

Editorial

Another trans-identified child suffers at government hands

Just a few short months ago, in the June issue, we reported and editorialized on the plight of young Violet [REDACTED], a transgender youth who was suspended from high school in the Gresham-Barlow school district in Oregon for expressing her gender.

This month, we have a younger trans-victim, six-year old Aurora Lipscomb. It appears that Aurora's parents have recognized and accepted Aurora's gender self-identity, but the misguided child welfare system in the Columbus, Ohio area (Columbus is in Franklin County) has successfully ripped this child away from the arms of her loving family. They have placed Aurora in foster care and will be insisting on treating her as a boy.

The cavalier attitude taken by the judges involved in the case, who are more concerned with their precious vacations than the welfare of that child, is illustrated by the statement of Judge Mason, "will the child die if I don't do anything tonight?"



Joann Prinzivalli

No, Judge, Aurora won't die, but she will continue to have to endure the abuse of the child welfare system that won't allow her the dignity of her gender identity.

According to the Franklin County Children's Services (FCCS) website, Ohio law defines emotional abuse as follows:

"Emotional abuse, although not as visible as other forms of abuse, can still be very damaging. The law defines it as mental injury; and does not give any real guidelines. A child who is repeatedly belittled, ignored, or blamed for the family's problems, may be emotionally abused."

The FCCS, without any legal guidelines to follow, apparently has the right to remove any child from any parent for whatever reason it can theorize. And yet, the mental injury it and its minions are imposing on little Aurora by forcing her to conform with gender stereotypes is something that should be actionable. The social workers need to learn that they cannot interpose their narrow and reactionary agenda on loving parents and their gender-different child.

I decided to check out the FCCS website, and I was shocked to see that the agency pays lip service to multicultural diversity. But actions speak louder than mere hollow words.

The FCCS online Newsletter trumpets the agency's commitment to multicultural diversity, reporting that the United Way recently recognized Franklin County Children's Services and its Multicultural Development Team for "outstanding commitment to celebrating and promoting diversity in Columbus and Central Ohio."

The FCCS Newsletter article goes on to state, "The idea our nation once embraced about a great melting pot where anyone from any background can assimilate into a single society is now outdated. It has been replaced by a more real-

istic and appropriate ideal of multiculturalism. Cultural diversity is based on the idea that cultural identities should not be discarded or ignored, but instead should be maintained and valued."

Now, that sounds really nice and all, but how does that relate to the mistreatment of a gender-variant child? The FCCS ought to return the award to the United Way.

Continuing with the FCCS article: "Cultural diversity is a matter of great importance for everyone, both professionally and personally. For businesses and communities to survive and thrive, everyone needs to be aware and sensitive to all members of the community. Unfortunately, many people are confronted with obstacles, prejudices, and stereotypes because of ethnic backgrounds, gender, religion, sexual preference, and age."

It is absolutely amazing that the words ring so hollow. Can they not see this? A commitment to gender diversity means in their own literature they accept gender variance, but in practice they try to suppress it. How vile to mouth pious platitudes while abusing that poor child.

Apparently, FCCS has had a multicultural diversity team in place since 1993. The article recites that the team is co-chaired by Program Bureau chief Mary Louise Smoot and Children Services board member Norman Brown.

"The agency's cultural awareness program began as a commitment with a dual purpose. Our goal is to better appreciate diversity in the workplace and deliver better services to the families and children we serve," says Smoot in the article.

The MCDT accomplishments include developing racism study circles for all agency employees, creating a diversity resource directory, hosting a statewide diversity conference, and conducting a variety of workshops and celebrations of African American, Latino, Asian, and Appalachian cultures.

It's clear that they haven't addressed the issue of gender diversity, though, from their handling of poor little Aurora.

The article wraps up with "When a group or segment of the population is excluded, the entire community is denied. When all segments are respected and utilized, everyone involved benefits. Children's Services is proud to serve as a Central Ohio role model for cultural diversity awareness."

Well, it appears that they are so proud, and patting themselves on the back for their multicultural awareness, while at the same time, they have perpetrated in fact a pattern of emotional abuse on little six-year old Aurora Lipscomb.

This isn't a case where the parents are forcing a little boy to be a girl - it's a case where the parents have recognized that their child is gender-different.

The situation is one where a recognition of the natural gender diversity would be much preferable to forcing the child into cultural stereotypes, as FCCS has so cruelly chosen.

Trans Child Removed from Supportive Parents

By Gwendolyn Ann Smith

OHIO — Parents Paul and Sherry Lipscomb are in the fight of their lives: An attempt to keep custody of their 6-year-old daughter, Aurora. A Franklin County Magistrate ruled against them August 23rd, awarding temporary custody of Aurora to Franklin County Children's Services (FCCS).

When Aurora was approximately two years old, Sherry and Paul began to notice that she, then their son, had a preference for feminine toys, clothes, shoes, and activities. By the time she entered pre-school, Aurora was emphatically stating that she was a girl. She had also announced her choice of name and insisted that she be addressed by it.

The Lipscombs initially viewed Aurora's behavior as just a phase of her development and assumed that she would outgrow it. As Aurora grew older, however, society around her began exerting increasing pressure on her to conform to social gender-role expectations. Accordingly, Aurora began exhibiting emotional problems in response to those pressures.

The Lipscombs sought therapy for Aurora, which included several inpatient hospitalizations. In the course of Aurora's treatment she was diagnosed with both Gender Identity Disorder (GID) and Aspergers Syndrome (a mild form of autism similar to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). The parents discontinued therapy and sought legal representation after they discovered that therapists were using behavior modification techniques in an attempt to force the child to identify and behave as a male.

It was prior to the fourth and final period of hospitalization that the Lipscombs had told the doctors and Aurora's school that they were planning to support Aurora's gender identity, including having her ears pierced and home schooling her.

But then the problems started. "On the fourth inpatient stay the physicians

totally flipped the diagnosis as strictly being psychological," said Paul Lipscomb, "[Telling us] we had to make a child conform."

Children's Services in Franklin and Hamilton counties stated that Aurora should be kept in a male role against her and her family's wishes. FCCS filed a petition in Franklin County Court, suggesting residential care for Aurora, which would remove Paul and Sherry Lipscomb from custody, simply because they

have refused to raise Aurora as a male.

Magistrate Sanchez of Franklin County agreed with the FCCS petition, placing Aurora in their custody. The Magistrate also refused to order that FCCS maintain Aurora's female gender identity while in their care, including the use of her name, and allowing her to wear girl's clothing.

Following the hearing, the Lipscombs and their attorneys, Randi Barnabee and Mark Narens, filed an objection to the decision. To the parent's dismay, the objection will not be heard until September 12th because the judge to whom the case is assigned, Kay Lias, is currently on vacation.

The Lipscombs will also be filing a motion to stay the order granting custody of Aurora to FCCS. Duty Judge James Mason was not willing to stay the order on the day it was issued, because the court-appointed guardian for Aurora was not present.

Judge Mason also posed the question, "will the child die if I don't do anything tonight?"

Planned legal actions by the Lipscombs include filing of a writ of habeas corpus in federal court in the hope that FCCS can be forced to relinquish custody. The Lipscombs also plan to file a federal sex-discrimination lawsuit in federal court against FCCS, the social workers involved, and others for their violations of Aurora's civil right to

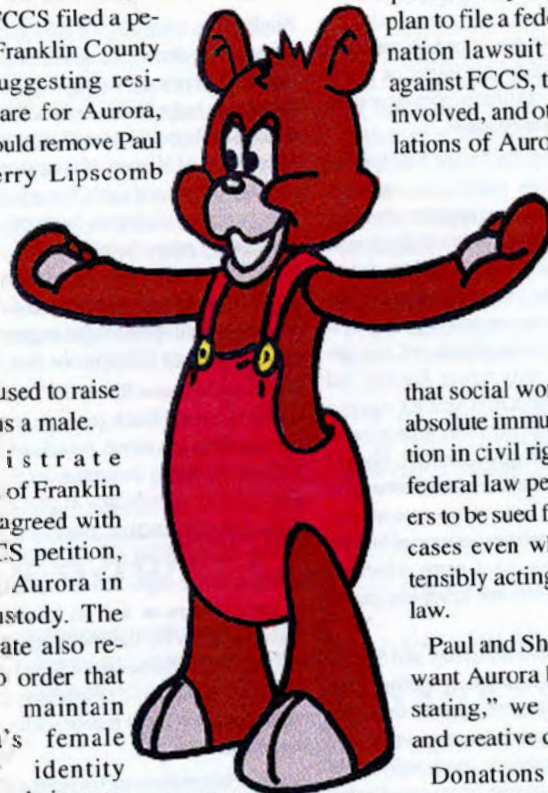
be whoever she says she is without regard for the gender-role expectations of others. Randi Barnabee noted

that social workers do not enjoy absolute immunity from prosecution in civil rights cases, and that federal law permits social workers to be sued for damages in such cases even when they were ostensibly acting under the color of law.

Paul and Sherry Lipscomb just want Aurora back home, simply stating, "we love our beautiful and creative daughter."

Donations to their Defense Fund can be sent to [redacted] South Euclid, OH 44121. Make checks out to "Aurora's Defense Fund."

Gwendolyn Ann Smith ([redacted]) is a "child of the Internet," serving as the Community Host of the Transgender Gazebo at Gay.com, as well as creating numerous transgender-specific Web projects, including the award-winning "Remembering Our Dead" project at www.gender.org/remember. She also serves on the Board of Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA), and is an advisor to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society of Northern California. Her own Web site is located at www.gwensmith.com/gender.



Ted D. Bear is the Mascot for Franklin County Children's Services. But are TG-kids hugged?

Kristianna has a bad experience with NYC EMS

By Rusty Mae Moore

On Friday morning, July 28, 2000, Kristiana [REDACTED] a member of Transy House, in Park Slope, Brooklyn, was suffering from overwhelming pain in her left hip. She decided that she would have to go to the hospital for assistance, and asked that an ambulance be called. One of the other people in the house asked if she could make it in a regular car, but Kristiana said that she could not stand the pain of walking down the stairs to the street. A call was made to 911, requesting an ambulance.

The initial operator at 911 was efficient, getting basic information, and passing the call off to a second operator who dispatched Emergency Medical Assistance in Brooklyn. The second operator asked additional questions, one of which was the sex of the patient, and requested to speak with Kristiana. Kristiana was in intense pain, but was able to speak with the operator, who requested information about her name. At this point Kristiana felt that she had to give her legal name, which was a name almost always associated with male-gendered people. The operator was mixed up because Kristiana

gave her sex as female, but her name sounded male. At this point the pain became too intense for Kristiana, and another member of the house took over. Kristiana's groans of pain could be heard in the background as the friend explained that Kristiana was a transgender person. The operator made no comment, and said that an ambulance would be there.

A New York Fire Department ambulance arrived within 15 minutes, with two medical technicians, both male. They brought a portable stretcher with them and came upstairs to the small bedroom where Kristiana was lying on a bed in agony. She is of African American descent, as well as being a trans woman. The EMS technicians asked her a few perfunctory questions, and then said that she would have to walk out of the house under her own power since they could not carry her, due to so many things being in the way on the staircase. As it happened, there was nothing in the way on the staircase, and the whole reason that an ambulance had been called was that Kristiana could not walk on her own power due to the pain.

Kristiana struggled out of bed, and limped

painfully to the stairs, supporting herself as best she could on the banisters. The EMS crew made no move whatsoever to assist her as she dragged herself along. Two of the women in the house attempted to help Kristiana, but it was difficult, since they were relatively short, and Kristiana is about 6'5". The EMS men ignored this, and watched passively in the background as Kristiana struggled down the stairs, and out the front door.

At the front door Kristiana collapsed, falling full length across the threshold. The EMS men walked past her as she lay on the stoop, and went over to the ambulance. One of the sisters from the house help her up, and she struggled out into the street to the ambulance. The EMS driver went to the cab to prepare to drive, while the other one went into the ambulance and sat down. There was a high step into the ambulance, approximately three feet. The technician made a sign to Kristiana that she should walk in on her own with a beckoning wave of his hand. After a moment he pushed a milk carton out into the street for Kristiana

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Chi Delta Mu of Tri-Ess

OCTOBER MEETING

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are confirmed with Dress Barn on Saturday, October 14th, 8 to 9 PM. Both stores (Dress Barn and Dress Barn Woman) will be available to our group.

The particular stores will be closed to the public. Members of the Tri-Ess chapter and their guests will be able to shop, try on clothes in the dressing rooms, and make their purchases in a private and dignified manner.

This is the group's second outing at the Dress Barn stores.

It is an especially good occasion for closeted CDs to do some real shopping!

CDI members who would like to be my guest, please contact me at:

[REDACTED]@hotmail.com

NYC EMS crew treats transwoman like pariah

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to use as a step. Using this, she was able to haul herself into the ambulance. Once in the ambulance the technician strapped Kristiana down on the stretcher.

One of the house members rode in the back of the ambulance with Kristiana and the EMS technician as they drove the 10 blocks to the Methodist Hospital. At the hospital, the two technicians pulled her out of the ambulance still strapped to the stretcher, and wheeled her into the Methodist Hospital Emergency Room.

Once in the Emergency Room, the Ambulance driver played with the blood pressure machine, taking his own blood pressure, while the other technician went off to get a wheel chair. When he returned, Kristiana moved to the wheel chair on her own, and the accompanying friend wheeled her into the triage section. The EMA crew went back to the ambulance.

Once in the hospital, Kristiana received medical attention, pain killing injections, and referrals to an orthopedist.

Back at Transy House everyone was enraged that the EMS crew had never touched Kristiana, or offered her any assistance whatsoever. They did nothing except come, drive the ambulance, and wheel her into the Emergency Room. They were shocked at their failure to provide any supportive medical or physical attention to Kristiana. There was no doubt in the minds of anyone at Transy House that their treatment of Kristiana exemplified both racism and transphobia.

As taxpaying residents of Brooklyn (city income tax, property tax) and of New York State (income tax, motor vehicle fees, sales tax) the members of Transy House believe that these EMS Technicians were not properly trained with respect to relating with trans people, and to people of color. They recommend that "sensitivity training" on these issues be provided to all such employees of the City Of New York, and all other Cities in New York State.

Transy House is a collective of people of transgendered experience and their friends located in Park Slope, Brooklyn. All of the members of the house are active in the Metropolitan Gender Network, <http://www.inch.com/~kdka/metgend/metgend>, and the Amanda Milan Coalition. The telephone number of the house is 718-832-1080.

Redneck CD jokes (shockingly brutish)

YOU MIGHT BE A REDNECK CROSSDRESSER IF...

- You go to family reunions to meet guys.
- You wear a dress that's strapless and a bra that ain't.
- You wear combat boots with a minidress.
- You wear jeans with a belt buckle that's bigger than your fist.
- You have a Ford F150 pick-up truck, with a gun rack, a Dale Earnhardt license plate frame, and a Confederate flag on the tailgate, next to the bumper sticker that says "I sell Avon Skin-So-Soft."
- You try to wax your legs with Turtle Wax.
- You braid the hair that sticks through your fishnet stockings.
- Wear a black John Deere baseball cap with pearls.
- You use glitter to highlight your mustache.
- You wear tube tops with your mini, because it shows off your Harley-Davidson tattoo.
- Your favorite hand ring came off a cigar.
- You keep spare ammo in your bra.
- You get a run in your stockings while changing a tire on your motorhome.
- Your purse is a toolbox.
- You pluck your eyebrows with a pair of needle nosed pliers.
- You store your lipsticks in a socket-wrench box.
- You use duct tape to keep your "tuck" in place.
- You call your vanity "your work bench."
- You use a pocketknife to sharpen your lip and eye liners.
- "Doing your nails" means sorting the ten-pennies from the sixteen-pennies.
- Your favorite leather skirt was made from the moose you shot last Fall.
- Your new sandals are made from truck tire re-treads you found on the road.
- You keep a spare lipstick in your toolbox.
- You wear a pair of C-clamps as screw-on earrings.
- Your best silver necklace is made from beer can pull-tabs.
- Your nail enamel is made by Rustoleum.
- You use paint thinner to remove your makeup.
- Your moisturizer says "non-detergent SAE 10W30" on the container.
- You remove your leg hair with duct tape.

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