

news

**More on Creating Change by Don Eggert
Gill Initiatives Make Change Possible**

A GLBT philanthropic organization has announced a special incentive program to help develop and broaden leadership for the LGBT movement in the next century.

The Gill Foundation announced its 21st Century Initiatives project during Creating Change in Oakland last month.

The initiatives focus on people of color, statewide organizing, and non-urban LGBT community centers. They offer funding \$4.5 million above and beyond the organization's current grants, and are part of an overall 40 percent increase in its grant-making budget for the year 2000.

"The Gill Foundation 21st Century Initiatives represent an effort to identify and focus resources on specific communities within the LGBT movement. In order to ensure these initiatives are a success, we will be working with leaders within those communities to plan and develop strong programs," said Katherine Pease, the foundation's executive director.

Gill is already planning to bring together a diverse group of leaders from organizations around the country to plan and implement the People of Color Initiative. Similar meetings will be convened to help plan and develop statewide organization and community center initiatives in 2000.

The organization pledged \$1 million over five years for projects to increase racial justice through funding and technical

assistance for organizations specific to people of color as well as for multi-cultural leadership development in all LGBT organizations.

Additionally, it earmarked \$1.5 million over five years to develop and strengthen statewide LGBT nonprofit organizations and \$2 million over five years to strengthen existing LGBT community centers and build new centers in non-urban America.

The Gill Foundation currently operates both grantmaking and training programs. The former focuses on providing funds to LGBT and HIV/AIDS organizations. The latter, called the OutGiving Project, offers technical assistance to organizations in the LGBT movement.

"The Gill Foundation 21st Century Initiatives will combine our two strengths, providing both grants and technical assistance. Through this powerful partnership, we hope to be able to create lasting change for people of color, statewide non-profits and LGBT community centers," Pease said.

Software entrepreneur Tim Gill established the Gill Foundation in 1994 as a catalyst, a resource for communities in pursuit of justice and equality, and a way to build awareness of the contributions gay men and lesbians make to American society. Since its inception, the Colorado-based foundation has provided nearly \$13 million to hundreds of community organizations. ▼

California Faces Marriage Issues of Its Own: No On Knight

Opponents of a California ballot item that would make same-gender marriages invalid in the state recently received a boost from activists across the country — and it may get another boost from Vermont in the future.

After two failed attempts to pass a Defense of Marriage Amendment through the state legislature, California will become the first state in the US to put such an issue up for statewide referendum.

During a presidential primary on March 7, California voters will decide on Proposition 22, also known as the Knight Amendment, which reads, "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California"

Creating Change Participants got involved with the No on Knight campaign by pledging and raising upward of \$25,000 for the cause.

On Saturday evening, 54 conference attendees "flexed their political muscles" by canvassing Oakland neighborhoods to educate residents about the potential damaging effects of the Knight initiative.

"The most critical thing we can do to win these kinds of campaigns is to talk face-to-face with fair-minded voters across this state," said Dave Fleischer, the NGLTF Policy Institute Senior Fellow who led the canvass. "When they encounter us at their doors, the fuzzy version of

gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender becomes more clear — it becomes a human being."

Sixty percent of the 518 people canvassed said they would vote against the Knight initiative, while 169 voters were still undecided.

Proposition supporters have endorsements from Catholic and Mormon leaders and financial backing of almost \$1 million from the Family Research Council and the Christian

gay son, who recently came out against his father's initiative in an op-ed piece in *The Los Angeles Times*.

No on Knight campaign manager Mike Marshall believes Knight is attempting to legislate a statewide resolution to the conflicts within his own family. "The Knight Initiative is not, as Pete Knight and its backers claim, about defending marriage. It's about attacking families. We need only look at the

"A positive marriage decision in Vermont could be used to put a face on what same-gender marriage looks like for California voters."

- Tracy Conaty, No on Knight Campaign

Coalition.

No on Knight organizers expect to face a huge media campaign attacking not only the idea of same-gender marriage, but the GLBT community in general.

"Our tactic has been to emphasize that this amendment and the campaign that supports it is unfair, divisive, and intrusive — it is definitely an anti-gay referendum," remarked San Francisco City Supervisor Mark Leno, a leader in the No on Knight movement.

No on Knight has also advocated 'considering the source' of the proposition, amendment sponsor Pete Knight. He has rejected both his gay brother, who died from AIDS, and his

impact of Pete Knight's beliefs on his own family to see what his initiative is truly about and what it would do to families across the state," said Marshall.

A final tactic might be available to the campaign from right here in Vermont.

"A positive marriage decision in Vermont could be used to put a face on what same-gender marriage looks like for California voters, said Tracey Conaty, press secretary for No On Knight.

She added, "We would hope that if any Vermont couple travelled to California, their marriage certificate would not evaporate at the airport, and that they would have access to the same services married people in California have."

Leno noted that the *Baker v. State* case was an important consideration in No On Knight strategizing. "We originally wanted to include 'unnecessary' in our litany of 'unfair, divisive, and intrusive', because currently there isn't a state which does recognize same gender marriages," he said. "We reconsidered this, so that a Vermont decision would not change the focus of our campaign." ▼

Assault Continued from p1

Oakland and around the country rallied the crowd with chants such as "We're human beings, we're not paperwork!"

Riki Anne Wilchins, executive director of GenderPAC, the national lobbying organization working to protect gender rights, spoke out against the inhumane treatment of the assault victim and the underreporting of hate crimes nationwide.

After several speeches, the Oakland police chief told the crowd he would comply with demands for investigation, reprimand, and sensitivity training. He remarked, "Everyone deserves to be treated with respect regardless of their gender or race."

The case is now being investigated by Oakland authorities. ▼

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