

# Newsletter

## About ET

EqualityToledo works for equality for all Ohioans regardless of their marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression through education, anti-defamation efforts, and activism.

## Our Work

### SAFE SCHOOLS PROJECT

The Safe Schools Project strives, through education and advocacy, to create a culture of safety that will make Ohio schools free from harassment, bullying, and other forms of violence against any student or group of students.

### FAITH & FAIRNESS INITIATIVE

EqualityToledo created the Faith and Fairness initiative to promote understanding and empower fair-minded people of faith to speak from their rich faith traditions about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality.

### EQUALITY @ WORK

Because they recognize that eliminating discrimination is good for business, more companies and institutions are extending their anti-discrimination policies to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees. ET works to promote and advocate for such policies in the Toledo area.

**EDUCATING** our community about issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and unmarried persons.

**BUILDING COALITIONS** of individuals and groups in Northwest Ohio who share our mission.

**NETWORKING** and cooperating with other local, state, and national non-profit groups that are dedicated to working for equality.

## Board of Directors

Sherry Tripepi, Executive Director  
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## Contact Us

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## Welcome from the New Executive Director

It's hard to believe that I have been Executive Director for three months. The time has passed quickly and I've learned so much in this short time. I want to first thank Kellie Duckering for doing a wonderful job as Executive Coordinator for EqualityToledo for the past year as well as thank her for all of her time and patience in training me. I still call her on occasion and she is always very helpful. We wish her well in her new endeavors in Missouri.



I am honored and excited to be in this new position. The past three months have been filled with meeting many new people and reconnecting with others that I haven't seen for awhile. For those that don't know me I am a social worker who has been in the Toledo area since 1983. My life's work has been focused on advocating for social justice for all people, including LGBT persons. I look forward to continuing this work as Executive Director.

The Board has been very busy working on our strategic plan; getting feedback and input from our members and community supporters and envisioning our future directions. I hope that you had a chance to complete our strategic plan survey. As Executive Director, I want to know what you want from EqualityToledo, so please don't hesitate to contact me with your thoughts and ideas.

We have many exciting events schedule for the fall: The annual meeting honoring RAY leader Brenda Spurlin and area GSA leaders, the *Kicked Out* presentation following our annual meeting, the Tucked fund raising event at Outskirts, just to name a few. I hope to see you all soon and meet those of you that I haven't yet had the privilege of meeting. Together, I believe, we can work for equality for all and have some fun along the way!

~ Sherry Tripepi  
 Executive Director, EqualityToledo



## Safe Schools Project targets bullying

Eric Mohat was 17 when he killed himself because of the severe anti-gay bullying he endured at his school in Mentor, Ohio. Just this year, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover of Springfield, Massachusetts and Jaheem Herrera of DeKalb County, Georgia took their own lives because of anti-gay bullying. Both boys were only 11 years old when they hanged themselves because of the cruelty of some of their classmates and the indifference of some of their teachers. All three of these boys were described as bright, creative, and fun-loving, but the suffering was too much for them to handle. These heartbreaking examples of the damage inflicted by bullying reveal only the surface of the problem. Gay kids, or those perceived to be gay, are among the most vulnerable for bullying, right up there with kids who are bullied because of their appearance or some visible disability. According to the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN), nearly 90% of gay schoolchildren report being bullied because of their sexual orientation during the past year. This

is why EqualityToledo initiated its Safe School Project in 2007.

EqualityToledo's Safe School Project is dedicated to helping prevent bullying and educating adults and kids on how best to help targets of bullies. The Project continues to actively train teachers, school officials, and students on the best practices for bullying prevention. Over the course of two years, the Safe School Project has trained over 2,000 teachers and administrators in several school systems, including Perrysburg, Springfield, Bowling Green, and Washington Local. The Project's message is needed more than ever as more and more kids bravely come out to their families, teachers, and peers.

While education and training are a vital part of any anti-bullying program, a more comprehensive approach is needed to achieve any real results. That is why the Project teamed up with State Senator Teresa Fedor to work on strengthening Ohio's anti-bullying law. The Safe School

Project helped research the issues and draft Senate Bill 126, which was introduced in May of this year. The draft proposed by the Safe School Project included an enumerated list of characteristics which make children especially vulnerable to bullying. Among the categories listed were sexual orientation and gender identity. Unfortunately, the current version of the Bill stripped references to any enumerated categories. As a result, EqualityToledo will participate in a collaborative statewide effort, spearheaded by Equality Ohio, to educate our legislators about the benefits of including specific protections for LGBT kids in the bill. The Senate Education Committee is expected to debate the bill during a hearing sometime this fall. The Senate needs to hear from concerned Ohioans who want our children's health and safety made a priority over political homophobia. EqualityToledo will keep you updated on the status of SB 126 and how you can help shape it into a meaningful law.

~ Rob Salem

## E. F. Schraeder to speak on UT campus during EqualityToledo Annual Meeting

Nearly 40% of homeless youth in America are identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning. EqualityToledo and The University of Toledo Office of LGBT Initiatives have collaborated to present a dynamic and compelling program for the October 11th EqualityToledo annual meeting focusing on this issue. This collaboration resulted in the invitation to E. F. Schraeder, one of the voices of *Kicked Out*, who as an LGBTQ youth was forced to leave home as a result of her sexual orientation.

*Kicked Out* is a community based movement that challenges us to stop the cultural silencing of homeless LGBTQ youth, increase visibility, and fight the stigma that exists against queer folks who leave home as teens. The program aims to provide education to participants and challenge the stereotypical face of homelessness in America.

E. F. Schraeder's creative work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Blue Collar Review*, *New Verse News*, and *Haz Mat Review*. Since completing a doctoral program in 2004 (ethics and social justice), she has worked, volunteered, and assisted in community and nonprofit projects ranging from urban art programming to LGBT political organizing. For more information on *Kicked Out*, please visit [www.kickedoutanthology.com](http://www.kickedoutanthology.com) and Homofactus Press at [www.homofactuspress.com](http://www.homofactuspress.com).

# KICKED OUT

**Sunday, October 11, 2009**

3:00 pm

*EqualityToledo Annual Meeting*

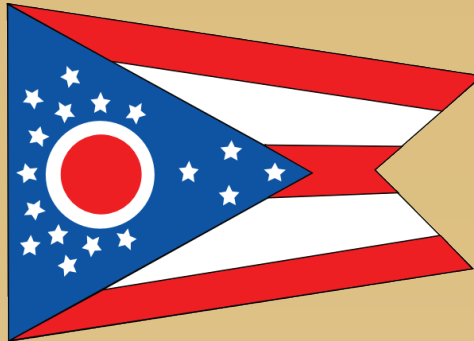
4:30 pm

**KICKED OUT Presentation**

**We hope you will join us at The University of Toledo, College of Health Science and Human Services Multipurpose Room at W. Bancroft and Towerview for this powerful event.**

## Pro-equality bill to make history in Ohio

On May 12, 2009, House Bill 176 (HB 176), the Equal Housing and Employment Act (EHEA), was introduced into the Ohio House of Representatives with bi-partisan support. The EHEA would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the existing non-discrimination law in Ohio, Ohio Revised Code 4112. The bill has exceptions for religious organizations and businesses that are primarily religious in nature, applies only to companies of more than 15 employees (current law applies to 5 or more), and does not have any affirmative action provisions.



If you can, please plan to attend so we can “fill the gallery” that day. If you’d like to receive special “Update” emails, follow this link to sign up: <http://eqfed.org/equalityohio/join.tcl>.

Right now you can help by sending your legislator an email or calling them and asking them to vote YES on HB 176.

For the first time in Ohio history a pro-equality bill was voted on in the Ohio General Assembly when on June 17, 2009, the State Government Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives voted 8-5 to send the bill to the floor with their recommendation to pass it. The budget crisis that occurred in late June prevented the bill from being voted on by the full House prior to their summer recess.

This summer, Shaker Heights and Hamilton County have both passed resolutions and/or signed letters supporting HB 176, Cleveland Heights added gender identity to their housing non-discrimination ordinance, and Bowling Green City Council passed non-discrimination ordinances for employment, public accommodation, and housing which includes both sexual orientation and gender identity.

HB 176 may be the first bill voted on when the members of the Ohio House of Representatives return in September. The vote could be as early as Tuesday, September 15, 2009.



**Kim Welter**  
 Director of Programs and Outreach  
 Equality Ohio  
[www.equalityohio.org](http://www.equalityohio.org)

photo by Jetta Fraser

## Support Equality Toledo through Northwest Ohio Community Shares

There are various ways you can donate to EqualityToledo. One is by donating to Northwest Ohio Community Shares. There are 33 employers in Northwest Ohio that include Community Shares in their annual charitable giving campaign which is now underway. NWO Community Shares is a grass roots organization that allows employees to donate money to the agency of their choice; EqualityToledo being one of their member agencies. Their mission, “a partnership of local non-profit organizations that provide additional choices for charitable giving, building a community that works for everyone”. NW Ohio Community Shares is a self-governed organization and fourth largest in the state of Ohio. Visit NW Ohio Community Shares at [www.communitysharesnwohio.org/partners.html](http://www.communitysharesnwohio.org/partners.html) for more information and please consider giving to EqualityToledo through NW Ohio Community Shares.



Kroger has created a program for non-profit organizations called Community Rewards that allows you to designate EqualityToledo as your earning rebate benefactor. It’s simple; just register your Kroger Rewards Card online at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com), using EqualityToledo’s NPO number 81859 and your individual purchases will begin counting towards EqualityToledo. Once you are registered, every time you shop for groceries and swipe your Kroger plus card, EqualityToledo automatically starts earning a rebate.

If you do not yet have a Kroger Plus card, they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger. If you do not have access to the online sign-up method, please call 1-800-837-4483 to learn about the alternative sign-up method.

Thank you for your continued support.

## An Exciting Time



Like all of us in EqualityToledo, I am passionate about social justice issues, particularly LGBT rights. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself to the members to our organization. It is my goal to meet all members of EqualityToledo at our upcoming gatherings and events.

I was born and raised in Chicago to Italian immigrant parents. I enrolled at the University of Illinois for my undergraduate studies and graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2006. During my college and law school years, I took advantage of countless opportunities, including taking classes and being active on LGBT and other social justice issues. After graduating, I relocated to Toledo to work at Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), where I continue my strong passion for social justice. I mainly practice employment, immigration, and civil rights law to low-income agricultural workers throughout Ohio. I fight strongly for my clients' rights, and it's important that we also remember to advocate for ourselves.

Forty years ago, our community was fighting to simply gather together and enjoy each other's company, free from police harassment and intimidation. Today, our movement's goals are much broader, and we are making great strides. The year 2009 has brought some great victories for this movement. Good news in equal marriage has emerged from Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire. At the same time, there are those who want to turn back the clock on LGBT civil rights.

We have the opportunity to further build coalitions and alliances to help educate individuals about our rights and our movement. We have a great network of people and organizations right here in Northwest Ohio. It is an exciting time to be a part of this movement, and I look forward to working with all of you to advance our civil rights together.

~ **Eugenio Mollo, Jr.**  
Board President, EqualityToledo

## Upcoming Events

### Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 11, 2009  
3:00 pm, All are welcome!

Then join us for **Kicked Out**  
from 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Writer, poet, E.F. Schraeder will share her story as one of the voices of *Kicked Out*, an anthology of LGBTQ youth forced to leave home as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity. From rejection to rejoice: hear about her journey toward a family of choice. *Kicked Out* is also a community based movement that challenges us to stop the cultural silencing of homeless LGBTQ youth, increase visibility, and fight the stigma that exists against queer folks who left home as teens.

**Event location: Multipurpose Room  
College of Health Science & Human  
Service, The University of Toledo**

### LGBT History Month

October is LGBT History Month at The University of Toledo! The Office of LGBT Initiatives is proud to present a full calendar of events for students, community and friends. Visit [www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/lgbt](http://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/lgbt) for full details.

### Outskirts presents TUCKED "The Comedy Drag Cabaret"

Saturday, October 24, 2009  
6:30 pm, 1515 West Laskey

Two hours of sidesplitting jaw dropping, absurd entertainment. Tickets are only \$25.00 and includes four course meal from LaScola; with a choice of

- 1.) Prime Rib
- 2.) Chicken Piccata
- 3.) Fettuccine Alfredo.

It also includes two hours of entertainment. The best part is that 10% of the proceeds go to EqualityToledo.

Call 419-304-7865 for tickets or further information.