

Soulforce

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(434) 384-7696
www.soulforce.org

Dear Friend,

Good news! Philanthropist Bruce Bastian, founder of WordPerfect, native of Utah, and supporter of the 2006 Equality Ride, **has offered another challenge grant for the Equality Ride. He will match every gift to the project between now and March 21, the day the 2007 Equality Ride arrives in his home state of Utah!** This is Mr. Bastian's way of **challenging you** to support the 2007 riders! Let's show him we can do it!

As I write this today, the Soulforce young adults are working to make the 2007 Equality Ride a life-changing experience for the 56 riders and the 32 schools they will visit. Haven Herrin and Jake Reitan are in Los Angeles meeting with some of our funders. Jarrett Lucas, Co-director of the East Bus, is working on logos and designs for the buses that reflect the energy and hope of the students. Katie Higgins, Director of Operations for the Equality Ride, is crunching the numbers and working with Co-founder Gary Nixon on figuring out ways to limit the expenses of the riders.

Alexey Bulokhov, Co-director of the West Bus, is making sure each rider is in communication with his or her designated university president. He is following up on the assigned readings and Bible studies that prepare the riders for the conversations they will encounter.

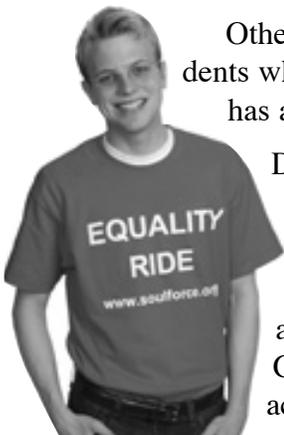
Today Katie and Jarrett will be meeting with the Special Assistant to the President of Dordt college in Sioux City, Iowa, which is the first stop on the ride for one of the buses. Dordt college has been vacillating about how (and if) they will welcome the riders onto the campus. The students have been in negotiations for months to bring attention to Dordt's policy, which states,

The College will strive to work in a counseling context with individuals who struggle with appropriate sexual conduct, relationships, and issues. The College may determine, however, that sexual activity outside of the marriage covenant, sexual activity with someone other than one's spouse, sexual activity with someone of the same gender, promoting or advocating sexually immoral activity, or sexual harassment and other inappropriate conduct should result in an employee's discharge or a student's dismissal.

Other schools that will be visited on the ride have much harsher words for students who struggle with sexual orientation. Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC, has a much more succinct policy:

Dishonesty, lewdness, sensual behavior, adultery, homosexuality, sexual perversion of any kind, pornography, illegal use of drugs and drunkenness all are clearly condemned by God's Word and prohibited here.

These fifty-six students who are setting out to change the world are an amazing bunch. For example, Vince Pancucci, 20, and Vince Cervantes, 19, embody the idea of inspiring a new generation of activists. Both experienced the 2006 Equality Ride as students at Azusa



Jake Reitan

Co-director, Soulforce Young Adults



Haven Herrin

Co-director, Soulforce Young Adults

Pacific University. On National Coming Out Day, both decided that they would no longer live in the closet at APU and posted statements describing their experiences as gay students on the campus. The action ended with the administration removing their words and Vince and Vince withdrawing from the University, bringing their APU education to a premature end. **Vince and Vince will continue to grow with Soulforce as they bring their story on the road and back into the communities that once silenced them.** Vince Cervantes says,

I choose to be on the Equality Ride to speak up for myself and for the many other individuals on Christian campuses that are discouraged to share their identity. I've had first-hand experience in stepping in a 'faith-based' community to authentically and vulnerably share all parts of my life. **I aspire to open eyes, broaden views, and get people talking by sharing my story at the institutions we will visit on the Equality Ride.** I will be silent no more!

Vince's partner, Vince Pancucci, speaks eloquently about his first-hand experience with religion-based oppression at a discriminatory university.

For one year, I was in a "reparative therapy" group, he says. I was convinced being gay wasn't what God wanted for me. **The Equality Ride represents so much more to me than two months on the road confronting religiously oppressive universities—it represents every hurtful word, discriminatory action, and act of violence every LGBT person has had to endure.** My goal for the two months on the Equality Ride will be to demonstrate through listening and compassion that God loves and affirms all those who seek God.

You can meet more riders like Vince and Vince on the Soulforce website at www.soulforce.org or www.equalityride.com. Log on and read their stories. If their stories resonate with you, **please sponsor a rider with a financial donation.**

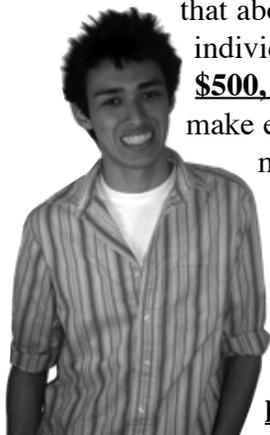
Remember, your gift TODAY to the Equality Ride will go twice as far—because any gift received before March 21, the day of the Brigham Young University visit in Bruce Bastian's home state of Utah, will be matched by Bruce (up to \$25,000).

In order to make the Equality Ride experience possible for all young activists, regardless of economic standing, Soulforce covers 100% of the training, transportation, accommodation, food, Equality Ride apparel and materials for the two-month journey. Your generous donation provides for hotel rooms, meals, books and many other rider needs. The 2007 Equality Ride would not happen without your financial support.

The 2007 Equality Ride will cost approximately \$387,500. Chartering the buses will cost \$100,000, flights to training sessions and the start of the ride will cost about \$28,000, hotels will run about \$80,000, food will be about \$48,000, printed materials to distribute to the colleges will be about \$36,000... as you can see, there are lots of costs involved. We anticipate that about half the money needed will come from grants, and we are looking to individuals to provide the rest. **Can you make a generous donation today of \$500, \$300, \$100 or \$50 to make this project happen?** To be sure the buses can make every promised stop and get home again, we need to have 80% of the money on hand by March 21.

These college kids know how to stretch their dollars. A donation of \$400 will fill up the gas tank. A gift of \$250 will provide a meal for everybody on the ride. A gift of \$75 will buy housing for four riders for one night.

Dollar for dollar, this is an excellent value for changing hearts and minds across America about gay, lesbian, bisexual and



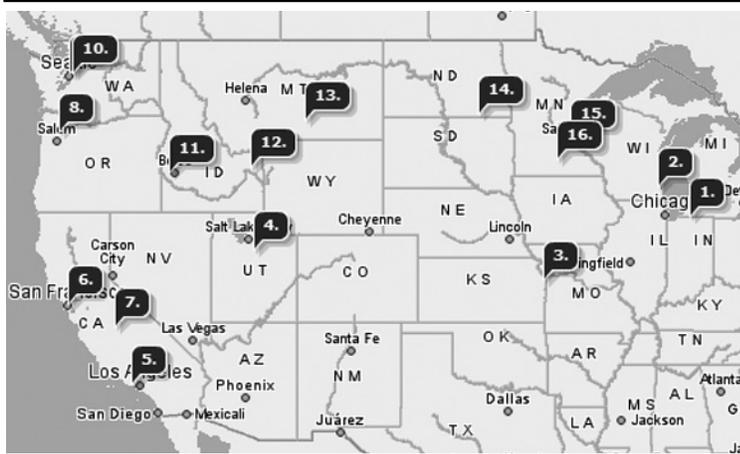
Vince Cervantes
Cornerstone University Organizer

Vince Pancucci
Cornerstone University Organizer

transgender people across the country. There's no way to accurately measure how many students will be affected by the riders' visit, but we're sure to have an impact. Based on surveys conducted on the 2006 ride, we know:

- We initiated over 10,000 conversations on GLBT issues
- We helped create three gay-straight alliances
- We helped students get three school policies changed
- We inspired 9 students to come out publicly
- We orchestrated 39 classroom presentations
- We appeared on 39 network news affiliates covering the Equality Ride
- Our largest open forum was attended by 1500 students (at Azusa Pacific)

(over, please)



WESTERN ROUTE

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | University of Notre Dame | Notre Dame, IN |
| 2 | Wisconsin Lutheran College | Milwaukee, WI |
| 3 | MidAmerica Nazarene University | Olathe, KS |
| 4 | Brigham Young University | Provo, UT |
| 5 | Pepperdine University | Malibu, CA |
| 6 | San Francisco Bay Area Outreach | SF, CA |
| 7 | Fresno Pacific University | Fresno, CA |
| 8 | George Fox University | Newberg, OR |
| 9 | Seattle Pacific University | Seattle, WA |
| 10 | Northwest University | Kirkland, WA |
| 11 | Northwest Nazarene University | Nampa, ID |
| 12 | Brigham Young University – Idaho | Rexburg, ID |
| 13 | Yellowstone Baptist College | Billings, MT |
| 14 | Trinity Bible College | Ellendale, ND |
| 15 | Northwestern College | St. Paul, MN |
| 16 | Bethany Lutheran College | Mankato, MN |

EASTERN ROUTE

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Dordt College | Sioux Center, IA |
| 2 | Central Bible College | Springfield, MO |
| 3 | Oklahoma Baptist University | Shawnee, OK |
| 4 | Baylor University | Waco, TX |
| 5 | Mississippi College | Clinton, MS |
| 6 | Union University | Jackson, TN |
| 7 | University of the Cumberlands | Williamsburg, KY |
| 8 | Samford University | Birmingham, AL |
| 9 | Covenant College | Lookout Mountain, GA |
| 10 | Bob Jones University | Greenville, SC |
| 11 | Montreat College | Montreat, NC |
| 12 | Patrick Henry College | Purcellville, VA |
| 13 | Messiah College | Grantham, PA |
| 14 | Gordon College | Wenham, MA |
| 15 | Cedarville University | Cedarville, OH |
| 16 | Cornerstone University | Grand Rapids, MI |
| 17 | Calvin College | Grand Rapids, MI |
| 18 | Bethany Lutheran College | Mankato, MN |



Alexey Bulokhov
Director of International Outreach



Jarrett Lucas
Director of Outreach



Matt Kulisch
Organizer of BYU events



Katie Higgins
Director of Operations

The Brigham Young University stops, designed to continue to reach the communities of the Church of Latter Day saints, are organized by former BYU students who suffered academic and personal repercussions as a result of their active involvement with the Equality Ride last year.

In 2006, Matt Kulisch, 24, led a die-in on campus to illuminate the realities of homophobic teachings at BYU. Once an active Mormon, he is now a faithful activist. **Propelled by his own experience with the Equality Ride, Matt seeks to assert God's love for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, especially to those on the BYU campus.** His courage is a constant inspiration to others who find themselves censored and oppressed.

This is the largest project ever attempted in Soulforce history. This ride will affect untold numbers of up-and-coming leaders who will have a direct impact on the antigay rhetoric coming from religious institutions. We need your financial support to make this ride a success.

Based on the positive response from students from the 2006 ride, many schools will be welcoming to the riders this year and are encouraging dialogue around GLBT issues. But some schools remain stubborn. Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC, with its harsh antigay policy, has hidden behind false scriptural interpretation many times in its history and is continuing to do so by not allowing the Equality Ride onto campus.

The Christian fundamentalist school even threatened to arrest all gay graduates who return to campus. Wayne Mouritzen, a retired minister and Bob Jones graduate, got a letter banning him from campus because officials discovered he is gay.

The letter, signed by Bob Jones' Dean of Students, said: "With grief we must tell you that as long as you are living as a homosexual, you, of course, would not be welcome on the campus and would be arrested for trespassing if you did visit." University spokesman Jonathan Pait said administrators routinely write to alumni they think have strayed from the school's core beliefs.

If that's the way the administration treats its alumni, imagine what life is like for the LGBT students still there! Bob Jones University turned to the Bible to keep African American students off campus until 1970 and to keep interracial dating a punishable offense until 2000. It is our moral obligation to tell the students, faculty and administration of these colleges that they can no longer use the Bible to condemn and kill our brothers and sisters. Religion-based oppression must end!

Your support is urgently needed. The bus stops at BYU in Bruce's home state of Utah on March 21, and we need \$310,000 in the bank by then. If you give TODAY, your gift will be doubled!

Thank you for making the 2007 Equality Ride a reality for these 56 young adults and the lives they will touch across America.

Sincerely,



Jeff Lutes
Executive Director
Soulforce, Inc.



Mel White
President of the Board
Soulforce, Inc.

P.S.-- If you donate \$50 or more, you will receive a postcard from the road! For a gift of \$250 or more, you'll receive an Equality Ride T-shirt and postcards from each stop thereafter.



YES! I want to be on the road with the Equality Riders!

Enclosed is a donation of \$40 \$60 \$100 \$200 \$250
\$500 \$750 \$1000 \$3500 _____

Check enclosed (or) Please use my credit card: Visa MasterCard

Card Number _____ Expiration: _____

Name on card: _____

Specific ways you can help . . .

- ✓ Adopt a rider for \$3500
(Get postcards from the road and a copy of the documentary DVD!)
- ✓ Fill up the gas tank, \$400
- ✓ Buy a meal for the Riders, \$250
- ✓ Provide four riders with housing for one night, \$75



NOTE: All gifts received by March 21, 2007 will be MATCHED! (up to \$25,000)

Please provide your e-mail address:

RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO: Soulforce, P.O. Box 3195, Lynchburg, VA 24503

www.soulforce.org

DML 0207



"Sometimes when you see something that is not right and you want to change it, you want to educate, inform, and sensitize people, you have to be prepared to 'get in the way.' That's what the young people of Soulforce are doing."

*U. S. Representative John Lewis,
an original Freedom Rider*

Soulforce

Young Adults

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Place
Stamp
Here