

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

# Annual Meeting

A Report to the Community

June 3, 2009

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley  
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2009

# Education and OutReach

The Education and OutReach Programs of the Gay Alliance strive to touch the hearts and the minds of citizens in the Rochester region. The goal is to create an environment where LGBTI and allied people can be fully integrated into all aspects of society by educating on and about all things LGBTI. Our professional trainers as well as the volunteers in the Speakers Bureau provide training, consultation and education for area schools, colleges, social services and businesses reaching thousands of people each year.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ Increased speaking engagements by 56% from 52 in 2007 to 93 in 2008
- ▼ Education was provided by 22 Volunteer Speakers Bureau Educators and 6 staff.
- ▼ A wide range of topics were presented including: Introduction to LGBT Community, Safe Zone Trainings, Workplace Gender Transitions and Health Care Provider Considerations.
- ▼ Over 3000 people learned LGBTI information from the Gay Alliance Education and OutReach efforts in 2008.
- ▼ Educational partnership with Rochester PFLAG helped to expand education into local communities.
- ▼ Provided information tables at a variety of events from Health Fairs to Diversity Expo's.
- ▼ Gay Alliance provided support to Rochester Pride 2008 planning team, and had a very strong presence at all 2008 Pride events.
- ▼ SpeakOUT Training provided LGBTI educational skills to 37 more community members.
- ▼ Online version of the Gay Alliance Resource Directory (GARD) was updated and expanded, maintaining current and correct information in GARD is now easier.

## 2009 GOALS

- ▼ Host two SpeakOUT Trainings, January and August of 2009.
- ▼ Increased opportunities to provide information tables at local festivals and events
- ▼ Track audience demographics to get a clear picture of who we are successfully reaching, and where we need to focus our outreach.
- ▼ Continue partnership with Rochester PFLAG to reach into communities surrounding Rochester.
- ▼ Provide learning and socializing opportunities for LGBTI community members.

# Community Safety Program and Anti-Violence Project

**Our ultimate goal is to decrease victimization in the LGBTQI communities of greater Rochester through proactive approaches that strengthen individuals and the community. We employ a three-pronged approach: victim support and advocacy; community education and outreach and systems change/capacity building.**

**Our programs address the needs of individuals as well as institutions. From schools and social service organizations, to first responder agencies, emergency rooms and jails, we strive to enhance their capacity to work with LGBTQI individuals in ways that decrease the likelihood of victimization and enhance a sense of community and shared destiny.**

## **2008 HIGHLIGHTS**

- ▼ Documented over 50 incidents totaling 68 victims.
- ▼ Launched new support group for LGBTI Survivors of Violence.
- ▼ Served individuals from all over NYS...Elmira, White Plains, Syracuse, Albany, Brockport, Spencerport, and the greater Rochester/ Monroe County area, as well as Maryland, Atlanta, and Columbus, Ohio.
- ▼ Recorded incident reports and conducted one-on-one peer counseling with 10 youth/young adults. AVP staff regularly interact with youth and their allies during weekly drop-in hours at Gay Alliance Youth Center.
- ▼ 2008 statistics on LGBTI domestic violence and anti-LGBTI bias crimes in our area included for the first time in the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' nationwide annual report.
- ▼ Conducted holiday season outreach blitz on relationship violence using the new It's not "just drama" awareness campaign.

## **2009 GOALS**

- ▼ Increase the number of LGBTI people in the greater Rochester area who report violence of all kinds, especially relationship violence and hate crimes to the Gay Alliance.
- ▼ Partner with WXXI and the Love and Forgiveness Project to host a series of community discussions on the power of love and forgiveness in all their forms.
- ▼ Launch of new violence report campaign including online reporting.
- ▼ Increase the number of victim referrals to Gay Alliance from other service providers.
- ▼ Increase the number of individual and organizational resources available to the Gay Alliance program staff and victims through participation in community coalitions.
- ▼ Participate in Crime Victims Month and the Annual Crime Victims Rally.
- ▼ Develop AVP "Street Team" volunteer program. Utilize members of the Out For Justice Group to recruit and train volunteers.

# Youth & Young Adult Services

The Gay Alliance Youth Program provides comprehensive advocacy and support services to LGBTI and questioning youth and their families in the Rochester region. The Youth Program also provides consultation, intervention and education to other youth service providers in the area, to ensure appropriate LGBTI inclusion and safety.

The 3,500 sq. ft. Youth Center is solely dedicated to providing a safe and supportive place for youth ages 13-23 to discuss issues, make friends, and get support. Services include weekly support groups, drop-in hours, evening and after-school specialty groups, social activities, leadership opportunities, crisis intervention, and short-term counseling.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ Increased attendance during weekly drop-in hours.
  - ▼ Added full-time AmeriCorps Member to the Youth Program staff.
  - ▼ Provided on-site mental health resource consultant to support youth and violence prevention services. Provided free confidential Depression Screening for youth.
  - ▼ Over 225 youth attended the Day of Silence Rally.
  - ▼ More than 25 youth participated in Equality and Justice Day in Albany.
  - ▼ Big Gay Prom attracted more than 200 youth.
  - ▼ Youth raised money for special needs through a talent show and the sale of original Youth Art the 2008 GAGV Annual Meeting.
  - ▼ Increased visibility in the community by participation in events such as ARTWALK Alive!
  - ▼ Established a new program, "Sex and Health Chat" in collaboration with AIDS Rochester.
  - ▼ Participated in "Macy's Shop for the Cause" as a fundraiser for the Youth Program.
- Youth Program placed second place for Youth fundraising group in the Annual AIDS Walk. Expanded Rochester Pride Picnic involvement to include new youth run events.

## 2009 GOALS

- ▼ Increase collaboration with Monroe County Gay-Straight Alliances.
- ▼ Increase the number of hours that Mental Health and Counseling services are available on-site.
- ▼ Increase Volunteer Involvement in Youth Program.
- ▼ Establish COLLAGE group (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere)
- ▼ Increase access to resources for parents of gender-variant children.
- ▼ Host "Ally Awards" in Fall 2009 at GAGV Youth Center.
- ▼ Increase contact with national LGBTI Youth Programs to learn "best practices" and trends in service provision.

# The Empty Closet

**The Empty Closet is New York State's oldest LGBTI Publication. The Empty Closet newspaper and the Gay Alliance website continue to be the primary source of information for the LGBTI community in the Rochester region. Nationally there remains strong support from advertisers and readers for community-based, community-serving publications like the Empty Closet.**

## **2008 HIGHLIGHTS**

- ▼ Published 11 issues of the Empty Closet with average monthly distribution of 5,000.
- ▼ Distributed in more than 65 locations and provided 6 metal racks to new distribution sites.
- ▼ Phase One of web site improvements completed
- ▼ News articles and columns are now posted on the Empty Closet pages of the Gay Alliance website.
- ▼ Selected new printer, The Messenger Post, which lowered publishing cost and enhanced the print and paper quality.
- ▼ Added a color comic strip.
- ▼ Added staff reporter, Ove Overmyer, and restaurant reviewer Paul Hoffman.
- ▼ Hired a commissioned ad salesperson.
- ▼ Streamlined advertising billing and revenue collection processes.

## **2009 GOALS**

- ▼ Redesign The Empty Closet to two sections and new headers
- ▼ Hire professional distribution service to increase distribution to businesses and colleges across the entire upstate region from Buffalo to Syracuse including the Southern Tier.
- ▼ Recruit new volunteers/interns for reporting and photography.
- ▼ Add Stepping Out Column & photos to the "Groups" page of printed version.
- ▼ Enhance website capacity to have photo galleries and photos with articles on the Empty Closet pages of the Gay Alliance website
- ▼ Develop an online advertising program.
- ▼ Further expand staff with additional advertising sales person.
- ▼ Recruit additional photographers and reporters

# CampusOUT

CampusOUT is a student run coalition that utilizes the knowledge and experience of activists in the queer community. CampusOUT acknowledges the strength of student movements to fight for the equality of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexed (LGBTI) people. We use our power as students to tackle the institutions that enable homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, sexism, racism, classism, and the spread of HIV and STI's to persist.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ Expanded the CampusOUT student coalition to include Nazareth College and Monroe Community College. CampusOUT now has active student representatives at 5 area colleges.
- ▼ Organized and facilitated the CampusOUT Conference, a social justice skills conference attended by 150 queer and ally college students.
- ▼ Registered over 500 students through CampusOUT's OUT the VOTE Campaign and Rock the Vote.
- ▼ Established the well-attended CampusOUT Coffee Night, a social networking event for college students the first Tuesday of every month at Equal Grounds.
- ▼ Created and distributed over 300 new marketing materials to campuses statewide.
- ▼ Facilitated our "Equality Begins At Home" a mixed media workshop on 4 campuses, which combined LGBTI social justice history with a call to action.
- ▼ Registered over 50 students to attend the Empire State Pride Agenda's Equality and Justice Day 2009.
- ▼ Facilitated students to organize with activists across the state with the Fair Share Tax Reform Campaign, the successful campaign that raised the personal income tax for individuals that make more than \$300,000 to minimize cuts to healthcare, social services and higher education.

## 2009 GOALS

- ▼ Maintain active membership on area colleges.
- ▼ Engage students to become active CampusOUT representatives at St. John Fisher College.
- ▼ Increase the sharing of best practices and successful strategies between members.
- ▼ Assist University of Rochester students to start an LGBTI center on campus.
- ▼ Expand the OUT the VOTE Campaign in the fall.
- ▼ Work with Metro Justice and the Empire State Pride Agenda to organize a local campaign for LGBTI rights.
- ▼ Increase CampusOUT's "new media" outreach efforts.
- ▼ Facilitate the development of student lead activism training workshops.

# Gay Alliance Library & Archives

The Gay Alliance Library is a circulating and reference collection of over 4,500 fiction and non-fiction books, and 800 magazine and journal titles, as well as video and audio recordings related to LGBTI issues

The Archives house a historic collection of copies of The Empty Closet newspaper, as well as vital paper records and ephemera of the events, organizations, and people important to the Rochester LGBTI community.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ Archives moved into larger location and improved storage.
- ▼ Organized and classified all non-fiction books.
- ▼ Secured desktop computer with internet access which allowed cataloging entire non-fiction collection at [www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com)
- ▼ Provided an information table at the Rochester Pride Festival.
- ▼ Partnered with ImageOUT LGBTI film festival – sponsored documentary “The Life and Times of Harvey Milk” – Librarian Gerry Szymanski spoke before the screening and answered questions and distributed brochures.
- ▼ Participated in a Rochester Regional Library Council Survey.
- ▼ Librarian Gerry Szymanski continued work with the “Shoulders to Stand On” video history project committee.
- ▼ Received and processed over 300 gifts in 2008.
- ▼ 2006 Library holdings - 3806 items
- ▼ 2007 Library holdings - 4539 items
- ▼ 2008 Library holdings - 4884 items

## 2009 GOALS

- ▼ Sort and re-house archival materials in new space – shift magazines and media to archival space.
- ▼ Continue sorting and indexing Empty Closet newspapers.
- ▼ Initiate “book swap” policy with other LGBTI libraries and archives for extra copies.
- ▼ Continue community outreach to build name recognition and to publicize the collection for historical research.
- ▼ Obtain membership in the Society for American Archivist’s Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable.

# Shoulders to Stand On History Project

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.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ Establishment of our interactive website [www.ShouldersToStandOn.org](http://www.ShouldersToStandOn.org) which includes a video with highlights of 2008 Rochester Pride.
- ▼ Developed a blog for members of the Rochester LGBTI community to tell their story.
- ▼ Created a new logo to “brand” the Shoulders to Stand On program.
- ▼ Held an Open House to launch the pre-production, research and fundraising phase of our efforts.

## 2009 GOALS

- ▼ Finish chronicling of the Empty Closet through 2002.
- ▼ Identify 10-20 organizations, agencies, groups or individuals with archival records.
- ▼ Finish chronicling of the New Women’s Times.
- ▼ Continue fundraising activities through grants and private donations.