

## Mountain Meadow's Youth Speak Out

Mountain Meadow's youth have been hard at work advocating for change for their families.

### Articles in the PGN

Trevor Sadler (13) was featured in the Philadelphia Gay News (PGN) in March of this year. The full page spread included a photo of Trevor in front of the Philadelphia skyline and numerous interview questions about Trevor, his family and his experience at Mountain Meadow. When Trevor's mom came out to him, his response was, "Oh Mom. It is no big deal. What difference does it make?"

Trevor doesn't like discrimination of any kind. He was quoted in the article as saying, "All discrimination [bothers me]. It's everywhere . . . if a boy says something to another boy, they get all bent out of shape. Why don't they just say, 'I'm not interested.' They don't have to go, 'disgusting!' People react like that all the time in movies, in cartoons and on TV. It's not right."

You are highly encouraged to vote for Trevor for president. Not only does he want to end discrimination, Trevor has promised to "get more money to nonprofit organizations" if he were president.

Trevor lives with his cousin, his moms, two cats and a dog. His older brother and sister don't live at home anymore.

Youth Talk participant and soon-to-be camper, Aaliyah Collings (age 9), had her photograph in the PGN this April. The photo featured her and her mother dancing the evening away at Mountain Meadow's Spring Fling Family Dance.

When asked how she felt when she saw her picture in the newspaper, Aaliyah's response was, "I freaked out with happiness! I was really excited."

Aaliyah lives with "Mommy, Amelia [her mom's partner], and sisi [her older sister]."

Both articles can be seen in full on our website at [www.mountainmeadow.org](http://www.mountainmeadow.org)

### Middle School Handbook

Tessa Corcoran-Sayers (17) saw a need in the LGBTQ community and is working hard to fill it. "I noticed that everyone had the same key struggles," Tessa writes, "and most parents had the same key questions." What Tessa is referring to is being an LGBTQ parent with a Middle School aged child. This past fall, Tessa presented her idea to create a Middle School Handbook for LGBTQ parents to Mountain Meadow's Board of Directors. They loved the idea and offered her their full support. See the article, "The Challenges of Middle School: A Pamphlet that will Help" inside this newsletter.

### Panels

Several brave and well-spoken Mountain Meadow youth have been participating on panels at various events around Philadelphia. The youth have shared openly and personally about their experiences, their beliefs, and how they feel others can support youth from LGBTQ families. Thank you to Meridian, Trevor, Nicolas, Qudsiyyah, Zach, Lexie, and Lashonna. You all are doing a wonderful job!

Interested in hearing the youth speak? Visit the "upcoming events" section of our website. The website is updated regularly.

### Rfamily Vacation's Trip to Philly

Eleven-year-old Nicholas (Nico) Miranda attended the Rfamily Vacation weekend in Philadelphia in order to recruit new campers. He told all the other children about Mountain Meadow. "I was nervous at first," he remembers, "but I got used to it after the first two kids and then it was fun!" Nico was very excited to be able to tell other kids like him about Mountain Meadow. He even got to meet someone with a famous lesbian mom! See the interview with Nicholas inside this newsletter to find out who it was.

Nicholas lives with his mom, his mom's partner and his two brothers.



Lashonna with Rebecca Walker

### WOMENS WAY

Sixteen-year-old Lashonna Washington spoke eloquently about Mountain Meadow and her experience being from an LGBTQ family in a WOMENS WAY video about their grantees. Lashonna represented Mountain Meadow again at WOMENS WAY'S 30th anniversary dinner, where the video was premiered to over 1,000 attendees. Lashonna spoke to numerous people that evening about her experience. One of the people she



had a personal conversation with was Rebecca Walker! Not familiar with Rebecca Walker? Visit Mountain Meadow's "Famous People" page at [www.mountainmeadow.org/famouspeople.pdf](http://www.mountainmeadow.org/famouspeople.pdf) for information on Rebecca Walker and other famous people from LGBTQ families.

When asked what it was like to meet Rebecca Walker, Lashonna exclaimed, "I was a bit shy to ask her to take a picture with me, but it was so cool. It was the coolest part of my life. I actually got to shake hands with Rebecca Walker!"

Lashonna will be leaving Philadelphia this summer to move in with her mother. We will miss you Lashonna!

Luis Cruz (18), Nicolas Miranda (11) and Lexie Brown (8) were photographed with their families for the book *The Many Faces of WOMENS WAY* and other WOMENS WAY promotional material. A framed picture of Lexie and her family is hanging on the wall of WOMENS WAY's office.

### New Jersey School Board Meeting

A February snowstorm didn't stop eighteen Mountain Meadow youth and adults from speaking out for the right for youth from LGBTQ families to be visible. The Evesham School Board held an open forum on the evening of February 13th regarding the film "That's a Family," a film designed to promote family diversity. Mountain Meadow's youth and parents spoke from the heart in ways that were heard by both the School Board and the parents who were opposed to the film. Thank you to everyone who braved the weather to make a difference!



Lorde tent circle

*Mountain Meadow is a place where you can be yourself and be out about you and your family. It is safe for everyone, no matter who you are. - Meridian, age 11*



#### **A Message From the Executive Director**

In January, I announced my plans to transition out of my role as the Executive Director of Mountain Meadow by December of this year. I will be transitioning into a new career as an independent organization development consultant for progressive non-profit organizations. Although my role at Mountain Meadow will be changing, I will forever remain a part of the community as a donor, an advocate, and true believer in the mission of Mountain Meadow.

Mountain Meadow's Board is currently in the process of hiring a new Executive Director with the skills and commitment to continue to strengthen the organization and expand its programming.

Mountain Meadow has grown tremendously over the six years that I have been involved with the organization. Each year has brought more and better programs to youth from LGBTQ families. In this year alone, we are anticipating our programs will directly serve more than 200 youth. That is double the number we served last year!

This incredible growth has been possible due to increased support from individuals and foundations who are passionate about community, personal development, and social change for youth from LGBTQ families. I hope you will join me in supporting Mountain Meadow's program expansion by making a contribution to the Calamus Foundation match (see below for more information). Your support will make continued growth possible.



Teen Trip to NYC with COLAGE

#### **NYC Teen Trip 2007**

At the beginning of each year, Youth Talk participants brainstorm activity ideas for the programming year. This year the teens were set on going to New York City. In order to convince Carolyn & Randi to send us to New York, we had to come up with a reason other than shopping. Randi spoke with the NYC COLAGE (children of lesbians and gays everywhere) chapter and they invited us to New York City for a teen gathering.

On Saturday, March 24th Mountain Meadow's teens, staff, and volunteers left for New York City. Once there, we walked to the LGBTQ community center for lunch and programming with the teens from the NYC COLAGE Chapter. From the moment we arrived there was a sense of community in the room. Even though our backgrounds were very different, we all had similar families. It was cool meeting other teens with families like ours who have such different backgrounds and live in a different city. As one youth put it, "we are everywhere."

After lunch, we said our goodbyes to COLAGE and headed to Times Square. For some of us it was our first time seeing Times Square. We got our picture taken; watched street shows and, of course, went shopping!

After an action packed day we headed back to Philadelphia. On the train ride we had time to reflect on the trip and agreed that this should be an annual event. We made a commitment to fundraising to make it happen.

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Randi Sherman, Program Director



### **Contact Information**

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Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Phone: 215-772-1107  
Fax: 215-772-0313  
inquiries@mountainmeadow.org  
www.mountainmeadow.org

## **Mountain Meadow Receives a Matching Grant!**

Mountain Meadow has received a \$10,000 matching grant from The Calamus Foundation for new and increased donations. This means your donation is worth twice as much between now and camp! Send a check to the Mountain Meadow office or make a donation online at [www.mountainmeadow.org](http://www.mountainmeadow.org)  
Make sure to write "Calamus Match" in the memo of your check, or in the notes section of an online donation.



*Mountain Meadow to me is a sanctuary. - Rowan, age 12*

Vote on your favorite t-shirt design

Thank you to everyone who submitted a design. It was a hard choice, but we were finally able to narrow it down to the staff's top three picks. Now it is your turn to decide.

Cast your vote by sending an e-mail to [inquiries@mountainmeadow.org](mailto:inquiries@mountainmeadow.org) with the subject: "T-shirt design." Include your name and your top design pick. If you do not have e-mail access, you can cast your vote by calling the office at 215-772-1107.

The winner's artwork will be proudly displayed on the front of our 2007 t-shirts.

Deadline to vote is July 15th.



Celisia, age 12  
#1



Julia, age 12  
#2



Qudsiyyah, age 10  
#3

*Mountain Meadow changed my life by taking me into a world where I could say anything about how I feel. It took me to a place, which was sort of like school, but no one was asking you, "Why doesn't your dad ever pick you up?" or "Why doesn't your mom ever pick you up?" - Qudsiyyah, age 10*

## JOIN US AT THESE EXCITING UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Camp Tour:

Saturday, August 18th, 11:15am-1:15pm  
Join us for a youth led camp tour followed by lunch!  
RSVP to [tour@mountainmeadow.org](mailto:tour@mountainmeadow.org) or call 215-772-1107

### Program Kick-Off:

Saturday, September 29th, 12:00pm-2:00pm  
Join us for a potluck lunch as we kickoff the 2007-2008 program year.  
RSVP to [inquiries@mountainmeadow.org](mailto:inquiries@mountainmeadow.org) or call 215-772-1107

## Tips for supporting youth from LGBTQ families

1. Don't treat us different from other kids.
2. Don't judge us.
3. Be supportive.
4. Learn about us and our experiences so you can imagine walking in our shoes.
5. Don't assume that a family is heterosexual just because they appear to be.
6. Stop people from talking bad about us and our families.
7. Stop people from saying things like "that's so gay."
8. Don't assume that we are gay just because our parents are.
9. Don't out youth from LGBTQ families without their permission.
10. Don't discriminate against anyone no matter what.
11. Be nice to everyone.

\*Written by Youth Talk participants

### Additional ways to support youth from LGBTQ families

1. Change forms so they say parent or guardian instead of mom or dad – and challenge others to do the same.
2. Celebrate Parent's Day or Family Day instead of Mother's or Father's Day.
3. Donate books about LGBTQ families to schools and public libraries.
4. Don't assume that all youth from LGBTQ families have two moms or two dads. Our families are far more diverse than that!

## The Challenges of Middle School: A Pamphlet That Will Help

Middle school is tough for anyone, but for a teenager with LGBTQ parents it can be a nightmare. When I was in middle school I didn't know anyone my age who had LGBTQ parents, or would even admit to knowing what LGBTQ meant. Middle school was simply a time when everyone worked as hard as possible to just fit in. Mountain Meadow was the only thing that kept me going. My parents had no resources to turn to, however, and were going through all of the teacher, student, parent dilemmas on their own.

As I have grown and looked back at my experiences, and talked to other teens with LGBTQ parents about theirs, I have noticed that everyone had the same key struggles, and most parents had the same key questions. After speaking on a few panels that were focused around the middle school years, I realized the growing need for a useful resource pamphlet that outlines key problems, and possible solutions, while giving examples and testimonials from teens and parents. Because of this need I have decided to create a pamphlet that does just that.

I am so excited about the impact and effect of the pamphlet. LGBTQ families are unique and their struggles deserve to be discussed and supported. I hope that the pamphlet will be out by the end of the summer or beginning of fall. To get a copy of the pamphlet, contact the Mountain Meadow office.

*Tessa Corcoran-Sayers lives in Syracuse, NY with her two moms. She is 17 years old and has attended Mountain Meadow's Summer Camp program for the past six years. Tessa is also a member of Mountain Meadow's Board of Directors.*

2007

# DONORS

MOUNTAIN MEADOW WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THE GIFTS THEY MADE TO THE ORGANIZATION SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER WAS PRINT. OUR PROGRAMS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT. THANK YOU!

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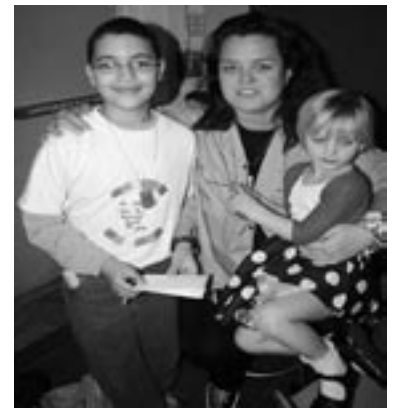
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... AND ADDITIONAL DONORS AT ALL LEVELS WHO WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS



## Nicholas with Rosie & Vivi O'Donnell

got free ice cream at the bowling place and I could pick out any flavor I wanted. That was the best part!

*Did you meet anyone special?*

Yeah! I met Rosie [O'Donnell] and her wife Kelli and their son Parker.

*I heard you asked Parker for his autograph. What did Parker say when you asked him for his autograph?*

He said, "Wow! No one has ever asked me before!" Then he signed my piece of paper. *Mountain Meadow later heard an unconfirmed rumor that Rosie spoke on the View about how excited Parker was to be asked for his signature.*

*Why was it so important to you to get Parker's autograph?*

I wanted his autograph because he has famous moms and not many kids have famous LGBTQ parents. Plus he has a family like mine and he is my age. I also got Kelli and Rosie's autographs. They are all in my autograph book. *So why did you go to the RFamily weekend?*

To have fun with my moms and tell other kids about Mountain Meadow. I met people and told them about Mountain Meadow and gave them a [business] card. I was nervous at first but I got used to it after the first two kids and then it was fun!

*Did you tell them about camp?*

Yeah. I told them about DYOT's [Do Your Own Thing] and free time. They might like that and might get interested in camp that way. Plus I told them about all the fun things we do, like cooking and swim lessons.

*How did it feel to meet other youth that have families like yours?*

It felt like [being at] Mountain Meadow.

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## SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONS 2007

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AND MORE TO COME....

### Interview with Nicholas, an Advocate for Mountain Meadow

RFamily Vacations had their first land vacation in Philadelphia the weekend of March 9th-11th. Mountain Meadow asked Nicholas to help spread the word about Mountain Meadow at the event. Below is an interview with Nicholas about his experience.

*How was the R Family weekend?*

It was fun!

*What did you do?*

We got up early in the morning and I did not know where I was going. We went with my other mom's co-worker, her partner and their daughter. We visited the constitution center and had lunch and went bowling. We