

Community and Service Project: Goal Statement

Inside/Out Youth Services

My interests and communities are pretty wide-ranging. I am interested in a number of things both inside and outside of school. I enjoy white-water rafting and have a community of friends who I have rafted with over the years. It is a varied group that includes teachers, retired teachers, firefighters, doctors, stone masons and general contractors. I officiate men's lacrosse and have been involved with that for a number of years as an official and as the person who assigns officials to work games. I enjoy cooking any number of dishes – including German style dishes, green chili, and just about anything that is not baking! I really enjoy reading and listening to music – especially music that I grew up with – and have been known to play the blues harmonica from time to time. I also have been very active in the LGBT community as an ally – someone who not only supports LGBT rights, but works towards equality.

The number of LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning) youth who are harassed at school and in the community is still a major problem despite recent attempts at equality. According to the 2013 GLSEN National School Climate Survey, "Schools nationwide are hostile environments for a distressing number of LGBT students, the overwhelming majority of whom routinely hear anti-LGBT language and experience victimization and discrimination at school. As a result, many LGBT students avoid school activities or miss school entirely."¹ While William J. Palmer High School has a Gay-Straight-Trans Alliance (GSTA) there is more work to be done in the community. Fortunately, in Colorado Springs there is an organization that works with LGBTIQ and their allies on a regular basis, Inside/Out Youth Services. The organization has been serving youth in the Colorado Springs and El Paso County region for over 27 years. Their vision "Education, empowerment and advocacy makes a real difference for LGBTIQ youth. When youth feel safe, accepted and supported, they gain a positive sense of self and are more successful students and citizens."² I have chosen this organization to focus my attention for the Community and Service project.

I have been an active volunteer with the Inside/Out organization for the past several years. I am currently serving as the president of the board of directors of Inside/Out. The purpose of the board is to work with the

¹ http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/NSCS_ExecSumm_2013_DESIGN_FINAL.pdf

² <https://www.insideoutys.org/about/problem-hope-vision/>

executive director in deciding the general direction of the organization, helping to raise funds, recruiting additional board members, planning events for the youth, (including Queer Prom) and to insure the overall vitality of the organization. The board meets once a month for a formal board meeting, and then meets at a variety of fundraising events or activities. In looking at the IBMYP Global contexts there are two that seem to be important for my community project. **Fairness and development** allows me to explore rights & responsibilities; and civil rights for LGBTIQ students is important. However, the IBMYP Global context that my project addresses is **“identities and relationships”** because Inside/Out helps LGBTIQ youth with their self-worth, a place to feel safe and welcomed, and a place where they can support each other. I think that **“identities and relationships”** fits my goal more closely.

My plan is to continue to work with the board of directors in the coming months. I will be attending three meetings and contributing by helping to plan the meeting agendas and helping to facilitate the meeting. Additionally, I will be an active participant in helping to organize and chaperone the Queer Prom on April 26, 2019. I will add my expertise as a teacher and as a sponsor of a GSTA club to the conversations, planning and trainings. I will be working with Jessie Pocock, Executive Director, Inside/Out Youth Services as well as members of different organizations supporting LGBTIQ youth. I am excited by this opportunity to continue my service!

Sources

<http://glsen.org/>

http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/NSCS_ExecSumm_2013_DESIGN_FINAL.pdf

<https://www.insideoutys.org/>

<http://www.one-colorado.org/issues/safe-schools/>

<http://cogsanetwork.org/>

Jessie Pocock, Executive Director, Inside/Out Youth Service - (719) 328-1056