



Samara Foundation of Vermont executive director Bill Lippert (l) with Outright Vermont board member David Ryan

Samara Foundation Awards First Annual Grants
■ Eight GLBTQ Agencies Receive Funding

BURLINGTON, VT — A transgender training institute, a Burlington GLBTQ community center, and a traveling display on same-gender marriage are among the projects sharing more than \$20,000 in funding from a Vermont philanthropic foundation.

The organizations behind the undertakings — which cover such areas as youth services, AIDS education and support, media development, community education, and community building — were all recipients of 1999 grants from the Samara Foundation of Vermont.

The eight winners were selected from among 18 proposals seeking more than \$120,000 in

support from Samara in its first regular grant cycle.

A \$2,000 grant to Trans North Country will officially launch the Transgender Training Institute. Funds will support development of training materials and a free training regarding transgender issues for service providers and community members in central Vermont.

The Vermont Freedom To Marry Task Force received \$4,165 for its statewide efforts to increase visibility and education about same-sex marriage and civil rights issues for gay and lesbian Vermonters. Grant funds will purchase two new portable

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Governor's Commission on Women to Honor Baker Plaintiffs
■ Group Calls Freedom to Marry "Issue of Equity"

MONTPELIER — The six GLBT Vermonters suing the state for the right to marry are being honored for their efforts — by a part of the Vermont state government.

On July 8, Nina Beck and Stacy Jolles will accept an award from the Vermont Governor's Commission on Women on behalf of Stan Baker, Peter Harrigan, Lois Farnham, and Holly Puterbaugh, their co-plaintiffs in *Baker v. State*. The ceremony is part of the annual convention of the National Association of Commissions for Women being held in Boston.

"These Vermonters deserve special recognition for their courage, commitment and willingness to open their private lives to public scrutiny for what is simply a civil rights issue," said Judith Sutphen, the commission's executive director. "It is human nature to love, and it is a human right to be in a long-term committed relationship recognized by the state. Same gender couples share the same responsibilities and commitment as married couples, yet they are denied many of the benefits granted to heterosexual married couples."

According to Beth Robinson, co-counsel for the plaintiffs, the State is trying to justify its discrimination in marriage on the basis of gender. The commission is concerned that enforcing predestined roles for men and women in marriage threatens the equal status of men and women in society.

This is not the first time the 16-member commission has publicly voiced its disagreement with the state over this issue. In 1996, it unanimously adopted a policy supporting same-sex marriage. ▼

Vermont Gets Tougher on Hate Crimes

MONTPELIER — Changes to existing Vermont hate crimes legislation that offer additional protection to victims of bias-motivated offenses were signed into law last month.

"This puts teeth in the hate crimes bill," said Governor Howard Dean as he signed Act 56, which took effect July 1.

The legislation provides for relief from abuse orders for victims of hate-motivated crimes to be issued at the request of either the victim or the Attorney General. Such orders are similar to those issued in cases of domes-

tic abuse. A person suspected of a hate crime can be ordered by a judge to have no contact with the victim or anyone else who is or is perceived to be a member of the protected category.

According to this statute, "protected category" includes race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, service in the armed forces of the United States, handicap, sexual orientation and gender identity, and perceived membership in any such group.

Keith Goslant of the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay

Rights looks forward to using this new legislation in finalizing a hate crimes training program for police officers.

The comprehensive training, said Goslant, "will strengthen the commitment to ensuring all citizens are afforded the equal protection from acts of violence that the original hate crimes law intended.

Representative Ann Seibert of Norwich was a chief proponent of the bill. "I think Vermont should be proud of this," she noted. "It's another very important tool in the tool box." ▼

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*Mountain Pride Media and
 Out in the Mountains
 invite you to join us*

*Sunday, July 25th
 4 - 6 pm*

*for a benefit reception
 at the home of
 Hugh Russell
 in Marlboro, VT*

*Special Guest — John Scagliotti
 Producer of **Before Stonewall** and **After Stonewall**
 and creator of PBS's **In the Life***

Light refreshments will be served

suggested donation: \$10

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