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SPEAKERS

Speaker 2, Jimmy Carper, Joan Devlin, Roy McCarthy, Speaker 1

S

Speaker 1 00:01

Kate Hoffman did most of the interviews, we interviewed over 50 young people and about 50 adults of various kinds, parents, professionals who work with us, teachers, clergy. And so we spent the first half a year in writing the book, not doing any writing at all, but really in just gathering the information and really wanting to listen to how it was for young people.

S

Speaker 2 00:31

Professionals aren't always allies, to young people who are gay or lesbian, or necessarily young people. Anyway-.

S

Speaker 1 00:38

Well really, the part of this book that's to allies was really important to us. Because as terrific as it is that young, gay and lesbian and bisexual people are speaking up and standing up for their rights and demanding really their rightful place in the world. They can't do it alone. They can't change schools all by themselves, they can't change religious institutions all by themselves, they need adults who want to be allies. And so part of the book speaks directly to parents, to educators, to clergy, to all kinds of social service providers, and we really exhort all these adults to be allies to you and talk about, you know, how to let people know that you're gay friendly. And one of the things that that we really want to tell all the adults is that anybody who works with you works with gay youth, whether you're aware of it or not. And the most important thing to know is that it's not enough just to be supportive if the young person comes out to you, because the kids who come out are just the tip of the iceberg, right? Yes, yes, there's all these kids who aren't visible, but are there in your groups in your classroom, in your youth ministry groups-.

S

Speaker 2 01:54

Right. And between when I was young, and I'm sure I'm not the only one, when you saw a person who appeared to be gay, it was usually the probably untypical gay person is as we would say, and you were afraid to talk to them. And now that there are probably more kids out these days, that some people are still very isolated, because they're not sure of themselves. And how do we reach them?

S

Speaker 1 02:20

Isolation is the greatest problem. And I think that for allies, what we need to do is make it clear that this is a gay friendly space, that this is a safe that space, that this is a space that safe for anybody of any sexual orientation. And it's easy to do that. One thing is just to use the words gay, lesbian, bisexual, in a neutral or respectful way, or to talk about gay people in a positive or respectful way. Or to wear a button were to put up a poster of famous gay people in history or have our book for your mind sitting out. You know, those things, communicate, whoever you are, it's okay for you to be here.

J

Joan Devlin 03:03

Have you done any follow up since the book has been written with some of the different people that you spoke with?

S

Speaker 1 03:09

Yes, a lot of young people have kept in touch with us quite a lot. And we're hearing wonderful stories of their blossoming really, as they grow. One of the main messages that we have to young people is that it gets better as you get older, and that being young is the hardest time to be gay, if you can make it through those years, it's just going to get easier and easier. And the great news is that inevitably, you're getting older all the time.

S

Speaker 2 03:39

And sometimes you have to tell people that it might be best for them to stay in the closet when they're young. If they're dependent on their family for financial backing, which most almost everybody is, and that. And also, what about the aspect of of sex and being so safe? Are young people thinking they're not vulnerable?

S

Speaker 1 04:03

Yes, yeah, we really try very hard to talk to young people honestly, and to not only give information about safe sex and how to be safe, but about why and that the deepest message there is because you're valuable, because you are a wonderful, terrific, fabulous person. And that even if a lot of society is telling you that's not true, they're wrong. And it's the world that needs changing, not you. And so although we have a chapter on safe sex, I think really the whole book is about being safe, because it's saying you are a terrific person. And I think this is the message that gay and lesbian youth need more than anything else is to have a mirror held

up to them and say, Wait a minute, you know, you are too precious to consider yourself a throwaway. So think about what you're doing. doing and we encourage young people not to rush in to sex in order to affirm their gay identity. And I think this is something that doesn't get said enough, you can know that you're gay, you can celebrate that you are a lesbian or a gay or bisexual without being sexually active, who you are attracted to what you feel in your heart, who you want to be close to, that's enough to tell you who you are in terms of your sexual orientation. And you don't have to run out and have sex that you're not ready for or that you don't really want in order to affirm who you are.

S

Speaker 2 05:36

Both of fabulous, fabulous statements. You're listening to KPFT Houston Pacifica foundation station here in the wonderful city of Houston. And we're talking to Ellen Bass, one of the authors of free your mind, and you're doing a book tour. And I, I could imagine it must be very grueling, to have to go from city to city, day after day. But it also must be also very affirming. And I just came from Crossroads market, and how was the reception there?

S

Speaker 1 06:06

Right, it was wonderful to be there. And actually, it's wonderful to be on this whole tour. It's it's more exciting at this point than grueling, especially after being writing this alone for a long time. And now to be able to share it with people and to start to be able to offer this I mean, what we really wanted was to offer this as a resource to young people, so that they would have more support in their lives. And it's really exciting to be able to do that. And to begin to hear the stories of other young people as we share this. Will you be appearing anywhere else in Houston? Yes, actually, tomorrow night, I'm going to be at hatch. And that's the Houston area teen coalition of homosexuals. And it starts at eight o'clock. And if any of you are interested in coming call 9427002. That's 9427002 for more information and location.

S

Speaker 2 07:09

That's great. I'm in San Francisco area where, Your Honor, there is just so many different resources. And that's not available in in some of the other areas. What kind of advice do you give somebody young, who's in a small town, if they were able to ask you or speak to you? What can they do? I mean, if they don't feel like there's anybody else out there, if there isn't a group like hatch, or even somebody here in Houston, who may not feel that they have access to HATCH.

S

Speaker 1 07:42

One thing is to seek out people that seem more open minded in general, and then to carefully test the waters as to what their attitudes might be, we encourage kids not to come out without really checking it out. So you can talk to somebody about something that gay and lesbian issues that's been in the paper or some celebrity who talks about being gay or lesbian, see what their reaction is before you risk coming out. And if the reaction is positive, then you might know that it's a little bit safer. We also encourage kids to call PFLAG parents, friends and family

of lesbians and gays, where there are supportive adults who are often going to be able to help you get in touch with resources. Also online, you can connect with other gay youth online, you can connect with other gay youth as pen pals. You don't have to be always right in the same city to be able to make connection. But don't let yourself be isolated. There are ways that you can connect without coming out. And that's really important to reach out.

S

Speaker 2 08:48

And we don't necessarily endorse any commercial products. But America Online has some very good forms for gay and lesbian people if you don't have access to the internet, or some other online service. P flags number here in Houston is 867 9020. And they even have an email address, which is PFLAGhoutx@aol.com.

S

Speaker 1 09:13

That's great. Also, there are youth talk National Youth talk lines that have 800 numbers that we listed in free your mind. Yeah, quite a number of them so that you can call and talk to another gay or lesbian young person someplace else in the country for free.

J

Joan Devlin 09:28

What other advice would you give perhaps to a person who is gay and who is being harassed? Because I know I was basically tortured through most of my high school years. And I wasn't out, you know, and I read in your book about for instance, Stone, who, you know, I just admired her so much when she said her first day, her you know, her first day in high school, she stood up and said that, you know, she was, my name is stone and I'm a lesbian. And I thought it would just blow over in two months and then spent, you know, the next four years being harassed. How can you reach somebody like that to tell them You know, don't give it up, don't you know it's going to get it will get better than this? Would you advise it, they also call some of the hotlines.

S

Speaker 1 10:07

Absolutely, absolutely. Don't stay isolated, it's not necessary to be isolated. You everybody has access to be able to connect with another young person who can give you support or with a safe and respectful adult who can give you support. Call a talk line called PFLAG call youth support group, don't be isolated. The other thing is check out and see what's possible in your school. Because every student deserves a safe learning environment. And if you're being harassed, go to a teacher, go to your principal, go to a guidance counselor, you may not get the support you deserve. But on the other hand, you might.

S

Speaker 2 10:50

And that except in Salt Lake City, of course.

S

Speaker 1 10:54

But even in areas where you don't expect to have a lot of support, sometimes you can get it. Many educators are in the business of education, because they care about young people. And although some of them will not be responsive, some of them will. And it's worth trying to really make your cause known. Because if you're being harassed at school, you shouldn't be and you deserve to have support to have a safe learning environment.

J

Joan Devlin 11:24

Of all of these, I want to say I don't want to say favorites. But I know you had to have some, I guess favorites is the word of-. Some of your favorites.

S

Speaker 1 11:37

Well, we do have some favorites. We can't help it. Not really favorite people. But some of the kids that we talked to, I think expressed what a lot of young people are going through in ways that were just so articulate, and you know, reached so much at the heart of what we were trying to say that I think was really important. I'd love to read you a couple of quotes. Some of them, could they do that. I think I'd like to read some about how it feels for young people, when they finally are able to connect with other supportive people. And this is one from Chris, who is a young person in Boston, who had just a horrendous time, throughout school with enormous harassment just didn't think you'd make it through. And finally did connect with other young gay and lesbian kids and also supportive adults. And this is what he says about his first experience going to pride day. He says, I'd heard all this stuff about pride day. And I thought, What is it, I had no idea. When we started marching, I thought every gay person in the world must be here because they lined the street. They were on top of building. And someone said, this isn't even all the gay people in Boston, I honestly understand pride. There is nothing in the world better than this. I felt as if everyone was family, like I could just run up to anyone and give them a hug. And they would understand. I just felt I never want to go home. I am home.

S

Speaker 2 13:13

I that is a wonderful quote. And I just want to tell you that 1991 We had a march on Austin, and about was like the first march outside of Washington State Capitol outside of Washington, and was a show called Wildenstein on this very station. And we opened up the phone lines, which we don't normally do. And it was so rewarding to have some young person call up and say, when we turn that corner, going up Congress Avenue, and all we can see is game as being people. And I'm thinking we're doing something right. Absolutely. And it is so rewarding that somebody young would have this type of feeling.

S

Speaker 1 13:52

Absolutely. It's interesting, because the thing that has, there was a study done and the thing that was the most influential in helping young gay and lesbian and bisexual kids feel self esteem and feel good about who they were, was knowing other gay and lesbian people,

particularly adult role models. And I think you have to be able to see, hey, there's a future for me where I can have a happy, successful, satisfying life. Because here I see other people like me being able to do that as adults. And that seems to make the hugest difference. Can I read you another show? This is one, a young man named Dan, who is a swimmer and competed in the Gay Games and actually won several medals. But he said that winning the medals was not the most thrilling part about being at the games and he described to us what the most thrilling part was. He says, This is how he felt whole for the first time he said, what really did it was walking to the closing ceremonies. It was dusk and the sky was that Purple Cow color, and as I walked into Yankee Stadium, I looked up and I'm like, damn, because Yankee Stadium is packed, I mean, packed, over 60,000 people, and everyone's just clapping and cheering and yelling for you. I will always remember that experience. It was just amazing. It was the first time in my life, I was able to be both gay, and an athlete. And no one expected me to explain how I felt because they all knew I didn't have to be the token gay boy in the athletic world. I didn't have to be the token jock in the gay world. I was like everyone else. And we were being celebrated for being athletes, and for being gay, and for being strong enough to be both.

S

Speaker 2 15:42

Fabulous. Thank you very much for joining us. Oh, you're so welcome. And I wish you all the success in your work in the book that you put out and have a great book tour. We were talking to Ellen Bass, who is co author of a book called Free Your Mind. It's available at Crossroads market in other fine bookstores and in Houston. And good luck.

S

Speaker 1 16:05

Thanks so much. I'm delighted to be here.

J

Jimmy Carper 16:11

Oh yeah, group. I don't know exactly their sexual orientation, but to do a song called boy or girl has to make them pretty cool. It's called Imperial drag. Not to be confused with Imperial teen which we played earlier, which is an openly gay group. That is a cool song. And that followed up the great interview from Jack and Joan from lesbian and gay voices on Free Your Mind.

R

Roy McCarthy 16:41

Here when they were interviewing Ellen Bath, right?

J

Jimmy Carper 16:45

They did that interview two weeks ago on the lesbian and gay voices show heard every Thursday night from eight until 10 o'clock right here on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station actually it's not heard on KEOS College Station is not they do their own programming during that time period. Oh, so those folks sorry, you you can't listen to lesbian and gay voices. Oh, well, but you've got your own great programming up there in College Station.

R

Roy McCarthy 17:15

And we left an hour longer.

J

Jimmy Carper 17:18

Did I did I tell you? Well, actually, we told everybody here about the MTV special same sex singled out? No. Did you get to say it? No. Okay. MTV does a program called singled out, which is really like the dating game. Remember the dating game? Oh, yeah. It's the same kind of thing for the 90s stupid and silly and all of that kind of stuff. But they did a special segment during Pride Week.

R

Roy McCarthy 17:48

I was gay dating.

J

Jimmy Carper 17:49

gay dating. Oh my god. Yes. Yes. It was great. It was really really great. There was no who or it was just weather very open.

R

Roy McCarthy 18:00

It was the same stupid questions.

J

Jimmy Carper 18:03

Oh, yeah, real idiot questions and all that they started out with 50 people 50 Guys, right and one guy, and then they asked the guy, you like hair are smooth. Okay, I like I want hair. And so all of a smooth guys have to leave. They all file past them and all of this, and they get them down to three contestants, and then they ask the dumb questions.

R

Roy McCarthy 18:28

Oh, if you were determined, if I was a turtle, what would you do?

J

Jimmy Carper 18:32

Right? It's, it's, it's like an A and a B answer. And if you match the answer that the date had, then you advance a space in the one to answer the most questions and events for spaces gets the date. Okay, so I had that with guys and they had it with women.

R

Roy McCarthy 18:57

came my lover Ed. Him and I here's how we broke the ice. When we first started he asked me said if there was such a thing as reincarnation, what would you like to come back at? Ah, and I said, an athletic supporter. That broke the ice bed it did. I mean, you know talking about dating game and stupid question.

J

Jimmy Carper 19:23

I know. I know. Oh, wow. Oh, that's a and other news lambda roller skating. That's that great rollerskating club.

R

Roy McCarthy 19:33

Right. My neighbor belongs to it. Oh, try to get me to go. Oh, you should.

J

Jimmy Carper 19:38

It's a lot of fun. Oh.

R

Roy McCarthy 19:39

I keep falling on my face. can't take much more.

J

Jimmy Carper 19:42

It's every Wednesday night. Every Wednesday night. They do it. And they've got great things coming up in July on the 17th. beach blanket. Bingo is the theme and they're encouraging everyone to wear bikinis.

R

Roy McCarthy 19:58

Oh, I've got it. Join. Edward killed me.

J

Jimmy Carper 20:04

The 24th is a fundraiser for the women's division of the Montrose clinic. And that's supported by the Imperial Court of the single star. Oh, we're gonna do that. And on the 31st They're having a fundraiser for the PWA coalition. Oh, right. That means that a portion of the proceeds go to the

PWA. Yeah, yeah, they did one for the switchboard and there was, it was like 100 bucks or Wow. And they were telling me, gosh, we're sorry, because it was a slow night. I was thrilled.

R

Roy McCarthy 20:39

How much should the Fourth of July party I know you must have talked about it already. But how was she the Fourth of July PWA party raise for the switchboard?

J

Jimmy Carper 20:47

Oh, the one over there, Westmoreland. Where you live also, right. Tom said that the Accounting has not been done, but he suspects it's real close to \$1,000. Great. Isn't that horrific? Wow. Now, the lambda rollerskating. Folks also wanted me to tell you that the single the imperial court of the single star will be having a benefit every night from July 29 through August 4, a whole week of benefits that they're sponsoring all places. And when we get more information, we'll tell you about it right.

R

Roy McCarthy 21:23

Well pass it on in the Women's Network

J

Jimmy Carper 21:26

And other news, located at the Montrose Counseling Center. 701 Richmond, coming up on July 10. They're gonna have a video called the famine within a powerful film on the obsessive quest for the perfect body. This was a winner of the Canadian Academy Award for Best Documentary. Oh, yeah, that's July 10. At the Montrose Counseling Center, the women's network if you haven't been there, give them a try. It's nice thing to do on Wednesday night.

R

Roy McCarthy 21:57

There you go.

J

Jimmy Carper 22:00

Let's see 10 by 1010 short plays by 10 New playwrights. We didn't advertise this last year. This is but there were several gay playwrights who had local gay playwrights who had plays in this 10 by 10. It's like 10 minute plays 10 to 15 minute plays, and they have 10 of them. Hmm. They show them all in one night. It's really great. It's so two weekends, July the 12th and the 13th, July 19 and 20th. And it's being done at stages, Repertory Theater wall drive for reservations, call 7075194. And since we were just talking about the teen thing, I wanted to bring up that in the latest edition of crossroads, which is supporting it's a kind of a magazine that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth. Hmm, there's a little thing about these I love gay comics. I am into gay con.

R

Roy McCarthy 23:05

Oh, I am too I love them.

J

Jimmy Carper 23:06

Okay, to two things here. Move over one Wonder Woman. It's not too late to check out DC Comics for book mini series, Metropolis s see you as cu stands for special Crimes Unit. The main character of the series is Captain Maggie Sawyer, a lesbian superhero. Raiders get to see Captain sorry or juggle a career relationship and motherhood all while saving the world. Even the Comics Code Authority is self regulating aid industry agency that imposes strict content guidelines is given Metropolis FCU the seal of approval to find out more about the series or to give DC Comics your own seal of approval right to them at 1325 Avenue of the Americas New York New York 1019. But it's the DC Comics so you can probably get that at any comic book store. Oh, yeah. Now another one that might be a little harder to get. I haven't looked for it yet. It's a super super human hero action. Check out gogo boy. Ooh, the first continuous mainstream comic series starring a gay superhero. So this is going to be a continuous series. Oh, I've got again. Actually it's not the first because there's there's been others in the US, huh? Gogo boy includes characters like the invisible lesbian, and Ron Lee, who is gogo boys boyfriend. The comic hasn't been picked up by a major comics distributor yet and is currently available through alternative sources. To find out how you can get a copy right to mermaid publications. 2358 West Hill, one word drive. West Vancouver. That's two words. British Columbia, V seven, s two z two, Canada, or you can call area code 606. Area code 604-926-8956. Wow. Just something about gay comics, I happen to collect them and like them?

R

Roy McCarthy 25:25

Well, you know, I've always found the superheroes in the comics to be very erotic.

J

Jimmy Carper 25:33

Oh, yeah.

R

Roy McCarthy 25:34

I mean, for the longest I mean, you know, like Superman, Batman, The Phantom all these? I mean, these guys were running around in public and tights and blue bikini.

J

Jimmy Carper 25:45

Oh, I had to have openly gay ones. It's just great. Just Oh, I I know that right now you have something you want to talk about? Right?

R

Roy McCarthy 25:55

I've been speaking for a little while about for the past few weeks about the right for gays and lesbians to get married for same sex union or significant other partnerships, what have you. And we all know how that right now through Congress. There's a Defense of Marriage Act or the DOMA do MA in which they're federally for the federal government are trying to deny us codify. heterosexual marriage has been the only marriage that there is, and that gay lesbian people cannot get married. And I've been fighting against this for the longest. And I told you that you should write a one page letter to your senator. Or to your congressman or in my case, my Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. And you can write to the Senator to the honor, you know, at the US Capitol in Washington DC, the Honorable Phil Gramm or the honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson, US Senate, Washington, DC 20510. And two the House of Representatives, like in my case would be the honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. And you can write to our wishy washy flip, flip flip flop man, the President Bill Clinton, to the President, the United States, President Bill Clinton, the White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington DC to 0500. Now these handwritten letters are very, very important, because each letter now President Clinton will never see your letter in all probability. Neither will Phil Gramm or Kay Bailey or Sheila Jackson Lee see my letters, but one of their staffers will and each letter counts as 5000 voters. Council as 5000 votes.

J

Jimmy Carper 28:21

When they're handwritten or typewritten.

R

Roy McCarthy 28:22

When they're handwritten or typewritten. Okay, but as long as it's not coming in as a petition, and when it comes in from a petition, or like when Reader's Digest was doing that contract on America, those that will insert that you are ripped off and put in the mail, that counted as one vote. When you sign a petition, that's one man one vote. But when you write it yourself, or type type it out yourself. That's considered 5000. And there's a reason for that. The reason is that they know that they feel that if a person feels strong enough about a particular issue, where they're going to sit down and write a one page, write out a letter or type out a letter on their own volition, then there must be 5000 other voters who feel the same as that one voter did. So they're going to count that as 5000 votes. Ah. Which, incidentally, is why Phil Gramm right now he's taking a very liberal attitude towards educating the children of illegal immigrants. Because he knows where the votes are right? You know, and we can we can make a difference, a grassroots campaign, letter writing campaign. It can work. You can also get the White House public comment line. error code 202-456-7639 email to the president@whitehouse.gov. And you can call the Capitol switchboard. Even if you're not sure who represent you just ask the operator and you will be connected, asked for the fax number and their email addresses as well. And, again, let these people know that you want to have the right to have gay and lesbian marriages in same sex unions. We do deserve a right. I have there's a couple in our complex that have been together nearly 20 years. That's longer than any of the straight people, the many straight people that I know. Yeah. And marriage is not just an institution for creating children, because there's a lot of straight people who are legally married. And I recognize that such who do not have children and do not want children. And in fact, there's a lot of straight people who are living together in common law marriage and in the state of Texas, when it

reaches an X amount of time. That's common law marriage and is recognized as such. And they're entitled the full benefits of a marriage. You bet. And we've got a lot of gay and lesbian couples that have been together. I know one couple that have been together out there in New York for nearly 50 years.

J Jimmy Carper 31:43

I thought it was doing good at 18.

R Roy McCarthy 31:45

Really. So this isn't just a fly by night or this isn't just a fly by night or, or some fad. This gay marriages and lesbian marriages are very real. Okay, and that's all I have to say on that.

J Jimmy Carper 32:08

Well, thank you in the background you're hearing Stephen Karasik. Yeah. Oh, do you do the new openly gay jazz?

R Roy McCarthy 32:18

Oh, I love it. Yes. You know, this is one of my favorites.

J Jimmy Carper 32:21

I know you've been listening to after hours career radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. I'm Jimmy Carper.

R Roy McCarthy 32:31

And I'm Roy, big Roy.

J Jimmy Carper 32:33

McCarthy. Scott Lewis was here earlier and coming up right after the BBC News will be really Gilbert with this return of the sons of musical chairs and Elmo and Randy are in the house with them and all that mayhem. So how about if I just turn up to Steven klasik and let you listen to him until BBC comes off. There you go. See you next week.