

YMCA GLBT



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

DECEMBER 2011

SIXTH ISSUE

www.YMCAGLBT.org

Editor: Scott Umbel

A YMCA RESOURCE NETWORK FOR THE YMCA GLBT COMMUNITY AND OUR ALLIES



IN THE NEWS

GAY IS GOOD: OUR TIPPING POINT

Some say that today's youth don't know of the past generation. Today's youth may not be familiar with the terms Sputnik, pet rock or listening to music in 33 1/3 record formats! They may not know of our rich history, our founders or our leaders. On October 11th of this year, one of our founding civil rights leaders, even before the Stonewall riots, died. His name was Frank Kamany.

Kameny is one of the most significant figures in our movement that some say he started more than forty-six years ago. When we talk about "tipping points," Kameny was the tipping point of the gay rights movement that inspired the lives of every generation that followed. In 1965, Frank and several others held the first gay rights protest. Where? Pennsylvania Avenue, the address? The White House.

If you lived in the times of the 60's—you understand that there has never been a decade quite like the sixties; the diversity, conflicts, hope, anger, the music, the dance crazes and the fun that characterized these years are captured here. The 60s decade was a decade of change. A decade of change where gay rights, publicly was born.

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YOUR FEEDBACK GUIDES OUR PATH

Complete our GLBT Newsletter Survey Online

Please assist our Communications Committee in directing our path in our future GLBT newsletters and messaging. Complete the below online survey: (available to Jan 13th)

[http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/
WEB22E5SMLH596](http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22E5SMLH596)

Thoughts For a Penny?

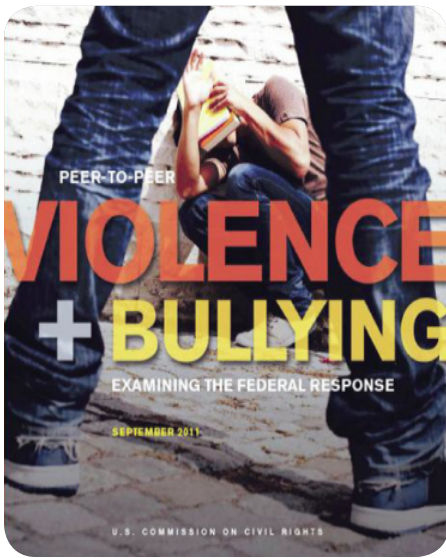
Ok, maybe for free but we could certainly use your feedback. You can start out by completing the above survey to better guide our editing team. Next, become a contributor! Our newsletter is only as strong as our membership. We would really like your Y Story or questions to "Dear Dorothy" to make it truly yours.

SHARE YOUR PRIDE

- 1) Forward this newsletter to your coworkers, friends and Y staff
- 2) Talk about Employee Resource Networks at your next staff meeting
- 3) Join our network and encourage others to join as well (www.ymcaglb.org)
- 4) Post the newsletter in your lobby or on a staff bulletin board

Our Mission Statement

All GLBT individuals are safe, welcomed and valued so that they can fully advance the mission of the Y.



NATIONAL REPORT ON DEFICIENCIES IN ANTI-BULLYING

A new report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights analyzes government efforts to protect minority youth from violence and bullying in school.

The report, entitled "Peer-To-Peer Violence and Bullying: Examining the Federal Response", cites a number of scholars and Williams Institute findings. The report spoke to the mental health consequences of stigma and discrimination based on sexual orientation, and addressed first amendment considerations when schools take action against bullying and violence.

The Commission's findings were:

1. Bullying and harassment, including bullying and harassment based on sex, race, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or religion, are harmful to American youth.
2. Current federal civil rights laws do not provide the U.S. Department of Education with jurisdiction to protect students from peer-to-peer harassment that is solely on the basis of religion.
3. The current federal civil rights laws do not protect students from peer-to-peer harassment that is solely on the basis of sexual orientation.

<http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2011statutory.pdf>

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

SEASON'S GREETINGS & GOOD TIDINGS



Alexander Vaughan
YMCA of Silicon Valley
Director of HR

Many of you may be Facebook members, have access to YouTube, or have videos sent to you from friends or family. It astonishes me the amount of individuals posting videos as a cry for help; whether they are GLBT individuals in crisis or are being bullied. Then we see videos that are inspiring, ones that give us a sense of hope for humanity, and ones where youth are choosing life instead of suicide. We all have to decide individually what this means for us and what it means for the YMCA.

To that end, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Resource Network has developed two resources to help guide your YMCA to becoming more inclusive. The first is the Providing a Safe, Affirming Place for GLBT Youth and Young Adults which helps YMCAs in circumstances where any person is suffering due to bullying or cyber-bullying because of his or her actual -or perceived- sexual orientation. Next is the Involving the Transgender Community White Paper that seeks to educate and provide resources to local YMCAs to work with the transgender community as members, staff and volunteers. While these resources have been available for some time I continue to be privy to the stories Nation-wide where YMCA members, staff and volunteers are being excluded and discriminated against. And, just like the videos prevalent on the internet, I hear equally encouraging stories.

Most recently our Resource Network launched the Affirming YMCAs Program, a 4 step pathway for Ys to become beacons of inclusion for the communities we serve. In order to be recognized, a YMCA needs to meet the criteria of a "Welcoming YMCA" first and then build upon that through achievement of the "Partnering" and "Advocating" criteria to finally attain the designation as an Affirming YMCA. As a Y attains each level of designation, recognition will be given to that YMCA on the GLBT Resource Network website.

Daily the YMCA works to strengthen the foundations of community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender members, staff, and volunteers must not be forgotten as part of our YMCA community. Our Resource Network will continue to advocate so that All GLBT individuals are safe, welcomed and valued so that they can fully advance the mission of the YMCA. We will continue to do not what is easy, but what is right.

Should you have any insights, stories, or thoughts that you'd like to share, please feel free to reach out and email me at avaughan@ymcasv.org. I look forward to our work together. I wish you all a happy holiday season.

Best Regards,

Alexander

MY Y STORY

MORE THAN A CAREER, ITS A CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Becky England
Community Development Director
YMCA Richmond

Currently I am the Community Development Director for the Midlothian Family YMCA in Midlothian, VA. My partner Lisa and I live in Moseley, VA and have been together for 21 years. We have two grown children and are very excited about the arrival of our first grandchild in 2012.

I began my Y career in a very unique way. In 1999 I walked into the A. E. Finley YMCA in Raleigh, NC weighing in excess of 850 lbs. I had retired from self-employment earlier in 1999 and needed something exciting to get me out of the house each day! It was a very intimidating and frightening experience to walk into a fitness facility weighing what I did. The YMCA staff there embraced me and saw something in me that I had ceased to see in myself. One of the biggest motivators of the human psyche is hope. With hope comes the belief that change can occur. With hope comes the drive to make something better for oneself. That being in a bad situation, albeit uncomfortable and painful, is not necessarily a permanent situation but rather a temporary glitch to maneuver through. Without hope, there can be no future. I didn't understand that when I first began working for the YMCA but I've come to realize that more and more each day.

I have varied responsibilities with my position here. In addition to being the Community Development Director I also support three branches in our Association with financial development. We strengthen communities here and by participating in the annual giving campaign every year I am able to tell the Y story to our donors and give them opportunities and ways to volunteer and participate with the children and families that we serve. Not only are we a tight-knit community but we are family.

As part of my "giving back" I talk to various groups throughout Richmond and North Carolina about my weight loss journey and the large part that the YMCA has played in helping me to become healthy and whole once again.

Working for the YMCA is more than a career – it's a choice to make a difference. To make a better tomorrow. To be the one who is offering that small sliver of hope. We can never underestimate the impact that we have on the children and families that enter our YMCAs. Behind every human being is a story – some good, some tragic, some simply unbelievable. It amazes me daily the stories that I'm told and my compassion and respect for the struggles they endure impacts me greatly. The one constant in all of their stories is the hope for change. We offer that many many times per day. Our work will continue to insure that those who need us will always have an open door of hope to walk through. For that reason, I take the responsibility of why we are here very seriously and I consider it an honor and a blessing to be able to offer hope and to show those who enter the YMCA that we are so much more than just a "fitness" facility. Through my work I know that I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be and that humbles me each and every single day. I'll never forget where I've come from and the part the YMCA had in helping me get here.

FINDING FUEL FOR THE FIGHT

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Even before his time, Kameny, a Harvard educated astronomer, fought when he was fired in 1957 from his post at the U.S. Army Map Service for being gay. He challenged the discrimination all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Even though the decision of the Court wasn't in his favor he found the fuel to begin a new fight by organizing in the gay community. He co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., in 1961; and what is now known as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, in 1973. That same year, Dr. Kameny played a key role in moving the American Psychiatric Association to stop calling homosexuality a mental disorder—a shift that helped disarm misleading rhetoric used by opponents to marginalize the LGBT community. But perhaps most importantly to his own experience, he was present in 1998 when President Bill Clinton signed an Executive Order that banned discrimination in federal employment because of an individual's orientation.

We are ever so thankful for him and his work. We, as an employee resource group, must, when addressing the GLBT-inclusion issues in our movement, remember Kameny and his work and use the same pride and compassion to help turn others into allies. "Gay is Good," as he famously put it, and the GLBT community of YMCA leaders must continue to show that to our movement. Thank you Dr. Kameny.

And a final footnote to this story, Dr. Frank Kameny died on National Coming Out Day.

Richard Clegg (Past Chair)
Resource Director, YMCA of the USA

CULTIVATING A NEW WAVE OF BULLY PREVENTION

Many Ys and resource groups like ourselves have shared numerous GLBT resources on bully prevention. These trainings, manuals, books and more have not only focused on anti-GLBT language and behavior but awareness and acceptance of more challenging topics such as gender identity and basic human rights.

Its gratifying to see that we aren't the only torch bearers however. There are a mountain of new bully prevention workshops, trainings, and guides out in the world and we'd like to share a few of the successful ones with you:

ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

A web site launched in conjunction with the Ad Council campaign to fight anti-LGBT language by raising awareness among straight teens about the prevalence and consequences of anti-LGBT bias and behavior in America's schools. The website provides tips on how to support LGBT issues and the opportunity for visitors to take a stand against anti-LGBT language through an interactive pledge form that will allow teens to "say something original," by sharing alternatives to "that's so gay."

www.ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

GLSEN Sports: Changing the Game

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

An incredible project that is immediately actionable for youth programming. Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project's mission is to assist K-12 schools in creating and maintaining an athletic and physical education climate that is based on the core principles of respect, safety and equal access for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. The GLSEN Sports Project fills a critical gap and adds a vital new dimension to GLSEN's work to create a world in which every child learns to accept and respect all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

<http://sports.glsen.org/>

WORLDWIDE MESSAGE

OUR SECRETARY OF STATE TAKES GLBT RIGHTS GLOBAL



You have genuinely missed a piece of our history if you have not seen or read the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's landmark speech on Human Rights Day this past week. No worries though, hop on nearly any resource online and watch the 30-minute speech for yourself. The speech focused on the plight and struggle of the GLBT community on a global scale, frankly discussed our own country's difficulty with intolerance and showed a new power in leadership we haven't seen for GLBT rights.

The following is a press release from the Human Rights Campaign and hrc.org [Click for Video](#)

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, praised Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton for her address focusing on human rights for LGBT people in recognition of Human Rights Day celebrated on December 10. The remarks came in tandem with the White House release of a presidential memorandum outlining a robust strategy to deal with human rights abuses of LGBT people. Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese, who met with Secretary Clinton and international human rights leaders, released the following statement:

"Secretary Clinton distinguished herself as a legendary champion of rights for all people, including those of us who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. In a remarkable speech to an international audience, the Secretary showed the power of American leadership that calls on the world to live up to the idea that all people are entitled to basic human rights and dignity. There is no question that the administration's record of advancing equality for LGBT people has been enhanced by the leadership of Secretary Clinton.

"Along with [the] memorandum by President Obama, it is clear that this administration will not turn its head when governments commit or allow abuses of the human rights of LGBT people. Additionally, Secretary Clinton's message directly to LGBT people around the world that they have an ally in the United States sends a powerful message.

"When speaking with Secretary Clinton, I thanked her for standing beside LGBT Americans and advancing an American foreign policy that is LGBT-inclusive. We were able to discuss how much further we have to go – at home and abroad – to secure the rights of LGBT people. While HRC continues to fight for equality in America, we stand with President Obama and Secretary Clinton to repudiate human rights abuses abroad. As Americans, we understand that no one should be made a criminal or subject to violence or even death for who they are."