

Teen pride shines through adolescent adversity

by **Jerry Jones**

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The teenage years are often difficult enough without the added burden of sorting through feelings that you have for members of the same sex – feelings that many of your friends don't have, and often can't relate to.

That's why more than 14 years ago One-In-Teen was formed as a support group for teenagers to come together, discuss those feelings, and help develop a network of friends, who can provide support while discovering their sexuality.

Teens from all over Middle Tennessee, Southern Kentucky, and Northern Alabama have found this support group to be a lifesaver.

"It is a place to go and relate with people like you," explained Rose, a middle school student who identifies as a lesbian: "This group is like my second family. We can talk about anything and discuss things that you really need to get off your back."

With ages ranging from 14 to 22, there are a wide variety of topics discussed at the weekly two-hour meetings. The first hour is spent in open discussion, a time for the teens to vent their frustrations from the week. The second hour is a focused discussion, lead by a facilitator.

Chris, who attended school at Glenclyff, and Cathy, who went to school in Montgomery County, both dropped out and pursued their GEDs instead of facing daily harassment from fellow students.

"The jocks all try to beat up on you," said Chris. "At Glenclyff there was a lot of open hostility and no support. It's this group that has provided me with the support I need. Everyone has been great."

Because One-In-Teen is not a therapy



Members of One-In-Teen: Cathy, A.J., Rose, Chris, Adria, & Jason

group, it does not require parental consent for the teens to attend. Many of the teens haven't come out to their parents.

One-In-Teen meets each Wednesday at the Rainbow Community Center on Woodland Street. More information can be found on their Web site at www.one-in-teen.org. ▼

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