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Educating those who counsel and educate our LGBTQI youth: Part I of a 4 part series

Morgan M. Hurley, Copyeditor | Fri, 01/08/2010 - 11:05am | [Bookmark](#)

Dr. Trish Hatch grew up in West Covina, received her undergraduate degree at Cal Poly, and went on to get two Masters and her Graduate degree at Cal State San Bernardino, taking classes at night so she could take care of her small children. During this time, she found her love for school counseling and established herself as a solid leader in the Moreno Valley Unified School District. Six years ago, she moved to San Diego to teach at SDSU. The rest has been bliss, and history.

Dr. Hatch now has a multitude of titles besides mother, student and school counselor. She has co-written several textbooks, has taken a pivotal role in the very fabric of her profession and has won a long list of awards, including the prestigious "Mary Gherke Lifetime Achievement Award" from the American School Counseling Association, in June 2007.

"Mary Gherke was my mentor, so this award was an absolute honor for me," said Hatch. "Even though they call it a lifetime achievement award, I'm not close to being done yet- I feel like I've only started!"

Aside from being an Associate Professor for the Department of Counseling & School Psychology at SDSU, she also is CEO of her own consultant company, Hatching Results, LLC., where she helped co-author the National Model for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). This national model provides a framework for the entire School Counseling profession, providing a foundation, delivery, management and accountability system.

A little over three years ago, with Hatch's guidance and leadership as Director of the School Counseling Graduate Program, her Graduate students launched the "Center for Excellence in School Counseling and Leadership." CESCcal (pronounced "Sess-cal"), as it is known, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides assistance to other counselors by focusing on ways to educate other counselors on the very framework she helped to establish within the ASCA model.

Hatch may be the Executive Director, but she feels strongly that this project belongs to her students.

CESCAL runs a resource-filled [website](#); consults with, reaches out to and visits schools; conducts small training workshops; and runs niche-based mini-conferences throughout the state several times per year. In addition, they frequently collaborate with counselors on the national level - focusing their topics on trends concerning the issues of today's youth in school; the last one regarding English as a Second Language, or EL.

She loves what she does.

Now, her own personal *tip of the spear* has become Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transsexual (LGBT) youth. For the last two years, she has travelled throughout the state, participated in the workshops, held fundraising mini-conferences, performed speaking engagements without accepting a fee and saved money with one goal in mind: creating a larger scale conference to support LGBT youth.

"These kids really need support and advocacy. I really wanted to dive in and provide a wide range of information," she said.

This year, the fruits of her passion will be harvested. She and her Grad students are presenting the *First Annual Conference for Educators and Counselors of LGBTQI Youth*, on February 5-7th at the Mission Valley Hilton.

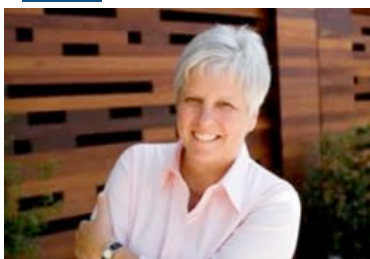
Why did she include the "Q" and "I" to the acronym?

"One of my colleagues brought the idea up - and after some dialogue I believed he was right. If we are to put on a conference such as this, we need to truly be inclusive. There are students who identify as Queer; there are students who are questioning; and intersex kids often just fall through the cracks. They all need to be included."

Although the conference is being geared towards the needs of students in grades K-12, when the children are most vulnerable or at risk, any educator or counselor who wishes to attend is encouraged to do so. This being the first year, Hatch's goals are small. She hopes for at least 150 attendees, expecting that they will take what they learn, go back and share, and return with bigger numbers next year and the year after.

"I want to make this an annual event."

[ENLARGE](#)



Dr Trish Hatch

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The fees were kept low and the conference takes place over a long weekend, in order to minimize the impact on attendees in case their school district would not support their attendance. Registrations have been received from across the country, and one speaker is flying in from Australia on his own dime.

Hatch emphasized that this isn't just for Gay & Lesbian educators and counselors, but for ALL counselors and educators. "Counselors are so pivotal," Hatch explained. "Unfortunately, there are many counselors out there who do not have the personal experience or education required to properly advocate for, or support these youth."

So far, only one negative email has been received, but its tone was certainly not much of a surprise. "I know you're trying to help these students, and that is wonderful. But I can't ethically or morally encourage students to stay in a self destructive lifestyle," the author wrote. "If we are truly interested in what they want, could we consider offering an alternate workshop as well, on how to make a different choice in regards to choosing this particular lifestyle?"

This, Hatch says, is one of the main reasons this conference is so important. "There really is a lot of ignorance out there. It requires a positive, more educational response than some would like to give."

She also pointed out that the author of that email (and many others, she surmises), by conducting his or her job based upon that opinion, is breaking the rules of the ASCA's School Counselor's Ethical Standards. "Whether or not they agree or disagree with a student's orientation, they do in fact have an ethical responsibility to support our youth and advocate for them.

"It is not [a counselor's or educator's] role to impose on the students their cultural or religious biases. Students need to discover and develop their own awareness and acceptance. It's the student's journey, we are merely the guide."

There has been an overwhelming response from presenters, which they are very thankful for. Chaz Bono is scheduled to be the Special Keynote Speaker and among many others, Stuart Milk and Mary Ellen Clark will also be appearing. The subjects tackled, just as Hatch had hoped, are as wide ranging as the list of presenters is long. *(Note: More about some of the phenomenal speakers and their subjects will take place in a subsequent article.)*

When asked what SDSU's response has been, says Hatch, "Dean Rick Houda has been very supportive. The [Dept of Counseling & School Psychology] is committed to social justice, and takes it very seriously. This conference demonstrates our commitment."

The conference has some great sponsors, including The Trevor Project, Lambda Legal and PFLAG, but Hatch says that to make this truly successful they need much more financial support. They were late getting the ball rolling, so they also need help spreading the word in order to boost attendance.

A decision was made to open up the Awards dinner, featuring special guest speaker Chaz Bono, to the public in order to bring in more revenue. Chaz will speak Friday night at 6pm. Dinner seats are \$50, with VIP seating at \$75. Chaz Bono, an FTM born of celebrity parents, was thrust deeper into the limelight earlier this year when he publicly announced his transition.

On the Saturday night of the conference, Hatch's team is immersing attendees into San Diego's own local gay scene, with a trip to The Center and then a waltz down University Avenue through Hillcrest. They are calling it the "Cultural Plunge," and hope to drop in on various gay owned and operated businesses along the way. They are currently seeking buses to take attendees from the Mission Valley Hilton to The Center that evening. If you can help out, they'd like you to contact them.

If you are in or know someone in the education or counseling profession, Hatch and her students want you to consider this conference.

"This is important work," Hatch affirmed. "This is everything. This is why I am here on the planet."

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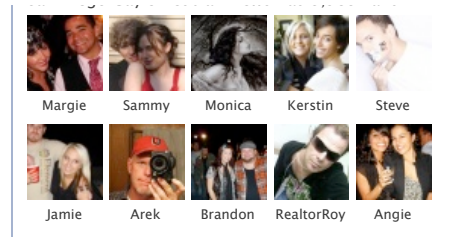
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