



Wear Purple and Paint the World Purple October 20

National Coming Out Day October 11, 2010

the reno gay page

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National attention brought to issue

Tragic teen suicides on the rise: cause - gay bullying

by C. Corbet

special to The Reno Gay Page

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender (GLBT) teen suicide has long been an issue. With seven recent GLBT teen suicides across the country, the media has brought the issue to light again.

Imagine being a GLBT teen in today's world, where wanting acceptance is the norm. Add the everyday stresses of just being a teen and combine that with worrying about coming out to family and friends and becoming more aware of one's same sex attraction to another. And, to top it all off is the anti-gay bullying that is directed towards you every day. All of these are most likely what contributes to GLBT teen suicide.

"I am not sure how a 13 year old knows he is gay," Branden Jung, a student at the University of Nevada, Reno and member of Queer Student Union (QSU), said. "How do they know they are gay at that age?"

That seems to be the question, as many are coming out earlier and earlier. It used to be you were teased if you had feminine qualities, which delayed the coming out process

for many. Some would even wait until later in life, maybe even marrying and having kids first because they felt they had no choice back then.

How likely are GLBT youth to have risk behaviors (i.e. suicide, depression and drug use)? According to a study, by the American Academy of Pediatrics, GLBT youth that self identify in high school are more likely, at an earlier age, to engage in these risk behaviors than their peers. It is suggested prevention, educational and health programs are needed to address the issues that GLBT youth experience.

Is there a critical need in Northern Nevada for outreach to local GLBT youth?

"The need for a community center to provide information to gay youth has already been identified as a major need in the Northern Nevada area," Jeromy Manke, vice-president of the Build Our Center (BOC) board, said. "But it will be a

while before we can build and operate a new center."

The BOC board hopes through its capital funding campaign to bring the community together and provide a place to gather for the GLBT youth, as well as members of the community. Local GLBT youth have not had their own place to gather, since the closing of the previous center. For the over 21 crowd, there are seven gay bars to drop into if lonely or feeling alone.

Today in Reno, one resource is the Crisis Call Center (the Center), which handles intervention into possible suicides. Staff at the Center is trained to handle and empathize with callers. It is hard to tell if the caller is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender unless they identify themselves as GLBT, which doesn't always happen and the Center doesn't ask. The Center says they do not get a lot of calls from teen-

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Communities tend to rally around candlelight memorials to remember tragic events. Does that help or just cause pity on poor us making survivors victims too



Seth Walsh, age 13, California



Raymond Chase, age 19, Rhode Island



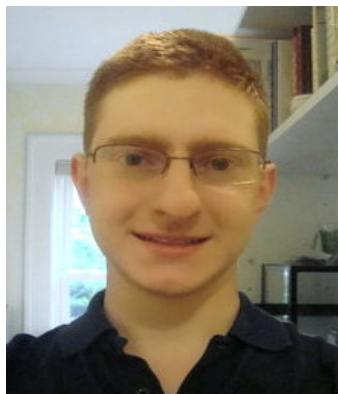
Asher Brown, age 13, Texas



Billy Lucas, age 15, Indiana



Justin Aaberg, age 15, Minnesota



Tyler Clementi, age 19, New Jersey



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agers contemplating suicide. In today's cyber world, most teens are into texting and facebook, more than calling. This has the Center working on different methods to reach out to them. One of those is a texting system where those in need can text and still remain anonymous.

Local Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) groups are another resource available to lend an ear. GSAs are located at various high schools. Check with a local high school or the Diversity Center at the University of Nevada, Reno to find out if there is one at your school.

Nationally, there are a few organizations that a GLBT teen youth can contact for help. There is the Trevor Project, GLBT National Help Center and GLBTnearme.org.

The Trevor Project is a hotline to help those in need. It is the leading, national organization that promotes acceptance and focuses on crisis and suicide prevention, with regards to the GLBT youth. It was founded by the creators of the short film Trevor. The main character, Trevor, is a 13 year old boy who makes an attempt to take his life when he is rejected due to his sexuality. The creators, while looking for an appropriate help line to air during the film and not finding one, decided to form one for the viewers that could relate to Trevor.

Trevorproject.org suggests local services for help and understanding. When searching the site, Reno brought up no services or assistance. Their number is (866) 4UTREVOR or (866) 488-7386. Chat is available on their website.

The GLBT National Help Center is an extension of the Gay/Lesbian National Hotline, which has been around since 1996. They have a national hotline, a youth talk line (for those younger than 25) and an online peer support, that utilizes instant messaging (IM). Their national hotline number is (888) 843-4564; youth hotline number is (800) 246-7743. Their website is: www.glnh.org.

GLBTnearme.org has a web-



the crowd of nearly 1000 turned out to honor and remember Rutgers student Tyler Clementi following the bullying by a roommate he faced.

site that lists names of counselors and other gay related places. According to an article by Psychotherapist Fran Brown (Finding a Gay Affirmative Psychotherapist) on about.com, a GLBT asking for help from a psychotherapist/counselor should make sure that person is gay affirmative. That means they think that being gay is not a problem, but an equal and healthy variation to heterosexuality. If one wants a gay or lesbian therapist, one should not be afraid to ask the sexual orientation of the therapist. Also, make sure that the therapist has extra training on being gay and other related matters and doesn't treat gays like everyone else.

The Queer Student Union (QSU) is planning something in honor of the teen deaths. QSU had talked about a candlelight memorial where victims are memorialized. "The remembrance needs to not only be about the recent victims of anti-gay action, but every-

one that has been affected by these events." Another suggestion was to do something that shows solidarity and support for GLBT teens and their families.

Brittany McMillian, who has felt alone at times and attempted suicide, has created a project to show solidarity. Ms. McMillian calls it Spirit Day and suggests that everyone, everywhere wears PURPLE on Wednesday, October 20, to celebrate and show unity. Her idea comes from the purple stripe on the Rainbow Flag, which represents spirit - the spirit of the community. If everyone, everywhere wears purple it shows a move of solidarity and support to show that even though you might feel alone -- you are NEVER alone. More information can be found on the Spirit Day facebook page.

"Teen suicide is a tragedy," Sam Olson, president of the BOC board said. "We are hoping to have services available again in the Reno area soon.

Solidarity Day of purple Wednesday October 20

It is being called Spirit Day as it takes its name from the purple strip on the rainbow flag, which stands for community spirit. It will be held around the world from members of the GLBT Community and their allies to stand up and let all know no-one is alone.

The solidarity move came from the grass roots movement young Brittany McMillian started on a facebook page to

remember the teenagers who had committed suicide in September.

Members of the GLBT com-

Gayla Film Festival Schedule announced

The Reno Gayla Film Festival has announced the following times for this year's festival in the Theatre of the Student Union building Saturday October 16: **Cruel and Unusual** (11am), followed by

GLBT Youth are not alone there are many people in the community to reach out to for help."

In Northern Nevada, the Medical Examiners Office (The Coroner) is not allowed to give out statistics on minors (those under the age of 18). There is a panel (The Child Death Review Board) that meets monthly to discuss causes of teen deaths and how to prevent them. The meeting is closed to the public. So unless a family or friends come forth and let the community know what happened, it may not be reported as a suicide.

Medical Examiners also don't ask sexual orientation, because there is not a section for it on a death certificate. That means they must be reported through other avenues, such as family or friends.

The Crisis Call Center said in 2000, Northern Nevada had five incidents of GLBT teen suicide that family members and friends made known. There weren't any more recent statistics, for Nevada. Creig Neilson, leader of the Trevor Project, said there were 3 confirmed suicides among GLBT youth in Utah, in September, and another one the weekend of Oct 2-4. This goes to show that GLBT teen suicides are picked and chosen by the national media, thus effecting how the public is informed. Imagine how many GLBT suicides have occurred over the years. For every completed suicide, it is estimated that 100 to 200 attempts are made, according to Suicide Facts at a Glance by the CDC.

Remember, GLBT suicides are only documented if family members or friends come forward and make it known.

munity are asked, in solidarity, to wear something purple.

For more information visit Spirit Day on facebook.

a panel discussion on transgender issues; **Violet Tendencies** (1:30pm); **8:The Mormon Proposition** (5:30pm) and **Undertow (Contracorriente)** (7:30pm).