



LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson Planning Guide - October 2008

Teachers who are planning your lessons for **October** may find it helpful to integrate some of the following, to infuse **LGBTQI2A** cultural awareness into the every day life of your classroom. Especially those teaching history, civics, social studies, family and consumer sciences, or language arts. Item #6 will be useful in teaching writing skills.

(1) What do all those letters mean?! LGBTQI2A?!

(2) A few general dates worth noting for October lesson-planning

(3) Some LGBTQI2 individuals to acknowledge in honor of National Disabilities Awareness Month

(4) October 11 is National Coming Out Day

WHY do people come out?

BUT know that it is also OK to work for human rights in quieter ways

ACTIVITIES teachers and school-based groups might consider

CHECK OUT a bunch of resources

(5) October is National GLBT History Month

(6) Some quotes and song lyrics to inspire your students' journaling

NOTE: You will find recent past email messages **archived** at <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/listserve/index.html> and all of these monthly history messages are **archived** at <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-history.html>

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**(1) What do all those letters mean?! LGBTQ2A?!**

Whether or not their curriculum includes whole lesson plans, teachers of all ages are asked what these words mean from time to time. Or they overhear words used as slurs and need to intervene to take the viciousness out of the language by matter-of-factly defining a term and substituting a respectful term for a derogatory one. Here are suggestions:

- **"L" stands for "lesbian" ...**
  - K-3: The issue is perhaps most likely to arise in discussion about someone's lesbian mom(s). The teacher's role is to give simple, respectful explanations. *"Lesbian' means a woman who loves another woman."*
  - 4-6: *"A woman might think of herself as lesbian if she mostly liked other women, not just as friends, but if she was most likely to want girlfriends rather than boyfriends."*
  - 7-12: *"A girl or woman might consider herself lesbian if she was most often or most intensely attracted (sexually, romantically, emotionally) to other girls or other women ... if that's who her biggest crushes were on and that's who she felt she would want relationships with or fall in love with."*
- **"G" stands for "gay" ...**
  - K-3: The issue is perhaps most likely to arise in discussion about someone's gay parent(s). *"Gay' means a man who loves another man." Or sometimes people use the word 'gay' for a woman who loves another woman, too. She might also call herself 'lesbian.'"*
  - 4-6: *"A man might think of himself as gay if he mostly liked other men, not just as friends, but if he was most likely to want boyfriends rather than girlfriends."*
  - 7-12: *"A boy or man might consider himself gay if he was most often or most intensely attracted (sexually, romantically, emotionally) to other boys or other men ... if that's who his biggest crushes were on and that's who he felt he would want relationships with or fall in love with."*



- **"B" stands for "bisexual" or "bi" ...**
  - K-3: The term doesn't usually come up at this level, but if a child asks: *"Bisexual" means a person could love a woman or a man.*
  - 4-6: *"A person might consider themselves bisexual if they liked guys and girls and could imagine sometimes having a boyfriend and sometimes, a girlfriend."*
  - 7-12: *"A person might consider themselves bisexual if they were attracted (sexually, romantically, emotionally) to people of any gender ... if they got big crushes on both guys and girls and felt they could want relationships with or fall in love with someone of any gender."* Notice we said "any gender," rather than "either gender." The latter implies that gender is binary and not on a natural continuum.
- **"T" means "transgender" or "trans" ...**
  - K-3: There aren't many occasions when the terms need defining at this age. The teacher *does* need to acknowledge gender diversity and prevent harassment by treating all diversity respectfully: *"Not everybody feels as if they are a boy, just because their body might look like a boy's body. Not everybody feels like a girl on the inside, even though their body might look like a girl's body. And, besides, there is no one way a person has to act (walk, talk, play, look) just because they are a boy or just because they are a girl."*
  - 4-8: Depending upon a class' exposure to talk-shows and tabloids, they may raise questions that objectify trans people. The teacher's role is to treat all people with respect: *"To be 'transgender' means that a person just doesn't fit the stereotypes for how you are supposed to be as a boy or a girl. Some trans people take medicine or have operations to change their bodies to fit how they feel inside. Many don't. They just walk, dress, and live in the world in whatever ways feel most honest and comfortable."*
  - 9-12: *"Transgender" is how a person might describe their gender identity if their spirit doesn't match the gender they were assigned at birth or if their most honest gender expression (ways of walking, speaking, moving in the world) transgresses their culture's gender norms (a guy who is very feminine or a girl who is very masculine or a person whose most authentic way of being may change from day to day: more femme one day, more butch another). It's an umbrella term that can include people who might otherwise call themselves transsexual, genderqueer, cross-dresser, MTF, FTM or androgynous."* See <http://www.youthresource.com/living/index.htm> and [http://transgenderlawcenter.org/pdf/beyond\\_the\\_binary.pdf](http://transgenderlawcenter.org/pdf/beyond_the_binary.pdf).
- **"Q" sometimes means "questioning"** or unsure of one's sexual orientation or gender identity or unsure of a meaningful label.
- **Others use the "Q" to mean "queer,"** which is still considered derogatory by some people and often prohibited in schools. Nevertheless, it is increasingly the identity of choice among some LGBT people for its inclusivity and flexibility and because it refuses to reinforce an arbitrarily binary system of genders. Unlike the "N word," *queer* is often a part of agency names and newsletters. At least in some parts of the country, it's no longer disparaging when it's used respectfully, any more than "lesbian" or "gay" or "bisexual" or "transgender."
- **"I" stands for "intersex."** A person might describe themselves as "intersex" if their anatomy or physiology is not typical of either male or female, if they were born with chromosomes, reproductive systems or hormone-receptivity that don't fit neatly into one of two easy categories. There are lots of different intersex conditions (what a doctor might call a DSD or "disorder of sexual development"), but "intersex" isn't usually a person's identity per se. Most people, regardless of whether they have any intersex conditions, identify as either male or female. See: [http://www.isna.org/faq/what\\_is\\_intersex](http://www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex).
- **"2" means "two-spirit" ...** the identity of many indigenous LGBTQ folks, reflecting alternative gender and sexuality in the context of many Native American nations' spirituality. See: <http://www.baaits.org/page3.html>



- **"A" refers to "allies."** In this context, those are heterosexual, non-trans people who stand up to anti-LGBTQI2 stereotypes, jokes, discrimination, bullying and violence. An ally is willing to learn. An ally works to notice the times when the culture confers advantages on them that aren't respectfully offered to all. An ally offers support and respect on an individual basis and may also work to educate others, stop harassment, change policies and laws, and otherwise seek equal justice for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

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(2) A few general dates worth noting for October lesson-planning

October, 2000 - South Korean actor/comedian Hong Sok-Chon comes out on national television and immediately loses his jobs on network TV and radio. More at <http://www.qrd.org/qrd/media/radio/thiswayout/summary/newswrap/2000/N655-10.16.00>

October 1-31 - National Family Sexuality Education Month. More here: http://www.obgyn.net/displayarticle.asp?page=/yw/articles/ppfa_letstalk

October 1, 1989 - Denmark becomes the first country in the world to recognize what would now be called **civil unions** (rather than marriages *per se*). See more, including a sweet photo, at: <http://users.cybercity.dk/~dko12530>

October 8, 2007 - Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day -- This might be a good time to discuss the impact of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. If you want **music** to spark classroom discussion, check out the song *1492* on the *CD I Will Be Your Friend* from Tolerance.org (words & music: www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/songbook/pdf/003_1492.pdf and info on downloading the song or ordering the CD and teachers' guide: <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/songbook/songs/index.jsp>). Here's an article from *Teaching Tolerance* by Michelle Montoya, age 17, about Columbus Day: <http://www.tolerance.org/teens/stories/article.jsp?p=0&ar=63&tnewsletter=tnewsletter-092707> Read about **Indigenous People's Day**, a Native perspective on the history and legacy of Columbus, here: <http://www.carnaval.com/columbus/parade.htm> and here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus_Day (scroll down to "opposition")

October 11, 1884 - Eleanor Roosevelt is born. Famed for her work as a human rights activist and for her outspokenness as first lady, Roosevelt was also bisexual. She had long-term relationships with her husband, Franklin, and her dear friend, Lorena Hickock. Roosevelt cared deeply about humanity. She once wrote, of the need to save the Jewish people of Europe, "*We will be the sufferers if we let great wrongs occur without exerting ourselves to correct them.*" She worked to pass anti-lynching legislation. She wrote a column urging congress not to further abrogate the sovereignty of American Indians. She resigned from the DAR when they refused to let opera star Marian Anderson sing in their hall (because Anderson was African-American) and she arranged instead for her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial. She publicly opposed Apartheid long before world sentiment was united about it. She served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. She was one of the most admired women in America in her day. Biographer Blanche Weisen has said that Roosevelt's bisexuality and her relationship with Lorena Hickock were powerful influences on the human rights work she was so admired for.

October 11 - National Coming Out Day (see item #4, next email)

October 12, 1998 - College student Matthew Shepard dies of injuries sustained when he was beaten and tortured, tied to a fence in the freezing middle of the night near Laramie, Wyoming and left to die. Matthew was openly gay.



October 18, 1956 - Martina Navratilova is born in Czechoslovakia. She will grow up to win 18 major singles tennis titles, including nine at Wimbledon. Martina emigrated to the U.S. in 1975, came out as bisexual in 1980 one of the very first pro athletes to do so, and became a U.S. citizen in 1981.

October 19, 2007 – J.K. Rowling reveals Dumbledore is gay. The Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, beloved by readers of the Harry Potter books, was, according to the author who created him, a gay man. Some folks find that appalling; many find it sweet or unsurprising. Still others are disappointed that Rowling didn't write him a gay storyline: <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6493682.html?q=Dumbledore>

October 24, 1962 - Actor and openly gay dad B.D. Wong is born. He will win a Tony for his performance in *M. Butterfly* and star in the TV drama *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*.

October 29, 7 B.C. - Sappho is born. The poet wrote beautiful poetry to the women she loved. It is because Sappho and her followers lived on the Isle of **Lesbos** that women who love women call themselves "lesbian" to this day.

"Sappho wrote only of one theme, sang it, laughed it, sighed it, wept it, sobbed it. Save for her knowledge of human love she was unlearned, save for her perception of beauty she was blind, save for the fullness of her passions she was empty-handed."
-- by Willa Cather (about Sappho) in 1895

October 29, 2002 - former NFL linebacker Esera Tuaolo Comes Out. Tuaolo, the child of Samoan banana farmers, lives in Minnesota with his life-partner, Mitchell Wherley, and their twins, Mitchell Jr. and Michelle.

October 31, 1896 - Jazz great and Oscar-nominated actress Ethel Waters is born. She'll grow up to be remarkably open (for her time) about her relationship with dancer Ethel Williams.



(3) Some LGBTQI2 individuals to acknowledge in honor of National Disabilities Awareness Month

Raymond J. Aguilera, 31, a gay man who has had cerebral palsy since birth is editor of *Bent* [www.bentvoices.org]. In spring 2007, he told a Bay Area Reporter journalist, *"It definitely seems like the younger generation of queer disabled folks are being more vocal and getting out a lot more, which makes us a lot more visible."*

Charles Coventry was born in 1943 near Glasgow, Scotland, with mild cerebral palsy. He writes about high school PE here: http://www.bentvoices.org/bentvoices/coventry_swim.htm

Comedian **Philip Patston** is Managing Director/Trustee of New Zealand's DiversityWorks: <http://www.diversityworks.co.nz/>. Read an article he wrote for *Bent* magazine, about Disability Culture, Crip Art, Disability Art and Crip Culture here: http://www.bentvoices.org/bentvoices/patston_great_leap.htm

Sharon Kowalski was in a 1983 car accident that left her brain-damaged and quadriplegic at age 35. Her parents denied her any contact with her partner, Karen Thompson, for years. Finally, in December, 1991, the courts granted Karen guardianship, as they would have to a legal spouse: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CE3DA133CF93BA25751C1A967958260>

U.S. Olympic diver **Greg Louganis** has Samoan and Swedish ancestry. He overcame a stutter as a child and struggled with dyslexia, asthma and depression. At age 16 he won a silver Olympic medal and has since won four gold medals and come out as gay and HIV-positive. Louganis is



also an outspoken survivor of domestic violence in his long-term relationship with his ex-partner. See http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Conference2007_Louganis, <http://espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00016086.html> and <http://members.aol.com/gendervariant/sports/athletes/louganis.htm>

Angela Madsen "has been in competitive athletics all her life. Following a failed back surgery in 1993, she immediately began to evaluate her options as a paraplegic in sports. In 1996, Angela decided to explore the sport of adaptive rowing. Almost immediately, Angela discovered a love for sculling and she quickly excelled in the sport. Within three years, she was competing at the regional and national levels. Today, she is an elite rower and competes at the World Nationals level." Angela also plays basketball and surfs. http://www.advocateinsider.com/2007/03/the_clubskirts_.html

Pablo was 17 and in high school when he wrote about himself on the Deaf Queer Resource Center's web site: http://www.deafqueer.org/resources/support/coming_out/stories/pablo.html

Jeff Pulling, who died in May of 2003, was the senior pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in the Valley, in North Hollywood, California. He was a stutterer and active in the stuttering self-help movement and he was an openly, proudly gay man. <http://passingtwice.com/pulling.html>

Dragonsani "Drago" Renteria is a Deaf Chicano/Italian Transman. In 1995 he founded the national Deaf Queer Resource Center <http://www.deafqueer.org> and now serves on the Boards of FTM International <http://www.ftmi.org> and the Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf <http://www.rad.org>. See the story of Drago at: <http://drago.deafqueer.org/>

Marilyn Riedel is a disabled Army veteran. The government says she's not entitled to a VA home loan like other disabled vets because she isn't married ... which, ironically, the government says she *can't* be, because she loves a woman. More at: http://www.journaltimes.com/articles/2004/03/17/local/iq_2773206.txt

NOTE: Find more about and for LGBTQ people with disabilities on the Safe Schools Coalition's web site: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/youth/differently-abled.html>



(3) October 11 is National Coming Out Day

WHY do people come out? Some people don't have any choice. Somehow they've been recognizable as LGBT since they were infants. Their most natural, honest gender expression differed enough from their culture's stereotypes that they were "out" before they knew themselves. But other gay, lesbian, bi (and some trans) people are not particularly different from heterosexual non-transfolk in their gender expression or, at least, they fall somewhere within an acceptable range of "normal" gender roles for their culture at their time in history. And they may *decide* to come out. Why? For all kinds of reasons.

- Because it feels phony to pretend to be someone you're not and nobody can get really close to you when you're pretending.
- Because you can't tell whether the people who love you are just loving your mask or the real person behind it. So it's lonely.
- Because it isn't fair that other people can have boyfriends or girlfriends and you can't or that other people can walk and talk and sit the way they like while you may have to watch every move you make.
- Because watching every move you make can be exhausting; it can sap emotional energy that could otherwise go into being a better student or better at your job.



- Because you may feel as if you're betraying your people by not standing with someone who's harassed or discriminated against for being lesbian, gay, bi or trans.
- Because it may mean preventing yourself from hanging out with people who have this important thing in common with you, if you're worried that people will see you with them.
- Because the opposite of coming out is actively hiding, an act of fear or shame. And at some point, as your fear and shame diminish and your confidence and self-respect grow with maturity, it just makes sense to stop hiding.
- Because your health care providers and counselors can provide you the best of care when they know your whole biological, emotional, social self.
- Because, it's a powerful form of education. Being honest about your sexual orientation or gender identity can dispel people's stereotypes, assuage their fears and open their hearts. It can help those around you appreciate how unjust it is to discriminate on the basis of who a person likes or loves or how masculine or feminine they are. Public opinion polls show that people who realize that they know someone LGBT are more likely to support legal equality.
- Because it's a powerful thing you can do in support of those who aren't ready to be open yet, letting yourself be a role model, demonstrating that there are healthy, happy LGBT people in the world ... yes, even people of your particular race, age, disabilities, etc.
- Because nobody should have to pretend to be someone else in order to get an education, hold a job, get respectful health care, or be loved by their family.

BUT know that it is also OK to work for human rights in quieter ways if it isn't **safe** to be "out" at this point in your life or in your particular home or work environment. So if your school is a dangerous place, if you are pretty sure your family would kick you out or beat you up, if you can't afford the emotional or practical costs of coming out right now, know that you are entitled to walk the journey at your own pace. Nobody else gets to decide **for** you when the costs of silence outweigh the risks of openness. Don't let people guilt-trip you into taking steps you aren't ready for. Someday you will find peace in bringing your whole self to work or school and especially sharing your honest, unmasked self with the people who love you. Until then, know that your life is still a gift to the world. And there are still actions you can take to end homophobia!

MAYBE EVERY GSA SHOULD CONSIDER READING THIS STATEMENT (above) ALOUD, especially if some people's enthusiasm about human rights activism causes others to feel pressure to come out before they're ready. We're each on our own personal journey!!

ACTIVITIES teachers and school-based groups might consider:

- Host a "coming out" assembly where you bring half a dozen diverse LGBT alumni of your school to speak to the student body.
- Create a "coming out" bulletin board featuring LGBTIQ staff, alumni and other heroes and role models.
- Write a "coming out" article for your school paper, co-authored by everyone who is willing in your gay-straight alliance, not necessarily outing any of you in particular, but explaining why secrecy can be so self-destructive to the soul.
- Interview an African-American elder who once had to "pass" as white to get a job or marry the person they loved. Ask about what secrecy was like for him or her.
- Interview someone who has intentionally lost their accent and changed their name to sound more Euro-American and hide their ethnicity. Ask about what secrecy was like for him or her.
- Interview a gay, lesbian, bi or trans elder about times in their lives when they "passed" as heterosexual to get or keep a job or for other reasons. Ask about what secrecy was like.

Consider celebrations that would empower people to come out:

- as gay, lesbian, bi, trans, queer or however they describe themselves ...
- or as the proud child of GLB or T parent(s) or the proud sibling or niece or nephew or grandchild of someone LGBTI or Q ...



- or as the proud parent, step-parent, grandparent or foster parent of someone LGBTI or Q ...
- or as a proud straight ally and advocate for the human rights of GLBTIQ folks ...
- or as a safe adult who respects and admires and will protect youths of all sexual orientations and gender identities!

CHECK OUT a bunch of resources: for preparing your GSA for National Coming Out Day here in PDF form: http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/Coming_Out.pdf and here: http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-coming_out.html and also ...

- **Coming Out: A Guide for Youth and Their Allies (from GLSEN):**
<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1290.html>
- **I'm Coming Out ... I Want the World to Know ... (Or Do I?)** by Jessie Gilliam (from Advocates for Youth):
http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/PUBLICATIONS/transitions/transitions1404_11.htm
- **24 Coming Out Tips** by Clyde Berry of Youth Guardian Services (from elight):
<http://www.elight.org/e/coming-out-tips.shtml>
- **Coming Out (from LGBT Youth Scotland):**
<http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/advice/comingout.htm>
- **Resource Guide to Coming Out (from the Human Rights Campaign):**
http://www.hrc.org/documents/resourceguide_co.pdf
- **Resource Guide to Coming Out for African Americans (from the Human Rights Campaign):** <http://www.hrc.org/documents/AfricanAmericanResourceGuide.pdf>
- **Coming Out as Transgender (from the Human Rights Campaign):**
http://www.hrc.org/documents/2071_HRC_Coming_Out.pdf
- **Candace Gingrich: Talking About It Podcast (from the Human Rights Campaign):**
<http://www.hrc.org/issues/4916.htm> HRC's Senior Youth Outreach Manager Candace Gingrich talks about family, "Friends," and youth activists in an MP3 interview.
- **Gabi Clayton's "Coming Out" page:**
http://www.gabiclayton.com/gcresource_comingout.htm
- **Read youths' coming out stories**, in their own words, here:
http://www.rslevinson.com/gaylesissues/comingoutstories/blcoming_youth.htm



(4) October is National GLBT History Month

There will be a new **30-second video** available to you **free** every day this month honoring a different icon at www.glbthistorymonth.com. At the same site, see **previous** years' videos too.



(5) Some quotes and song lyrics to inspire your students' journaling

"How could I have been anyone other than me?"
-- gay South African rock star, guitarist and vocalist Dave **Matthews**

"And the day came when the risk it took to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."
-- American author of Spanish, Cuban, French and Danish descent Anais **Nin**

*"Don't you ever wish
You were someone else
You were meant to be
The way you are exactly*



*Don't you ever say
You don't like the way you are
When you learn to love yourself
You're better off by far
And I hope you always stay the same
Cause there's nothing 'bout you I would change"*
-- **Joey McIntyre, "Stay the Same"** from the 1999 CD of the same name

*"How could anyone ever tell you, you were anything less than beautiful
How could anyone ever tell you, you were less than whole
How could anyone fail to notice that your loving is a miracle
How deeply you're connected to my soul."*
-- **Libby Roderick, "How Could Anyone (ever tell you, you were anything less than beautiful?)"** from the CD *If You See a Dream*

*"...but here am I;
Once a caterpillar, now a butterfly."*
-- **Pet Shop Boys, "Metamorphosis"**

"I don't think that [the issue of] sexuality and disability is controversial because of genitals. I don't even think it's controversial so much because of pregnancy. The major reason it's controversial is that it would force a massive reevaluation of who disabled people are."
-- **Dave Hingsburger**

"I have said to you to speak the truth is a painful thing. To be forced to tell lies is much worse. "
-- **Oscar Wilde, De Profundis**

"From an early age, we're taught not only bigotry but also to feel helpless and hopeless when confronted with it, as if it is a force of nature--like gravity--that we cannot control. This is the lesson we must unlearn. We must break free of the mindset that tells us we have to accept injustice, intolerance, and bigotry..."
-- **Kevin Jennings, from "Learning to Swim Upstream"**

"The most exciting thing is not doing it. If you fall in love with someone and never do it, it's much more exciting."
-- **Andy Warhol**

"Can I tell you guys something?" Joe says. "Will you promise not to laugh at me or say it's gross?"

"Promise," I say, and Skeezie goes, "Pinky swear," and smiles.

"You know what I want more than anything?"

I am guessing by the way he takes a deep breath that the answer to this is not to be found in any of Joe's usual wish-list categories, such as home decor or celebrities-I'd-most-like-to-be-stuck-on-a-desert-island-with.

"I think about this a lot, but I've never told anybody. Not Aunt Pam or anybody. What I want more than anything is to hold hands with somebody I like.

Joe pulls his knees up then, sharp, and crosses his arms over them, so he can lay down his head, like now that he's told us this terrible secret he doesn't want to see our faces telling him what we think.

"Does that gross you out?" he asks from inside his folded-up arms.

"No," I go, and so does Skeeze.

"If that's how you feel, then you should just go for it, man," says Skeezie, getting all serious. "I mean, you're a pretty outrageous character, JoDan. I never seen you exactly lacking for nerve."



Joe lifts his head. "Right. Can you see me walking down the hall holding hands with Colin the way Brittney holds hands with Will, or Sara with Justin? Not that I'm saying Colin would want to or anything, but it's not fair."

-- **James Howe**, *The Misfits*, pp. 121-2

"Friendship with oneself is all-important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world."

-- **Eleanor Roosevelt**, former first lady and American political leader (who was what we would describe today as bisexual)

"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture of their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up. I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land."

-- **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, clergyman, civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner

"I feel honored that I have the opportunity to be a role model for younger people. I want to educate the kids that it's not OK to hate individuals because they're different. It could be their brother, their sister. It also could be their best friend."

-- **Esera Tuaolo**, retired NFL football player and openly gay partner and dad

"I didn't come out -- I was out. The media was, 'Oh my God, you're gay,' and I'm like yes -- I've been out my whole life to my family and friends. Everyone in the skating community knew. But just because I won the national title, it's like, 'Oh, my God, you're gay.' The judges would say, 'You have to tone down your costumes, your choreography,' and I'm like, 'No . . .' I wanted to skate for the audiences, not for the judges."

-- **Rudy Galindo**, Olympic figure skater

"see, i was afraid of redicule. it totally freaked me out. i remember a few times being made fun of by guy friends in elementary. they said sometimes i would act like a girl, or run like a girl. so i fought hard. everyday to make sure i showed no sign of my femme side."

-- **Ashley**, trans youth who tells her story at www.comingoutstories.com

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

-- **Eleanor Roosevelt**, former first lady and American political leader

"If a boy and a girl are able to go to a dance, then two boys ought to be able to go to a dance."

-- **Virginia Uribe**, now-retired founder of Project 10, the first school-based dropout prevention program for students facing sexual orientation discrimination and harassment

"What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine."

-- **Susan Sontag**

*"Why shouldn't I take a chance when romance passes by?
Why shouldn't I know of love?"*

-- **Cole Porter** (lyrics from the song Why Shouldn't I?)