

FAIRNESS

C A M P A I G N

June
2009

McDonald's Agrees to Training and Settlement in Anti-Gay Suit

Nine months after an employee at a McDonald's restaurant in downtown Louisville called a group of gay customers a series of anti-gay slurs, the American Civil Liberties Union announced in May that the corporate giant has agreed to a cash settlement and diversity training for management at 30 of its Louisville-area restaurants.

Ryan Marlatt, Teddy Eggers, and three other friends had stopped for lunch at a McDonald's restaurant on East Market Street on July 26, 2008 while visiting from Indianapolis. While they waited for their food to be prepared, an employee behind the counter referred to them using anti-gay slurs to another employee. When Marlatt and Eggers objected to the slur and asked to speak with a manager, the employee who had harassed them began arguing with them, repeatedly calling them anti-gay slurs in front of other staff and customers.

"The reason we made such a big deal out of this to begin with was because we didn't want it happening to anyone else," said Eggers. "We were hurt and upset, but at least we're adults and can handle being called names. We hated thinking that this kind of harassment might also happen to someone young and vulnerable who would really take it to heart."

The supervisor on duty refused to refund the group's purchase, so Marlatt attempted several times in the following weeks to contact both the general manager of the McDonald's and the corporate offices, with no results. Since Louisville offers protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under the Fairness ordinance, the ACLU filed a complaint in September on behalf of Marlatt and Eggers with the Louisville Human Relations Commission. In October, the Fairness Campaign, with the University of Louisville's LGBTQ student group commonGround and the University's Lambda Law Caucus, protested at the East Market Street McDonald's where the incident took place.

When their Louisville Human Relations Commission complaint was filed, Marlatt and Eggers asked for a refund of the money they spent on the McDonald's meal and asked that one employee – the cashier who objected to the other employee's name-calling – be commended. Although Marlatt and Eggers only asked for \$28, McDonald's offered them \$2,000 each, which they accepted, along with the commitment to train 30 of its area locations in diversity.

The Fairness Campaign joined in the press conference announcing the settlement to raise awareness of the need for a statewide Fairness law, protecting every Kentuckian from the type of discrimination these men suffered. Morgan Ransdell, Managing Attorney for the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, followed to announce the Commission's upcoming advocacy hearing on a statewide Fairness law to be held June 17 in Richmond, titled "A Fair Future For Kentucky: A Call for an End to Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity." The public is encouraged to attend the hearing in Richmond, and the Fairness Campaign will help provide transportation for those interested. Please call the office or contact Fairness@fairness.org.



ACLU of Kentucky Executive Director Michael Aldridge announced the settlement with McDonald's restaurant.

PRIDE EVENTS

- ★ **The Perfect 10** - June 5, 6 pm, new poetry by Aletha Fields and a new play reading, Actors Theatre, 316 West Main St., \$25, benefits Fairness Campaign and Juneteenth Legacy Theatre
- ★ **Mr. Kentuckiana Pride Festival Contest** - June 6, 6 pm, The Connection, 120 S. Floyd St.
- ★ **Miss Transgender Pageant** - June 6, 7 pm, MCC, 1432 Highland Ave.
- ★ **Pride Kick-Off Beach Party** - June 6, 10 pm, Starbase Q, 921 W. Main St.
- ★ **Pride Interfaith Service** - June 11, 5 pm, First Unitarian, 809 S. Fourth St.
- ★ **Fairness Pride Float Planning** - June 11 & 18, 6 pm, Fairness office
- ★ **Courtyard Cafe'** - June 12, 6-10 pm, LGBTQ cafe' and concert, First Unitarian Church, 809 South Fourth Street, \$3 benefits Fairness Campaign
- ★ **Miss Kentuckiana Pride Festival Pageant** - June 13, 6 pm, The Connection
- ★ **A Fair Future For Kentucky: A Call For An End To Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity** - June 17, 6 pm, Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Advocacy Hearing Supporting Statewide Fairness, City Hall, Richmond, KY.
- ★ **Kentuckiana Pride Parade** - June 19, 8 pm, steps off from Market and Preston Street to Belvedere.
- ★ **Kentuckiana Pride Festival** - June 20, featuring the Indigo Girls and Tiffany, Belvedere at 5th & Main, \$5
- ★ **Candlelight Vigil Commemorating 40 Years of Stonewall** - June 28, 8 pm
- ★ **Laugh Out Proud** - June 30, 8 pm, Comedy Caravan, 1250 Bardstown Road

Director's Notes – Fairness Forward

by Chris Hartman

You're invited to the Kentucky Social Forum from July 31–August 2, 2009 at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky! The KYSF is the first statewide social forum in the South and will provide space for progressive activists to build relationships, learn from each other's experiences, share our analysis of the problems our communities face, and bring renewed insight and inspiration. It will help develop leadership and develop consciousness, vision and strategy needed to realize another world.

The KYSF will promote people power by bringing together hundreds of folks from both rural and urban areas to learn about such issues as housing, hunger, homelessness, poverty, environmental justice, workers' rights, youth advocacy and organizing, mountaintop removal, reproductive justice, immigrant rights, queer advocacy and organizing, media justice, non-partisan political mobilizing, economic justice and more. Sessions will include an education component about the various human rights topics presented as well as an advocacy component on how people can take action at the local and state level. We must declare what we want our state to look like and begin planning the path to get there.

Volunteers are also needed to make this event a success. To learn more and to register for the event, visit www.kentuckysocialforum.org or call 502-582-5454.



**A Roast of
 Carla Wallace
 to benefit CFAIR**
June 25 - 7 pm
1333 S. Third Street
\$50
**(Roasting opportunities
 to be auctioned)**
 For info: cfair@fairness.org
 or call 893-0788

Pride Month is upon us, and as we celebrate 40 years of Stonewall and a decade of Louisville's Fairness ordinance this year, how can one help but feel proud? And while 2009 is a year of historic commemoration for the LGBTQ civil rights movement, it is also one of unprecedented present-day victories for the LGBTQ community in Louisville, Kentucky, and America at large. So many positive things are happening in the civil rights movement here and across the nation, it is clear Fairness is moving forward!

In Louisville, the power of our Fairness ordinance was recently felt by the McDonald's corporation, forced to settle an anti-gay discrimination case filed by two men who suffered verbal abuse by employees at the East Market Street restaurant; each victim received a cash settlement, and 30 area McDonald's will undergo diversity training as retribution for the incident.

In Kentucky, the Fairness Campaign built a strong statewide coalition of individuals and organizations this legislative session that lobbied together for the defeat of anti-adoption Senate Bill 68, legislation prohibiting foster or adoptive care by all unmarried couples—a measure our coalition lobbying efforts stopped cold before coming to a vote on the Senate floor.

And in America, we have seen marriage equality wins in Iowa, Vermont, and Maine, as well as recognition of same-sex marriages in the District of Columbia, and I feel this is just the beginning!

Here at the Fairness Campaign, we look towards the day we can celebrate the anniversary of our statewide Fairness law, protecting all Kentuckians from discrimination, and ultimately our own marriage equality in the Commonwealth. Each step we take with our friends and allies moves the struggle for Fairness and equality forward, and we hope you will celebrate this Pride Month by joining the movement, becoming a member and volunteer of the Fairness Campaign, and working to help us achieve a fair and equal future for Kentucky.



Fairness Director Chris Hartman at Prop 8 Protest

Challenging Racism and Sexism in Our Community

As you may have seen reported in *LEO's* recent article, "Correcting the Past: Louisville's Leading LGBT Group Revisits Altercation at Woody's Tavern a Year Later," the Fairness Campaign has joined University of Louisville's Director of LGBT Services Brian Buford to bring renewed attention to the incident of racism and sexism occurring at Woody's Tavern just over one year ago. Together with the victims of the discrimination, we called once more for a public apology from Mr. David Norton, owner of the establishment, who has repeatedly refused contact or apology regarding this matter. Numerous attempts have been made to engage Mr. Norton in a dialogue regarding this issue, the most-recent in the form of a certified mailed letter from the Campaign, Buford, and victims, to no avail—at each step, Mr. Norton has failed to even respond.

The intersection of racism, sexism, and homophobia is central to our understanding of prejudice in America, and we must recognize that dismantling one is key to the dissolution of the others. Too often we fail to see the inherent connection of all forms of discrimination, and that no offense of prejudice may go unnoticed. The final action regarding this specific incident has yet to be taken, and we will continue to update this situation most immediately through our Facebook and Twitter (FairnessCamp) sites, as well as here in our newsletter.

Whatever the outcome of the Woody's incident, we must utilize this as a springboard to examine the racism still present within our own community, and join in the continuing national dialogue examining and dismantling systemic racism in America, which pervades every community. The Fairness Campaign's Coordinating Committee has made a commitment to devote a portion of its monthly meeting (open to public attendance) to the dialogue of better serving our mission of dismantling racism, and will work to launch a series of programs dedicated to dismantling racism in the near future. For more information, or to offer suggestions or help, please call the office or contact Fairness@Fairness.org.

New Coordinating Committee Members



New Fairness leaders Ernie Flores, Brad Hampton, Phoenix Lindsey-Hall, Meg Stern.

The Fairness Campaign is excited to welcome four new members to its Coordinating Committee, which helps set the agenda and carry out the mission of the Campaign.

Ernie Flores began working with the Fairness Campaign during the “No on the Amendment” issue in 2004, which led to a deeper involvement and commitment with the Campaign. By 2007, Ernie had taken the lead on designing and constructing the Fairness Campaign’s Pride float, which took home first place! He has joined the organization on many occasions lobbying in the state Capitol, and in his spare time, Ernie is working to build a bridge between the LGBTQ and Catholic communities.

Brad Hampton is a HIV Prevention Specialist at Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness and is the Director of Louisville AIDS Walk. He has been working in HIV Prevention for the past 13 years, and has also worked for Community Health Trust, Volunteers of America and as a Consultant/Trainer for the University of Kentucky’s Office of HIV Prevention Research. He is an alumnus of LYG, a long time, avid supporter of the Fairness Campaign, and was honored to have been the Grand Marshall of the 2006 Kentuckiana Pride Festival Parade. He and his partner Alex have been together for 6 years and reside in Jeffersonville.

Phoenix Lindsey-Hall, a North Carolina native, moved to Louisville in August 2004, just after obtaining her BFA in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design. She has worked both locally and nationally on LGBTQ-specific issue campaigns, and as the Volunteer and Lobby Coordinator at the Fairness Campaign. Phoenix is currently the Development Director and Special Projects Coordinator for the Metropolitan Housing Coalition, which is an advocacy organization dedicated to making fair, safe, and affordable housing possible for all. She serves on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of KY and the Policy Council of Head Start/Early Head Start with JCPS. When Phoenix isn’t working for social justice, she rolls with the Derby City Roller Girls.

Meg Stern, a native of Louisville, has been a member of the board of directors for the BRYCC House since 2004, and is a founding member of WENCH Health Care Collective that, among other initiatives, provides support escorts for women facing harassment at abortion and family planning clinics. Meg is a nanny and chef by trade.

Current Coordinating Committee members also include: Yana Baker, Kat Crawford, Aletha Fields, Lauren Heberle, Carol Kraemer, Sam Marcossou, Terry Mickler, K.A. Owens, Jeff Rodgers, Dorene Stein and Nick Wilkerson.

New Administrative Coordinator Hired

The Fairness Campaign is proud to welcome Kyle Riggs as its new Administrative Coordinator. In this role, Kyle will be responsible for office and database management, constituent communications, and bookkeeping, along with working to engage the community through volunteer recruitment and online social networking tools.

Kyle brings with him legislative and campaign experience from internships in both Frankfort and DC, and coming most immediately from Barack Obama’s Campaign for Change, where he served as both a field organizer and a deputy regional field director in Michigan and Indiana. As a sixth generation Kentuckian, Kyle is deeply invested in the mission of statewide equality for all individuals. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from UofL where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and served as budget director for the Student Government Association.



His commitment to LGBTQ issues is evidenced in Michigan, where Kyle worked with local leaders to defeat a motion banning the regional lesbian softball tournament. Kyle is also a seasoned stand-up comedian, having performed often at the Comedy Caravan—you may see him perform June 30 in the Kentuckiana Pride Festival’s *Laugh Out Proud* at the Caravan!

Nationwide Prop 8 Protests

Last month, the California Supreme Court ruled on the constitutionality of Proposition 8, deciding 6-1 to uphold the discriminatory law, though ruling unanimously to honor the existing 18,000-plus same-sex unions formed in the months prior to the measure’s passage. The court had promised to provide 24-hour notice of its ruling on Prop 8, which allowed LGBTQ groups time to organize a public protest of the decision.

On May 26, the Fairness Campaign joined over 100 cities around America hosting a “Day of Decision” protest of the ruling. Dozens of supporters met at the Hall of Justice in Downtown Louisville to make their voices heard, that civil rights must no longer be denied LGBTQ citizens in America. One sign read “18,000—Not Enough,” another, “I Love Gay/Civil Rights!”



“We cannot allow civil rights to be denied to Americans any longer,” Fairness Campaign Director Chris Hartman told reporters at the protest. “We cannot allow civil rights to be decided by a simple majority either. Civil rights are not issues that we can leave up to chance like that.”

In Kentucky, which passed its own anti-gay marriage amendment in 2004, the first step to achieving marriage equality is the passage of a statewide Fairness law, prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity across the Commonwealth. Now is the perfect time to call or write your state legislators expressing your support for a statewide Fairness law in 2010. The most effective way to deliver your message is by calling your state legislator’s local office number and setting a meeting with them in your home district, where you can gather a group of friends and family to share the story of why Fairness is important to you and the future of their community. For help organizing an in-district lobby meeting, please call the office or contact Fairness@fairness.org.



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Louisville, Kentucky 40206

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Please make your check payable to
**Fairness Campaign, 2263 Frankfort Ave,
Louisville, KY 40206.**

I prefer my gift remain anonymous.



Have you been reading the headlines?

- ★ *Fairness Campaign Names First Director*—Louisville Defender, Feb. 12, 2009
- ★ *Adoption, Foster-care Bill is Dead for Session*—The Courier-Journal, Mar. 11, 2009
- ★ *McDonald's Pays Up After Gay Slurs*—Advocate.com, May 6, 2009

There are already so many reasons to celebrate Fairness in 2009, and here is one more—

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the historic passage of Louisville's Fairness Ordinance, prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations—legal protections not all Kentuckians share.

Join the celebration now by renewing your annual membership to the Fairness Campaign. Only with your help will we be able to celebrate the future victories we all envision—a statewide Fairness law protecting all Kentuckians from discrimination, a Commonwealth that joins Iowa, Vermont, Maine and others in marriage equality, and the continued protection of our LGBT families from attack legislation in Frankfort. Join today!