

## **Living the Welcoming Congregation and Beyond Cedar Lane UU Church**

The Cedar Lane LGBT Task Force used the "Living the Welcoming Congregation" materials in a flexible way. When they submitted their certification application, they explained exactly what they had done, and it was accepted by the UUA. You can be creative and flexible in carrying out the program too!

The Cedar Lane LGBT Task Force group was formed in the fall of 2005 (as a part of the Social Justice Council-SJC) with the goal of updating Cedar Lane's commitment to the Welcoming Congregation program and integrating our Welcoming Congregation work into the ongoing structure of life in the church. The group worked on this project for a number of years, and then applied for and were granted updated "Living the Welcoming Congregation" certification by the UUA during the summer of 2008. Since that time, the group has continued to work actively as a SJC subgroup with the mission of continuing to weave the "Living the Welcoming Congregation" initiative (with its UU goals of respect, equality, and justice) into the life of Cedar Lane, and to work collaboratively with other community groups doing related social justice work outside of Cedar Lane.

Starting in the fall of 2010, the LGBT Task Force began offering a film series in conjunction with the Adult Programs Committee. Films were shown on the second Friday evening of each month, and each film presentation was followed by a group discussion facilitated by a subject matter expert. Moderators included a Mormon Elder, a Muslim Imam, a representative from the Human Rights Campaign, a male-to-female transgender physician, a female-to-male transgender psychologist, and a number of Cedar Lane LGBT Task Force members.

The fall semester featured films that focused on **sexuality and faith**, including the Mormon Church, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The spring series focused on **gender identity and expression and families**. Listed and described below are the particular films that were included in both of these film series offerings. The film and discussion sessions were well attended and well received by a mixed group of participants, including members of Cedar Lane and other local UU congregations and other community groups such as PFLAG. Based on the success of this year's experience, our LGBT Task Force group is planning to sponsor another LGBT related film series next fall.

For more information, contact Marge Dimond at [margeryjd@aol.com](mailto:margeryjd@aol.com)

### **Fall Film Series: Religious Creed and Sexual Orientation**

- **"8: The Mormon Proposition"**-- a 2010 documentary film about the impact of work by the Mormon Church on the passage of Proposition 8 in California. Proposition 8 is the public referendum which reversed the right to marry (for same-sex couples) that had been granted by the California Supreme Court.
- \* **"Trembling Before G-d"**-- a 2001 American documentary film about gay and lesbian Orthodox Jews trying to reconcile their sexuality with their faith.
- \* **"For the Bible Tells Me So"**-- a 2007 award winning documentary film about homosexuality and its perceived conflict with religion. The film focuses on the contemporary face of an old conflict between Christian fundamentalists and gay and lesbian people. Included in the film are interviews with members of a number of well known religious families (including the families of former House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt and Bishop Gene Robinson).
- **"Jihad for Love"**--a documentary about gay, lesbian and transgender Muslims across the Muslim and Western worlds.

### **Winter/spring film series: Gender Identity in Film and Theater**

\* **"The Kids are All Right"**-- a 2010 film nominated for numerous awards including four Oscars. As described in a recent review, "this film is a beautifully told story of two women, one sperm donor, and two

children. We're at the beginning of the world our grandchildren are going to take for granted. But now, we compare and realize that family is by choice or design a place, a state of mind, in which love does or must flourish."

\* "***Different for Girls***"-- a 1996 British romantic comedy with an engaging and unusual story line. The film follows two school boys, best friends who grow up and lose touch with each other. When an accidental meeting between the two of them occurs some years later, they realize how much things have changed. One of the boys is now a girl! A review describes the film as "an interesting, touching and reflective film, which takes the viewer for an emotional ride through an intelligent and unpredictable story."

\* "**Transamerica**"-- a 2005 independent comedy-drama film. The film tells the story of Bree, a transsexual woman (Felicity Huffman), who goes on a road trip with her long-lost son Toby (Kevin Zegers). The film has won multiple awards, both for the screenplay and for various acting roles. One of the major themes of the film is the personal journey toward self-discovery.

\* "**Transparent**"-- a 2015 documentary film about the experiences of 19 female-to-male transgender parents as they are coming to terms with gender transitioning. The film focuses on its subjects' lives as parents and as human beings as it reveals the diverse ways in which each person reconciles giving birth and being a biological mother with his masculine identity. Through these extraordinary stories, the film challenges the ways that people relate to one another, particularly within our immediate families, based on gender.