



Gay Alliance
of the genesee valley

Annual Report 2008





Dear Friends of the Gay Alliance:

As the Gay Alliance enters its 35th year, it continues to grow and serve more members of our community. Through constant review and revision we remain vital and relevant, achieving far more than ever before. Here are some significant examples.

In 2007, our Speakers Bureau delivered 52 presentations to the community, an increase of 250% over 2006. Through March of this year, we are on track to continue to increase the number of people reached through these informative, myth-busting presentations.

The Anti-violence Program provides one-on-one service and resources to crime and bias survivors, orientation and training to area law enforcement officials, and cultural competency training to providers of services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Statistics in domestic violence reports, violent attacks, and bias activity have remained stable or declined slightly, while other reports have increased. During the past year, reports of police misconduct increased from 1 report to 11. This has triggered a new focus of our efforts towards training materials and the deepening of our relationships with area law enforcement officials. Our work to improve police relations and attitudes towards LGBT people aligns with an overall agency increase in resource allocation to prevention and systemic change.

Youth and young adult services continue to see substantial growth in the number of people served directly with program events and ongoing activities. Outreach to schools and universities has increased significantly with the introduction of a new program called CampusOut, a university-based collaboration with eight area academic institutions. This new program, funded primarily by the Community Foundation, serves over 100 young adults and their faculty advisors by providing a social and professional network for cross-campus organizing, training, and social justice activism. Youth drop in and support groups have begun to see exponential growth in on-site visits at our youth center. In January of 2007 we saw drop in rates of 8 to 12 youth group members per drop in session. In 2008, this rate grew to an average of 42-45 members.

The cornerstone and longest-running element of the Gay Alliance is its monthly newspaper, *The Empty Closet*. Through this medium, we reach nearly 5,000 readers per month in hard copy, and over 5,000 readers per month in its electronic format. *The Empty Closet* is the only local link to the larger LGBT community for many rural LGBT people.

I hope you share my excitement as you review this report. Being at the center of the Rochester area LGBT community is a wonderful place to be, and I hope you are as proud of the work we are doing for your community as I am.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Hinesley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher H. Hinesley
Executive Director

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

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2008



Health & Safety/ Violence Prevention

The Anti Violence Program assists LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) victims of violence and hate activity, and bias crimes, and works proactively to promote institutional changes to prevent future crimes and hate activity.

2007 Highlights

- ▼ Recorded a 15-fold increase in complaints of police misconduct.
- ▼ Assisted victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, hate activity and police misconduct. As a result of working in the community, saw a 30% reduction in calls in 2006.
- ▼ Responded to calls from victims of violence, hate crimes, and other bias activity.
- ▼ Coordinated community response to Monroe Avenue hate crime incident.
- ▼ Advocated for and won the application of hate crime status for the Park Ave. hate crime incident of 2006.
- ▼ Established LGBTI liaison in the Monroe County Sheriff's Department.
- ▼ Increased outreach efforts and materials.
- ▼ Added Hotline banner with resource links on the Gay Alliance website front page.
- ▼ Educated local media on hate crime legislation.
- ▼ Expanded working agreement with the Rochester Police Department to provide ongoing training and education.
- ▼ Established professional networking group, Out for Justice, to promote best practices for advocacy, justice, and law enforcement.

2008 Goals

- ▼ Provide training materials to all regional law enforcement agencies.
- ▼ Provide educational presentations to Out for Justice members, including a workshop at the Equality Leadership Conference.
- ▼ Recruit and train volunteers for coordinated community response to high profile hate crimes and bias activities.
- ▼ Train area service providers in best practices for LGBTI community members.

Stretch Goals for 2008 and Beyond

- ▼ Build Health and Safety curricula for Gay Straight Alliance advisors and student members.
- ▼ Train area law enforcement officers and administrators in LGBTI community cultural competency.
- ▼ Collaborate with existing local shelter to provide services for gay, bisexual, and transgender men.

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The Empty Closet **Newspaper**

The *Empty Closet* newspaper and the Gay Alliance website *continue to be the primary information source for the LGBTI community in the Rochester region.*

2007 Highlights

- ▼ Added new features and columnists.
- ▼ Added library and archives, and Shoulders to Stand On webpages.
- ▼ Engaged Youth Group member as intern reporter.
- ▼ Enhanced coverage of political and community events.
- ▼ Added new distribution sites for a new total of over 70 sites in the region.
- ▼ Added advertising sales representative position.

2008 Goals

- ▼ Deliver electronic newsletter and electronic updates every month via E-mail to provide news between issues of the *Empty Closet*.
- ▼ Hire paid webmaster to upgrade and enhance the capability, design and visual appeal of the website.
- ▼ Add news updates and press releases to website on a regular basis.
- ▼ Provide metal racks for select distribution sites.
- ▼ Provide online advertising purchase option.
- ▼ Enhance print quality by contracting with new printing company.
- ▼ Add popular articles to the Gay Alliance website front page.
- ▼ Add second color comic strip.

Stretch Goals for 2008 and Beyond

- ▼ Enhance photo features on website version.
- ▼ Hire paid intern for expanded, in-depth news coverage.
- ▼ Mail or deliver newspaper bundles to all Gay Straight Alliances and campuses in the region.
- ▼ Provide online payment capability option for advertisers.

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Outreach Program and Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau provides training and education for area schools, universities and businesses to foster an inclusive and safe community for LGBTI people and their families.

2007 Highlights

- ▼ Increased speaking engagements by over 120% from 20 in 2006, to 52 in 2007.
- ▼ Organized and/or facilitated Speakers Bureau trainings to promote group unity, improve individual comfort level with public speaking and educate on a variety of issues.
- ▼ Provided resources, support and referrals to LGBTI people and their families.
- ▼ Established a mentoring program for parents and spouses of LGBTI people.
- ▼ Increased the number of volunteer speakers by over 200%.
- ▼ Redesigned and created new informational fliers.
- ▼ Arranged for speakers to participate in community health fairs.
- ▼ In the words of a recent SpeakOut (Speakers Bureau) trainee: *I have found, at least these past few weeks, the training that I have received has been so useful that my reaction and advocacy for the students here at MCC is a direct result of the training and time spent in the speaker's bureau. GAGV ROCKS!*

2008 Goals

- ▼ Organize bimonthly educational trainings and practice sessions for Speakers Bureau members.
- ▼ Actively participate in presentations with new speakers in order to assist, advise and evaluate their skills.
- ▼ Develop and act as liaison for the Speaker's Bureau support network so that members can obtain the support and assistance they need.
- ▼ Create a Safe Space Program and a residence assistants' training program on area campuses.
- ▼ Develop "Straight Talk: Understanding the power of the straight ally" and present at local colleges and organizations.
- ▼ Arrange and organize full Speakers Bureau trainings once per year
- ▼ Create a Speakers Bureau brochure.
- ▼ Actively seek speaking engagements in order to provide services to a broader range of organizations.
- ▼ Establish an annual event to recognize Speakers Bureau volunteers.
- ▼ Increase presentations in the community from 52 to 75; increase number served from 1220 to 1800.

Stretch Goals for 2008 and Beyond

- ▼ Improve reliability and maintenance of resource directory with additional technical support.
- ▼ Offer multiple speaker trainings per year to increase the number of qualified speakers on bureau.

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Youth and Young Adult Services

The Youth Program provides comprehensive advocacy and support services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and their families in the Rochester region.

2007 Highlights

- ▼ 174 new members joined, total membership remains over 400 for third year.
- ▼ Annual attendance of 2470.
- ▼ Average weekly drop-in attendance was 48.
- ▼ Over 250 youth attended the Day of Silence Rally.
- ▼ 150 youth attended the Alternative Prom.
- ▼ Recruited largest youth contingency in NYS to lobby State legislators in Albany.
- ▼ Added Mental Health Resource Consultant to support youth and violence prevention services.
- ▼ Added part time staff to expand services.
- ▼ When asked about the value of his advocacy experience with the Gay Alliance, one member said:
"It's educational. It's energetic. It excites me about my community and the potential for change. It's a great way to get active and connected to others." ~ Gordy Walsh
- ▼ Added new young adult student program, called CampusOUT.
- ▼ Recruited campus/organizational members: SUNY Brockport, SUNY Geneseo, Nazareth College, Rochester Institute of Technology, Finger Lakes Community College, University of Rochester, Planned Parenthood, Rochester Indy Media.

2008 Goals

- ▼ Increase Gay Straight Alliance network in area high schools.
- ▼ Increase youth participation in community activities and service.
- ▼ Increase adult volunteers to keep up with expanding youth services.
- ▼ Establish internal fund raising programs within the Youth Advisory Council.
- ▼ Provide leadership programming to include peer mediation and team building.
- ▼ Provide one-on-one assistance to GSA faculty advisors.
- ▼ Increase youth and young adult participation in Speakers Bureau and violence prevention.
- ▼ Provide conflict mediation training to student advisory council and other youth members.

Stretch Goals for 2008 and Beyond

- ▼ Add staff to enhance staff to member ratio. Attendance has doubled year-to-date in 2008.
- ▼ Expand homelessness initiative to include homelessness resource services.
- ▼ Expand CampusOut workshops to include an educational track at the Equality Leadership Conference.

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Library, Archives and Video Project

Library, Archives and Video Project

- ▼ Moved library into new space on 5th floor of Auditorium Center.
- ▼ Organized books and archival material for easy access.
- ▼ Purchased new bookshelves and equipment.
- ▼ Began classification of non-fiction books according to Dewey Decimal system.
- ▼ Accepted Ove Overmyer's resignation as co-coordinator of the Library Project.
- ▼ Provided an information table at the Pride Festival with library and archival materials, brochures and a donation box.
- ▼ Partnered with ImageOUT LGBT film festival - sponsored archival movie "Mala Noche" - Librarian Gerry Szymanski spoke before the showing of the film and answered questions afterwards.
- ▼ Librarian Gerry Szymanski became part of the "Shoulders to Stand On" video history project committee.
- ▼ Received gifts of library materials - as of the end of 2006, the library held 3806 items - received in 2007

Hardcover books	96
Trade paperbacks	402
Pocket paperbacks...	198
DVD/VHS.....	7
Periodicals	30
Total gifts 2007	733
Library holdings.....	4539

2008 Goals

- ▼ Begin entry of library collection into online catalog.
- ▼ Finish sorting and indexing Empty Closet newspapers.
- ▼ Initiate "book swap" policy with other gay libraries and archives for extra copies of items.
- ▼ Apply for membership in the Society for American Archivists' Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable.

Stretch Goals for 2008 and Beyond

- ▼ Help plan library space with community center project.
- ▼ Prepare collections for move into community center or expanded space.
- ▼ Catalog entire collection making it accessible to Rochester and the world.

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Shoulders to Stand On

Shoulders to Stand On is a documentary film project that will chronicle the history of the gay community in the Rochester region and its impact on the nation, as a Project of the Gay Alliance.

Shoulders to Stand On will capture the stories, struggles and achievements of our gay pioneers, who often made important sacrifices to make Rochester a better place to live. The documentary will highlight many events that put Rochester in the local and national spotlight. And, it will celebrate the spirit of a community that is bound together with a steadfast sense of pride.

The project has four major components: Shoulders to Stand On Production, the Roots Chronology, the Documentary Heritage Program Archive Grant through New York State, and the Shoulders to Stand On website.

2007

Shoulders to Stand On has moved into its pre-production, research, grant writing, and fundraising phase. The Roots Chronology research is a volunteer effort to record the headlines from the *Empty Closet* in order to create a historical time line for the gay community of Rochester. A Documentary Heritage Program Archive grant proposal has been submitted to assist in this effort. The Shoulders to Stand On Website provides information, a vehicle for recording individual histories and anecdotes, and a mechanism for fundraising.

2008 Goals

- ▼ Finish chronicling the *Empty Closet* through 2002.
- ▼ Finish chronicling the *New Women's Times*.
- ▼ Begin raising money to fund this project through private donations and grants.
- ▼ Develop and maintain an interactive website, Shoulderstostandon.org, within the Gay Alliance website.
- ▼ Create a blog as a vehicle for members of the community to tell their story.
- ▼ Identify and survey records of individuals, organizations, and groups of diverse backgrounds (ie. African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Pacific Islanders and women's groups) who are LGBTI members of the Rochester community.

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Staff, Consultants and Board of Directors

Staff and Consultants

Christopher Hinesley, Executive Director
Jim Anderson, Graphic Designer
Kelly Baumgartner, Program Assistant
Jessica Cohen, Youth Services Coordinator
Dorothy Drazal, Development
Scott Fearing, Program Director
Jeanne Gainsburg, Outreach Coordinator
Susan Jordan, *Empty Closet* Editor
Rebecca Newberry, Program Assistant
Sharon Sandvik, Bookkeeping
John Stevens, Administrative Assistant
Ceridwen Troy, Americorp Member
Anne Wakeman, Government Contracts

Gay Alliance Board of Directors, 2007-2008

Sue Cowell, President
Thomas Ferrarese, President-Elect
John Altieri, Board Member
Evelyn Bailey, Board Member
Deanna Baker, Board Member
Ralph Carter, Tech Committee Chair
Kay Conheady, Board Treasurer
Judy Cranston, Development Chair
Julie Devins, Board Member
Chris Hilderbrant, Board Member
Christopher Hinesley, Ex Officio
Jeffrey Lamica, Secretary
Robert Lewis, Board Member
Jo Meleca Voigt, Board Member
Deb Oppenheimer, Board Member
Kathryn Rivers, Past-President
Joseph Searles, Board Member
Nikia Speed, Board Member
Barb Turner, Board Member

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Sponsorship Levels

Platinum Sponsorship: \$5,000 or more

- ▼ Placement as a Gay Alliance Platinum Sponsor at all Gay Alliance events.
- ▼ 8 tickets to the Equality Leadership Conference, including the full day workshop and the luncheon.
- ▼ Company name/logo prominently placed on the Gay Alliance website and each issue of *The Empty Closet* (distribution of 5000 copies/month) for the entire year.
- ▼ 3 training and/or educational workshops for your leaders and employees to support LGBT educational needs as defined by your company.
- ▼ Technical support on LGBT issues and assistance on the Corporate Equality Index.
- ▼ Opportunity for exhibit table at key events for your company to display advertising materials.

Gold Sponsorship: \$3,000

- ▼ Placement as a Gay Alliance Gold Sponsor at all Gay Alliance events.
- ▼ 6 tickets to the Equality Leadership Conference, including the full day workshop and the luncheon.
- ▼ Company name/logo will be prominently placed on the Gay Alliance website and each issue of *The Empty Closet* (distribution of 5000 copies/month) for an entire year.
- ▼ 2 training and/or educational workshops for your leaders and employees to support LGBT educational needs as defined by your Company.
- ▼ Technical support on LGBT issues and assistance on the Corporate Equality Index.
- ▼ Opportunity for exhibit table at key events for your company to display advertising materials.

Silver Sponsorship: \$1,000

- ▼ Placement as a Gay Alliance Silver Sponsor at all Gay Alliance events.
- ▼ 4 tickets to the Equality Leadership Conference, including the full day workshop and the luncheon.
- ▼ Company name/logo will be prominently placed on the Gay Alliance website and in each issue of *The Empty Closet* (distribution of 5000 copies/month) for an entire year.
- ▼ Technical support on LGBT issues and assistance on the Corporate Equality Index.
- ▼ Opportunity for exhibit table at key events for your company to display advertising materials.

Bronze Sponsorship: \$500

- ▼ Placement as a Bronze Sponsor at all Gay Alliance events.
- ▼ 2 tickets to the Equality Leadership Conference, including the full day workshop and the luncheon.
- ▼ Company name/logo will be prominently placed on the Gay Alliance website and each issue of *The Empty Closet* (distribution of 5000 copies month) for an entire year.
- ▼ Opportunity for exhibit table at key events for your company to display advertising materials.

Pride Sponsorship: \$250

- ▼ Your company identified as a Gay Alliance Pride Sponsor at all GAGV events.
- ▼ Company name/logo will be prominently placed on the GAGV website and in each issue of *The Empty Closet* (distribution of 5000 copies) for an entire year.

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