

YOUTH Zone

If you're between the ages of 15-25 and have something to say, this page is for YOUR stories, commentary, toons, art and pix. Contact lynn@mountainpridemedia.org.

Connor McFadden is Our Hometown Hero

United Way Panel Recognizes Connor's Courage in Williston

Connor McFadden has been one of Outright Vermont's most dedicated youth leaders over the past few years. He has been part of our speaker's bureau, a summer intern, youth board member, and part of planning large events like Youth Pride 2006. Earlier this year, we nominated Connor as our Hometown Hero for all of his outstanding work for Outright Vermont and for his courage this past spring at the Williston Central School.

The United Way Hometown Hero Breakfast, Connor and three other individuals were selected from 127 nominees as the 2006 Hometown Heroes. Connor received a certificate and a special Vermont Teddy Bear in recognition of his volunteer work for Outright. He also "won" Outright a new IBM laptop computer and a \$2,000 donation from the Argosy Foundation.

Thom Fleury, former co-principal of Williston Central School and a former Outright Vermont board member, spoke on Connor's behalf, praising his bravery, dedication, and poise at Williston school this past spring. Several outspoken parents at the Williston school met Outright and Connor with objections to the presentation Outright was to give on anti-gay bullying. After deciding to cancel the presentation, Williston school officials held a public hearing on the issue. Within a month, the presentation was rescheduled.

We are very proud of Connor's accomplishments both here at Outright Vermont and as a senior at Burlington High School. ▼

Press release from Outright Vermont.



Connor McFadden PHOTO: OUTRIGHT VERMONT

Outright Vermont Welcomes New Staff

Three new staff are now working at the new, bigger Outright offices. Lee Konieczka is the new Vista employee in charge of direct services, including the popular Friday and Saturday night groups, as well as Youth Pride. Volunteers are now working with Lee to organize the Masquerade to be held Saturday, October 21st at 7-10 pm at 242 Main in Burlington. Lee is from Michigan and studied sculpture and women's studies before her arrival at Outright.

Katherine Betzer is the new health and wellness coordinator. She works with the Sex with Dan group, an ongoing gathering where participants talk about safe sex and relationships; and Sex Proud, an HIV and STI-prevention group co-facilitated with Executive Director Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak. Katherine also coordinates with other groups on anti-tobacco and suicide prevention efforts. She studied anthropology and art history prior to moving



Katherine Betzer, Franklin Burus, Lee Konieczka and Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak

to Vermont, and is credited with getting the new basketball hoop for Outright.

Franklin Burns is the new outreach and education coordinator who works with Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), and presents "Queer

101" in the schools, including upcoming talks in St. Johnsbury, St. Albans, and Randolph.

Franklin taught 4th and 5th grades before working at Planned Parenthood, where he founded a gay support group. ▼

reaching out

BY WILL HOLDEN

Dear William,
I am a recently out bisexual living in northern Vermont. I have a boyfriend and he's really great (the first one I've ever had out in the open). He's caring and kind, and is really one of the sweetest people I have ever met. I've made a huge mistake though! I had had a crush on his best friend for a while before we began to date, and now she's taking an interest in me. I really do love my boyfriend, but the other day, his friend kissed me. I knew it was wrong, and I wasn't the one to initiate it. But I also did nothing to stop the kiss either. I kissed her back and now I feel awful. I don't know what to do. I don't know if I should tell him what happened or what. Please, I don't want my relationship with my boyfriend to end! — 19/M

In response:

You are indeed in quite a predicament, and one that doesn't have an easy solution. You understand what you did was wrong, and I can tell that you feel really bad about that. Also, it sounds like you really care for your boyfriend, and don't want to hurt him. Try talking to his friend about this. Maybe if you can reach an understanding about what happened, and spurn her advances toward you, then it may be an easier situation to deal with later on. Now, I know that you may not want to, but I believe that it would be best if you told your boyfriend. This is the kind of issue that can fester and become worse over time. Also, if it were to come out later on, it may not be in a situation that you like.

The fact that it was his best friend also complicates things a bit. That's why I find it imperative that you talk things out with her as well. If you can get her to talk to him with you, and if all three of you can reach a sort of understanding, then this may turn out well.

When talking to your boyfriend, just be calm. Try not to get yourself, or him, worked up over this. After all, you didn't mean to hurt him. Even though his friend is the one who started the kiss with you, try not to blame everything on her. You don't want to make enemies in this, and just choose your words carefully. Just tell him that you know it was wrong, and try telling him the things that you wrote in to me. How much you love him, and how caring, kind, and sweet he is.

I hope that this advice helps you, and please do tell me how everything turns out. ▼

If anyone else has a question to ask me, email me at wholden7@aol.com, or call me at 1-802-683-6072.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL PARTY FRIDAY, OCT. 13, 6-7 PM

Outright's staff has doubled this month with the recent hiring of three full-time staff! We will expand our education efforts around the state and increase our direct service work in Chittenden County.



Come meet Katherine, Frankin and Lee at the ICE CREAM SOCIAL!!