



## San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center *Volunteer Spotlight*

August 2010

### **Jake Hagood**



Jake came to The Center from Boise, Idaho by way of Salem, Oregon. A third year Anthropology student at Willamette University, Jake provided significant assistance with the daily Community Programs operations by compiling and analyzing client demographic and referral information and staffing the Information and Referral Desk. He showed great initiative and willingness to work directly with LGBT families, high-needs clients, transgender jobseekers, and homeless queer youth. He also participated significantly in our LGBT Pride festivities, community meetings, and marriage equality rallies.

### **What brought you to The Center? Where do you volunteer and why do you volunteer at this particular team?**

I chose The Center to perform my internship because I sought a place where I could not only learn more about how nonprofits work but also to grow more as a person in a safe and queer environment. My hometown of Boise, Idaho has nothing close in regards to an organization that makes such a clear and powerful impact on the LGBT community as The Center does. I interned for the Community Programs department with the hope that I can take the tools and knowledge that I have acquired here and put them to much needed use in my own community back home.

### **What excited you about volunteering for The Center?**

In my lifetime, I have never seen something at all similar to The Center. For that matter, never have I felt more safe and at home in my own skin than during my time here. I suppose what excited me most everyday was the feeling that I got from every member of the staff and every volunteer—a feeling that I most definitely have never felt before. That feeling was of course that I truly belonged to this special family. It was here that I finally felt what it is like to no longer be judged based on who I am or who I love. For the first time I truly believe I've been accepted into something that is greater than myself and for that I owe a debt of gratitude that I don't think I'll ever be able to repay.

### **Do you have any memorable and/or favorite experience volunteering with The Center?**

My most memorable experience at The Center would have to be this year's Pride March. The rush I got from marching alongside my fellow compatriots from The Center was beyond words. More so because I got to share that experience with the boy I love. Hand in hand and with the crowd cheering us on, it is hard to believe that less than a year ago I was ashamed of who I am. At that moment, however, it was hard *not* to feel proud. I will treasure that experience as long I live. My experience here has been remarkable and forever memorable. Thank you all for everything!