

Transgender Education Network of Texas

www.transtexas.org

Website Update

Transgender Education Network of Texas has a new website address – www.transtexas.org. This change was made in most part because “tentex” was not as clearly recognized. If you have any bookmarked pages, they should automatically redirect to the new website link. Also, we are in the process of converting email addresses over to the new name. We have already set up several, to include info@transtexas.org and newsletter@transtexas.org.

Community Update

Multi-Faith Pride Service

The Multi-faith Pride Service is **Thursday, June 3rd at 7pm** at Unity Church of the Hills in Austin, TX. (ASL and childcare provided.) Please join with those from across a wide spiritual, sexual identity and gender expression spectrum as we come together to celebrate our spirituality and ourselves. Bishop Flunder, who founded the City of Refuge UCC in 1991 in order to unite a gospel ministry with a social ministry, will be our keynote speaker. City of Refuge is a thriving inner-city congregation in San Francisco that celebrates the radically inclusive love of God. Bishop Flunder preaches a message of action and spiritual growth. Responding to the needs of the AIDS epidemic, Bishop Flunder and her staff opened Hazard-Ashley House and Walker House in Oakland and Restoration House in San Francisco through Ark of Refuge, Inc., a non-profit agency which provides housing, direct services, education and training for persons affected by HIV/AIDS in the Bay Area, throughout the USA and in three countries in Africa. Bishop Flunder is a board member of the National Sexuality Resource Center, an active voice for the Religion Council of the Human Rights Campaign and Co-Chair of the Religious Advisory Committee of the National Black Justice Coalition. She is a founding member of the African American Interfaith Alliance on AIDS.

Upcoming Events

June 3 - 6

El Paso Sun City PRIDEFEST 2010
El Paso, TX
See elppride.org website for more details about the pride festival and events.

June 3 – 7:00 PM

Multi-Faith Pride Service, Austin, TX (see article this page)

June 5

Austin Pride 2010 - see the www.austinpride2010.org website's Events link for more details about the daylong events.

June 12 – Noon – 10:00 PM

San Antonio PrideFest
HemisFair Park, Houston, TX
See pridefestsatx.com for more details about the pride festival.

June 12 – 2:30-4:30 PM

Central Texas Monthly Program,
Genuine Joe's Coffee House,
Austin, TX

June 26 – Noon – 11:00 PM

Houston Pride Festival and Parade
Montrose Area, Houston, TX
See www.pridehouston.org website's Events link for more details about the pride festival, parade, and other various pride events happening this month.

Know of an event in your area coming up in the next month that is worth sharing? We need to hear from other areas in Texas so that we can make this newsletter a statewide resource. Send your information to info@transtexas.org.

Central Texas Monthly Program

June 12, 2:30-4:30 PM. To celebrate Pride month we will be sharing our personal coming out stories. Coming out as whom, you might ask? As whoever we are in all our celebrated forms. Please remember that no one has to speak, and all are welcome. Dinner after at: McAlister's Deli in Northcorss mall. Don't let the name fool you- there are plenty of salads on the menu that can be made vegetarian.

Executive Director's Report

Reasonable Ramblings from the Executive Director

Pride month is upon us and with that, I'd like to talk a moment about shame, coming out and Pride

Shame – I don't have to tell the Transgender folks out there about the shame that many of us carry around. For me, prior to coming out and transition, I had gobs and gobs of shame – truckloads of it. If I am to be honest (and I want to be), I STILL carry some shame – I pray that I don't always. Internalized transphobia is something I think most of us deal with. I know that when I have conversations with folks outside the community and issues come up surrounding my childhood like, “what were you like when you were a little girl?” or “do you remember your prom dress?” I freeze for a moment. I could easily simply say ‘no’ or answer in an ambiguous way and hope that is the end of it. Or I could say, ‘I was NEVER a little girl, but I could tell you what it was like when I was a little boy.’ Many times I chose the former, but I feel I SHOULD chose the latter. What stops me? Shame! Internalized transphobia.

As we do our work in Texas and we educate the public, businesses, the queer community and public officials, this shame will automatically decrease. So, it is my job, as an advocate, to be a bit braver than I have been in the past and say, “you know what? I grew up as a little boy, but now I am living my truth, with integrity and I'm proud of that.” I'm a transgender woman.

Coming out – After dealing with our shame, we need to come out. No, I'm not suggesting that we go around wearing giant sandwich boards proclaiming our gender status. Coming out is a very personal experience and needs to be dealt with gingerly. Once you come out, you can't go back in so it is important to give your coming out a great deal of thought.

A good friend of mine told me that, for her, she comes out to people if they meet one of three criteria: If they **need** to know, if they **deserve** to know, or if I **want** them to know. I believe your doctors and caregivers need to know, the people who care about you may deserve to know and.... Well, you don't need me to figure out the mean of the last criteria. I think those are excellent guidelines and what I have used in my personal coming out experience.

And, if you are living full time in the gender that is different than the one you were assigned at birth, you have the great good fortune of getting to come out twice -- YIPEE. So for you, the coming out process is life long. You get to use those three criteria after transition to tell the people in your life that this has not always been your gender presentation. But, if you have dealt with your shame you can say, “I am transgender and I am proud.”

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Reasonable Ramblings from the Executive Director

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Pride – Proud? Lisa, Really? Proud? Yes. I believe we have many reasons to be proud. I mentioned it earlier, if you have taken the step to transition, you are living your truth. You are living with honesty and integrity and you have nothing to hide. The one unifying thing that binds all of us in the Transgender Community is courage – it takes a great deal of courage to be transgender.

Ok, some of you are saying, “Lisa, you are out of your mind. It doesn’t take courage to be transgender... it is just who I am.” Not true. For many of us, we can’t ‘hide’ the fact that we are transgender and yet, when we walk down the street, we hold our head high – that takes courage. When you muster the nerve to tell your loved ones the truth of how you have felt your entire life – that takes courage. Finally telling yourself that you are no longer going to live a lie – that takes courage. Talking to your HR director, coming up with a plan to transition at work – that takes courage. Not conforming to what society tells you and having a gender expression that isn’t defined as ‘male’ or ‘female’ -- that takes courage. I believe that the trans community is filled with the bravest people that I have had the pleasure to know.

I believe we can take June (and the rest of the year) to pat our selves proudly on the back and say, “Good job. I’m proud of you.” Remember, the stonewall riots, which called attention to the needs of the LGBT community and is credited with being the beginning of the movement, was started by brave transgender people. We, the gender diverse, have much to be proud of. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this incredible community!

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“I take pride in honestly, ethically and effectively representing my clients and their families. My rates are reasonable and I am sensitive to the needs of the transgender and queer communities. “

Please call for a confidential consultation—I am there for you

Contributors to this edition: Lisa Scheps, Rifka Reichler. Edited and designed by Tiana Chandler.

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