



PRIDE in Print

People Respecting Individuality, Diversity and Equality

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www.stanpride.org

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SPC and ASMJC to Present Young Adult Drama on GLBT Issues by Betty Schroder

Harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation remains a problem in California schools. Each year, thousands of middle and high school students are targets. The abuse can be both verbal and physical.

To help counter this, the SPC has partnered with the Associated Students of Modesto Junior College to bring the New Conservatory Theatre Center production *The Other Side of the Closet* to Modesto. This hard-hitting drama will be presented on Monday, October 30, in the Mary Stuart Rogers Building on MJC's West Campus. The play starts at 7 p.m. and will be followed by a facilitated discussion with the cast. Admission is free, and all are welcome to attend.

Set in and around a high school, the play tells the story of five teenagers grappling with issues of peer pressure, youth violence, homophobia, behavior norms, expectations, and identity. Touring Northern California every Fall since 2000, *The Other Side of the Closet* supports a safer school curriculum through which students, teachers, and parents can learn about diversity and acceptance.

According to one Fremont High School student who saw the play, "We felt that the performance realistically portrayed the emotions that teens nowadays might feel with coming out.... It opened students' minds."

A Woodside High School social studies teacher said, "I took my class to see the play and was impressed by their reflection and discussion both immediately after the performance and days later during class. Students were vocal about the need to keep moving beyond mere tolerance, towards celebrating and appreciating those who are different. I was heartened by the entire experience."

The Other Side of the Closet will be presented on Monday, October 30 at 7 p.m in the Mary Stuart Rogers Building on MJC's West Campus. Admission is free. For more information, call the SPC at (209) 567-3121.

Help the SPC Open Its Doors— and Keep Them Open

Securing and maintaining a facility takes money. Not only is there rent to be paid, but utilities, insurance, maintenance, office supplies and a host of other necessities.

With this in mind, SPC leadership knows that we cannot open the doors to the Center's home until a strong and steady revenue stream is in place. For when we open them, we want to be sure we can keep them open for good, in service to our region's GLBT community.

To do this, we need your help. And now it's easier than ever to make your ongoing investment in the SPC.

You can now join others in the **Sustained Giving Circle** by making your donations via Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover.

The convenience of using a credit card also gives you the opportunity of making your donation over time, becoming a Sustaining Donor in the truest sense.

All it takes is your making a monthly pledge of \$10 to \$50—or more—which will be charged to your card of choice. Our goal is to establish a base of 100 donors at \$50 per month. These monies will be used solely for operating expenses—including a facility.

Arrangements can be made for donors who prefer to make their investment quarterly or via check or money order. All individuals in the Sustained Giving Circle will be specially acknowledged in future issues of *PRIDE in Print*. Like all donations to the SPC, monthly gifts are tax-deductible.

We invite you to join today. Become a part of the SPC. Help us open our doors sooner rather than later.

To join the SPC's Sustained Giving Circle, just send us the completed coupon from page 8.

For more information, contact Chuck Silva at 209-567-3121 or c.silva@stanpride.org.

SPC Star Volunteer: Sirivath Mu
by Marilyn Mettler

Community involvement matters to Sirivath Mu.

He began doing volunteer work while he was a student at Modesto High School. As part of their International Baccalaureate Program, Sirivath contributed over 150 hours to elementary school work with classroom computers and main office tasks. He says, "It was nice, actually, because I got to revisit many of my former elementary school teachers."



From an early age, Sirivath's parents impressed upon him the importance of doing well in school. They told him that his social life was secondary to getting a really good education. He is now a biology major at CSU Stanislaus.

Sirivath plans to go to law school at UC Berkeley because he saw the need for advocacy in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community. He chose to volunteer for the Stanislaus PRIDE Center because

he felt it was the best way to help underserved Central Valley GLBTs have more of a voice.

Sirivath began working with the SPC in April, helping with mailings for the Programs and Services Committee. He quickly moved on to larger tasks. This summer, he researched and compiled a comprehensive Community Resources database now available online at stanpride.org. He is currently the project manager for the PRIDE Pages, the SPC's directory of GLBT-friendly businesses and groups.

The SPC thanks Sirivath for his selfless contribution of time and talent in furthering our mission to provide resources to strengthen and support GLBT persons in Stanislaus and surrounding counties.

Let us know if you'd like to help make a difference. Just fill out and send us the coupon from page 8.

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Jeff Gianelli,
with his son
Tristan

Celebrate...National Coming Out Day

by Jeff Gianelli, SPC President

October 11 is National Coming Out Day—a day dedicated to empowering gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) and allied Americans to live openly. In honor of this important annual event, the Stanislaus PRIDE Center is partnering with the Associated Students of MJC to present *The Other Side of the Closet*. This young adult drama by Ed Roy deals with issues central to Coming Out Day and has toured Northern California schools since 2000. (See p.1 article)

Admittedly, coming out today is a little easier than it was just 10 or 15 years ago—even in rural, conservative areas like the Central Valley. There are more allies and more resources. An ever-growing number of people are supportive of GLBT persons, and even more support full legal protections, including marriage equality.

But what's to be gained by coming out? Above all, the relief of no longer having to hide. You're able to love who you choose and live an open and affirming life. Of course, there can still be discrimination to deal with. Some may find themselves more exposed to it than ever, while others find themselves being accepted when they least expect it. Ask anyone who's begun the process of coming out—and it *is* a process, one that can last your whole life long—and they'll tell you that the comfort of being themselves is definitely worth it, no matter what anyone else thinks.

Coming Out Day isn't just for those just now choosing to leave "the closet." We encourage those who are already out to observe the day by speaking about their being GLBT to those who may be unaware. For coming out benefits more than just the individual. The more people who are out, the more visible the GLBT community becomes, and the safer it becomes for all to live openly and honestly. This leads to happier, more productive lives, and a greater sense of well being.

The more the community at large knows us, the more they see us as just like them. We are parents, friends, co-workers, and devoted spouses. We have roles in all walks of life. Nothing about our nature limits us. We are teachers, construction workers, doctors, and bank tellers. Of course, some of us aren't in situations where we can come out. Others are too uncomfortable to do so. This is understandable. Sometimes, it cannot be changed. But those who are in a position to come out will pave the way for others, so that no one is faced with having to hide who they are.

One reason we formed the SPC was to help with this process for those who are ready to begin the journey. We provide the resources and support that will continue to make the Valley a better, safer, and more welcoming place for GLBTs. We'd like to see coming out become easier and easier—until we no longer need observances like Coming Out Day at all.



A Simple Way to Help the SPC

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From the Executive Director's Desk...



I have always loved words. One of my favorites is “community.” It comes from the Latin *communis*, which means “shared by all or many.”

Although each of us in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) community is unique, there is much we share. Most obviously, we share the experience of being discriminated against and marginalized in society. Yet by coming together, we can do much to counter this injustice and transform our country into a place where equality is not just some hollow promise but a constant reality for every single person.

For the name “community center” to mean something, members of the community must have a say. So we asked people: what do you want from a GLBT community center? The answer was *everything!* So we started by locating currently available resources and making that information readily available on our website, stanpride.org. Then we began filling the gaps by providing programs that don’t require our own facility. At the same time, we began work toward securing a home for the Center.

That we have been able to provide programs and services without a facility of our own is due to one very simple fact: community is not *where* you meet. It’s the *people* who meet.

You have a unique opportunity to make a difference—in the quality of your own life as well as that of thousands of others. You can take part in creating a key GLBT resource that is being designed to stay around for a long, long time. You can have a say. You can help us open the doors to a facility that will serve as our community’s home—a place where people can meet and have access to needed information and resources, a place where we all belong.

By working together, we can make the Valley a better, safer, more welcoming place for all. If you’ve yet to make a financial investment in the Center, I encourage you to do so now—particularly by becoming a Sustaining Donor. This will help us finally open the doors and keep them open. If you cannot afford a financial gift, I encourage you to make an investment of your valuable time and talent.

Join the others who are already helping us make a long-standing dream into a reality.

- Lisa M. Verigin, Ph.D.

The Stanislaus PRIDE Center is a member of the *National Association of LGBT Community Centers* and *InterPride*.

The SPC is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit corporation.

This issue of *PRIDE in Print* was created by: Amie Carter, Jeff Gianelli, Marilyn Mettler, Betty Schroder, and Lisa Verigin

If you would like to lend your talents to future issues, please contact Marilyn Mettler at m.mettler@stanpride.org, (209) 567-3121, or send in the response coupon from page 8.

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Thank you for your contribution to the SPC's success and investment in our region's GLBT community!

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Stacy Anderson, David Cerutti & Aaron Kellums, Kendra Erickson & David Turpin, Robert Granderson,
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*Good-Bye Equality Pages,
Hello PRIDE Pages!*

The SPC's regional directory of GLBT-friendly businesses and organizations has a new and improved name—and a new and improved format!

The *Equality Pages* are now the *PRIDE Pages*. We chose this name to link the directory more closely to our mission of providing resources to support and strengthen the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) persons in Stanislaus and surrounding counties.

GLBTs and allies alike want and need to know where they can expect to be treated fairly, without threat of harassment due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Increasingly, they turn to the *PRIDE Pages* to find out. Hundreds view the directory online each month!

We are also pleased to announce the launch of the html version of the directory. This much more user-friendly edition allows people to quickly find GLBT-welcoming businesses and groups by category.

A downloadable PDF version remains available for those who prefer to have a hardcopy of the complete *PRIDE Pages*.

Check out the new *PRIDE Pages* today:
www.stanislauspridecenter.com/pride_page.php.

The SPC Wish List

The Stanislaus PRIDE Center has special need for the items listed below to help us continue to grow and sustain the SPC. If you can help make any of these wishes come true, just fill out and send in the page 8 coupon.

- A **BUILDING** to house the Center
- Sustained **DONORS**
- NAMES** – help us build our mailing list
- VOLUNTEERS** – of all kinds, but especially grant writers and people skilled in IT
- OFFICE EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES**
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From the PRIDE Pages: Vella Farms
by Amie Carter

Vella Farms is more than just a fruit stand. It is a bakery, a coffee shop, a seasonal gift shop, and a place to enjoy family and friends.

It was also one of the first to list in the SPC's directory of GLBT-friendly businesses and organizations, the *PRIDE Pages*.

Located at 5002 Dale Road in Modesto, Vella Farms has been offering fresh, locally-grown produce for more than 40 years. The market sits amongst acres of gardens and orchards, which keep its offerings current with each season's new yields. This means that there is always something fresh and in season when you visit: melons, nectarines, oranges, plums, pomegranates, walnuts, and more.

Vella is best known for their boysenberries, blackberries, and peaches. However, few can resist the aroma of the bakery, which lures shoppers to displays of breads, scones, Danishes, cookies, specialty cakes, and fresh pies.

Vella Farms is a warm, relaxed, and welcoming place. And it offers something new each time you visit. Summers at the market bring evening barbecues, accompanied by live music under the stars. In the fall, Vella Farms becomes a giant pumpkin patch, complete with a corn-stalk maze. For the holiday season, they offer an array of delicious pies and cheesecakes. Come springtime, it is the perfect space for an outdoor lunch as you enjoy a gourmet sandwich or salad.

If you haven't visited Vella Farms, you are missing one of the true delights of Modesto.



Employees Alison Sexton and Vanessa Silva

Is your business or organization part of the PRIDE Pages? If not and you'd like it to be, just let us know by sending us the completed response coupon from page 8.

Making a Difference: Robbie Brinkman
By Marilyn Mettler

Robbie Brinkman has been a familiar face at Modesto Junior College since 2003, when she enrolled as a part-time student. Students, faculty, and staff all recognize her as someone who knows how to get things done.



Shortly after entering MJC, Brinkman became vice president of the Rainbow Generation Club. She helped turn it into the thriving gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT), and allied student alliance now known as PRISM (Pride, Respect, Integrity, Strength, Multiculturalism).

Through the three years she has served as president of PRISM, Brinkman accomplished all the key goals she had set for herself within that organization. When PRISM posters were defaced, she contacted the *Modesto Bee*, doing what she felt was necessary for GLBT students to feel safe on campus. Under her leadership, PRISM also established the "Second Chance Prom." The first two proms were held off-campus. This year, Brinkman was able to help bring the February event to MJC's West Campus.

Brinkman currently serves President of the Associated Students of Modesto Junior College (ASMJC). She was instrumental in the ASMJC's partnering with the Stanislaus PRIDE Center to present the play *The Other Side of the Closet* this October. (See p.1 article) She is also working to revive the Beyond Tolerance Initiative, to ensure that the learning and work environments are characterized by inclusiveness, tolerance and respect for all. In this way, she hopes to bring more diversity and multicultural events to campus.

In addition, Brinkman is implementing a student initiative to lower college fees and attempting to encourage more professionalism in student negotiations. Through such work, she also hopes to show that GLBTs can be effective leaders.

