

VISUALIZE

CREATING A HATE-FREE COMMUNITY

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2001

Turning Ideals into Reality An Open Invitation to Members of Our Community

By **Ashraf Zahedi**, Chair, Network for a Hate-Free Community

April marks the first anniversary of the formation of the Santa Clara County Network for a Hate Free Community. Formation of the Network has been a major achievement for members of the Network and reflects on their continuous efforts and determination to work on hatred and its manifestations. What has brought these diverse organizations and individuals together is their understanding that it is not enough to respond to acts of hatred but to take a comprehensive approach in impeding its development and growth at all levels.

Hate has had a lasting presence in our collective history. It has been generated and regenerated through our complex social web impacting every level of our social relations: personal, communal, and international. The complexity of the making of hatred requires a comprehensive approach in addressing it effectively. All the mediums and channels that have the potential of generating hatred need to be redirected to generate understanding and respect. The complexity of the task indeed makes the ideal of "creating a hate free community" more challenging. Today this is an ideal beyond our immediate reach but not beyond our vision of tomorrow. Many ideals of the past like gender and racial equity are part of our reality today. Ideals can become reality when people believe in them and play an active role towards materialization of those ideals. Public support and involvement are crucial for turning ideal into reality.

Over the past year, the members of the Network have built an organizational structure through which members of community can take part in creating a hate-free community. Five committees were set up to facilitate public participation: an education committee, media committee, community committee, criminal justice committee, and community response committee. These committees are in their early stage of development and can highly benefit from the ideas and insights of community members. We invite you to join the Network and its committees and be a party to turning ideals into reality.

ANNOUNCING: NETWORK COMMITTEES

The Network for Creating a Hate-Free Community announces the establishment of the five subcommittees to implement the Network's 2001 workplan:

- **Media Committee:** to work and have continuing dialogue with editors and reporters about the impact of the media on inter-group relations and hate violence.
- **Criminal Justice Committee:** to assure that local police departments adopt and implement appropriate policies and protocols for taking reports and responding to hate violence and hate crime incidents.
- **Education Committee:** to encourage local school districts to adopt and implement policies and procedures for responding and taking reports of hate/bias violence and inter-group conflict.
- **Community Committee:** to provide a supportive environment where victims can report incidents of hate violence and inter-group conflict.
- **Community Response Committee:** to respond quickly to any and all hate crimes/incidents and to develop a follow-up plan.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Safe Schools Coalition

By Debra Dake, Safe Schools Coalition, Rainbow Network and Network Member

In October of 1999, a small group of concerned community members, under the leadership of the Rainbow Committee of the Santa Clara County Bar Association, came together to address the issue of safety in our Schools for all children, families and teachers regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In the next few months, the SAFE SCHOOLS COALITION of the South Bay was off and running.

Today, the Safe Schools Coalition of the South Bay is comprised of nearly 100 students, teachers, parents and school administrators along with representatives from the ACLU, BAYMEC, DeFrank Lesbian & Gay Community Center, GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian Straight Education Network), GSA Network (Gay-Straight Alliance), Santa Clara County Human Relations Commission, LGBAP, NAACP, PFLAG (Parents, Friends & Families of Lesbians & Gays), Rainbow Chamber of Commerce, Rainbow Committee of the Santa Clara County Bar Association, Rainbow Network 4 Community Action, School Linked Services, Social Advocates for Youth, Social Services Agency and other youth advocacy and human services agencies.

On October 2, 1999, Governor Gray Davis signed into law Sheila Kuehl's AB537, the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000. The new law, which went into effect on January 1, 2000, added the categories of actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity to the protected categories of the educational code. This law, though many school personnel don't even know of its existence, now requires schools to make their campuses free of harassment.

Unfortunately, during the law's first year, five incidents of severe harassment in Santa Clara County schools were reported to the Safe Schools Coalition. Members of the Safe Schools Coalition provided crisis intervention and resources to the students, families and schools in these incidents, and was honored to have members from the Network for a Hate-Free Community join us to meet with school officials regarding an incident in the San José School District. All five of these reported incidents were severe enough to result in physical injury or psychiatric hospitalization.

These circumstances, when reviewed in light of the statistics, become exponentially more tragic:

- At least 75% of crimes against gays and lesbians are not reported to anyone
- 97% of public high school students report hearing derogatory remarks about gays and lesbians from their peers -- a student typically hears anti-gay slurs 26 times a day
- Teachers intervene in only 3% of the incidents involving anti-gay harassment
- Approximately 28% of gay and lesbian youth drop out of high school because of discomfort (due to verbal and physical abuse) in the school environment
- 27% of gay and lesbian youth have been physically hurt by another student
- Approximately 38% of the lesbian and gay adolescents who have suffered physical attack also attempt suicide
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among lesbian and gay youth*

Until our society provides a supportive structure for each and every young person, our statistics will remain devastating.

The Safe Schools Coalition meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 5:30-7:30pm in San José. The Coalition is open to any individual who is concerned about the safety of every child in our school system. For more information, or to receive a Resource Guide please call: 408-514-2618 x1054 or email: SBSafeSchools@zdnetwork.com.

(*See <http://www.pflag-phoenix.org/youthstats.html> for sources of statistics)

LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Lieutenant John Hirokawa

The California Department of Justice, as with other law enforcement agencies in the State of California, started noticing a trend in the increase of Hate Crimes in the state of California. In 1998, the California Department of Justice created a commission to study Hate Crimes and recommended methods to improve Hate Crime prevention, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity, suppression of organized supremacist hate groups, victim services, and the efficacy of state laws at preventing and punishing perpetrators of Hate Crimes.

In 1998, the California Department of Justice reported more than 1800 Hate Crimes affecting 2136 victims. Nearly 65 percent of these crimes related to the victim's race, 22 percent to sexual orientation, 11.5 percent to religion, and 0.2 percent to a physical or mental disability. Nearly 69 percent of the crimes are violent. All law enforcement agencies are required to report Hate Crimes statistics to the California Department of Justice. The Sheriff's Office provides monthly statistical information on Hate Crimes.

All California Peace Officers and agencies must meet the requirement set by the California Commission of Peace Officer Standards and Training, also known as P.O.S.T. P.O.S.T. sets the requirements for the curriculum and standards that are taught in law enforcement academies. They also set the standard for the mandatory annual re-certification of various certificates, which must be maintained by all peace officers in the State of California. After a peace officer cadet completes the P.O.S.T academy, most California law enforcement agencies require them to complete a field-training program. Depending upon the agency this is a 3 to 6 month program.

The Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff recognized the need for Hate Crime training several years ago. The Sheriff's Office then implemented a Hate Crime training section, in their field training program. This program is taught to all new deputies. The deputies are taught "14 points to recognize Hate Crimes." Sheriff Laurie Smith recognized an increase of Hate Crimes occurring in the State of California and throughout the country. California has more to lose than anywhere if Hate Crimes begin to spread in our state; nowhere in the world do more people come from diverse backgrounds and live and work together in relative peace. When that peace is punctured by an act of hate, we all suffer and thus, the individual is harmed and others begin to live in fear. Our peace of mind and quality of life diminishes. The threads of trust and values that hold our society together are torn apart.

In November 1999, Sheriff Laurie Smith directed our department to create more efficient guidelines and training for our deputies in responding to Hate Crimes. She recognized that many of these types of crimes were not being recognized as such and were going unreported by the victims. Our deputies had to be more cognizant and sympathetic to possible victims of Hate Crimes. A more intensive training for our deputies has been established, along with more efficient guidelines for reporting Hate Crimes.

Sheriff Laurie Smith made a request to the County Board of Supervisors, that funding be allocated for a Sheriff's Office Hate Crimes Investigator. The Board of Supervisors has approved this position. The Office is now operating from the Domestic Violence Unit supported by Detectives Doug Rogers, Jim Stephens and Leila Sutherland. They were introduced to the Network at its March meeting.

In August 2000, P.O.S.T published the Guidelines for Law Enforcement's Design of Hate Crime, Policy and Training 2000. This document covers the definition of Hate Crimes, Criminal and Civil Laws pertaining to Hate Crimes, Hate Crime Resources, Developing Departmental Hate Crime Policy and Procedures, Hate Crime Incident Check List, Department of Justice Reporting Requirements, and Historical Hate Crime Legislation. The Sheriff's Office is incorporating this document into our current Hate Crimes Training.

HATE CRIME LEGAL UPDATE

By Aaron Persky, Assistant District and Chair, Criminal Justice Committee

Two new laws relating to hate crimes and hate incidents will become effective on January 1, 2001. The first law will require schools and school districts to collect statistics on hate-motivated incidents and hate crimes on the standard school crime-reporting form. Examples of hate-motivated incidents include bigoted insults, distributing hate group literature and circulating demeaning jokes or leaflets. Examples of hate crimes include physical assault, vandalism, and threatening telephone calls. The State Department of Education will aggregate the statistics and make the information available to public agencies and private organizations. The second law authorizes a competitive grant program to fund school programs designed to foster ethnic sensitivity, overcome racism and prejudice, and counter hatred and intolerance.

**" IDEAS ARE NOT MADE TO BE THOUGHT,
BUT TO BE LIVED."
ANDRE MALRAUX**

EVENTS

April 24, 2001 3:45p.m.
Holocaust, Day of Remembrance
Board of Supervisor Chambers

May 2, 2001 10:00a.m.-2:00p.m.
Unity and Diversity Day
Santa Clara County Building, San José

August 23, 2001 7:30a.m.
Women's Equality Breakfast
Wyndam Hotel San José
For more information, call (408) 792-2310

COMMUNITY RESPONSE COLUMN

If you have an opinion to discuss or an event to promote regarding creating a hate-free community or if you are interested in joining our Network please contact us at:

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