

One-In-Teen opens gay youth center in 'gay business district'

by David Miller
Staff Writer

One-In-Teen Youth Services, Inc., will open its new One-In-Teen Youth Center this month at 1700 Hayes Street in the West End/Elliston area (Midtown) of Nashville.

Located one block off Church Street, their presence helps cement the area as part of a thriving gay business district.

DeWayne Fulton, board member and senior sponsor, views this as the culmination of a vision for the youth agency, the oldest such organization in the State of

During this period, Fulton and other members of the Board searched for more permanent space.

The youth involved with One-in-Teen are very excited about the new building and the opportunities it affords them.

"It's like watching something you've help plant bloom in front of your eyes. I think the support that we'll get from having our own building will be a great thing. We [the youth] are showing that if you want something bad enough, then almost nothing can stand in your way even at our age," states Chris Searcy, a youth member of One-in-Teen.

Fulton began the process of creating the new Center by reaching out to talented and energetic people to transform the One-In-Teen Board.

Robert McNamara, long-time social and political activist, states "I'm proud to be a new member of the One-In-Teen Board. I'm especially pleased to be involved with an organization that is helping gay youth overcome the social obstacles that other youth don't have to face."

Brad Beasley, MS, a supervisor at the Metro Public Health Department, STD/HIV educator, and department liaison to the gay community, relates, "I'm honored to be on the board of an agency that has a long history of helping GLBT kids." Other Board Members include: Carlton Cornett, LCSW, elected board president in December, 2003; Frances Bledsoe, LCSW, an expert on family therapy and longtime supporter of One-In-Teen; and James R. McFerrin, MD, one of Nashville's most distinguished psychiatrists.

In conjunction with One-in-Teen, the Nashville chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is planning an Information Fair for GLBT teens and their parents to learn about the resources that are available to them. One-in-Teen, The Oasis Center, and local GSA's will be there to discuss what they do for GLBT teens. It will be held at the Cohn Adult Learning Center on April 20.

Further information regarding the One-In-Teen program can be found at the agency's Web site www.one-in-teen.org. Or if you'd like to know more about the Nashville chapter of PFLAG, you can visit their Web site at www.pflagnashville.org. ■



Photo by Mike Robinson

One-In-Teen's new youth center will be located at 1700 Hayes Street in Midtown Nashville.

Tennessee. Founded in 1989, Fulton has been associated with One-In-Teen since 1990. Formally incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1994, One-In-Teen serves sexual minority youth between the ages of 14 and 21. Its services have expanded since its inception from a weekly support group to now include support for school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), community education, scholarships, and developing alternative social activities for youth, the most successful of which is the annual Gay/Lesbian Prom. Until the fall of 2003, One-In-Teen rented space from The Center for Gay and Lesbian Community Services and its successor, The Rainbow Community Center.

According to Julia Tate, JD, LCSW, who was elected Secretary/Treasurer in December, 2003, "During this past fall, the OIT Board of Directors was reorganized, and we looked carefully at the future of One-In-Teen. One of the new Board's first decisions was to make finding our own space a priority."

From October 2003 to February 2004, One-In-Teen met at St. Ann's Episcopal Church in East Nashville.

"We're very grateful to St. Ann's — they stepped in at a critical time in the life of the agency and gave us a space to meet in," Fulton said.

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