GSBA Goes Global

THE PERSPECTIVE

WINTER 2018

EQUALITY IS GOOD BUSINESS
theGSBA.org
The Perspective. A quarterly publication from Seattle’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied chamber of commerce.

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LGBTQ+ and allied students.
GSBA is proud to invest over $250K, the largest awarded by OLS; perhaps, the most transformational outcome, was the bringing together of a group of minority chambers that have never worked together.

Working with the ECCC and its amazing President Martha Lee, was how we met Felicity Wang, the impressive mover and shaker and President of the Seattle Chinese Chamber. The rest is history. We became fast friends with Felicity, who proudly talked about Taiwan’s progressive values and how her country of birth was soon to make marriage equality. Felicity was the one to connect the dots and suggest we gather a group of LGBTQ business leaders to travel to Taiwan for what would be the first ever, LGBTQ Cultural and Trade Mission. Joining us on this first cultural and trade mission was one of our Founding Members, Tim Bradford, the very person that brought that first group of gay men together to launch GSBA. Business offers great opportunities for bringing people together and breaking down barriers. It did so 37 years ago and that journey continues today, expanding our reach nationally.

For equality, Louisiana.

By Drew Ness, Board Chair

I recall a GBASA board meeting several years ago. We were discussing our reach of GBASA. Someone mentioned that “we should really consider going as far as Turkuwa.” Oh my—who would have guessed that the first letter was correct, but the continent was way off! Just reading this issue it is hard to think how GBASA has reached Taiwan is it any wonder that some, only half-jokingly, have started thinking that the “G” in our name stands for “Galactic?”

This historic opportunity to travel to Taiwan as an openly LGBTQ business group is directly tied to expanding our partnerships with the ethnic chambers under the umbrella of the Ethnic Chambers of Commerce Coalition (ECCC). Shortly after the office for Labor Standards announced funding for business associations to offer training on how to implement the new labor laws, GBASA met with the ECCC to explore ways to open one grant for our diverse chamber group, including the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Taiwanese, Filipino and later on the Eritrean business communities. Although the result was incredible with our group receiving over $250K, the largest awarded by OLS; perhaps, the most transformational outcome, was the bringing together of a group of minority chambers that have never worked together.

Matchmaker events, and more. With so many of GBASA’s members being owners of small businesses, it’s great to see GBASA continue to reach of GBASA. Someone mentioned that “we should really consider going as far as Turkuwa.” Oh my— who would have guessed that the first letter was correct, but the continent was way off! Just reading this issue it is hard to think how GBASA has reached Taiwan is it any wonder that some, only half-jokingly, have started thinking that the “G” in our name stands for “Galactic?”

Through its Public Policy Council and Public Policy Task Force, GBASA continues to speak out on issues affecting civil rights, economic prosperity, and education for all. Through the GBASA Scholarship Fund, it continues to heighten its effectiveness by not only providing critically-needed scholarships for well-deserving students, but by also providing scholars with leadership training so that they can grow into tomorrow’s leaders. When you purchase “what a difference an association in the state takes a such a focused, yet holistic approach” and you truly believe that “Equality is Good Business,” membership in GBASA is one of the best business and life decisions you can make!

For equality, Louisiana.

THE 38th ANNUAL GSBA SCHOLARSHIP DINNER FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2018
When Felicity Wang, President of the Greater Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce, proposed that GSBA organize the first-ever LGBT cultural mission to Taiwan, we couldn’t pass up the unique opportunity. Felicity is also the owner of APA Tours & Travel and has been organizing economic and cultural missions between Washington State and Asia for many years. Together with her daughter Jessica Lu, Felicity treated a group of GSBA founders, Board, business owners, and staff to an extraordinary week in Taiwan, meeting with the LGBT community across the island and learning more about the ties between our two countries.

COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER
Just as in Seattle, the days leading up to Pride are packed full of events as the community converges from all across Asia to Taipei to celebrate. GSBA was invited to the GaLa BFF Social event, a monthly professional networking event that expands to several hundred people for its pre-Pride event. Partnering with the local LGBT film organization, organizers showcased the latest Taiwanese and Chinese films and shows made by and for LGBT people.

TAIWAN’S BIGGEST-EVER PRIDE
On October 28 the GSBA contingent joined over 123,000 people for the largest Pride march in Taiwan’s history. Starting near Liberty Square and the Presidential Palace, the huge crowds gathered for the largest LGBT event in East Asia before fanning out into three routes across downtown Taipei to celebrate marriage equality and demand LGBT inclusion in the national curriculum review. Before the parade began, the entire crowd knelt down in respect for the rainbow flag that led the marchers. Celebrations continued in the Ximending neighborhood, Taipei’s epicenter of queer culture.

A STRONG COMMUNITY IN TAICHUNG
Taichung’s GDi Association (LGBTQ Community Center) welcomed us with open arms. The GDi Association shares a location with Wo Maison, the only center exclusively for lesbians and trans women in Asia, and the Taiwan Lourdes Association which focused on HIV prevention and support. The Director of Taichung’s Bureau of Social Affairs shared how the local government is working to advance LGBT and gender equality. We are excited to bring our Tacoma members to meet their sister city counterparts on the next trip!

MEETING TAIPEI’S LGBT CHAMPIONS
For our final night in Taipei, GSBA organized a reception with local LGBT leaders, business owners, and activists to share our stories and better understand how we can work together. The leaders of the Taiwan Marriage Equality Coalition like Jennifer Lu were able to connect with Tim Bradbury, the first openly gay judge in Washington State. Dorian Tsai (see page 10) shared her dreams for empowering LGBTQ entrepreneurs in Taiwan with Amazon’s supply chain, and perhaps a Taiwanese LGBTQ chamber. The women of LEZ’S shared their work on building a community for lesbians in Taiwan. We met a woman who at first identified herself as “just a boring corporate lawyer” but who was inspired by the Washington Won’t Discriminate campaign to use her position to advocate for her community.

SISTER CITIES
In Kaohsiung, Seattle’s sister city, we met with city officials to talk about building business connections and tourism promotion between Washington and Taiwan. Kaohsiung was the first city in Taiwan to offer domestic partnership benefits.

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SOME PEOPLE DREAM of making a global impact, but very few succeed. Travis Mears, Director of Development & Scholarship Programs, accomplished this while representing GSBA at the United Nations’ inaugural UNLEASH Innovation Lab held in Copenhagen, Denmark in August 2017.

“UNLEASH is about bringing together people from around the world who have facilitated some level of meaningful change in their communities to build on and create new ideas to make the world a better place,” says Mears.

After failing to achieve their objectives to end global poverty by 2015, the UN developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with the intent of solving the problem by 2030. They used a unique approach to finding solutions. UNLEASH brought 1000 visionaries under the age of 35 from across the globe to Copenhagen to facilitate solutions in seven of the SDGs including Education & ICT, Energy, Food, Health, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Urban Sustainability, and Water.

In May 2016, Travis began working closely with Microsoft, a GSBA and UNLEASH sponsor, to create a leadership development program for GSBA Scholarship recipients. Travis’ display of exceptional experience, leadership, and passion for educational equity during this project proved he was a perfect fit as Microsoft’s sponsored talent for UNLEASH focusing on inclusive and equitable quality education.

GSBA Contributes to Global Solutions for Educational Equity at the UNLEASH Innovation Lab

BY GREGORY STUMP, GSBA INTERNS

Travis’ UNLEASH group was tasked with focusing on drop-out rates among primary and secondary school students in developing countries. With members from South Africa, Ghana, Germany, and India, they were well suited to tackle this problem. Some nations represented in his party struggled with high drop-out rates caused by the placement of students in grades based on age as opposed to ability. In one instance, despite the creation of successful programs in India to assist students to overcome the challenges, drop-out rates remained high due to a lack of political will to fund the intervention programs.

His team developed a consulting service using virtual reality to create an immersive experience that informed decision makers in developing nations about these issues. By providing context to the data, the service will enable governments to make better funding decisions.

“Using talents from across the globe allowed for a diversity of thought that brought critical skills and outlooks to the process of creating educational equity. Pulling people together from so many different walks of life to think about how to solve an issue critically with no boundaries created a space of ‘yes and...’ versus a space of no” Travis says.

The fertile environment for innovation and international cooperation are critical elements that Travis believes will help propel the United Nations toward success in meeting the SDGs by 2030.

To learn more about UNLEASH 2017 or to apply for UNLEASH 2018 in Singapore, visit www.unleash.org.

At the end of the day, where do you go?

Jacob Blackmon doesn’t just want to sell you a house, he wants to bring you home; to your NEW home to be exact. In this staggeringly tight real estate market finding a space that you connect with, that fits your lifestyle and is uniquely you is a tall order, but Jacob is patient, passionate and tenacious. If it’s out there, he’ll help you find it.

Jacob represents families from across the Puget Sound but it’s his instincts, expertise and experience in South Seattle that truly sets him apart. As a Beacon Hill resident, he and his husband Daniel have made this vibrant, distinctive and diverse neighborhood their home, and the focus of his business. He understands the unique nature of this community in a way that no other broker can, the celebration of a historical past balanced by an ever-evolving face of new development.

Give Jacob a call, have a cup of coffee and chat, you’ll be glad you did!
Your Chamber’s Global Reach

2018 | BRAZIL
Hosted Clovis Casemiro of IGLTA Brazil to share travel and tourism opportunities and LGBT business connections between Seattle and São Paulo.

2018 | MEXICO
Working with Mexican Consulate in Seattle to organize cultural and economic mission to Mexico.

2017 | DENMARK
GSBA staff participate in UNLEASH global innovation lab, organized by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals program. (See pages 6-7)

2017 | GERMANY
Hosted travel journalist from Schwulissimo magazine.

2017 | TAIWAN & HONG KONG
GSBA organizes first LGBT cultural mission to Asia; marches in largest pride in Taiwan’s history. (See pages 4-5)

2016 | BULGARIA
Connected activists with corporations to organize event on supporting LGBT people in the workplace in Eastern Europe.

2016 | CUBA
Iisel Calzadilla Acosta of CENESEX, Cuba’s LGBT and HIV/AIDS organization, speaks at GSBA Pride Luncheon.

2016 | INTERNATIONAL PRIDE
Met with LGBT activists from 25 countries as a part of World Affairs Council & US State Department international leaders program over Pride week.

2016 | RUSSIA
Met delegation of Russian LGBT activists hosted by the World Affairs Council.

2015 | IRELAND
Hosted several Irish activists involved with marriage equality campaign to discuss forming Out in Front Ireland, an LGBT business group.

2006 | JAPAN
Organized reception for Kanako Otsuji, first lesbian member of National Diet of Japan.
Taipei’s LGBT Business Community is facing a new challenge: how do we amplify our voices beyond the streets? What do we do to increase the economic development of our community? How do we develop LGBT wedding and travel businesses? A Taiwanese LGBT business chamber is definitely a good way to get people together and share the sources, but in Taiwan neither labor unions nor business chambers are familiar concepts.

Most people have no idea what a union or chamber is. After I explain about organizations like GSBA, they understand a little more, but I think it would be great if GSBA members could help recording short videos, sharing their thoughts on the LGBT business environment, or what they learn from their chamber, or why they joined the chamber. People in Taiwan would more easily understand how they could benefit by coming together in a professional organization.

We are still fighting for equality in many ways, but we have the faith to bring in the lights, after all nothing good comes easy. I would like to thank GSBA for choosing Taiwan as the first overseas culture mission. We will keep working on building equality, and I hope by our efforts, the next generation will be living in a better world with more love and kindness. 

Taiwan’s LGBT community

AN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY BEGAN when I started my business. In order to explore potential customers in the United States, I found NGLCC (National LGBT Chamber of Commerce) and attended the annual business leadership conference. It was beyond my imagination—I never thought a convention could be this creative and fun. I was very lucky to be introduced to GSBA, and was then able to help them meet more Taiwanese LGBT business friends during their visit.

I remember 15 years ago, I had no friends to talk with about my sexual orientation. There was very limited media that would talk publicly about LGBT people, and I only knew one single broadcast program that would invite LGBT participants. Today we have many choices and places to find our own identity: more than ten gay/lesbian bars in Taipei (which is only 270 sq. km), a queer film festival, the Taiwan Pride parade (since 2003), LGBT magazines, and countless multi-culture activities every weekend. Obviously, the Taiwanese LGBT community has been growing quite fast and even stronger in the past decade! There are many reasons that contributed, and I think a democratic society and civic consciousness is the key reason. If we look at Chinese history, you’ll see Taiwan is very unique—it has a democratic constitution and it gives us the chance to leave the ancient Confucianism behind, and rethink who we really are on our own terms.

The Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association is an important nonprofit that supports LGBT children and their parents since 2000, and educates the public on issues from HIV prevention to gender equality. The stories of their struggles and their resilience are astounding, yet remain unknown—or willfully ignored—by the general public who seeks change. Alarmingly, in at least 72 countries globally, same-sex relations between consenting adults remain illegal, with penalties including physical violence, incarceration, and the death penalty. Discriminatory laws are both explicit, such as marriage or adoption prohibitions, and in vague language related to morality. LGBTIQ people are subject to arrest, blackmail, and harassment on charges as frivolous as ‘loitering,’ ‘vagabondry,’ and ‘cross-dressing.’ Violence against those who are gender non-conforming is particularly frequent and widespread.

For 27 years, OutRight Action International (formerly the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission) has fought to protect and advance the basic rights of LGBTIQ people everywhere as part of the global human rights struggle. OutRight strives for a world in which LGBTIQ people can live with safety, dignity, equality, and justice and are unencumbered by prejudice and discrimination, wherever they are.

OutRight works alongside LGBTIQ grassroots leaders in the Global South, with staff based in six countries, to help identify community-focused solutions to promote last change. OutRight employs the following strategies:

1. Advises donors, UN agencies, NGOs, and others on strategic, sensitive, and safe approaches to defending and advancing LGBTIQ human rights.
2. Advocates globally, regionally, and nationally to advance LGBTIQ rights.
3. Convenes and connects activists, advocates, governments, multilateral agencies, NGOs, donors, and other existing and potential allies.
4. Monitors and documents discriminatory and life-threatening conditions to spur action and stop human rights violations when they occur.
5. Offers and leverages resources to strengthen capacity of partners in the Global South.
6. Conducts trainings with partners and activists on tactics and strategies for advancing LGBTIQ rights around the world.

OutRight is the only US-based LGBTIQ organization to hold consultative status at the UN as a recognized Non-Governmental Organization representing the concerns and human rights of LGBTIQ people worldwide. OutRight advocates to include a voice for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in UN resolutions whenever necessary, and makes sure the concerns and perspective of LGBTIQ people are included in debates taking place at the intergovernmental level.
My Member Go-Tos

“As a certified nurse midwife and nurse practitioner for over 20 years, it’s imperative to offer my clients at Eastside Total Health & Lactation a multidisciplinary approach. This means that I have healthy base of providers that I can readily refer my patients to, and I can refer them with the utmost confidence. My go-to’s are Dr. Paula Wrentmore at Mobility Health & Wellness for chiropractic services. From infants to my more mature clients, Dr. Wrentmore’s skill and healing touch has made significant improvements in so many lives. I rely on Jennifer Kennett at Eastside Family Counseling for my clients in need of therapy. Jen and her team treat my patients with empathy, care and kindness. Though one of my services include pre-conception and insemination services, for some of my patients who need a bit more than what I can offer, my go-to reproductive endocrinologist and fertility specialist is Dr. Kat Lin at Sound Fertility. Dr. Lin and her team run a stellar practice couched in personal care and world class medicine. I trust her team in even the most delicate of circumstances. So, I don’t have many in go-to’s in my pocket, but the ones that I do have make my work as a healthcare provider more thorough and effective!”

Jennifer Jimenez, CNM, ARNP, Co-Owner, Eastside Total Health & Lactation, PLLC

"I blast off with the Breakfast Sandwich + tomato jam at Dani’s Cone & Steiner, receive wisdom from Mona Smith PLLC, Attorneys at Law; and get market research on real estate from realtor Meredith Laws, Sterling, Johnston & Assoc. and residential financing from Kathryn Keller.

Golden West Mortgage.

For good health and healing, I get hypnosis and tarot readings from Christian Skoorsmith, Whole Health; downward-facing dog with Anne Phyfe Palmer, Eight Limbs Yoga; golf lessons from Ryan Nass, DML Insurance, and Kris Costello, Costello Law Firm, PLLC; and endless support (and referrals) from Martha Davis, City Lights Sign Company.

Special thanks to Ilona and Meridian at GSBA because, between the two, they know almost everything and everyone.”

Sally Schultz, Arranging financing for commercial real estate on the West Coast / Sally Ray Your Astrologer
Vulcan is proud to support the GSBA in their efforts to expand economic opportunities for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities throughout the region.

Learn more at vulcan.com and follow us @VulcanInc
Going Somewhere? Get Your Ergonomics in Order!

WHETHER YOU'RE TAKING A LONG FLIGHT across the dateline, or simply find yourself sitting for long spells, take the time to accommodate your body. How many times as a child were you told to sit up straight? Today's thinking is different. Ergonomic experts say we aren't meant to be sitting ramrod straight. Instead, aim for a relaxed, leaning-back, rocking position with proper support.

Even at 30,000 feet, you can make adjustments. Be sure to get up and move about often. Walk the aisles, stretch your legs and try some lunges, knee bends or toe lifts.

When seated, look for ways to vary your posture. Airplane seats have been improving, with better lower-toe lifts. Be sure to get up and move about often. Walk the aisles, stretch your legs and try some lunges, knee bends or toe lifts.

For global travel, visit a travel clinic in advance of your trip to review required and recommended travel vaccines, such as immunizations for malaria, typhoid or rabies. Give yourself at least three weeks prior to travel to get vaccinated because some require several steps spread out over time, and because their medical benefits typically won’t activate until 15 days after you receive them.

If you have a chronic illness, visit your provider or a travel clinic with plenty of lead time. Some destinations may pose challenges for you. Considerations might include high altitude, availability of clean water, proper storage for medications and available emergency services. It’s important to start your adventure with your chronic condition stabilized. Consult with your doctor several weeks before you depart.

The PacMed Travel Clinic is located at our Beacon Hill clinic. To make an appointment, call 206-621-4504. (The Travel Clinic charges patients directly for services. Contact your insurer to discuss coverage for travel medications and vaccinations.)

MY CAREER GOAL
developed as an amalgamation of my interest in politics and a desire to effect change at the institutional level. While I identify as a gay male, my focus on gender and sexuality came more so by witnessing the systemic injustices affecting minorities within the queer community, especially the Trans* POC community.

In high school, I was a part of a program called Hands For A Bridge which educates young people on injustices within our own society through an international perspective. The program’s curriculum centers on social unrest related to the Troubles in Northern Ireland and Apartheid in South Africa, and includes a 16-day cultural immersion. I went to Northern Ireland, witnessing the fractured and violent legacy of the Troubles, which saw 3,700 killed and nearly 50,000 injured. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement brought an end to much of the violence, with its core tenets anchored in the framework of the European Convention of Human Rights espousing the inviolability of human rights.

It was my experience in Northern Ireland coupled with the significance that human rights hold in Europe that drew my eyes back across the Atlantic. I felt that an education in politics in London would not only give me the tools to better understand the political situation in the US, but also let me approach it from a more critical angle.

Meet Forrest Allison-Brown

Forrest Allison-Brown is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in European Politics at King’s College London. Following graduation, he intends to pursue a career in politics and public policy and to be an advocate for the protection of human dignity.

MY CAREER GOAL
UW Medicine: A Focus on Healthcare Equity for the LGBTQ Community

BY AARON HALABEE, UW MEDICINE

The health system is evaluated annually by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Their Healthcare Equality Index is a benchmarking process that rates healthcare facilities nationwide, assessing their level of progressive regard to LGBTQ policies and practices.

Under McCraw’s stewardship as committee co-chair, the diagnosis has been excellent. For seven consecutive years HRC has named UW Medicine’s affiliated hospitals as “Leaders in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality”—a coveted national award.

“We’re the only hospital system in the state that has received that recognition,” McCraw said, “so that’s something we’re quite proud of.”

Blueprint for success

The organization’s commitment to promoting healthcare equity and reducing disparities is codified in its that patient’s perspective.”

The training is not merely some pro forma HR mandate. It speaks to a deep commitment to educating medical providers. A further example is the committee’s contributions to a learning module that’s being developed for UW School of Medicine students and physicians to help them better understand LGBTQ healthcare concerns.

“We strive to make sure that our policies regarding family rights all include LGBTQ families and that UW Medicine physicians are prepared to serve the community going forward.”

Relentless pursuit of health equity

Further efforts involve ensuring that the Seattle transgender community is well-served.

“We’re providing additional assistance to transgender patients that coordinates both primary and specialty care—such as endocrinology—through their primary care doctor,” McCraw said. “We’re a huge organization and it’s often hard for these patients to navigate the system. “We always want to serve people better. We have ideas about improving care, but we don’t always know what the patients know.”

To learn, the committee brings in patients and family members in focus group settings to proactively determine what issues may need addressing.

“As an HR organization we work to overcome the healthcare disparities of any patient population, including the LGBTQ community. It’s rewarding and important work. And we want people to know that we’re here to serve.”

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The Jewels of GSBA make a significant investment in GSBA and the GSBA Scholarship Fund.

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