



REACH OUT the newsletter of Maine SpeakOut Project

Spring 2006 • 343 Forest Avenue • Portland, ME 04101 • 207.874.1030 • tty 207.874.1043

Maine SpeakOut Project is a Program of Community Counseling Center

Dear SpeakOut Volunteers and Supporters:

As members of Portland's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, we find ourselves in a unique and exciting time. As advocates, volunteers and speakers, the mission of Maine SpeakOut Project is more relevant than ever before. Our efforts are increasing tolerance and support for the LGBT community in Maine. Evidence for this can be found in the recent defeat of Question 1. Maine is now a safer place. Through the work of SpeakOut volunteers, Maine's safe spaces will grow. Each audience builds upon the momentum of the last, as individual and deeply personal connections are made.

The energy and goodwill that we have created by raising our voices in support of ourselves will sustain us as we move forward. Our lives are more in the public eye than ever. Increased visibility also means an increase in opportunities to share our stories and create change. SpeakOut's mission of building a more tolerant society is achievable. If we each can commit to these goals on both a personal and community level, there is no limit to our potential.

Please consider how you want to get involved this spring and summer. There are so many wonderful opportunities. I look forward to working with you and seeing you at the various Walk With the Ones You Love events across the state. It's time to bring Maine SpeakOut Project to the next level.

With care,

Pam McCann
Pam

Out of Our Pantries Cookbook Recipe Sampling Party

Be the first on your block to sample delicious recipes from the Maine SpeakOut Project cookbook, *Out of Our Pantries*.



Friday, March 24th
5:30pm - 7:00pm
The Portland Stage Company
TICKETS \$25.00

Each ticket gets you a cookbook and a glass of wine or beverage of choice. Volunteer speakers will also be sharing stories throughout the event!

Special Guest Appearance by Tom Ford, star of "I Am My Own Wife" from 6:00pm - 6:30pm.

Tickets available at the door or at Community Counseling Center by calling Nicole Pelletier at 207.874.1030 ext. 336. All proceeds will support Maine SpeakOut Project.

Maine SpeakOut Project has also reserved a block of tickets, available on a first-come-first-serve basis, to see the brilliantly performed "I Am My Own Wife." These tickets must be reserved and purchased separately from the sampling party. For more information, call Pam McCann at 207.874.1030, ext. 510.

Maine SpeakOut Project in 2005

121 Speaking Gigs

8 Outreach Events

4 Speaker Trainings

3 "Walk With the Ones You Love" Events

Of the 121 Speakouts, 34 were held at high schools; 34 at colleges and universities; 6 at alternative schools; 10 at churches or faith organizations; 9 at community organizations; 9 at social service organizations; 4 at media events; 2 at conferences; and 1 at a business.

Maine SpeakOut Project had an incredibly busy year!
Thank you for all the hard work from volunteers and supporters that made our accomplishments possible.

Maine SpeakOut Project Fundraising Update

Karla Wheaton, Community Counseling Center's development director

Thank you to those of you who generously supported Maine SpeakOut Project last year. In 2005, MSOP received almost 200 donations and raised over \$26,000. We would like to especially thank our major donors who included Bob Carter, Shep Lee, the Maine Women's Fund and the Sam L. Cohen Foundation. Your donations helped us train speakers, participate in over 100 speakouts, re-open the Charlie Howard Memorial Library and host our Second Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Maine Speakout Project receives no public funding. Our program depends on its individual, foundation and corporate support. This year, your increased support is needed to train 20 new volunteers, to increase the number of speakouts (especially in those areas of the state that "voted yes" during the 2005 elections), to provide more outreach to Maine's faith communities, and to reach more businesses through Everyone Counts in the Workplace.

Your support is important and greatly appreciated. To make your annual donation please use the enclosed giving envelope, give online at www.mainespeakout.org or call Community Counseling Center's development department at 207.874.1030. Other ways to help include purchasing *Out of Our Pantries* cookbooks or becoming a corporate sponsor of Walk With the Ones You Love. Please call the development department if you are interested in supporting our program through either of these opportunities.

Thank you again for your continued support. Together by donating our time, our financial resources, or both, we can make a real difference in the lives of Maine's LGBT community.

Maine SpeakOut Project '06 Wish List

- GASOLINE CARDS in any amount
- Pastel or brightly colored photocopy paper
- In-kind services for printing or copying
- Food & refreshments for training sessions

Maine SpeakOut Project Advisory Committee

Richard Bilodeau, Co-chair

Bob Carter, Co-chair

Elliott Cherry

Leslie Clark Brancato

Laura Gottfried

Tara Healy

Holly Howard

Connie Howe

Natasha Johnson

Daniel Pelletier

Everett R. Perlman

How to Give

Contributions can be sent to:
Maine SpeakOut Project
343 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@commcc.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.

Tough Questions for MSOP Speakers by Pam McCann

During speaker training, a great deal of time is spent working out how to answer difficult and challenging questions from the audience. As a trainer, I believe that this is time well spent. Blind questions from audience members are a lot like the children's game Battleship. Remember that one? One player calls out a location blindly to a second player. The second player replies with a hit or a miss. The object of the game is to sink the others battleship. The big difference, of course, is Speakouts are not a game. Speakers are telling the truth of their lives and experiences. For me, the last thing I want is to be caught off-guard and found floundering, much like a sinking ship, for an appropriate answer.

Audiences tend to ask questions when they want, or need, to know the answers. As a speaker, it is our job to answer the question without feeling like someone has just tried to sink our ship. The best way to avoid this feeling is to be prepared and know what our personal hot-button issues are as speakers.

Training covers topics that could potentially be hot-button issues. Questions such as, "Do you believe that you are a sinner?" or "Why do you flaunt your lifestyle?" are covered to help speakers practice and prepare. Recently, I went over a sampling of questions that were asked of speakers in high schools across the state. Many of these questions challenged my thinking, and I had to consider how to answer them in a respectful and open way based on my experiences. They prompted the writing of this column.

What follows is a short list of questions asked by students. How would you choose to answer? I welcome your thoughts, comments and answers. If you want to reply, please email me at pmccann@commcc.org.

- "I think its fine to be gay and my parents have gay friends.... I don't see why people have such a hard time with people being gay. Is there a reason?"
- "How do you have the courage to tell everyone that you are gay?"
- "How old were you when you started questioning yourself and what did it feel like?"
- "Are you a lesbian because you can not find the right man or (do) you really like girl friends?"
- "I broke up with my boyfriend because I wasn't sure if I really liked boys or girls but I think I like both and that's not normal."

MAINE SPEAKOUT PROJECT GOALS FOR 2006

- Expand our venues to include locations outside of Portland and surrounding communities, with a focus on north of Bangor and west of Lewiston.
- Continue to strengthen our relationships with Maine's faith communities and increase the number of speaking gigs by 1 a month.
- To increase our venues for Everyone Counts in the Workplace.
 - To train 20 new volunteers in 2006.

Charlie Howard Memorial Library
a collection of LGBT works available for loan
through Maine SpeakOut Project

43 Baxter Boulevard
Portland, ME 04101

hours of operation
Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm
Saturdays, Sundays & evenings by appointment

"[My husband] believed that none of us could be free until all of us were free, that a person of conscience had no alternative but to defend the human rights of all people. I want to reaffirm my determination to secure the fullest protection of the law for all working people, regardless of their sexual orientation ... it is right, just and good for America."

- Coretta Scott King at the
Task Force's Honoring Our Allies
award ceremony

Congratulations to our newly trained SpeakOut volunteers

Andrew K. R. Jones, Rhianna Twaney, BooM, Tracy Scott and Maura McKenney completed their training on March 4, 2006.

Second Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance by Joan G.

On November 19th, 2005 MSOP held the 2nd annual Transgender Day of Remembrance program at the USM Glickman Library in Portland. Similar ceremonies were held in 42 states of the U.S. and in 12 countries on 5 continents. The purpose of this day is to commemorate the memory of Rita Hester who was murdered in 1998 and all those since who have fallen as victims of anti-transgender hatred and violence. This year's theme was "Celebrating Our Progress, Remembering Our Losses."

This year, it was possible to enlarge the scope of the program thanks to the generous support of The Maine Women's Fund, the USM Libraries, the LGBT Collection of the Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine and the Department of Health and Human Services. The format was expanded to include 6 workshops on various transgender topics during the morning period, including Transgender 101, Partnering with Transpersons, Violence against the Transgender Community, Trans Families, Transitioning in the Workplace and a Trans Youth Panel.

A buffet lunch and resource fair was available between the end of the morning workshops and the afternoon ceremony. A movie titled "Toilet Training" was also shown during this time. Though the title was a bit odd, the film itself dealt with the very real problem of access to public restrooms and the sometimes violent reactions that transgender folk often experience.



Vanessa Torres and her band perform at the Transgender Day of Remembrance event.

Marty Hagglund, PJ Mears, Sage Hayes and Kolby Southwick gave an

interesting presentation highlighting the history of the transgender community in Maine from 1980 to the present. Vanessa Torres and her musical group performed during the afternoon.

Dr. Randi Kaufman, Psy. D., coordinator for the Fenway Community Health Center's Transgender Health Program in Boston, presented the keynote address. Dr. Kaufman gave an extremely interesting presentation that spoke to just about every aspect and problem a trans-person might experience in today's constantly changing times.

After all the singing, speech making and presentations were over, the names of the victims of violent, fatal, hate crimes that were perpetrated against transgendered people in the U.S. during the past year were read aloud. Twenty-seven names were read and twenty seven times a bell was rung, once for each victim. It is an extremely moving experience that brings home the whole purpose of why we gather on that day.



Dr. Randi Kaufman, Psy. D., coordinator for the Fenway Community Health Center's Transgender Health Program in Boston, presented the keynote address at the 2005 Transgender Day of Remembrance event on November 19th.

MSOP's own Jamie Gibson provided a fitting closing for the day's events by reading a letter from Gwen Smith. Gwen Smith is the founder of the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. Her message, that we as a community are neither a small entity nor a fringe group to be ignored, especially resonated with me as this has been a long time contention of mine. She went on to say that if we can field events such as this on a global scale, then we are a large enough force to claim our place in open society. That sounds kind of prophetic when you consider the recent defeat of "the people's veto" effort this past November here in Maine.

If you wish to get a true feel for the scope of violent hate crimes against Trans-people worldwide or to learn more about this topic then go to Gwen Smith's web site "Remembering Our Dead" at www.gender.org/remember/.

Pam McCann & Kevin Gilgan to Receive Equality Maine's Out Front Award

Congratulations to MSOP program coordinator Pam McCann and MSOP speaker Kevin Gilgan from Bangor on winning Equality Maine's Out Front Award.

Pam and Kevin are two of eight Out Front awardees being recognized for their outstanding volunteer leadership from the State House to the ballot box. Pam and Kevin were leaders in lobbying for the non-discrimination bill, leading canvasses and phone banks and volunteering much time and talent on the Maine Won't Discriminate campaign.

In addition to her work on the campaign, Equality Maine recognizes and celebrate Pam's constant presence, commitment and coalition-building efforts across all of Maine's LGBT organizations -- Equality Maine, Speakout, Outright, Pride, and many more.

"We are so proud of Pam and the work she has done on behalf of the LGBT community and Maine SpeakOut Project," says Community Counseling Center's president and CEO Leslie Clark Brancato.

The Out Front Award will be given out during Equality Maine's Awards Banquet on Saturday, March 18th.

Out of Our Pantries, a cookbook to benefit Maine SpeakOut Project, is now available.

Featuring over 150 diverse recipes, the cookbook includes yummy appetizers, soups & salads, main dishes, vegetables & side dishes, desserts & accoutrements from the pantries of MSOP volunteers and supporters. To order a copy of Out of Our Pantries, call Nicole at 207.874.1030, ext. 336 or email speakout@commcc.org



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Maine SpeakOut Project is a Program of

Community
Counseling Center
a United Way member agency

Upcoming Events

February 28th - March 26th, "I Am My Own Wife"
Portland Stage Company

Saturday, March 18th, Equality Maine Awards Banquet
Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland (5:30pm)

Friday, April 28th, Take Back the Night Monument Square,
Portland (6:30pm)

Friday, May 5th, Community Counseling Center's
Express Yourself! Art Auction The Woodlands Club,
Falmouth (5:30pm)

Sunday, June 11th, Walk With the Ones You Love Back,
Cove, Portland (3:00pm - 5:00pm)

Upcoming Speakouts

Tuesday, March 14th, Council on Accreditation for
Community Counseling Center

Wednesday, March 15th, Rape Response Services of
Bangor

Thursday, March 16th, University of New England

Wednesday, March 22nd, Family Planning Association -
Augusta

Friday, March 31st, Unity College Psychology Class

Tuesday, April 4th, Southern Maine Community College
Counseling Class

Wednesday, April 5th, Day One Youth Services Center

Wednesday, April 12th, Rainbow Professional Business
Association

Thursday, April 27th, Transgender Awareness Program,
Unity College

