

# fire circle



## Join MM's New Speaker's Program

Last year, Mountain Meadow kicked off the new Speakers Bureau, and is now focused on developing this program more fully. Real-life stories from the youth Mountain Meadow serves have much more of an impact than the same old presentations that directors give throughout the community. KEEPING IT REAL is a program designed to help youth get comfortable telling their own unique stories, explaining what camp is like for them, and why Mountain Meadow is so important to them. The program:

- TRAINS youth in the basics of public speaking and more specialized media training;
- COORDINATES speaking venues at schools, businesses and events;
- CONNECTS youth with speaking opportunities (from tabling at Pride to being a member of a panel discussion, to co-presenting at the United Way Fall Campaign)

## Mountain Meadow Wants You to Bowl for a Good Cause

Next week, families, friends and supporters of Mountain Meadow can show off your Turkey skills, enjoy a unique weekend with their loved ones, and help empower youth from LGBTQ families by bowling your heart out during the Satellite Bowl fundraiser.

The fun family event, which will raise awareness and money for the Philadelphia-based non-profit, will take place at Lucky Strike Lanes and Lounge (1336 Chestnut St., Philadelphia), on Sunday, Jan. 11. Starting at noon, supporters and families will bowl together and have FUN while supporting the organization and their initiatives! Admission to Lucky Strike is free, but bowling costs between \$10 - \$15 per bowler, per hour. However, for every dollar spent on bowling, food and libations, Mountain Meadow will receive 20 percent from Lucky Strike. Additionally, Satellite Bowl's registered teams will raise money for Mountain Meadow by receiving pledges from people they

know who want to support our mission. Why the name Satellite? Since fundraiser participants will be bowling not only in Philadelphia on Jan. 11, but in many places across the country, friends of Mountain Meadow will be connected that day through one common goal – helping a non-profit that's helped so

Teams Pledged thus far include:	
Colorado Springs, CO	\$800
International Falls, MN	\$1,500
Team WCL Buff	\$400
St. Paul, MN	\$400
Philly Drake	\$400
SMHS	\$250
Norristown	\$250
Team Syracuse	\$2,000
Loveland, CO	\$250
Fanblades	\$250
Leslie Hall	\$400
Bryn Mawr	\$250

Effective outreach is critical to the growth and stability of Mountain Meadow, and our families are our best ambassadors! If you already like speaking in public, or if you're the shy type who gets nervous speaking in front of groups, KEEPING IT REAL is designed to help you.

The program is being facilitated for three age groups, with several facilitators, plus Program Director Susie Peiffer performing the training. Whether you received the GLAAD training or not, you are welcome to join the Speakers' Bureau. Two trainings are available by February.

Sign up today for KEEPING IT REAL! by mailing in the sign up sheet on page 5.

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# Greetings From the Board



## Our Year in Roses and Thorns

**C**ampers in “Cho” introduced me to the reflective ritual of Roses and Thorns during this past year’s camp. It is a nightly ritual where they recall things that caused a challenge during the day, hence the thorn, and things that went well or were positive—hence a rose. I was so moved by this practice that I thought it would be worthwhile to reflect on the 2008-year and our path ahead in the same spirit. So here goes!

No doubt during 2008, MM had its share of challenges in the areas of staffing, board membership and finances, i.e., Thorns. We said a sad goodbye to Carolyn, our ED for the past 6 years who ushered MM through a time of amazing growth and development. We also wished our PD of 3 years, Randi, well as she ventured off to a new city and a new journey - certainly another challenge in the loss of such a key role. We lost board members - another key component in our organization - due to life changes and new adventures. As our economy took a downturn, MM was not unscathed. Many foundations faced with financial difficulties reduced awards and cut some grants all together. Individual donations were greatly reduced undoubtedly due to the economic times. For 2008, our revenues came in drastically under budget. But remember, thorns are attached to roses and we received many roses throughout the year.

In early 2008, we welcomed a new ED Steve Duffy, who has come through his first camp season with flying colors and has been responsible for getting MM much needed publicity and press. It is clear that MM has an amazing mission that only few are aware of and press and publicity are essential to our growth. We created a Speaker’s Bureau of youth and adults from LGBTQ families. This bureau is instrumental in highlighting

the challenges our youth face in the mainstream world, which is an essential part of our mission. We have been fortunate to find Susie to fill the role of PD on a part-time basis as we strive to navigate the turbulent economy. We have a small but dedicated board that has brought a fresh set of eyes to the organization’s processes, policies and overall management. As for finances, we have streamlined our budget for 2009 and have incorporated much needed signature fundraisers such as the Satellite bowl—January 11, 2009.

As you can see, we are thinking ahead and planting many seeds for an abundant rose garden in our future. But a garden needs a lot of help in order to flourish. I ask each of you to consider helping us build our garden. Do you have one hour a month, week or day to contribute? Maybe your skills are in organizing, planning, office tasks or technology - any of which make for a perfect volunteer or committee member. Maybe you have access to items that could be used to help run our day-to-day operations or camp that you can loan or donate. Or maybe you want to donate monetarily to help feed a camper, defray the costs of one day or a week of camp or other costs associated with keeping our mission alive. We invite you to find a way to contribute to our garden in 2009!

*-Sheri Reed, President*

## Make a Donation!

Our youth need your support! Donations from people like you make it possible for Mountain Meadow to serve ALL youth from LGBTQ families, regardless of income. **Want to make a contribution?** Visit [mountainmeadow.org](http://mountainmeadow.org), contact the office, or make a donation through United Way Donor option program (MM code #14200). Thank you!

## Board of Directors

Sheri Reed <i>President</i>	Eric Fox <i>Treasurer</i>
Susan Shachter <i>Vice President</i>	Clelia A. Scaccia <i>Secretary</i>

## Year-Round Staff

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*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

SUSANE PEIFFER  
*PROGRAM DIRECTOR*

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Meredith Mollitt	Laura de Waal
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Newsletter designed by  
Annamarya Scaccia

# In Touch

Mountain Meadow wants you to know what's going on...

In this transitional year for Mountain Meadow, we have not been as in touch as we normally are with our families. We are developing a new program, and want to evaluate our year-round programs so that we know that they are meeting the needs of our families. The IN TOUCH section of our newsletter allows us to share feedback from our youth and families. By January, we will be in contact with you directly - so that you can tell us what you like or don't like about our programs. The Program Committee of the Board of Directors will be calling all of our families by phone this winter, to:

- **Talk about Youth Talk, and how we can shift the focus of it to better serve our youth and families.**
- **Get your feedback on camp 2008 and seeing if you'll be attending in 2009.**
- **See if you'd like to participate in KEEPING IT REAL.**
- **Anything else you want to talk about.**

Your ideas and testimonials will be reported in subsequent editions of our newsletter. They will also be shared with potential donors and foundations to illustrate how needed we are and how important our work is.

"I am the aunt of a niece who is 16 and struggling with self-esteem and is socially isolating in part because she does not know how to talk to her peers about her lesbian parents. I am interested in your camp... I would also like for her to participate in your leadership training program as I think it will support her to blossom." - via e-mail from Chicago



## Things We're Working On...

### Camp

- **Getting a date** – we're not sure, but plan for two weeks in August.
- **Electronic Application Process** – We're trying to make it easier for our families to apply for camp. A volunteer is working on our application to see if it can be completed and submitted electronically. We should know this by the next edition of *Fire Circle*.
- **Monthly Tuition Payment Plan** – We're also trying to make it easier for families to afford sending their children to camp. A monthly or quarterly payment plan might ease the burden of making lump sum payments. We're also looking into other payment options and incentives that will help us all in these tough economic times.
- **Winter Intern** – Weezie Lauher may join us again as a Program Intern this Winter, helping to revise camp staff job descriptions and assisting families in applying for camp. Welcome Back, Weezie. We love you!

### Our Organization's Needs

- **Board Members** – Mountain Meadow has set a goal at its two-day November Board retreat to solicit and elect three new Board members to join this special group of volunteers.
- **Committee Members** – We also need to increase members of our Board Committees. If you know anyone with skills in finance, fundraising, program development or evaluation, human resource management, strategic planning or special events, please send them our way. We have a lot of work to do in many areas.
- **Interns** – We really need more program interns and a development intern to join our team of volunteers. Please refer to the website for job descriptions. At our Board retreat, we identified many specific tasks that volunteers and/or interns could help us tackle. That list will be added to our website in the near future.
- **OUTREACH** – Do you know that thousands of LGBTQ families live in the Delaware Valley? We serve only about hundred youth a year, so there are many, many families who could benefit from Mountain Meadow. And if each family connected us with one other, we would easily double the number of youth we serve! It's that simple, so please help us get the word out!

### News

- **TV Appearance on WHYY** – Susie and Dylan gave a great interview on live television on December 6. Thank you to all our volunteers who helped us look great that day:  
**Sheri Reed, Eric Fox, Clelia and Annamarya Scaccia, Laura DeWall, Ria Capone, Caroline and Michelle Davis, Carolyn Thompson, Malaiki Robinson, Dylan Arroyo, Nathan Gold, Kimberly Paynter, Mary Ellen Duffy, Abigail Reikow, Jessica Kalvp, and Thomas McCarthy.**
- **Equality Forum** - Equality Forum selected our proposed panel discussion "From PTA to GSA: The Queer Family

## SATELLITE BOWL from pg 1

many. Teams have already registered in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Michigan, Minnesota, Colorado, Texas, New Mexico and even Halifax, Nova Scotia! Teams are the key to this event - the bowlers do the actual fundraising and outreach for us. Team captains pledge to raise a specified amount of money, and collect from teammates and



**You'll need a coupon like the one picture above when you bowl at Lucky Strikes during the Satellite Bowl on Jan. 11. Coupons will be distributed at the event.**

their extended groups. If a team pledges \$100, then each team member contributes or tries to raise \$25. Locally, teams are forming – there is a Bank of America Team, Team William Way, and more.

The Satellite Bowl fundraiser runs from noon to 8 pm, with Happy Hour from 4 pm to 8 pm. The Family Bowl portion of the event takes place from noon to 4 pm.

Pledge a team for Mountain Meadow, in your neighborhood or in ours, or simply come out and bowl if you're in Philly. For more info about the event, call 215-772-1107 or visit [www.mountainmeadow.org](http://www.mountainmeadow.org).



## IN TOUCH from pg 3

School Experience,” which will be a part of KEEPING IT REAL’s Spring presentations in May 2009. Anyone interested in assisting us with this program, please call the office!

- **COLAGE and the camp collaborative** – COLAGE helped form a collaborative partnership for a series of roundtable conferences discussing best practices and issues faced by the few other agencies working with youth from LGBTQ families. The group is a mix of summer camps, family camps, non-profit organizations, year round programs and summer programs. We are collecting basic information on each participating group, and hope to grow this collaborative that can share resources and experiences to enable these symbiotic programs to thrive effectively. Jan 15 is the next meeting for the collaborative.

### Events

- Philadelphia Family Pride is having their Annual New Year’s Brunch. All families welcome. For information about this event, email Jennifer at: [pfp\\_raison@verizon.net](mailto:pfp_raison@verizon.net)
- Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), an educational and support group, holds its monthly meetings, generally the third Sunday of the month, at the LGBTQ Center also known as the Carriage House at the University of Pennsylvania, 3907 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6031 from 2:00-5:00 PM. The next PFLAG meeting is Sunday January 18, 2009

Lesbian Author Eli Gordon will read from and discuss her award-winning non-fiction narrative *Walk with Us: Triplet Boys, their Teen Parents and Two White Women who Tagged Along*. Refreshments and discussion groups follow the program.

## MM Recipient of Four New Grants

**2009** is proving to be an amazing year so far for Mountain Meadow as the organization just received a grant from the Sonya Staff Foundation on New Year’s Eve! MM also received grants from the Calamus Fund, the Allen A. Stein Family Foundation (both based in New York), and the William Purves Gest Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation to support its programming. Announcement of the grant was made by R. Andrew Swinney, President of the Foundation, whose Board of Managers approved the grant on November 18, 2008.

Since grants represented 47 percent of our overall revenue last year, we deeply thank the foundations that support us. Last year’s grants came from the following caring Foundations:

- **The Caroline Alexander Bucks Foundation**
- **Delaware Valley Legacy Fund**
- **Fund for Children**
- **The Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial Fund**
- **The Leo Model Foundation**
- **Philadelphia Activities Fund**
- **The Philadelphia Foundation**
- **Sapphire Fund**
- **Women’s Way**

# “Keeping it real” w/ Youth from Queer Families **Media Leadership Program** Call for Speakers ::

Name	Age	E-mail	Phone	Address

Mountain Meadow’s speakers’ bureau offers inter-generational training to raise awareness about LGBTQ families and to have our voices represented & integrated in diverse ways through media interfacing, making presentations in communities, churches, & schools, participating on panels, and facilitating workshops as empowered youth, families, and advocates sharing our stories and celebrating our lives.