

OUT/WEST

August/September 2006

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM



Check Out What's Inside >>>



from 'Love Makes a Family' Exhibit
Image courtesy Family Diversity Projects
See page 3 for details



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Western Equality's Mission:

Western Equality of Grand Junction is creating a more fair community and working for equal rights through advocacy, education, support, referrals, and mobilization of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community, our allies, and the public.

OutWest

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To update your mailing address or cancel your subscription simply send a courteous note to our office, call 970-242-8949, or send an email to info@westernequality.org.

Editor: Mike Mansheim

Contributors: Jeff Basinger, Camille Cary, Mike Mansheim, Shari Daly-Miller, Gloria Perez

Opinions expressed in commentary/op-ed articles are those of the author and may not represent the opinion of Western Equality's board of directors or its members.

If you would like to contribute or comment, please submit to: Mike Mansheim, Editor
Western Equality *OutWest*
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Grand Junction, CO 81501
or e-mail to info@westernequality.org.

WESTERN EQUALITY

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: Noon - 4 p.m.

OFFICE LOCATION

523-1/2 Main Street, #11
Between 5th and 6th streets, on the 2nd floor of the historic Margery Building in downtown Grand Junction

PHONE

970-242-8949

E-MAIL

info@westernequality.org

WEBSITE

www.westernequality.org

Join Western Equality members and board of directors at our monthly potluck, the first Thursday of each month at our downtown Grand Junction office at 6 p.m. For a list of other events, please visit our website at www.westernequality.org.

Support Western Equality — Become a member today!

Member Information:

Name _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership Type:

New Renewal

\$15 single membership

\$20 couple/family membership

\$10 student membership

Additional donation of \$ _____

Note: All new and increased memberships received through December 2006 will be matched by the Gill Foundation.

I want to help! Please contact me!

I'd like to receive information from and about Western Equality via e-mail.

Please make your check payable to Western Equality and mail to:
Treasurer
Western Equality
PO Box 3335
Grand Junction, CO 81502

'Love Makes a Family' Exhibit in Grand Junction

The touring Family Diversity Projects Exhibit LOVE MAKES A FAMILY: Portraits of *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People and their Families* visits Grand Junction throughout August. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out!

At a time in history when GLBT people continue to fight for basic human rights including the right to legally marry, the right to lead a Boy Scout troop, the right to have access to partner health benefits, and the right to be adoptive and foster parents, Love Makes a Family cuts through all the political arguments right to the heart of the issue by showing the love, caring, and connection that are so basic to all families. By allowing viewers to come face-to-face with GLBT people, Love Makes a Family makes visible, in a positive way, the love and caring in these families. This exhibit contributes to the process of dismantling the destructive power of prejudice and intolerance, thus making the world a safer place for all people.

An exhibition of Love Makes a Family, a touring photo-text display created by the award-winning Family Diversity Projects of Amherst, Massachusetts is being featured at the Mesa County Public Library in downtown Grand Junction and at Tomlinson Libraray on Mesa State College's main campus. Portions of the exhibit are also being displayed in a booth during the Thursday evening Farmer's Market on Main Street and at The Coffee Studio.

Photographs by Gigi Kaeser depict a variety of gay, lesbian, bisexual,

and transgender people and their families of all races in familiar family settings. The photos are accompanied by text edited by Peggy Gillespie from in-depth interviews she conducted with each family member — including children like Liza—who speak candidly about their lives, their relationships, and the ways in which they cope with the realities of prejudice, bias, and intolerance on a day-to-day basis.

Love Makes a Family was created as a way of helping to combat homophobia. The exhibit has traveled to over 1000 communities. Ten copies of Love Makes a Family tour nationwide throughout the year to universities, schools, public libraries, corporate headquarters, statehouses, and houses of worship, supporting the grassroots efforts of activists, friends, and allies who are working in their communities to combat the cycle of ignorance and bigotry toward GLBT people. It serves as a divining rod for informed dialogue in communities where GLBT issues are emerging onto the public agenda.

The Grand Valley Marriage Equality Council brought this exhibit to Grand Junction through the support of First Congregational Church, Global Heart Spiritual Center, Grand Valley Interfaith Network, Koinonia Church, Western Equality, John Kiernan, Margaret Pearson, Pennie Rhae, Laura Rose, and Rev. Marlene Walker. We are grateful for their support and the expression of their belief that we should be included among the rest of Colorado's citizens whose families have legal

status. Watch for feedback about the exhibit in the newspapers and add your positive voice to the letters to the editor of each paper.

For more information about the Grand Valley Marriage Equality Council or Referendum I, Domestic Partnership, on the November ballot, call the Western Equality office at 970-242-8949.

You still have time to see the exhibit. It remains on display at the Mesa County Public Library and at Mesa State College's Tomlinson Library through September 1. The exhibit is free and open to the entire community.

For more information call the Western Equality office at 970-242-8949.



Image courtesy Family Diversity Projects

My Journey Begins

Hi, I'm Camille Cary and I'm looking forward to serving

Western Equality members and the GLBTQ community. September 5th is the official date set for me to come on board as the next full-time AmeriCorps staff person!

Gloria Perez has worked very hard the last two years. She has opened up many channels in the Grand Valley for our GLBT youth to have their voice heard. I intend to strengthen those channels. My ultimate goal is to widen acceptance throughout the Grand Valley of our entire GLBTQ community through education. I hope the end result of such education as the *Journey* film, and *Love Makes a Family*, will be true understanding from Grand Valley residents of GLBTQ issues. If true understanding is accomplished from a wide portion of residents, I believe Western Equality will be able to add significantly to its support network.

Most of you don't know me, so I'll share a little bit about myself. I'm finishing up requirements for a bachelor degree in sociology this fall at Mesa State College. Fall 2004 I worked as a Mesa State student on Western Equality's directory project. I was impressed with the staff at Western Equality. The directory project sparked a passion in me to do what I can to make a difference for GLBTQ folk.

I have experienced a tremendous transformation in my thinking within the last two years. This is due in part to courses I have taken such as Sex and Gender and Social Movements. More importantly though, this transformation stems from getting to know people in the GLBTQ community and the staff at Western Equality.

On a more personal level, I feel comfortable sharing with all of you that I'm in the process of awakening to the truth that I have always been different. For years I identified as heterosexual, however, now I know this was not my choice. Rather, I realize I role-played society's norms. I am in a discovery phase and know in my heart I am not straight heterosexual. It feels good to come out about this! I view this AmeriCorps position as an embarkation on a path I was meant to find a long time ago.

As stated, I have many goals I hope to accomplish for the GLBTQ community. Specifically, I want to create outlets for our GLBTQ youth that struggle with suicide so they have a support system. I want all of you to know I consider this position a privileged opportunity that will require a lot of hard work.

May I ask for your support on this personal and public journey?

You can reach Camille via e-mail to info@westernequality.org or by calling the Western Equality office at 970-242-8949.

Our Community Collaboration Continues!

The Western Equality board of directors has made a commitment to continue developing and strengthening relationships we've established with local human service organizations by committing funds to employ a full-time AmeriCorps service member in our organization through September 2007. We're also keenly aware that without the support of our members, sponsors, donors, and funders none of this would be possible! Over the next year our new AmeriCorps staff person will continue to advance the mission of Western Equality, and will especially be committed to issues affecting youth in our community.

Thank you for believing enough in our organization, mission, and leadership to commit the financial resources to continue the important work Western Equality is involved in!

— Mike Mansheim

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Thanks for the Memories, and the Possibilities!

– by Jeff Basinger

Many of you may know that Western Equality has been near and dear to my heart for the last 14 years. We banded together to fight discrimination against gays and lesbians in 1992 in the “Vote No on 2” campaign. We lost that election, but we won when the US Supreme Court ruled that gays and lesbians as a class of citizens cannot be denied equal access to the laws of our country in 1996. That was when Western Equality turned it’s attention to securing equal rights in the form of advocacy, education, support, referral and mobilization of the gay, lesbian and allied community. We have since added bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersexed and curious to our list of people we serve.

I am resigning from the board of directors of Western Equality for two primary reasons. First, I am pooped from the fight of the last 14 years! Second, so that others can step in and fulfill their interests in moving our community towards equality. As the extremist right-wing agenda in the USA continues to mount efforts to marginalize and condemn our lives and families to second-class status, now it is more important than ever to step up and get involved.

We are at incredibly exciting crossroads in 2006. Much has been gained in the civil rights struggle towards equality, and much remains to be achieved so that all of us can live our lives in pursuit of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”.

Western Equality (W=) has accomplished tremendous tasks recently with the full-time staff position through the AmeriCorps program at Mesa State College. This

will continue for another year as we bid farewell to Gloria Perez and welcome Camille Cary. Some of the accomplishments:

- W= has presented “Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium” to over 1200 people in over 40 community settings
- W= is represented on the Suicide Prevention Task Force
- W= is participating in developing a comprehensive health curriculum for public schools
- W= is represented on the Human Services Council
- W= is represented in the Grand Junction Downtown Association
- W= is serving on the advisory board for the homeless youth shelter
- W= has facilitated Hate Crimes training for Mesa County Sheriff’s Department
- W= has created the Grand Valley Marriage Equality Council
- W= regularly attends meetings of the Grand Valley Interfaith Network
- W= is participating in suicide awareness training in middle schools
- W= is cooperating with Coloradans for Fairness to defeat a gay marriage ban & pass domestic partnerships
- W= is collaborating with PFLAG and GSA at Mesa State College
- W= is helping Marillac Clinic become welcoming and affirming for GLBT patients
- W= has interviewed over 50 local professionals for referrals for legal help, medical and mental health services, and welcoming churches
- W= has doubled our paid memberships to over 140 households
- W= continues to publish OutWest newsletter bi-monthly & mail to over 300 addresses in the Grand Valley
- W= has aired over 60 programs on

GLBT issues on KAFM 88.1 community radio

- W= has the only “gay” listing in the phone book
- W= has had our office on Main Street open for 6 years
- W= has established a fabulous website, www.westernequality.org

Western Equality has embarked on a two year capacity building program with the Gill Foundation and JVA Consultants, along with 30 other non-profits in Colorado. Western Equality is cooperating with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Mesa County Health Department and the GLBT Community Services Center in Denver to bring tobacco awareness, education, prevention and cessation to our community. Western Equality is expanding because the opportunities continue being important to our local community!

It has been an honor and a privilege to be part of such a remarkable grass-roots organization that has evolved into a powerful human services provider we are today. I invite you to become involved in Western Equality today in a sincere and dedicated manner so that we can continue to make the Grand Valley safer, more inclusive and tolerant of individuals who fall into minority status, regardless of the reasons. Your skills and resources are what will carry us into a future that includes “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for everyone, not just the privileged elite in power. The problems of today will not be solved by the minds that created them, so bring your talents to the table at Western Equality and make your dreams a reality by getting involved. Imagine the possibilities!!!

OutFest: Western Equality's Largest Benefit Event is Back and Better Than Ever for 2006

Annual Dance Party Moves to Two Rivers Convention Center!

OutFest, Western Equality's largest annual event and a vital fundraiser for other programming, is Friday, August 25 at Two Rivers Convention Center. Doors open at 7pm. **This is an event you don't want to miss!** Get advance tickets at the Western Equality office. Or, buy your tickets for \$15 at the door. 18+ for admission; 21+ to drink.

Celebrate the decade of decadence with your favorite hits, requests, and performances at 10pm. Dance until midnight!



Dinner and a Movie

What makes for a great, gay meal? Mostly good conversation, probably over a nice bottle of wine. A favorite summer dish that's a great starter (or an entire meal) is gazpacho. Plus, the beauty of living on the western slope is the availability of fresh ingredients that make this summer soup so delicious.

In a large bowl, combine all of these ingredients:

3 cups chopped tomatoes, 1 cup peeled and seeded chopped cucumber, 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped, 1/2 yellow bell pepper, chopped, 2/3 cup finely chopped sweet onion, 1/2 cup chopped celery, 1/2 tablespoon olive oil, 1/2 tablespoon horseradish
1/2 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, 1/2 tablespoon rice vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, 2 cups vegetable or tomato juice, 1 clove garlic, minced, 4 tbs. chopped fresh cilantro.
Cover and chill at least 2 hours. Top with avocado when serving.

—Mike

Recipe by Debra Rouse, ND. "Fuel Your Day." [Delicious Living](#) July 2006: p. 30.

and, then, it's time for popcorn and...

If you haven't had a chance to view these movies, here are a few that are "must see". In a serious vein, *Philadelphia*, *Latter Days*, *Ma Vie en Rose*, *Bent*, and *Flawless*. In a less serious vein, *In and Out*, *Birdcage*, *Torch Song Trilogy*, and *The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. Just a few for starters. Hmmm, I may have to make a trip to the video store!

—Gloria

You Can Help End Suicide in Our Community

—by Gloria Perez

On the morning of August 26th people will be gathering at Albertson's Shopping Center (2512 Broadway in Grand Junction) to walk to save lives. This event is called Out of the Darkness. People from communities across the nation will be walking to raise money for suicide prevention programs. The Mesa County Suicide Prevention Coalition has worked with some other local suicide prevention groups to produce this walk at Connected Lakes..

Colorado has one of the highest rates of suicide in the nation and Mesa County has one of the highest rates in the state. We know that suicide is a huge issue in our own

LGBT community. Has anyone of us not had suicidal thoughts or had someone whom we care about think about suicide or actually dying by suicide? That is why I believe it is very important for us to step up and out in this walk. I have been the gay voice to the members of the coalition, asking them to keep us in their awareness as they train adults as well as teens about suicide awareness and intervention skills.

I am asking you to get involved. You can donate, you can solicit donations from people you know, you can walk in the event. I will be there Saturday morning. For more information, call me at the Western Equality office, 242-8949. You can stop in at the office. I am usually

here Tuesday thru Friday. If you see the white sign out front, I'm up here. Someone will be in the office Saturdays from noon to 4:00pm. You can visit the website, www.afsp.org. I would love to have a team of GLBT people and allies. Let's show everyone that we can participate in the life of the community in which we live.

When: Saturday, August 26, 2006
 Registration and check-in 8:00am; Walk starts: 9:00am
 Where: Connected Lakes along the Audubon Trail
 Sign in & registration at Albertson's Shopping Center 2512 Broadway, Grand Junction

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Western Equality Is Radio-Active!

Tune in to **Family, Friends & Neighbors** the 3rd Monday of every month at noon **on KAFM 88.1 Community Radio**. And if you miss a broadcast, don't worry — you can download and listen to past episodes on Western Equality's website! Check it out at www.westernequality.org.

Get Involved! – Small Groups Continue to Form

For the past year, Western Equality has been developing smaller, niche events and groups for folks with specific and similar interests. So far we've formed a book club, activities specifically for women, men's

events, small dances, and more. Now we're discussing forming a **group specifically for same-sex families**. But that's not all – the possibilities are as limitless as the diversity that makes up our

community. Let us know what interests you. If you'd be interested in joining a group or forming one, please call the office at 970-242-8949 or send an email to info@westernequality.org.

Upcoming Men's Events and Activities

August 14

POTLUCK - 6PM
Western Equality Office,
523 1/2 Main, Ste. 11, Grand
Junction, call 242-8949.
Bring a friend!

August 19

RIVER FLOAT - 9AM SHARP
Meet at WCAP Office, 805 Main
Street. Transportation & lunch
provided. Limited to 12 men so
RSVP! Call 243-2437 for more
information.

August 25-28

Grand Junction MANREACH
RETREAT at Camp Kiwanis on the
Grand Mesa. All retreats include 3
meals per day and indoor lodging.
No children / No pets (except for
those assisting the differently abled).
No fireworks. Camping is available
so bring your gear! Visit [www.
manreach.org](http://www.manreach.org) for registration &
information.

September 6

BOWLING 6-8 PM
Meet at GJ Scores & ask for
ManREACH Group

September 11

POTLUCK - 6PM
Western Equality Office, 523 1/2
Main, Ste. 11, Grand Junction, call
242-8949. Bring a friend!

September 16

HIKE - 9AM SHARP!
Dominguez Canyon, Hike & Picnic.
Meet at WCAP Office, 805 Main
Street. Grand Jct.
Limited to 12 men so RSVP! Call 243-
2437 for more information.

October 9

POTLUCK - 6PM
Western Equality Office,
523 1/2 Main, Ste. 11,
Grand Jct, Call 242-8949.

October 27-30

BOULDER MANREACH RETREAT
at Cal-Wood near Boulder.
Visit www.manreach.org for
registration & information.

For more information on any event
contact: Paul Jones 970.361.1282 or
Jeff Basinger 970.243.2437

PRESENTED BY: ManREACH
Building heart-centered
connections and community for
gay/bi/queer men in rural Colorado.
Visit www.manreach.org for your
areas contact information.



Grand Valley GLBT Resource Directory Available

Did you know that Western Equality volunteers have worked over the past two years to interview over 50 local professionals for referrals for legal help, medical and mental health services, and welcoming churches. And our work continues!

If you need a referral for a GLBTQ-friendly doctor, lawyer, counselor, or congregation, give us a call, email, or stop by the office.

970-242-8949
info@westernequality.org
523-1/2 Main Street, #11
Grand Junction, CO

Membership

Double Your Money!

The Gill Foundation has provided Western Equality with a \$3500 challenge grant for 2006. All new and increased memberships and donations will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$3500 by the Gill Foundation.

If you're not yet a member, please complete the membership form on page two of this newsletter. If you'd like to donate, please submit your check to:

Treasurer
Western Equality
PO Box 3335
Grand Junction, CO 81502

Facts on Referendum I: Domestic Partnerships

– from *Coloradans for Fairness*

Colorado voters will go to the polls this November to consider Referendum I, which was sent to the ballot by a strong, bipartisan majority of Colorado lawmakers.

The referendum does NOT authorize gay marriage. Rather, it fixes a hole in state law by clarifying the legal status of committed Colorado couples.

Referendum I simply provides committed couples with basic, common sense, legal protections and responsibilities, including the right to visit a partner in the hospital, make decisions for an incapacitated partner, make funeral arrangements, direct nursing home care and secure basic property and inheritance rights.

It creates a binding, legal agreement between a committed couple to provide the basic responsibilities that they are currently denied.

Thousands of committed Colorado couples are not guaranteed the ability or the responsibility to make decisions regarding medical treatment for one another. Thousands of committed Colorado couples are not currently guaranteed the right to make funeral arrangements for a deceased partner.

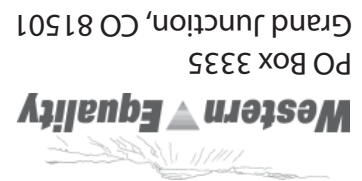
Thousands of committed couples lack access to health insurance benefits through a partner's place of business. Referendum I would also help protect children by ensuring that the courts enforce the responsibility of same-sex partners to pay alimony and child support.

For more information about Referendum I, please contact Coloradans for Fairness locally at 102 North 4th Street in Grand Junction, or visit www.fairequal.org.

Thank You to Our Funders:

Western Equality is supported by memberships, donations, and grants from the Chinook Fund and Gill Foundation. Thank you for your support.





RESOURCES FOR YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY provided locally by Western Equality —

- Rural Library Project (stop by and check it out)
- Resource Directory (referrals for medical, legal, and mental health providers, plus welcoming faith communities)
- Presentations of *Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium* and GLBT 101 (great for schools, businesses, and civic organizations)
- Hate Crime Trainings for Law Enforcement (in collaboration with our friends at the Colorado Anti-Violence Project)
- Radio Show on KAFM 88.1 the third Monday of each month at noon
- Events both large and small
- and much more...

Learn more online or call the office at 970-242-8949

Visit Western Equality On the Web >>>

www.westernequality.org