

2009

acceptance without exception



AFFA

ALLIANCE FOR FULL ACCEPTANCE

2009 was a year of national, regional and local progress for full lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality, even in the face of war, the economic downturn and the battle over health care. It's clear that the election of President Obama was a triumph for the LGBT community, though we realized that navigating this relationship requires a balance of praise with strong rebuttal when necessary.

Marriage equality, while losing on Maine's November ballot and receiving a recent setback in New York, was adopted in Vermont, New Hampshire, Iowa and the District of Columbia. The Connecticut legislature even chose to put its imprimatur on the state Supreme Court decision to grant full marriage equality. And, on January 10, 2010, same-sex couples can legally marry in New Hampshire.

While it's clear that the election of President Obama was a triumph for the LGBT community, we also realized that navigating this relationship requires a balance of praise with strong rebuttal when necessary.

As always, AFFA worked to keep our finger on the pulse of national, regional and local LGBT issues - all in our ongoing commitment to create a more accepting South Carolina, a place where there is acceptance without exception for all citizens. It's with that in our mind and hearts that we respectfully submit our fifth comprehensive Annual Report highlighting our 2009 accomplishments.

As an organization, AFFA experienced growth in both experiences and our numbers. To date, our membership is nearly 500 strong. Our mailing list reaches more than 1,650 homes, and our annual budget exceeds \$150,000 as well as supports one full-time Executive Director, extensive programs, outreach and a multimedia education and awareness campaign.

We thank our members, friends, donors and corporate sponsors for their generous support. It's through that support that AFFA proudly continues the conversation, education and quest for LGBT equality. We look forward to your continued support in 2010 and thank you again for helping us achieve acceptance without exception.

Best wishes,

Board of Directors, Leadership Group & Staff of The Alliance For Full Acceptance

MEDIA

- ✓ The 2009 media campaign channeled the momentum started by NAACP's Julian Bond's assertion that "gay rights are civil rights" and built onto it for a series of thought-provoking and controversial billboards
- ✓ AFFA developed a social marketing program (a YouTube channel for videos, an AFFA Facebook page and a Twitter account) designed to:
 - Create new channels to share important information about LGBT issues and AFFA events
 - Engage and grow our membership and audience
- ✓ AFFA leadership and members wrote letters to the editor published in The Post & Courier
- ✓ AFFA made regular contributions to The Charleston City Paper's Gay blog as well as to the paper's annual "Gay Issue"
- ✓ A member of AFFA's leadership writes "It's Already Out There," a monthly, LGBT-focused column for The Charleston City Paper
- ✓ AFFA leadership made appearances on WCSC Channel 5's Talkback as well as local television shows, The Savage Report and Issues and Answers.

POLITICAL

- ✓ AFFA partnered with SCEC, the ACLU and local legislators to pass legislation that prohibits discrimination in matters of public accommodations and housing to include protection for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Charleston.

COMMUNITY

- ✓ AFFA board and leadership underwent fundraising training
- ✓ AFFA board members attended the Riley Diversity Institute through Furman and one attended Leadership Charleston
- ✓ For the tenth year, AFFA was a sponsor for SC Pride Parade in Columbia, SC
- ✓ AFFA members attended the annual retreat for the South Carolina Progressive Network, networking and planning with other progressive organizations across the state.
- ✓ AFFA leadership and membership participated in Operation Shoebox, providing more than 49 shoeboxes full of goodies to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan combat areas
- ✓ AFFA hosted one of Charleston's largest Dining With Friends parties, raising more than \$12,000
- ✓ AFFA distributed information on female and lesbian health at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure event
- ✓ AFFA was invited to participate in the Ralph H Johnson VA Medical Center Diversity Day
- ✓ AFFA created and administered an online member survey as a way to solicit feedback and set goals for the organization's future
- ✓ AFFA leadership met with leaders of local churches to provide materials for further conversations on welcoming LGBT persons to communities not traditionally seen as welcoming
- ✓ AFFA participated in the South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Organizations conference
- ✓ AFFA participated in Yom HaShoah, sponsored by the Charleston Jewish Federation
- ✓ AFFA continued to offer Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity workshops across the state for law enforcement and social service agencies. AFFA's training was also used extensively by other LGBT organizations outside of SC to train their law enforcement personnel.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- ✓ 2009 was a magical mix of educational and engaging speakers, lively discussions and high-energy social and fundraising events. Many thanks to the companies, individuals, members and volunteers who helped make 2009 a banner year.
- ✓ AFFA planned a series of six program meetings at a *new* location with guest speakers that spoke to member and community issues:
 - Donna Redwing: Senior Advisor for Program and Development to The Interfaith Alliance in Washington, DC, rallied the audience with
 - Susan Dunn, ACLU lawyer and Charleston School of Law professor, spoke about the gay rights in the context of the civil rights movement, using letters to her father, a minister at the forefront of the civil rights movement of the 1960s
 - Brent Childers, Faith America
 - Eric Peterson from SPHRM spoke about diversity and workplace protection
- ✓ 2nd Annual Oyster Roast & Live Auction at Bowen's Island raised more than \$5,000.
- ✓ 2nd Annual Drag King Show at The Chart brought together 200 people from across Charleston and raised \$1,500.
- ✓ The 2nd Annual "A Taste of Equality," boasted keynote speaker and Washington correspondent to The Advocate, Kerry Eleveld, a live and silent auction, delicious fare from more than 10 of Charleston's finest restaurants and raised more than \$30,000
- ✓ AFFA members graciously hosted six Beverages & BS evenings giving folks a relaxed setting in which to meet and network

COALITIONS

- ✓ AFFA partnered with the NAACP to renew the discussion on civil rights, the LGBT community and the African-American community, to establish common ground and find a common language.
- ✓ An AFFA board member also served as board member for the Charleston Young Professionals as well as the the Charleston School of Law Alliance for Equality (a gay-straight alliance)
- ✓ AFFA partnered with community leaders to strengthen and build We Are Family, LGBTQ Youth Support