



Creating Change co-chairs announced

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By Jason A. Michael

Local leaders will spearhead planning of '08 conference

DETROIT - The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, organizers of the Creating Change conference, announced Monday the selection of the four local activists who will serve as co-chairs of the 2008 conference, which is coming to Detroit next February.

The co-chairs, selected largely by Sue Hyde, director of Creating Change for the Task Force, will each oversee approximately three sub-committees. Their responsibility will be to keep planning of the conference on a forward-moving track. The host committee will meet monthly, and sub-committee meetings will take place between host committee meetings.

Here's a look at the leaders selected:

Name: Carrie E.V. Copeland

Who she is: Special Events Manager at Affirmations

What made her want to be a co-chair: I have been attending Creating Change conferences since 1997, looking forward every year to the opportunity to recharge, increase my capacity as a leader, and work beside my mentors and role models. It has always been my dream to be able to contribute to the planning process of this vital event.

What she hopes to bring to the planning process: Many underrepresented portions of our community are places I consider my home, such as within the transgender and genderqueer communities, amongst people with disabilities and fat folks, and with folks who identify as being a member of the LGBT community but are not LGB and/or T identified. Because of this, it is my hope that folks who haven't traditionally been a part of the planning process will feel excited about contributing.

Name: Gabriel Javier

Who he is: Assistant Director of the Office of LGBT Affairs at the University of Michigan

What made him want to be a co-chair: I have a passion for moving the struggle for LGBTQ rights forward, especially amongst college-aged LGBTQ people. It is so important that people have opportunities like Creating Change to be empowered and armed with the tools to enact change in their communities.

What he hopes to bring to the planning process: I think some of my greatest assets lie in relationship building and with communicating with a wide range of people. I really look forward to bringing my own unique, creative brand of energy and viewpoint to the Creating Change '08 planning process.

Name: Curtis Lipscomb

Who he is: Executive director of Kick - The Agency for LGBT African-Americans; co-founder of Detroit Black Gay Pride, advocate for the Wayne State University School of Medicine HIV/AIDS Program Office.

What made him want to be a co-chair: I want the LGBT community to grow, and what better opportunity than to be a part of the Creating Change Conference and participate and give on this level! I am devoted to our community and I want it to stay empowered!

What he hopes to bring to the planning process: In my experience of providing information, offering unique services, event fundraising and doing community organizing for the past 15 years, I envision giving an often overlooked community the opportunity to have a "seat at the table" and voice their concerns and to participate in this 'event of change.'

Name: Kate Runyon

Who she is: Director of the LGBT Issues Program of the American Friends Service Committee for Michigan

What made her want to be a co-chair: I am most excited to have this event in Detroit and to lend a bright light of optimism and energy. I want to share with the Creating Change community that Southeastern Michigan has great people and great community, despite some of the stereotyping that still happens and in spite of some of the difficulties that we are currently facing.

What she hopes to bring to the planning process: I am able to be realistic and have a bottom line focus on how much energy and time it will take to make plans for the conference and implement them. I also have in mind to accomplish this in a way that assists our community here in Michigan to deepen our relationships with each other and with our guests from around the country so that our community is enhanced as a result of Creating Change being in Detroit.

For her part, Hyde is thrilled with the lineup.

"We were blessed with the largest candidate pool for co-chairs for the host committee that we've ever had," she said. "It was geographically diverse. It was racially diverse, and it was gender diverse. Our four co-chairs comprise a leadership team that represents what we think are very important groupings in the state of Michigan. We did not limit ourselves to metro Detroit, which we think is very important, because you have a very organized state.

"We think that our leadership team is energized and represents the strong leadership in Michigan. We are excited to be working with them, and we look forward to a great host committee that will help us make Creating Change 2008 the most successful Creating Change ever."

The first meeting of the 2008 Creating Change Host Committee will take place at the Community Pride Building in Ferndale on Wednesday, May 23, beginning at 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.creatingchange.org.