



## GLBT youth learn about relationships, politics, and social change

### Staff Report

One-In-Teen Youth Services, Inc. completed its nine-week fall lecture series on Nov. 26 at St. Ann's Episcopal Church.

Members were exposed to a wide variety of topics given by experts in their respective fields, including qualities of successful relationships, domestic violence, Nashville city politics, the crisis in the Episcopal Church, modern feminism, the New Testament, the history of GLBT civil rights in Nashville, GLBT issues on the national level, and the impact of the gay vote on local elections.

Carlton Cornett, LCSW, described five qualities of successful relationships, including willingness to work, acceptance, empathy, communication, and self-awareness.

Greta McClain, director of the YWCA's GLBT outreach program, described the dynamics of abusive relationships. Youth members learned the patterns of abu-

sive relationships and how to spot such a relationship in its earliest stages. McClain emphasized that one partner's need for total control is the most significant dynamic of an abusive relationship.

In one of the most controversial evenings of the series, Vice Mayor Howard Gentry discussed similarities and differences between the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the current sexual minority rights movement. His vote on the ordinance that came before the Metro Council earlier this year was of particular interest to the group. The Vice Mayor pointed out that the proposed ordinance would carry only a \$50 fine for violators, which he suggested would not deter discrimination. He suggested that an ordinance with more teeth might be more appropriate. "You are all worth more than \$50," he said.

The Reverend Lisa Hunt, rector of St. Ann's Episcopal Church and newly appointed school board member, compared the current upheaval

in the Episcopal Church over the election of an openly gay Bishop to the elevation of women to leadership positions in the past few decades. However, in her new role, she also talked with youth members about their school experiences.

Dr. Linda Manning, director of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center at Vanderbilt University, reviewed the history of feminism and current directions in the feminist movement. She emphasized modern feminism as viewing the furtherance of all people's rights as the key to advancing every minority group.

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, director of the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender and Sexuality at the Vanderbilt University Divinity School, proposed a more compassionate view of the New Testament than what is generally offered to sexual minority youth.

The Reverend Bill Barnes, retired pastor of Edgehill United Methodist Church and one of Nashville's public intellectuals,

described the early days of the racial civil rights and gay rights movements in Nashville. Barnes described his contacts with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his sense that change must come about through love. Twice the United Methodist Conference attempted to sever ties with Edgehill because of its commitment to serving people of all sexual orientations.

Politics—both national and local—rounded out the series. Due to an unusually contentious session in congress, U.S. Representative Jim Cooper was unable to leave Washington for his scheduled evening. However, in his stead his wife, Martha Cooper, and Chief-of-Staff, Greg Hinote, spoke with the group. The sexual minority community faces several challenges on the national level, including a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages.

Metro Council Member, Mike Jameson, completed the series. Elected from East Nashville's 6th

District, which includes a large number of GLBT households, the councilman described the importance of the GLBT vote in electing local officials. Like Vice Mayor Gentry, he emphasized the importance of using each vote to support a candidate rather than attempt to use a vote as opposition to another candidate.

"One-In-Teen is very proud of the success of the series," senior sponsor, DeWayne Fulton, stated, "We're grateful to all the speakers who shared their time and knowledge with us. One-In-Teen youth members are the future leaders of our community and the board and sponsors believe that this was a serious investment in our future."

One-In-Teen is actively seeking both sponsors (adult volunteers) and board members. By Jan. 1, 2004, One-In-Teen hopes to be operating from new space in the West End area. For further information on One-In-Teen, please visit [www.one-in-teen.org](http://www.one-in-teen.org). ■

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