accomplished that day. Victims of transgender violence who were struck down for openly living as their true selves were remembered and honored. I won't try to list all the people who were involved with this project in one capacity or another for lack of sufficient space here. I would like to say thank you to each and every one of you though because when it came down to it, you were the ones who made it happen.

Already plans are being discussed for next year's event. This year's success will no doubt allow us to acquire larger facilities, more resources and personnel. Bigger is usually considered better in our society and that is fine just as long as we don't lose sight of why we are doing this. Someday we will all be able to live our lives as only we know they should be - safe from fear and threats of violence. See you next year!
The mission of the Maine Speakout Project is to create a safe and respectful environment for people of different sexual orientations by providing opportunities for non-divisive communication and education.

## Upcoming Events

**February 17th, MSOP Volunteer Speaker Training**
*University of Maine, Orono*

**February 26th, Charlie Howard Benefit Auction and Potluck* Congregational Church, Bangor

**March 5th, MSOP Volunteer Speaker Training**
*Community Counseling Center, Portland*

**March 5th, Equality Maine Awards Banquet**
*Holiday Inn By the Bay, Portland*

**March 19th, MSOP Volunteer Speaker Training**
*Unitarian Universalist Church, Bangor*

**April 29th, Community Counseling Center's Express Yourself! Art Auction**
*The Woodlands Club, Falmouth*

**Spring, “Out of Our Pantries” Cookbook**
*Available for Purchase*

**June 12th, Walk With the Ones You Love**
*Back Cove, Portland (3:00pm - 5:00pm)*

## MSOP Upcoming Speakouts

**February 10th, Deering High School**

**February 14th, University of Maine at Presque Isle**

**February 14th, DHHS Presque Isle**

**February 27th, Unitarian Church, Norwau**

**March 8th, Belfast High School**

**March 8th, Camden Community School**

**March 16th, University of Maine at Augusta**

**March 18th, Counseling Class, University of Maine at Orono**

**March 21st, Rape Response Services of Bangor**