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Camp Poll

What question would you most like to see Mayor Mark Funkhouser address at the Nov. 7 LGBT Town Hall meeting?

What makes Kansas City stand out as a great place to live for the LGBT community?

Disaster? Hate Crime Would Qualify, Students Decide

November 17, 2007

by [John Long](#)

LGBTQ teen group makes a film with a grant from Camp Fire USA

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Camp Fire USA has just released a DVD titled Youth Out Loud, Responding to Hate Crimes as a Human Disaster. The film was done using a grant from Camp Fire USA, which has been working with the Kansas City Passages LGBTQ youth group.

Camp Fire USA Heartland Council introduces the 15-minute film this way: "The teens of Passages TIA hope that through this film, their stories can bring a face and a personal voice to the reality of hate crimes against the LGBT community in our nation. The teens in this video share their stories to help combat these disasters, to promote open dialogues in communities, to start conversations between parents, teens and educators. Also they hope this film helps legislators and policy makers understand and label these crimes as hate crimes and associating these crimes with the rightful punishment."

Camp Fire USA was formed in 1910. Headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., Camp Fire USA now serves nearly 750,000 children and youth annually. The group, formerly Camp Fire Girls, has been coeducational since 1975. Camp Fire USA serves young people ages 3-21 in different program levels.

This important film developed by Kansas City indie filmmaker Lisa Evans and film student Paul Oldham was screened earlier this month at the Camp Fire National Leadership Conference at the Kansas City Downtown Marriott. It was well-received by the attendees, reports Rick Williams, a gay and out program manager at Camp Fire USA for the Passages Teens in Action (TIA) Club.

The DVD project began with Williams. "The local Heartland Council received grant money from national to do disaster-preparedness programs," Williams said. "And that was done through Learn and Serve America, which is an offshoot of AmeriCorps."

"There were 10 councils initially that undertook this project ..., and the Heartland Council was one of the first 10. The charge was for the Teens in Action Clubs to actually do some disaster-preparedness projects. Well, our Teens in Action Club for Passages decided to focus on the human disaster of hate crimes."

They approached Lisa Evans, a local independent filmmaker who was formerly employed by Camp Fire and also had been involved as a facilitator with Passages. Williams said they told her, "The kids want to do a DVD. They want to do a film about their experiences with hate crimes.' So she got involved, and voila, the project happened. The Heartland Council is embracing the LGBT community, and this is one way we're doing it."

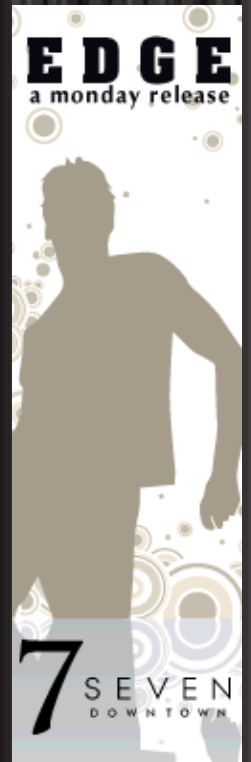
Williams said they are distributing the free DVD nationwide to groups like PFLAG, Human Rights Campaign and at least 50 groups nationally and locally. They will also mail it to gay/straight alliances in

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What can the city government do to be more inclusive of LGBT people?

Can we expect Kansas City to include gender identity in the Human Rights ordinance?

Would you consider making a city government job position responsible for outreach to the LGBT community as well as other minority communities?

Would the city be willing to allocate Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund dollars to help promote LGBT events like PRIDE and/or Out in Westport?

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high schools. The DVD has been shown at Passages, and his Teens in Action Club is planning to debut it at bar Natasha from 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 1. "It will be youth-friendly," Williams said.

He said the second part of the project hasn't happened yet.

"It is for the teens to not only spread that message but also to speak to local organizations and talk about how to combat these particular incidences. They made the film and want to distribute the message in hopes that these crimes will be somehow eliminated."

Besides being an indie filmmaker, Evans works as a freelancer on video projects and works by appointment as a certified massage therapist out of her office in the West Bottoms. She's been doing several promotional videos, including one about David Bowie with Harley Sears, her former co-worker at the Jinsei Center in Kansas City, where she did massage.

One of her film project ideas originated when she met her biological father, whom she grew up not knowing, and filmed it. There's no plan for a release date, she said. "I'm still waiting for inspiration to happen on that."

Evans described her role in the creation of Youth Out Loud, working with the various individuals: "It goes through a process of about 10 weeks. It starts with us doing a discussion about some of the issues in the community, things that they feel are problems and resolutions for those. We narrow it down to style, locations. They plan that."

Evans collaborated with Oldham, who at the time was a sophomore film major at the Kansas City Art Institute.

"From the beginning, we both worked together on the content and how we were going to execute it. And then I did a lot of the editing in the post-production," Oldham said. "We worked with the kids at Passages to create questions of what they wanted to ask and what they wanted to find out about. So we used that input to create questions about what was relevant and what would lead to future discussions."

Oldham's own experience going to high school in Rogers, Ark., prepared him for an understanding of hate expressed against LGBT youth. He came out to his family on his 18th birthday after what he says was a particularly hard process. During high school, he said, "I was accosted by so-called Christians and football players and my classmates. But I just turned that around and wrote my own editorials for the school newspaper on what was wrong with America and its skewed perspective of LGBT and other political issues. And actually it created quite a following, people I didn't know were encouraging. So I tried to turn it into something positive."

Evans described her role on this film as being more of collaboration than of leading the individuals involved.

"I think that it's been an interesting process doing these types of programs. It works best for both of us to do more of a collaborative effort because we're both sharing things about where we've come from or where we are. From my perspective as an artist, it's always an interesting process when collaboration takes place because you don't really know where it's going to go and you're seizing that moment and watching it. I think it's a great bonding [experience]" and the people involved in the film had so many ideas to draw from out there."

For more information on the Camp Fire DVD, contact Rick Williams, rick@kc-campfire.org. Lisa Evans can

be reached at indyoutties@yahoo.com, and Paul Oldham at razetheworld@gmail.com. The Heartland Council's Web site is <http://www.kc-campfire.org/>

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