

July Highlights

NCTE Field Director Caeden Dempsey trained students at GLSEN's annual conference, *Teaching Respect for All*.

NCTE and Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition co-sponsored *Boston T Party* at Jacques, the historic trans venue in Boston.

Aug and Sept Events

August 6

NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling spoke at the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies.

August 7

NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling, along with several other trans leaders, met with the Human Rights Campaign Board of Directors.
(right)

Sept 3-6

NCTE will be presenting at *FTM 2004: A Gender Odyssey* in Seattle.

Report Anti-Trans Harassment and Discrimination Online

NCTE now tracks hate crimes and incidents of discrimination against trans people. If you have an incident to report please go to the following sites:

Hate Crimes

http://nctequality.org/Hate_Crimes.asp

Discrimination

<http://nctequality.org/Discrimination.asp>

You can also call NCTE at 202.639.332 or email at ncte@nctequality.org to report an incident.

NCTE Applauds HRC Decision to Back Trans Rights Community Looks Forward to Trans-Inclusive ENDA in 2005

WASHINGTON, August 7, 2004 -- The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest LGBT human rights organization, adopted a policy to only support federal anti-discrimination legislation that is trans-inclusive.

A delegation of transgender activists including NCTE Board members Donna Cartwright and Diego Sanchez as well as NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling made a presentation at the summer meeting HRC's Board of Directors to ask for the policy change.

Keisling noted, "This is an historic day for the transgender movement. The LGBT community's most connected organization in Congress has finally embraced transgender rights equally with lesbian, gay and bisexual rights. We are confident that Congress will hear this message."

NCTE has been working with national LGBT organizations to establish a community-wide consensus that transgender inclusion must be non-negotiable in federal legislation. Twelve other national organizations have already adopted such policies.

The decision today caps more than 10 years of work by the transgender community to convince our gay and lesbian allies that we must move forward together. This initiative began in Washington on July 29, 1994 when transgender pioneers Phyllis Frye and Karen Kerin reached out to Senators about our need to be protected from discrimination.

"Today, it seems that the trans community is finally a full partner in the LGBT civil rights struggle," said Cartwright.

Lisa Mottet, Transgender Rights Attorney at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, who also presented at HRC's Board meeting, commented, "We have been proud to work with NCTE and the transgender community to enact laws on the state and local level while also advocating for non-negotiable trans-inclusion in ENDA. We welcome the continuing unification of the LGB and T communities and look forward to working with Congress until a trans-inclusive ENDA passes."

Sanchez said, "I am delighted that HRC agreed to support non-discrimination for my community and me. It is fair and indicative of what the country needs from HRC."

HRC's policy change will enhance NCTE's effort to coordinate education of members of Congress with visits in their home districts during summer recess, which ends August 30. Keisling said, "Now our Congressional Education Teams can incorporate this strengthened support for transgender equality in their Congressional visits. Because HRC is the LGBT community's most significant presence on Capitol Hill, their support is vital for moving Congress forward."

Others in the delegation to the HRC Board meeting included Transgender Law and Policy Institute board members Kylar Broadus, Paisley Currah, Jamison Green and Shannon Minter, as well as HRC activists Reed Bogle and Donna Rose. NCTE appreciates the opportunity to work with such dedicated and wonderful colleagues.

Margaret Cho Provides NCTE with Unique Fundraising Opportunity

Margaret Cho and Cho Taussig Productions, Inc. have provided NCTE with a unique fundraising opportunity. Supporters of NCTE can purchase Cho's DVD "Revolution" online and NCTE will receive \$15 for every DVD sold. Margaret Cho, a comedian whose talent is respected in both the straight and LGBT communities alike, is a friend of the trans community.

Follow the link below to order this DVD:

http://www.goerchant7.com/index.cgi?ST=buy&Action=add&Merchant=chotaussigproductionsincn&ItemNumber=revolution_dvd_NCTE

Florida Court of Appeal Invalidates Marriage; Fails to Recognize FTM Transman as Male

On July 23, 2004, the Florida Court of Appeals overturned a state's trial court verdict in the case of Kantaras v. Kantaras. This is a divorce case between a transsexual man, Michael Kantaras, and his wife who sought to invalidate the marriage and Michael's parental rights by arguing that Michael was legally female. The trial court found that Michael was indeed male, the marriage valid, and awarded him primary custody of their two children.

The Florida Court of Appeals, however, reversed that ruling with a unanimous opinion holding that Florida does not recognize the marriage of transsexual people according to their correct gender identity. It announced its agreement with other courts' "...understanding of the common meaning of male and female ... to refer to immutable traits determined at birth" and declared the marriage invalid, saying, "whether a post-operative transsexual is authorized to marry a member of their birth sex is a matter for the Florida legislature and not the Florida courts to decide." The Court of Appeals sent the case back to the trial court "to determine the legal status of the children and the parties' property rights."

Karen Doering, the National Center for Lesbian Rights attorney who represents Michael, expressed disappointment by the ruling, "It's cruel that transsexual people are allowed to undergo the process of sex reassignment, and then you turn around and tell them, 'you can't have the legal rights, you can't get legally married. Michael Kantaras has been a man since 1987 when he completed treatment. This court has just turned common sense on its head."

Mara Keisling, Executive Director of NCTE, noted that the trial court judge had carefully reviewed all available medical and legal information and made a common sense ruling based on science and respect for the humanity of the parties. "But the appeals court," Keisling said, "ignored all of that and made a terrible ruling based on old stereotypes and scientific misunderstanding."

Congressional Summer School Educating Congress About Discrimination

Washington, DC - Trans people across the country are taking steps to educate members of Congress about the discrimination and harassment so many of us face because of our gender identity or expression. During the month of August, trans people and allies will visit members of Congress during an NCTE-sponsored effort called *Congressional Summer School*.

Over 30 diverse teams of transgender activists and allies in states and congressional districts across the country will conduct in-district educational meetings with their members of Congress. These meetings will serve to begin, or continue, the long education process of members of Congress about transgender issues. Congressional Summer School will also establish and strengthen relationships between transgender people and Congress and aid the building of relationships between transgender people on the local, state and national levels.

"Trans people face pervasive discrimination in this country," said NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling. "Congressional Summer School gives trans people the opportunity to talk directly to lawmakers about this discrimination."

At this time there are no federal laws protecting trans people from discrimination. Although we are making great strides on the local and state level (in 2003 alone two states and twelve jurisdictions passed trans-inclusive discrimination protections), only 25% of the country is covered by these protections.

During Congressional Summer School trans and non-trans people will form teams to talk with their members of Congress about the disproportionate amount of violence and discrimination directed at trans people.

"Trans people and our allies need to continue talking about the discrimination we face and sharing our stories with members of Congress. It is important that members of Congress see that both trans and non-trans people in their districts are interested in trans issues and are paying attention to how our members of Congress respond to those issues," said Keisling.

Visits will be taking place in over 25 states throughout the month of August while members are in their home districts. This allows a greater number of trans people and allies, who may not be able to travel to DC, to participate in this effort. If you are interested in participating, contact NCTE at ncte@nctequality.org.

Judge Sets New Trial Date for Araujo Murder

May 9, 2005 has been set as a new trial date for the murder of Gwen Araujo. Three men were charged with brutally beating and murdering the seventeen-year-old trans woman. The judge declared a mistrial when the jury became "hopelessly deadlocked" on June 22, 2004. It is believed the members of the jury rejected the defendants' claim that they attacked Gwen in a panic after discovering she was transgender but could not agree on whether the murder was premeditated. Prosecutor Chris Lamiero stated that he plans to retry all three men on a charge of murder.

One defendant, Jason Cazares, has been granted bail in the amount of \$1 million while awaiting trial. Cazares has no criminal history and is not considered a flight risk. The other two defendants are being held without bail.

Become a Member of NCTE!

The National Center for Transgender Equality depends on donations from trans people and our allies to continue our work in Washington, DC and around the country. Go to <http://www.nctequality.org/donate.asp> to join. When you join and give to the National Center for Transgender Equality, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to fight discrimination and violence against transgender people. Every donation ensures that transgender voices will be heard in Washington and around the country.