

Conference: HRC's "Time To THRIVE"

Location: Hilton Hotel, Portland, OR

Dates: February 15-17, 2015

Attendee: Dorothy M. Reina, CTA/CCA

HRC's "Time To THRIVE" Conference focuses on GLBTQ youth, but is applicable to the students we serve at the Community College level as well.

The Workshops presented are divided into three tracks:

- 1) HIV/AIDS Awareness & Prevention
- 2) Intersectionality
- 3) Transgender and Gender-Expansive Youth

I decided to focus on the Intersectionality workshops, described as:

"When it comes to working with youth, it is important for educators, counselors, social workers and other youth-serving professionals to understand that one size doesn't fit all."

The above definitely resonated with me and the student population I teach at Norco College.

The workshops I attended were:

- 1) "Privilege, Power and Intersectionality 101" – "It our goal is to create culturally inclusive spaces, we may be limiting ourselves by focusing only on the identities and experiences of those who have been traditionally marginalized by those identities. A privilege framework, on the other hand, broadens the scope of potential allies. Using an intersectional lens, this self-reflective, interactive workshop challenges us to consider how our privileged identities might unintentionally be contributing to the exclusion of others."

\*\*This workshop proved the most thought provoking and engaging. The speaker pointed out the various "positionings" people find themselves in at various times and the factors education, race, religion, education, region, etc., play in whether "privilege" is given or deprived.

- 2) "...And I'm Gay": The Multiple Identities of Rural LGBTQ Youth" – A panel of LGBTQ youth from the rural areas near Portland discuss the importance of their multiple identities and the effects of others viewing them only as queer youth.

\*\*I found this a difficult session to grasp. It seemed to be all over the map and lacked a true focus. This might be because of the various personalities of the youth presenters.\*\*

\*3) Forbidden Subjects: A Holistic Approach to Students' Lives" – We know that many LGB TQ people have been harmed by religion. When they come out to their parents or in church thy encounter messages on the extreme end like "You will go to hell" or "Homosexuality is an abomination." Even in affirming households, young people either explicitly or implicitly get the message that they can't be LGBT and religious."

**\*\*This session did not fall under the "Intersectionality" track but I was personally drawn to this session. I must say, I didn't find anything new or revealing from the session and I was somewhat disappointed as it was more a telling of an individual's journey and no "answers" were provided in terms of how to respond to the criticisms or condemnations of various church members levied at GLBTQ individuals.**

**The best part of the conference was the opportunity to network and meet people from various organizations that work with the GLBTQ Communities.**

**Personally, for me, one of the best moments was meeting Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union and Conference Advisory Committee Member, and having a conversation with her.**

**The Plenary Sessions were wonderful, with individuals sharing their own journey: Jazz Jeffries, a 14 year old transgender girl who exudes a maturity well beyond her 14 years!; Michael Sam, NFL draftee who came out before the draft as the first openly gay football player; George Takei, actor, writer, and former internee with his family during WWII; Judy Shepard, whose son, Matthew, was brutally tortured and murdered simply for being gay.**

**I would definitely recommend this conference and I hope to attend next year's as well!**

**Submitted by Dorothy M. Reina**

**February 17, 2015**