



The Safe Schools Coalition

10501 Meridian Ave N, Seattle, WA 98133

www.safeschoolscoalition.org

American Friends Service Committee
Charles Wright Academy
Comprehensive Health Education Foundation
Diversity Productions
Gay Parent Support Group (Honolulu)
GLSEN: The Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (national office)
Greater Seattle Business Association
Hate Free Zone Washington
Ingersoll Gender Center
Kalaheo High School Gay Straight Alliance
King County Sexual Assault Resource Center
Kitsap County Health District
Kitsap Safe Schools Network
Lake Washington Education Association
Lake Washington Technical Academy in Lake WA Technical College
Lambert House
Lifelong AIDS Alliance
Multifaith Alliance of Reconciling Communities
National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)
Norup School (Michigan)
Odyssey Youth Center
Oregon Safe Schools and Community Coalition
OSPI, The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG national) and five local chapters: Bellevue, Everett/Snohomish, Olympia, Seattle, Yakima/Yakima Valley
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Washington
Power of Hope
Pride Foundation
Public Health - Seattle & King County
Rainbow Families of Puget Sound
Safe Schools of Wyoming
School Nurse Organization of Washington
Seattle Academy of Arts & Sciences
Seattle Counseling Service for Sexual Minorities
Seattle Education Association
Seattle LGBT Community Center
Shorewood High School
Snohomish County GLOBE Youth Program
Spokane Public Schools
Stonewall Youth
Teaching Tolerance (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center)
Turning Institute
University of Puget Sound - Multicultural Student Services
Verbena
Washington Association of Churches
Washington Association of School Social Workers
Washington Education Association and its Women's Caucus
Washington State University's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Allies Program
Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation
Women's Educational Media
Youth Guardian Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEATTLE, WASHINGTON AND NATIONAL GROUPS CONDEMN ANTI-GAY "GROUNDSWELL CONFERENCE"

Exodus International's "therapy" for LGBT youth is unproven, unsafe and abusive

SEATTLE (October 24, 2005)—Youth advocacy groups from Seattle, Washington state and around the country explain on Wednesday their concerns about a local conference organized by Exodus International. Exodus advocates what they call "freedom from homosexuality" through religious ministry and lay counseling and advocates so-called "reparative therapy" for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth.

"The widely discredited Exodus International 'ex-gay' ministries now appears to be recruiting young people to deliver their dangerous and misguided message in schools," said PFLAG (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays) in a statement released today. "They would have Christian young people become their newest evangelical weapon by training them how to badger their gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning peers with the message that they can and should 'change.'"

Representatives from the Safe Schools Coalition; Washington Association of Churches; the Religious Coalition on Equality; Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); and the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) will join parents, clergy, educators, mental health professionals, survivors of these kinds of ministries, and openly gay youth on **Wednesday, October 26**, at a press conference where they will highlight the dangerous and discredited methods employed by Groundswell. **The press conference will be held at Hildebrand Hall, Plymouth Congregational Church, 1217 6th Ave., at 11 a.m.**

Helping schools become safe places, where every family can belong, where every educator can teach and where every child can learn, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

“These conferences reinforce the beliefs and fears of parents and youth workers who see LGBT youth as mentally ill or sinful and destined for a lonely, self-destructive life,” said the Safe Schools Coalition, a Seattle-based national organization. “Attending a conference like this may increase the chances a minister or family will forcibly subject a child to reprogramming efforts. Mainstream health and mental health organizations representing nearly half a million professionals, including The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association consider it unethical for a helping professional to attempt such psychotherapy.”

“Our local and national organizations believe in the health and resilience of LGBT youth and don't believe they have to change to be healthy and whole,” said Kathy Sakahara, who serves on the board of the Religious Coalition for Equality. “Seattle youth will hear from us loudly and clearly this week that they are welcome and loved as they are.”

Additional information is available and will be updated online at: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/ResponsestoExodusConf.html>. Press conference speakers and other national experts on the dangers of “reparative therapy” are available for interviews upon request, as are additional educators, parents, and youth.

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