



Mountain Meadow Turns Fifteen

Fifteen years ago volunteers organized and ran Mountain Meadow's first summer program for young people from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and other non-traditional families. Eighteen youth attended camp that first summer. Today Mountain Meadow has grown to be a year-round organization with two full-time staff members, an office in Philadelphia's LGBTQ community center, and a fifteen member Board of Directors. Mountain Meadow now serves over 100 youth a year and that number will continue to grow!

I can't imagine a better organization to help children emerge from childhood to adulthood with a sense of self-acceptance. -Susan Shachter, parent and Board Member.

New This Year

Every year since its inception, Mountain Meadow has expanded to meet the growing need for programming for youth from LGBTQ families. This year is no exception. Mountain Meadow's Board of Directors met in February to revise the organization's mission and vision statements. These statements will help guide the organization through the coming years.

New Mission and Vision

Mission: Mountain Meadow is a progressive and diverse community dedicated to providing a supportive and safe space for all children of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) and other non-traditional families and their allies.

Vision: Mountain Meadow creates a safe and supportive community where children of LGBTQ families are empowered to affirm and appreciate family diversity. We aspire to incorporate these

values that will challenge oppression and create on-going social change. Through the cultivation of multi-generational relationships, Mountain Meadow will enhance communication skills and cultural acceptance while providing programming specific to awareness and celebration of non-traditional families and their allies. Mountain Meadow instills our children with the confidence to be competent in the face of ignorance and intolerance.

Program Director

Mountain Meadow doubled the organization's year-round staff this year with the addition of a new Program Director position. This new position will allow Mountain Meadow to expand to meet the growing need for programming. This expansion will mean more programming for you and your family! (See related article: Meet Mountain Meadow's new Program Director.)

Website

Thanks to volunteer Joanne Parra, Mountain Meadow has a brand new website. The site features a photo gallery, resource lists, information about famous people from LGBTQ families, and more. Whether you are looking for an application for camp, want to learn more about youth growing up in LGBTQ families or wish to make a donation, Mountain Meadow's new website will have the answers you are looking for.

Visit us at www.mountainmeadow.org and check back often. Updates are made frequently.

Improved Junior Staff program

Last summer saw the beginning of a Junior Staff program for 17 year olds who had completed Mountain Meadow's Staff-In-Training program. A community meeting was held in the fall to solicit feedback and ideas to further improve this highly successful program. Thanks to everyone who participated, Mountain Meadow's Junior Staff program will be even stronger this summer. Visit our website for more information.



Joe Valentine speaks with Aaliyah and Qudsiyyah at an event hosted by Mountain Meadow

Event with Pitcher Joe Valentine

In February of this year Joe Valentine, pitcher for the Huston Astros, spoke with Mountain Meadow's families and friends about his experience growing up with two moms. The crowd was deeply touched by his sincerity and obvious caring for the youth. He brought tears to people eyes with his response to the question,



"When was the first time you met someone else from an LGBTQ family?" His response was all too common. "Today," he replied.

Mountain Meadow is working to ensure that today's youth don't have to spend their childhood believing they are the only one. There are an estimated 6-14 million youth growing up in LGBTQ families. Welcome to the community Joe!

Needs Assessment Survey

Thank you to the over 100 adults and nearly 50 youth who completed Mountain Meadow's needs assessment survey. The results will help guide Mountain Meadow's board and staff as they design additional programming for youth from LGBTQ families.

Coming Next Year

For the last year Mountain Meadow has been talking about substantially expanding programming. The expansion will soon be here!

Expanded Youth Talk Program

Beginning in October of 2006, Mountain Meadow's year-round Youth Talk program will be expanded to include three age groups: 8-10, 11-13, and 14-16. We are looking forward to having eight-year-olds join us for the first time. Want to help name these three new groups? See Youth Talk Naming Contest information below.

Family Programming

Join us this fall for our first monthly family event. The date will be announced on our website as soon as possible. These events will be a wonderful way to meet other LGBTQ families and learn more about Youth Talk and other events. Mountain Meadow's monthly family programming will be all ages events. Have more programming ideas? Feel free to contact us with your suggestions

A Message From the Executive Director



I wish I could take all the credit for the wonderful changes happening at Mountain Meadow, but I am only one person among a large community of dedicated people who are guiding Mountain Meadow forward. Mountain Meadow is growing by leaps and bounds on account of the commitment and hard work of everyone involved.

Mountain Meadow would not be where it is today were it not for the energy and direction the Board of Directors provides. I am fortunate to be working with such an energetic and thoughtful Board; with them the youth always come first.

The Board provides Mountain Meadow with direction, but it is our numerous volunteers that help put everything into action. In the last month alone, volunteers have updated our database, put together an over one thousand piece mailing, processed camper applications, deposited checks, and designed this newsletter. Volunteers have also designed and run programming, created our new website, and represented Mountain Meadow at numerous events.

Thank you to everyone who is helping to make Mountain Meadow the successful organization that it is. We couldn't do it without you!

Youth Talk Naming Contest

What is in a name?

That is the question. Do you have the answer?

With our youth talk groups expanding we are in the need of new group names. We are looking for you to come up with a Theme & Names for our 3 youth talk groups!

Guidelines for the contest:

1. Names need to be original & appropriate
2. Names need to follow a general theme that will allow us to add more groups in the future



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The winner will have the honor of naming the groups & will get to pick from one of the following prizes:

A \$25 gift certificate for M.M., a M.M. T-shirt, or the book "Families Like Mine"

E-mail your submissions to inquiries@mountainmeadow.org

Or send them into the office

All submissions need to be received by July 30th, 2006

What Mountain Meadow Has Meant to Me

Everyone has a point in their life where they can look back and say that from that moment on they would never be the same. That moment for me was when I stepped into the world of Mountain Meadow. Mountain Meadow has been a teacher, a guardian, a friend and a mentor. I have learned to question my surroundings, take pride in my background, challenge boundaries that I never knew existed and grow into myself without question.

Mountain Meadow has given me more than just the opportunity to go to a summer camp, they have given me the tools I needed to express myself and be confident through their gentle praise and good humor. I cannot wait to see where Mountain Meadow is in five, ten or twenty years, and wherever they are I know I want to be with them.

Tessa Corcoran-Sayers lives in Syracuse, NY with her two moms. She is 16 years old and has attended Mountain Meadow's Summer Camp program for the past five years. Tessa is also a member of Mountain Meadow's Board of Directors where she chairs the Long Range Planning Committee.



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 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 2006 t-shirts.

Deadline to vote is July 15th.

#1 – JARRETT



#2 – LASHONNA



#3 – KADELL



2006 Donors

I love Mountain Meadow and I hope it's still around in 15 or so years when I have kids so that they can enjoy the accepting atmosphere that Mountain Meadow provides. –Isabel, age 14

Thank you to all of the following people who have given financial gifts already this year. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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Embracing Family Diversity

- AND MORE!
 - MEET MM'S NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR
 - T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST
 - YOUTH TALK NAMING CONTEST
 - WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR AND COMING NEXT YEAR
 - MM TURNS 15
- INSIDE:

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Meeting MM's New Program Director!

Here is what Randi Sherman, MM's new Program Director, has to say:

How did you find out about Mountain Meadow?

I found out by www.idealists.org and by one of the lifeguards that worked at camp a few years ago.

What city did you come from ?

I moved from Marquette, Michigan.

Why did you choose this job to be a year round program director and a camp director?

I really enjoy working with youth and I have been committed to working with LGBTQ community and LGBTQ families and this brought two things I really enjoy doing together. That is why I chose this job.

When did you start working for Mountain Meadow? How do you feel about the experience to be working with Mountain Meadow?

I started on March 1, 2006. I knew from the first day I started I made the right decision, I am very happy to be here. I cannot wait until camp starts!

What is your favorite camp song?

Well, I have been learning some of the camp songs. But my favorite song is the shark song.

What is your favorite thing to do?

I like anything that is outdoors, such as biking, hiking, rock climbing, etc.

Interview by Lashonna, age 15



Randi Sherman