



A Community of LGBTQs & Allies
of Wheaton College, Illinois

MEDIA RELEASE

Introducing OneWheaton

WHEATON, Illinois—April 29, 2011— OneWheaton is currently composed of Wheaton College alumni and exists to reassure LGBTQ and questioning students and their friends that it gets better. We are a newly emerging and rapidly growing group, and our members have wide-ranging goals, desires, interests and capabilities. Our hope is to become a persistent voice and a sustained presence.

The prevailing ideas about homosexuality in the Wheaton community, given voice in chapel messages and other venues, don't take into account our stories of joy, faith and wholeness. We remember the limited or one-sided debates we heard as students and we believe our stories often get lost, marginalized or discredited in Wheaton's conversations about sexuality.

Our April 29, 2011 letter to students intends to make our voices audible so a new conversation could develop. At Wheaton, the word integrity is often used to describe only those who conform to Wheaton's policies and particular theological stance. As part of the Wheaton community, we believe our integrity calls us to affirm the full humanity and dignity of every human being regardless of their sexuality or gender identity. We do not believe there is anything wrong with being gay. We don't just believe otherwise, we live happily, and even faithfully, otherwise.

We don't have a political agenda and we are not engaging the administration through this letter. While we hope Wheaton's policies towards homosexuality will change, policies are not our issue. We did not come together for a political fight. While we hope Wheaton's theological position towards homosexuality based on one interpretation of church tradition and Biblical hermeneutics changes, we did not unite for a divisive theological debate. Our desire is to reach out to students and other alumni who may be hurting and show the broader Wheaton community that there are better ways to love.

Members of OneWheaton have a vast variety of experiences, backgrounds and journeys to share. Our group spans six decades of Wheaton graduation years and we currently live all over the globe. In OneWheaton, some alumni hold a deeply Christian faith, some other faiths and some are no longer religious. We have LGBTQ alumni who pursued graduate degrees in theology or masters of divinity. In our group, there are alumni who were forced to undergo reparative therapy and can speak to the pain and torment it causes, alumni who were asked to leave Wheaton College because of their sexuality, alumni who came out while at Wheaton and alumni who came out long after graduation. For some of us, our siblings and parents affirmed and loved us—and our sexualities—immediately after coming out, and others have had longer, more complicated, and distressing journeys.

Our website, OneWheaton.com, Facebook page and Twitter account were created to provide safe spaces for students and alumni to speak and be heard. We provide online spaces where students can lovingly explore, question, and be open to this part of who they are and/or who their friends are. We are joining the conversation at Wheaton to show students that they have the option to live without shame and self-hatred.

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