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Winter 2008

Equality News (Winter 2008)

Matthew R. Dubois

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EQUALITYNEWS

Working to secure full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Maine through political action, education, and collaboration.

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EQME
EQUALITYMAINE

Winter 2008

**EqualityMaine
Foundation
24th Annual
Awards Dinner**

**Saturday,
March 8, 2008**

(see back page for more
details)

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Adoption Now Legal for Same-Sex Couples

Thanks to the unanimous ruling by Maine's Supreme Court (called the Law Court) on August 30, 2007, same-sex couples may now jointly adopt children. The case involved Ann Courtney and Marilyn Kirby, who won the right to form a permanent, legal parental relationship with their foster children, 10-year-old Michelle and her brother, six-year-old Ryan.

Ann and Marilyn's story began six years ago when DHHS placed 4-year-old Michelle and 4-month-old Ryan in their care after determining that the children's biological parents could not care for them. Both children were diagnosed with multiple disorders related to their earliest years. Ann and Marilyn, a committed couple with foster parent and adoption experience, devoted much of their time to addressing the children's emotional, learning, and developmental problems.

In 2006, Ann and Marilyn petitioned the Probate Court in Cumberland County to jointly adopt Michelle and Ryan because they wanted to ensure the children had the social and legal protections of having two legal parents rather than one.

The Probate Judge denied their petition, stating that the law permitted only a married couple or an unmarried person to adopt. After the Probate Judge denied their petition, they appealed to the Law Court, claiming that it is in the children's best interest to have two legal parents dedicated to and responsible for their welfare.

On August 30, 2007, the Law Court issued its unanimous ruling that Ann and Marilyn could jointly establish a legal parental relationship with their children. "A joint adoption assures that in the event of either adoptive parent's death, the children's continued relationship with the surviving parent is fixed and certain," wrote Justice Jon Levy in the 20-page decision. "Most importantly, a joint adoption affords the adopted children the love, nurturing and support of not one, but two parents."

Michelle and Ryan were formally adopted by Ann and Marilyn on October 17th.

Over 60 people attended a forum on adoption to hear Ann and Marilyn's story and to learn how to access the new law themselves. Mary Bonauto from Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), the organization that represented Ann and Marilyn, and Judy Berry, a well-known and highly regarded adoption practitioner in Maine, talked

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Panelists at GLAD's Adoption Forum included (from R to L): Attorney Judy Berry (adoption practitioner), Ann Kirby (adoptive mother and plaintiff in historic lawsuit), Mary Bonauto (GLAD's Civil Rights Project Director) and standing is Betsy Smith (EqualityMaine Executive Director). The panel provided comprehensive information on the new adoption law and how it is being implemented in the various counties in Maine.



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EQME to Ramp Up Communications

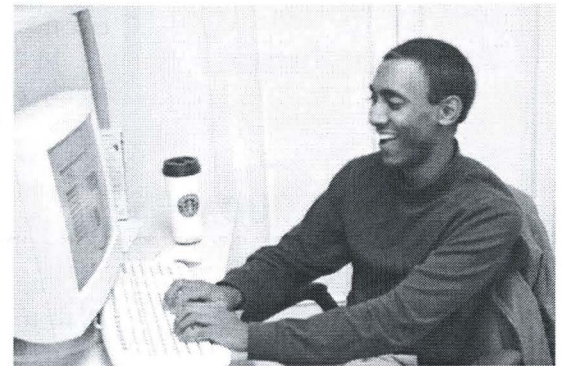
For several years, EqualityMaine has recognized a need to develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan. A communications plan would help us meet some of the goals of our strategic plan:

- increase EqualityMaine's visibility statewide;
- sympathetically frame LGBT issues in the media;
- increase the visibility of, and educate the public on, LGBT individuals and families;
- better involve LGBT community & supporters in political activism;
- upgrade website and increase unique website visits.

Thanks to an anonymous donor who recently pledged \$10,000 as a challenge grant, we are well on our way to funding a part-time communications coordinator position for 2008. We fully expect this position to be full-time in 2009 as we head into a new legislative session.

We are grateful to Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), who recently provided \$3,500 for a communications intern and is providing staff time for communications training and development. Additional support is coming from Freedom to Marry.

We hired Andrew Jones (in photo at right) as our communications intern and are thrilled to have him working with us. Many of you know Andrew from his leadership work with Outright and Proud Rainbow Youth of Southern Maine (PRYSM). Andrew is assessing and upgrading our website and representing EqualityMaine in various statewide committees and conferences.



For more information or to apply for the communications coordinator position, visit our website at www.equalitymaine.org. •



Jamie Gibson (L) and Tim Diehl (center) were elected in September to the EqualityMaine Board of Directors. In addition to Margaret O'Connell, who was also elected in September, Tim sits on the EqualityMaine Board while Jamie sits on the EqualityMaine Foundation Board. With Jamie and Tim is Board President Matthew Dubois.

ENDA Passes with No Transgender Protections

The federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was a sensitive topic in October and November. Just days before heading to the U.S. House of Representatives for debate, ENDA was stripped of gender identity protections. Why those protections were stripped from ENDA still remains unclear. Some say there weren't enough votes to pass the bill with gender inclusive language, while others say there were. Some say had they gone forward with a fully-inclusive bill, conservatives might have used a well-known tactic to force a stand-alone vote on transgender protections, potentially setting it up for failure.

Whatever the reason, stripping gender identity protections from ENDA generated a national grassroots protest by LGBT and allied organizations. EqualityMaine joined 350 organizations, representing well over 2 million people, who contacted Congress members in an amazing grassroots effort to keep gender identity protections in the bill.

Studies and surveys consistently show that between one-third and one-half of all LGBT respondents have suffered employment-related discrimination. Transgender people, in particular, desperately need the protections ENDA would provide.

Maine was in a similar situation in the spring of 2005 when legislative leaders wanted to strip gender identity and expression from Maine's non-discrimination bill. While we understood that some legislators had jitters about the new language, it was simply not acceptable to abandon part of the community. We took the time to educate and succeeded in keeping it in.

Continuous pressure was put on Congress for a period of five weeks to go back to the original bill that protected everyone in the LGBT community. But after 15,000 emails and a nearly equal number of phone calls asking for an inclusive ENDA, or no ENDA at all, congressional Democrats went forward with a non-inclusive bill.

It is important to keep in mind that ENDA has no chance of becoming law this time around because we have a president who will not sign it. So the issue was not whether

or not we could pass ENDA, but rather which strategy would provide the best chance for passing an inclusive ENDA in the future—when we have a president who will sign it.

We believed a “no” vote would provide the best strategy, because by standing on principle, we can come back in the next Congress and ensure that only an inclusive bill goes forward.

That's why we asked Congressman Tom Allen (District #1) and Congressman Mike Michaud (District #2), who have exemplary pro-LGBT voting records, to vote “no” on HR 3685, the version of ENDA that specifically excluded transgender people.

Contrary to the principles we used in passing inclusive non-discrimination legislation in Maine, the Human Rights Campaign asked Congressmen Allen and Michaud to vote yes on HR 3685. They stated in an email that if we lost the vote, it would set the movement back years. What they didn't say was that leadership would not bring this bill up for a vote if they didn't have the votes to pass it. And they always know their vote count.

On Wednesday, November 7, a non-inclusive ENDA came to the House floor and passed by a vote of 235-184. While in many ways historic—it's the first time Congress passed non-discrimination legislation based on sexual orientation, and that's a wonderful thing—it was a marginal victory. Eliminating gender identity from ENDA ignores the reality that gender identity and expression are at the root of much anti-gay discrimination.

For a bill that has no chance of becoming law, this was our opportunity to refuse to cave in to the tired old politics of divide and conquer, whether by those who oppose us or by those who use our community for political gain in an election year. The moral yardstick of any civil rights movement is how the movement treats its most vulnerable members.

We are very proud to have in Congress a representative from Maine who took what may be his most difficult yet

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Father Tom, ULC Ordained

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EqualityMaine Delivers Public Education on Marriage

In our last newsletter issue, we highlighted some of the components of EqualityMaine's 3-year public education campaign on marriage. For although we cannot predict how the freedom to marry will eventually be won in Maine—litigation, legislation, or referendum—we know that regardless of the strategy, a strong and effective public education campaign is required.

Educating legislators, voters and the general public is the foundation of EqualityMaine's public education campaign. To that end, we are conducting **in-district meetings** with legislators, speaking with **community groups** about marriage, canvassing voters and collecting **constituent postcards** and, in collaboration with Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), responding publicly to articles, editorials, or letters-to-the-editor on marriage through our **media response team**.

Talking with Legislators

In the last six months, EqualityMaine has organized in-district meetings and one-on-one conversations about the freedom to marry with legislators throughout the state. During in-district meetings, teams of five to seven people have done remarkable work educating their legislators. These teams have been as diverse as the people who support the freedom to marry—LGBT couples, straight allies, business owners, clergy, elected officials, teachers, and college students. The conversations have been profound, with each participant sharing his/her own personal story and reasons why marriage matters and why LGBT couples should not be denied the protections that marriage provides.

One-on-one meetings follow the same format and have been as successful as in-district meetings. Colleagues, friends, and family members of legislators have met with legislators to share their stories and determine where each legislator stands on winning the freedom to marry in Maine.

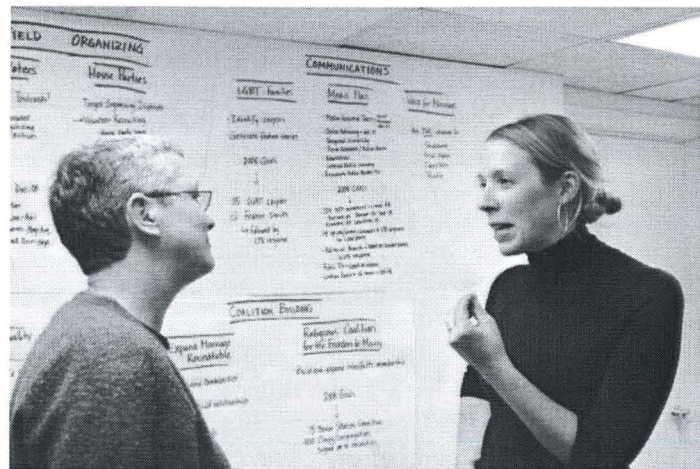
As a result, we've been able to identify the positions of more than 20 legislators on the freedom to marry, with a

goal of reaching 10 more by the end of 2007. By mid-June of 2008, we hope to add another 40.

Out and About in the LGBT and Allied Communities

When EqualityMaine collaborated with the Maine Civil Liberties Union & GLAD to produce our DVD titled *Marriage in Maine: The Way Life Should Be*, we knew the DVD would become our primary public education tool. We have taken this DVD "on the road" and presented it wherever there was a TV, DVD player, and group of people willing to watch it. We've shown the DVD at more than 30 events—community gatherings, social justice fairs, campus classrooms from Biddeford to Orono, college LGBT organizational meetings, church conferences, public TV, and house parties, to name a few. Sara Jane Eliot and Rita Clifford, a retired couple featured in the DVD, have accompanied us many times at these presentations to add their unique and personal perspectives. Jim Bishop and Steve Ryan, another

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Ali Cashin (R), GLAD's Writer/Researcher, talks with EqualityMaine's Public Policy Director Darlene Huntress about our organizations' collaborative public education work on marriage.

Pro-Equality Candidates Victorious in Special Elections

In early September we were shocked by the sudden death of state representative Deane Jones (D-Mt. Vernon). Just elected in June to represent District 83—in a special election due to the sudden death of state representative Abby Holman—Jones was a supporter of marriage equality. Through phone banks and door-to-door canvassing, EqualityMaine turned out many voters to help him get elected, and we regret that we never had the opportunity to work with him in the Legislature.

In the weeks following his death, the Democratic and Republican Parties once again chose their nominees for a

special election to fill the seat of House District 83. The Democrats nominated Jones's widow, Pat, to finish out his term. Because of the values Pat shared with Deane, as well as her years of experience as a strong advocate on health issues, we enthusiastically endorsed her candidacy for State Representative.

EqualityMaine was proud to support two other candidates in special elections for State Representative this fall. In District 72 in Lewiston, we endorsed Mike Carey, an affordable housing developer who demonstrated a strong commitment to equality for LGBT people in his responses

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Adoption Now Legal for Same-Sex Couples

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about the processes and procedures that are playing out as the new law is slowly implemented.

One of the challenges they face is working with the Probate Courts and the attorneys who practice regularly in those courts regarding consistent and fair processes and procedures. As it currently appears, some Probate Courts are requiring different documentation than others, such as home studies, being registered as domestic partners, and other issues. Over time these issues will be worked out, so that every same-sex couple will be treated fairly when they petition to adopt children in the county where they live.



Over 60 people attended the Adoption Forum in Portland on October 25. Speaking to the group is Mary Bonauto, lead attorney in the successful lawsuit that won the right for same-sex couples in Maine to adopt children jointly. Attorneys Pat Peard and Judy Berry also deserve credit for this historic ruling.

Who is affected by the ruling?

This case affects Maine children who need permanent homes and the families who want to adopt them. Specifically:

- Children in DHHS custody who are cared for by qualified foster parents who seek to adopt jointly may now do so.
- Children who are born to an unmarried couple may now be adopted by both of their parents as long as no third legal parent exists.
- Children adopted by one parent from a private agency may now be adopted together by both of their parents.

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What is the effect of a joint adoption?

An adoption creates a legal tie between a child and his or her parents, reinforcing both emotional security and legal rights:

- Adoption ensures that both parents are legally obligated to support the children in their minority and sometimes beyond.
- In the event of either parent's death or disability while the child is a minor, the child may receive substantial Social Security and other benefits based on the deceased or disabled parent's work record, and may also be the beneficiary of worker's compensation benefits, of a wrongful death action, and of intestate succession.
- Adoption means that either parent can provide workplace benefits to the child, including medical, dental and life insurance.
- Adoption means both parents are authorized to make medical and school-related decisions.
- Adoption also ensures that each child may continue his or her relationship with both parents in the event the parents separate.

To learn more about Maine's new adoption law or to find a referral for an adoption lawyer, contact GLAD at 617-426-1350 or at <http://me.glad.org/>.

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For more information or to reserve a space in the next newsletter, contact Brian Sandberg at (207) 761-3732 or brian@equalitymaine.org.

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Annual Report

Fiscal Year October 1, 2006–September 30, 2007

On the following five pages is EqualityMaine's annual report for fiscal year October 1, 2006–September 30, 2007. The report is divided into four areas—Program, Donors, Development, and Finances.

Program:

- Thanks to a \$15,000 grant from HRC in fall 2006, we hired three field organizers and **campaigned in eight legislative districts** where pro-equality incumbents were vulnerable or where we had an opportunity to elect a new pro-equality candidate. We distributed literature to 3,249 voters, made 3,465 phone calls, and won 7 of those 8 races. While we increased voter turnout in each targeted district, we were credited with making the difference in Sen. Lynn Bromley's victory over conservative Rep. Kevin Glynn.
- Through a grant from Maine Initiatives' Chrysalis Youth Fund, we added a fourth field organizer who focused solely on **college campus volunteer recruitment** efforts.
- In November and December 2006, Board President Matthew Dubois hosted three "**President's Circles**" across the state. President's Circles are townhall-like events where EqualityMaine members talk directly with the President of EqualityMaine about LGBT issues of concern to them. We invited all attendees to then serve on a host committee of a local community event that EqualityMaine organized soon thereafter, as a fundraiser for our legislative work. The three community events were held in Ogunquit, Augusta, and Bangor in January and February 2007.
- In December 2006 we launched our **first ever DVD**—an awesome educational tool produced in collaboration with Maine Civil Liberties Union, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), and filmmaker Molly O'Neil. It features three Maine gay and lesbian couples, who tell their story of why marriage matters to them. We have distributed over 400 copies of the DVD and have had over 35 formal showings and discussions. It's on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCzJn3PRhfk>.
- Thanks to our profound partnership with GLAD, we were able to hire in January 2007 a **top notch lobbyist** from Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson for the 2-year legislative session 2007-2008. Kate Knox did an outstanding job as EqualityMaine's lobbyist in 2007 and is currently laying the groundwork for more LGBT progress in 2009.
- In March 2007 we hired a **new field organizer**, Matthew Moonen, to carry out our important legislative and electoral field efforts.
- We had a successful legislative session (Jan–June 2007):
 - ◊ We passed our primary piece of legislation: LD 375, an amendment to **Family Medical Leave**. EqualityMaine led a coalition of organizations that drafted the bill, organized a riveting public hearing for the Labor Committee, made over 865 phone calls to our members, generating 184 constituent calls to state legislators, and worked with legislative leaders until it was finally signed into law.
 - ◊ We provided recommendations in drafting, and then testified at the public hearing, of legislation that amends Maine's **absentee ballot** laws to allow domestic partners to request and drop off absentee ballots.
 - ◊ We opposed legislation that would have made it a **crime to use a public bathroom** that was designated for use by a gender different than the gender a person was assigned at birth. The bill died in committee. At the public hearing, Jean Vermette from Bangor and Kael Parker from Portland provided the committee with outstanding trans 101 education.
 - ◊ We provided recommendations in the drafting of legislation that allows LGBT business owners to waive **workers' compensation coverage** for their domestic partners.
 - ◊ Against our principles, we worked to defeat a bill that would have allowed a change in **gender designation on a driver's license**. We fully support people changing their gender designation on a driver's license, but this bill was not the right approach. The Department of Motor Vehicles currently allows people who are post-op to change their gender designation and although not all trans people will have surgery, when we go through the legislature for more substantive changes to the law, we will support a bill that addresses more areas and is less cumbersome.
 - ◊ In a controversial bill that passed, EqualityMaine testified neither for nor against a recommendation from the Federal CDC calling for **routine HIV testing** in health care settings. We proposed compromise language that we believe would have allowed for routine HIV testing while maintaining important patient protections.

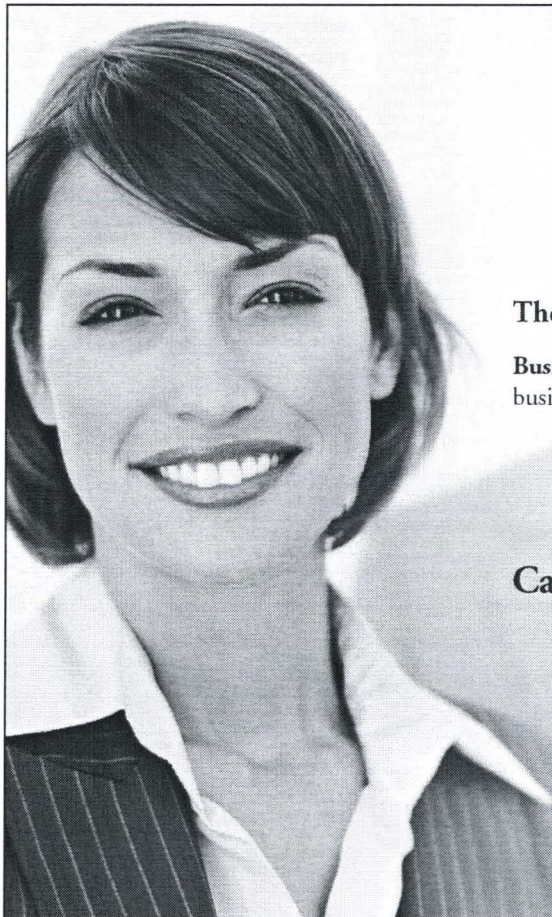
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Annual Report

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- ◊ We testified neither for nor against a bill to **remove clergy as signatories on marriage licenses**. Our testimony shed light on the intersection of civil marriage and religious marriage and the importance of religious blessings of the relationships of many same-sex couples.
- In June 2007, we awarded **three \$1,000 Joel Abromsom Scholarships** to high school seniors in Maine—Abby McCann, Winslow High School; Hazel Stark, Hampden Academy; Juliet Carrington, Cape Elizabeth High School. Over the next year, we are upgrading our scholarship program to include a summer internship at EqualityMaine, where we'll pay students a stipend of \$2,000 for two months of work and send them off to school with an additional \$2,000 scholarship award.
- On August 30, 2007, Maine's Law Court ruled unanimously that **same-sex couples may now jointly adopt children** in Maine. This is a huge victory for LGBT families in Maine, where many parents have been legal strangers to their children—harming the children by denying them important protections. We thank GLAD and Pat Peard for this historic victory. We'll be helping GLAD host several educational forums on adoption around the state in 07 and 08.
- What follows is a progress report on our 3-year **public education campaign on marriage**. This campaign began in 2006 and objectives must be met by the end of 2008 in order to have laid the groundwork necessary for successful political action on marriage in 2009.
 - ◊ Train 250 LGBT leaders and allies on marriage messages and counter arguments—100 have been trained thus far.
 - ◊ Organize 65 speaking engagements to schools, social service clubs, churches, businesses and other strategic groups—35 down, 30 to go!
 - ◊ Marriage DVDs distributed to 900 activists and policy makers—400 distributed in 2007, 500 to be distributed in 2008.
 - ◊ Collect and distribute 15,000 postcards in support of marriage to key legislators and the governor—we'll have over 8,000 by the end of 2007.
 - ◊ Organize in-district constituent meetings on marriage with 78 key legislators—these are time consuming efforts, by end of 2007 we'll have had 25 constituent meetings/conversations.
 - ◊ Grow our newly formed Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry to include 100 clergy by

(Continued on page 10)



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(continued on next page)

Annual Report -- Donors

Fiscal Year October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007

(continued from previous page)

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Every effort has been made to ensure this list's accuracy. However, mistakes, omissions, and other blunders inevitably slip by, and we sincerely apologize for any error that may have occurred. Please contact EqualityMaine regarding any corrections, comments or questions. •

Annual Report

Fiscal Year October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007

(continued from page 7)

end of 2008—great response from clergy across the state, 25 signed on so far.

- ◊ Respond in all major daily newspapers to LGBT news articles, editorials and letters-to-the-editor through our Media Response Team—we organized an awesome response to a *Portland Press Herald* editorial on marriage in June, but only 3 of 15 letters-to-the-editor were printed in response to adoption ruling and stories about the first official same-sex couple adoption in Maine.
- ◊ Work closely with House and Senate efforts to identify, recruit and elect pro-equality legislative candidates in the November 08 elections.

Development:

- Our partnership with Gill Foundation deepened in fall 2006 when they granted us **\$50,000 for general support and capacity building**. Typically, Gill funds us at about \$25,000 a year. This enabled us to hire our first-ever Administrative Assistant (John McKenna), upgrade our technology (new phone system and computers), and generally support our program work.
- A new partnership began in fall 2006 when the Civil Marriage Collaborative, hosted by the Proteus Fund, funded us **\$40,000 for our work on marriage**. They shifted their priorities for 07-08 to fund primarily the states that are likely to win marriage in the next 1-2 years. While Maine does not qualify for that category, they still funded us \$35,000 for the good progress we're making toward full equality for LGBT families.
- We hosted a successful **Annual Awards Dinner** in March 2007, with 425 attendees, outstanding awardees, and a well received program. We grossed \$36,750 and netted \$20,500. These receipts do not count scholarship appeal income. While our net income went down from 2006 to 2007 (\$25,000 to \$20,500), we pulled off this event with no development director—Development Director Erica Quin-Easter left EqualityMaine in November 2006.
- We hired a **new development director**, Brian Sandberg, in March 2007 to carry out the ever important work of raising money for EqualityMaine.
- We hosted what may possibly become EqualityMaine's signature summer event in Bangor: ***EqualityFolk: A Community Social***, an event held during the American Folk Festival in August on the Penobscot River. Equality-

Folk is a 3-hour reception on Saturday of the festival weekend, where people come for free food, cash bar, and networking with other LGBT people in the area.

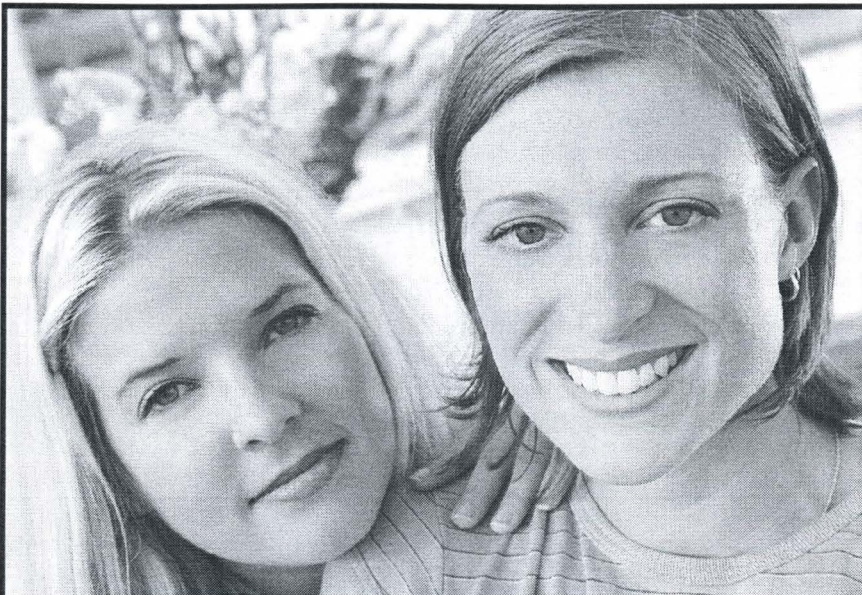
Finance:

EqualityMaine Foundation

<u>Income</u>	Amount	Percent
Donations	\$ 58,184	28%
Event Revenue	\$ 36,183	17%
Grants	\$104,413	49%
Other Revenue	\$ 11,908	6%
Total Income	\$210,688	100%
<u>Expenses</u>		
Program	\$130,331	62%
Development	\$ 42,042	20%
Operating	\$ 37,838	18%
Total expenses	\$210,211	100%
Net Income	\$ 477	

EqualityMaine

<u>Income</u>		
Donations	\$ 44,967	58%
Event Revenue	\$ 10,754	14%
Grants	\$ 20,297	26%
Other Revenue	\$ 1,413	2%
Total Income	\$ 77,431	100%
<u>Expenses</u>		
Program	\$ 69,606	86%
Development	\$ 2,428	3%
Operating	\$ 8,903	11%
Total expenses	\$ 80,937	100%
Net Income	\$ (3,506)	



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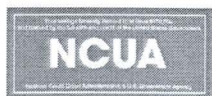
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Pro-Equality Candidates Victorious in Special Elections

(continued from page 4)

to our candidate questionnaire. In District 99 in the Sebago area, we endorsed Kate Smith, a physical therapist, school board member and another strong supporter of equality for LGBT people.

EqualityMaine ran phone banks and mailed campaign literature to our members in these three districts, totaling over 350 member contacts. Pat Jones and Mike Carey won their campaigns, but Kate Smith came up a bit short.

In addition to the special legislative elections in June, pro-equality candidates endorsed by EqualityMaine in 2007 won three out of four races, giving us good momentum as we head into the crucial 2008 election season.

We congratulate Pat Jones and Mike Carey on their victories and look forward to working with them as EqualityMaine and its coalition partners work to win full equality for LGBT people. •

Make YOUR Pledge for Equality! Become a Sustaining Partner

When you become a Sustaining Partner, your monthly donation helps provide steady, reliable income for EqualityMaine to respond quickly and effectively to discrimination and move Maine towards full equality.

\$10 a month supports our campaign to generate 15,000 constituent-signed legislative postcards on full equality for LGBT families.

\$15 a month supports our efforts to organize 65 educational events where we show and discuss our DVD on marriage.

\$25 a month supports our organizing of 78 in-district legislative meetings, where constituents talk one-on-one with their legislators about equality.

\$50 a month enables us to produce educational materials, such as fliers, brochures, and copies of our DVD on marriage, for a wide variety of venues.

Become a Sustaining Partner today, and put your pledge to work for equality immediately.

✂-----

Sign me up as a Sustaining Partner! Please start charging my monthly contribution of:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$_____

(Sustaining Partner pledges of any amount are welcome)

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Please direct my contribution to (check one):

____ EqualityMaine Foundation (501c3 educational arm, tax-deductible)
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Mail your pledge to EqualityMaine, PO Box 1951, Portland ME 04104 or fax to 207-761-3752. For more information or to join by phone, contact Brian Sandberg at (207) 761-3732 or brian@equalitymaine.org. Thanks for your Sustaining support!

ENDA Passes with No Transgender Protections

(continued from page 3)

principled vote ever. Congressman Michael Michaud voted on ENDA to leave no one in the LGBT community behind!

Despite the enormous pressure representatives were under to vote for a bill that excludes gender identity, Congressman Michaud listened to the people of Maine who said, "We stand on principle in Maine. We don't leave part of the community behind, even though it may be easier politically."

Congressman Michaud, EqualityMaine, and the more than 350 LGBT organizations across the country who form United ENDA are committed and well positioned to ensure a fully-inclusive bill is introduced in the next Congress—when passage in the Senate and the signature of a new President make the enactment of comprehensive employment protections a real possibility.

What is ENDA?

ENDA is a federal bill that would address discrimination in the workplace by making it illegal to fire, refuse to hire or refuse to promote employees simply based on a person's sexual orientation [or gender identity]*. It would reinforce the principle that employment decisions should be based upon a person's qualifications and job performance.

What ENDA Does

- Extends federal employment discrimination protections currently provided based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age and disability to sexual orientation [and/or gender identity]*.

- Prohibits public and private employers, employment agencies and labor unions from using an individual's sexual orientation [or gender identity]* as the basis for employment decisions, such as hiring, firing, promotion or compensation.

- Provides for the same procedures, and similar, but somewhat more limited, remedies as are permitted under Title VII and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Applies to Congress and the federal government, as well as employees of state and local governments.

What ENDA Does Not Do

- Cover businesses with fewer than 15 employees.
- Apply to most jobs at religious organizations. For any class of jobs, a religious organization can require employees to follow the tenets and teachings of their religion, including ones that bar gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees.
- Apply to the uniformed members of the armed forces (the bill doesn't affect the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy).
- Allow for quotas or preferential treatment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Allow a "disparate impact" claim similar to the one available under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Therefore, an employer is not required to justify a neutral practice that may have a statistically disparate impact on individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Allow the imposition of affirmative action for a violation of ENDA.
- Allow the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to collect statistics on sexual orientation or gender identity or compel employers to collect such statistics.
- Apply retroactively.

(* Words in brackets were stripped out of the final bill.)

Leave a Legacy of Equality

When you make or update your will, consider including EqualityMaine Foundation in your planning. We'll carry on your commitment to LGBT equality for years to come.

For more information on making a bequest or other planned gift to EqualityMaine Foundation, contact Brian Sandberg at (207) 761-3732 or brian@equalitymaine.org.

If you've included EqualityMaine Foundation in your will, we'd like to know so we can say thanks.



☐ YES! I have included EqualityMaine Foundation in my will.

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Public Education Update

continued from page 4

couple in the DVD, went with us to Bangor to talk about the impact marriage would have on their lives.

At each of these events, following the DVD viewing, we've had open and honest dialogue about marriage. We've signed up new members, supporters and volunteers. We've distributed hundreds of DVDs to people attending the presentations, and every time, we walk away knowing that support for the freedom to marry in Maine is growing.

Collecting Postcards for Legislators

At our last report, we had collected 1,000 legislative postcards signed by constituents in support of the freedom to marry. We have now collected over 7,000 and will have 8,000 by year's end. Our goal is to collect and deliver 15,000 postcards to legislators in the 2009 legislative session. Postcards urge legislators to begin working on the freedom to marry now.

Reaching out to Mainers: Media Response Team

In collaboration with GLAD, we continue our work of training volunteers and building a Media Response Team throughout the state. The Media Response Team responds to news articles or opinion pieces about LGBT people and their families. The editorial/letters-to-the-editor page is one of the most read sections of the paper, and it provides us with a tremendous opportunity to tell our stories to thousands of people we might otherwise never reach.

As an example, when news of the historic Maine Law Court ruling on adoption hit the media, we immediately sent out action alerts to our media response team supplying them with the news stories, talking points and the contact information for their daily newspapers. As a result, letters supporting the ruling were printed in the *Bangor Daily News* and the *Portland Press Herald*.

We will continue our daily monitoring of the media with the commitment that no news article or opinion editorial about LGBT couples and families will go without an organized response from the people who are affected by it.

What's Next?

It is no small mission to secure full equality for LGBT people in Maine. Educating legislators, voters and the general public is a critical part of achieving full equality, and we need everyone who supports equality to become actively involved. If you'd like to participate in an in-district meeting with your legislator, host a DVD presentation in your community, or become a member of our Media Response Team, please contact Darlene Huntress by calling 207-761-3732 or emailing dhuntress@equalitymaine.org. •

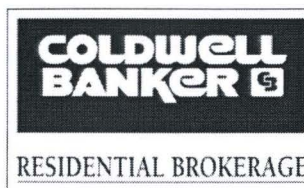
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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN EQUALITYMAINE TODAY!

All EqualityMaine members receive our quarterly newsletter, regular communication through email regarding political action and upcoming events, opportunities to volunteer, and the reward of supporting LGBT advocacy efforts. Contributions of any amount are counted towards membership – whether you can give \$1 or \$1,000, your membership makes a difference in winning protections for LGBT people in Maine.

YES! I want to be a member of EqualityMaine! Enclosed is my contribution of:

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$_____

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, ZIP _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

☐ Please charge this to my credit card. ☐ My check payable to EqualityMaine is enclosed.

☐ Sign me up as a Sustaining Partner (see page 12)! Please start charging my monthly gift of \$10 / \$15 / \$25 / \$_____

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Name on card: _____

☐ I'd like to volunteer

☐ I have included EqualityMaine Foundation in my will

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Save the Date!

EqualityMaine Foundation 23rd Annual Awards Banquet Saturday, March 10, 2007

Mark your calendar for March 10 and join us for a special evening of recognition and celebration. Like our 2006 awards banquet program, which told the story of how we won non-discrimination protections, our program this year will also tell a story—the story of how we began to win full equality for LGBT people in Maine. To be inspired, you won't want to miss this event.

5:30 – 6:30pm – Social Hour & Silent Auction
6:30 – 9:00pm – Dinner & Awards Presentation

Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland
ASL interpretation services available

See Inside for More Details!

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We need volunteers!

We need volunteers the day of the banquet to help set up the silent auction and community information table, register and greet guests, clean-up and other tasks! Can you help? If so, please call Darlene Huntress at 761-3732 X3004 or email dhuntress@equalitymaine.org.