Eastern Washington University’s Pride Center hosted the second annual Lavender Graduation Ceremony on Thursday, April 21, 2011.

The Lavender Graduation is a cultural celebration that recognizes LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning) students and their allies. The ceremony acknowledges the academic achievements of the students, and raises awareness about their contributions to their respective schools and to the community at large.

Charlotte Heller, EWU Junior and treasurer of Eagle Pride was the emcee for the ceremony. Steven Barrios (Long Time Holy Rain) offered a blessing from his Native American tradition, and Alan Fonseca, secretary of Eagle Pride, welcomed the crowd of about fifty faculty, staff and students who gathered in the Showalter Rotunda on the Eastern Washington campus.

Nathan Lewis introduced this year’s keynote speaker, Sarah Toce, the nationally recognized and award winning Editor-in-Chief of The Seattle Lesbian, an online news and entertainment magazine (www.theseattlelesbian.com).

Sarah’s inspirational speech described her struggles with coming out, as well as her accomplishments. She offered encouragement to the students that she said were actually an inspiration to her, commenting, “I wish I had something like this when I was going to school.”

The ceremony also honored faculty, staff and fellow students that the graduates nominated to receive special recognition for their support, encouragement and inspiration. Ally awards were presented to Steve Bertram, Kelly Coogan-Gehr, Joel Diaz, Mimi Marinucci, and the Associated Students of EWU (ASEWU) for their support of the LGBT community.

The ceremony was a moving and inspirational event. Thanks and best wishes to all of the graduates!!!

The Pride Center would like to offer a special thank you to David Cornelius, Michael Antee and Frederick Montgomery. Without their support this year’s Lavender Graduation would not have been possible!
NOVA KAINÉ & BLOW ME BUBBLES: A CLOSER LOOK AT DRAG
(co-sponsored with Eagle Entertainment)
The Pride Center was able to add an educational component to the popular Drag Show that EWU puts on each year to benefit the Spokane AIDS network.

Drag Make-Up Seminar
Drag Queen Blow Me Bubbles hosted a seminar on Drag Make-up, offering students insight into the behind the scenes process and the art of Drag Make-up. She also shared make-up tips and tricks, answered questions and offered advice.

The History of Drag: From Stonewall to Spokane
Drag Queen Nova Kainé shared the powerful oral history of her lineage, tracing the moniker Nova Kainé all the way back to Stonewall. She talked to students about her life journey and shared her struggles.

Nova Kainé also discussed the history of drag, the role that drag plays in the LGBT community, and she educated students about the court system, and about the connection between the Drag community and the Stonewall Riots of 1969.

STEVEN BARRIOS: TWO SPIRIT HISTORY - A PERSONAL JOURNEY
(co-sponsored with American Indian Studies)
The Pride Center and the American Indian Studies Program brought Steven Barrios (Long Time Holy Rain) to campus as a part of American Indian Awareness Week at EWU.

Steven is a Two-Spirit Native American, Community Activist, and HIV/AIDS educator who lives on the Blackfeet reservation in Browning, Montana. Steven talked about what it means to be Two-Spirit and his role within the Native community. Steven also met with Eagle Pride students during their weekly meeting and answered their questions.

CURTIS CHIN: VINCENT WHO?
(co-sponsored with the Department of Sociology and Justice Studies)
Curtis Chin, an award winning Director and Activist came to campus and talked to students about his life as an Asian gay man and his work with marriage equality.

Curtis also screened his documentary Vincent Who?, a film about an Asian American who was murdered because of his race, and he talked about the connection between civil rights for Asian Americans and the movement for marriage equality.

CHICANO/LATINO IDENTITY: THE JOURNEY OF RAMON ALVAREZ
(co-sponsored with the Chicano Education Department)
During a conversation that took place earlier this year, several Eagle Pride students mentioned that they had never met an LGBT person that was in a long term relationship.

In fact, the students said that they did not really believe it was possible for LGBT people to have successful long term relationships or happy families. Where are our role models for that? they asked.

On April 19, as a part of EWU’s Pride Week, the Pride Center and Eagle Pride provided an answer to that question by bringing together a panel of long term lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couples to talk about their relationships and experiences.

Lavender Love: A Panel of Long Term LGBT Couples introduced thirteen individuals to the EWU campus, representing seven long term lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships. All but one of the couples had been together for over 10 years, and one couple for over 30 years.

The lively exchange that followed between the panelists and students included stories about how the couples met, their challenges, accomplishments, anecdotes about their lives together, and heartfelt advice on how to make relationships last.

Rarely do LGBT couples have the opportunity to showcase their lives and their experiences in such a positive way. As a result, the panel proved to be an interesting dialogue about commitment, sacrifice, and how love is able to survive and flourish in the face of discrimination, prejudice and overwhelming odds.

One student, who was moved to tears, commented that he had been afraid that he would end up dying alone, but after seeing the panel and meeting the couples, he now believed that it was possible to have a long term partner and build a family together.

**CAN LGBT PEOPLE HAVE LONG TERM RELATIONSHIPS?**

**IMPRESSIONS LLC**

**AN LGBT FRIENDLY PLACE TO LIVE**

Living Learning Communities, or LLC’s, are small groups of students who live in a common area and share common academic goals or interests.

The Impressions Living Learning Community, located in Morrison Hall, is open to all students who are interested in issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. In this community, students will explore and express who they are in a safe and affirming environment.

Students will learn about the history and culture of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and ally communities, through the lens of Women’s and Gender Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy.

They will participate in learning opportunities offered by Women’s and Gender Studies, Sociology, Philosophy, and the EWU Pride Center.

Students in the LLC will have the opportunity to:
- Connect with the campus community through social events, service opportunities, and guest speakers
- Take classes together
- Live with students who are open to exploring ideas and issues related to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and ally community
- Participate in activities that will include speakers on social justice, LGBTQA studies, and wellness.

For more information contact Sandy in the Pride Center at swilliams@ewu.edu, 359-7870 or contact Deb Stafford, Coordinator of the Living Learning Communities at 359-4466 or dstafford@ewu.edu.

You can also search “Living Learning Communities” on the EWU website.

**PRIDE WEEK!**

**April 26**

**ICBI Ally Panel**

PUB 206 Noon - 1 pm

What does it really mean to be an ally to the ICBI community?

**April 26**

**LAVENDER LOVE**

A panel of long term ICBI couples

Showalter 109 4:30 pm

A panel of long term lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couples will talk about their relationships and their experiences.

**April 27**

**GOD = ?**

PUB 206 Noon - 4 pm

What is God? Come fill in the blank

**April 27**

**CURTIS CHIN - Vincent Uho?**

Showalter 109 4 pm

Curtis Chin is an Award Winning Director and Activist who also happens to be a gay man.
The Pride Center and EWU Libraries co-sponsored a visit to Eastern Washington University by author Cheryl Kilodavis to provide a discussion and signing of her book "My Princess Boy" on May 10, 2011.

"My Princess Boy" is a nonfiction picture book about acceptance. It tells the tale of a 4-year-old boy who happily expresses his authentic self by enjoying "traditional girl things," like jewelry, sparkles or anything pink. The book was designed to start and continue a dialogue about unconditional friendship and teaches children, and adults, how to accept and support children for who they are and how they wish to look.

Cheryl, a published author, strategic marketer, and social entrepreneur, originally wrote the book to explain her younger son’s "uniqueness" to his teachers and fellow students, but "My Princess Boy" soon went viral with its strong anti-bullying message and has created a forum for open discussion about acceptance.

According to Cheryl, her goal with the book and sharing her journey was to create a space in the world where children who are different, feel different, or express themselves differently can be accepted for who they are.

The discussion and book signing took place at noon in the JFK Library, with close to fifty students, faculty and staff in attendance. A lively question and answer session followed and many in the audience lined up to purchase an autographed copy of the book and talk to Cheryl one on one.

Following the book signing, Cheryl facilitated a workshop in the JFK Auditorium geared towards students and staff in attendance. The workshop offered further insight into the book and the experiences of Cheryl and her family. She also focused attention on bullying, how to recognize it and challenged the audience on ways they could become more accepting.

Later that evening, members from Spokane PFLAG (Parents, Friends of Lesbians and Gays) joined Cheryl for a book signing and conversation at the Barnes & Noble in the Valley, which was co-sponsored by the EWU Pride Center. The PFLAG parents shared stories of their LGBT children and praised Cheryl for her message of acceptance and unconditional love. Finally, despite a very long day, Cheryl took the time to visit with members of InMx! (Inland Northwest Men’s Experience) who traveled to the valley to meet her.

Cheryl donated a copy of My Princess Boy to the Pride Center, which is available to be checked out from the library. For more information about Cheryl or her book, visit her website: www.myprincessboy.com.

Sandy Williams Receives Rainbow Award

The Pride Foundation/Inland Northwest Rainbow Awards are held every year as part of Spokane’s Pride Week. Three awards are given annually (individual, group, and over the rainbow) to honor individuals and organizations whose efforts have had a positive effect on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community of the Inland Northwest.

At the June 6th ceremony that was held at the Unitarian Universalist Church, the 2011 Over the Rainbow Award was presented to Sandy Williams for her work as Coordinator of the EWU Pride Center, as well as for her two decades of involvement in Spokane’s LGBT Community. The Over the Rainbow Award is selected by the review committee from nominations received and is awarded to an LGBTQA individual for consistent and exemplary service to the LGBTQ community and for services rendered over a considerable length of time.

PRIDE CENTER CO-SPONSORS GET LIT PERFORMER HEATHER GOLD

The Pride Center partnered with Odyssey Youth Center to co-sponsor Heather Gold as a part of the EWU’s 2011 Get Lit! Literary Festival.

Heather Gold, a standup comic, public speaker, and playwright, who describes herself as the love child of Sarah Silverman and Rachel Maddow, presented her innovative and irreverent one-woman show, "I Look Like an Egg but I Identify as a Cookie," on April 14 at the Kress Gallery in Spokane. In her award winning show, Sarah relates her coming-of-age/coming out experiences to the audience while baking a batch of chocolate chip cookies.

Heather also dropped by the Pride Center for a meet & greet with Eagle Pride members.
The EWU Pride Center marched in the 2011 Pride Parade. Go Eagles!!!

The EWU Pride Center teamed up with the Alliance at Spokane Falls Community College to staff a resource table at this year’s Pride Community Festival.

The Welcoming Project is back by popular demand! In response to requests from faculty and staff for training on LGBT issues, the Pride Center offered an update of the Welcoming Project Ally training as a part of EWU’s Pride Week in April of this year. The two hour training was co-facilitated by Sandy Williams and Terrie Ashby-Scott. It incorporated some of the original information from the previous Welcoming Project training, as well as some updated information and interactive activities that were developed by Terrie and Sandy.

The Welcoming Project was originally developed to provide an opportunity for EWU faculty and staff to become allies for LGBT students. The goal is for students to have a core group of individuals across the campus that they can turn to for support and assistance.

The Welcoming Project Training is informative, interactive, fun, and most importantly, it is a safe space to ask questions, and discuss difficult and uncomfortable situations.

Participants who complete the training receive a handbook and the newly designed Welcoming Project sticker, which can be displayed in their work area to identify them as LGBTQ allies.

Nineteen faculty and staff participated in this training, and other trainings will be offered in the coming academic year. For more information, contact Sandy in the Pride Center at 359-7870 or send an e-mail to swilliams@ewu.edu.

NEED AN LGBTQ ALLY?
LOOK FOR THE NEW WELCOMING PROJECT STICKERS

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