


## BRIDGING THE GSA GAP, from 17

tional Safe Schools Partnership, we're optimistic that Congress will take action soon to enact a federal anti-bullying policy that protects all students from bullying and harassment in schools."

In the meantime, rural Oregon students face an uphill battle in terms of recognizing civil liberties and understanding universal equity. GLSEN Oregon's Ambassadors will get their footing this year on where this outreach program might take the safer schools message. Smith is confident that with the help of the gay, lesbian, bi and trans community and its allies, GLSEN's work can stretch to all areas of the state, not just the ones along the I-5 corridor.

"One of the things I've been working on in the gay community, and especially with PABA [the Portland Area Business Association], is we really need GLBT businesses to step up to the plate and say, 'This is really important,'" notes Smith. "The GSA at Beaverton High is reaching 1,800 kids every single year. They're educating them about the needs and the wants and what happens to LGBT students on a regular basis. In four years, all of those kids are going to be registered voters out there in the world.

"They talk about reclaiming [their identity]. They're taking something that was very negative and they're turning it into something very positive. I think those are the kinds of things that happen when you allow these guys a little free reign to use their imagination and work to change the world. I really truly believe that this [gesturing to students] is the change." 

## GROWING A MEMORIAL

By JENNY FURNISS

Commemorating gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who wrestled with intolerance or suffered from hate crimes is the theme of a sculpture garden envisioned by the Gay-Straight Alliance at Madison High School. The sculpture garden will surround last year's GSA project, a mosaic sofa, with stones, trees, shrubs and sculptures created by art students and community artists. The GSA is considering naming the garden after Tina Brandon, Harvey Milk or Matthew Shepard.

"Matthew Shepard gave his life for who he was. We can't just bury them and forget them; we have to keep showing the ugly side of intolerance until people finally get that there's something wrong," says senior Heaven Leigh Carey, one of the GSA's leaders. "We want people to remember all the horrible things America has done in the past and all the great things other people have done to bring the movement to light."

Carey has been involved in the GSA since her freshman year and described how it has grown from 4-5 to 15-20 students. "People are coming out of their shell and are more willing to take a pro-lesbian/gay stance," she says.

The garden will be located in Madison's turn-around area, where the mosaic sofa is located. A couch decorated with flowers




Last year, Madison High School's Gay-Straight Alliance group project was this mosaic sofa. Plans for a GLBT sculpture garden that would be situated around the sofa are under review by the school district.

and vines may seem a somewhat puzzling statue for a GSA to create, but for Madison High School, it's a functional piece of art meant to inspire a dialogue.

"The sofa is really representative of bringing people together," says David Colton, Madison counselor and GSA advisor. "A sofa is a place of conversation and conversation where people gather to share their stories and lives."

The project's budget will depend on how

much money the GSA is able to raise, and Colton plans to honor donors by including a plaque in the garden inscribed with their names. Currently, the project is still under review by the school district, but Colton expects an approval within a month or so. Last year's sofa project was funded by a grant from the city. 

To make a donation, contact Colton at 503-916-5220, ext. 79356.