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Trans Visibility at Folsom Street Fair

Thu, Oct 01, 2009 at 05:29:42pm by Richard C Garcia folsom gay transgender

This past weekend, I volunteered during the Folsom Street Fair at the transmen4men (tm4m) booth sponsored by Eros, TRANS:THRIVE, and Trannywood Pictures. Tm4m is a discussion, event, and resource program for trans men who play with men. A call for volunteers went out a few weeks ago and I'd been looking forward to participating ever since. All in all, the event was really fun. I spent most of the time handing out flyers promoting tm4m. On the flyer was a sexy cartoon transguy with the words 'Top 5 reasons to fuck a transguy' (that's another blog entirely). When I handed out the flyer, I received lots of positive responses like "I only need one" and "Hell yeah!" What I wasn't ready for, or rather, was naive enough to think that at a sex positive space like the Folsom Street Fair wouldn't occur, were the disgusted looks and inappropriate questions from some people. Mostly, once I handed someone a flyer, they'd read it, and maybe look back and smile, laugh, or give a thumbs up. Others took the flyer and read it, then scrutinized me with some the rudest stares I've ever encountered. Most of the stares, and subsequent questions, revolved around folks asking me if I was trans. I'm not.

I am however, a gay guy that loves and supports my friends that are part of the trans communities. My sexuality is inclusive of lots of different types of men and masculinities and I went to Folsom that Sunday afternoon to celebrate that with my friends and do something for a great cause. I don't know what it's like to be trans, so I'm not going to say that having people stare at me and ask me awful questions about my genitals gave me any new insight because that brief experience could never compare to someone's actual life. What I can say is that I hope with my different answers to people's questions of "Wait, are you trans? Because you don't look like a girl..." (seriously, some were worse) created some opportunities for education.

I told folks things like "Unless we're fucking, or about to, what I have in my pants is irrelevant to this conversation" and "That's more of a second or third date question, buy me dinner and drinks first and lets get to know each other" I wasn't there to give anyone a 101 on gender and identity. I was there to hang out with sexy people, hand out flyers and condoms, and have a great time, which I made sure I did.



Comments



niko Kowell on Oct 03, 2009 09:40am

thanks!

hey richard, thanks for this. folsom was a lot of fun but it was too bad we had to deal with people's ignorance around trans issues. it was great to have you there.



Genetalia: The Essential Part of What Makes You You

I forget sometimes about the bubble I'm currently living in. It's a lot easier when I go home to be rudely reminded that not everyone is as

**Stephanie Kanna**  
on Oct 03,  
2009 08:41pm

accepting as many of the wonderful people in my program, and many of the people I've encountered in SF. For some reason, maybe because SF has always been portrayed as a place of acceptance, I have a harder time here when someone acts out of ignorance. Although not a good excuse, I actually expect ignorance in my conservative town from many (though by means not all), so I'm never shocked when I encounter it. But I must also admit, that unfortunately, especially with the state of how our society treats sexuality, in general and in the mainstream, I think most humans are reduced to presumed genitalia and all the constructs we have created for what it means to have said genitalia. What cracks me up though is the thought of someone in the BDSM community getting all judgemental (let's be realistic, mainstream society doesn't exactly give the BDSM community any breaks). Of course, sticking to that realistic thing, we all judge. Even in a program that is specifically designed to study sexuality, where one might naively believe there will be no judgement from like minded people who all have good intentions, judgement happens. While we hope to provide an even playing ground for all, it is true that there are still rankings within sexuality, and it is only recently that the "T" in LGBTQ went from "t" to "T", and unfortunately, many still experience the "T" as "t", smaller, of lesser importance.



**PRANEY ANAND**

on Oct 06,  
2009 01:01pm

**Thanks Richard!**

This reminded me of this one time I volunteered for Naz India for one of their HIV awareness campaigns. That particular day, they were talking about the history of Hijras and why the once celebrated community has become what it is today. The ignorance, presumptions and "fear" people had about hijras just surprised me. But I agree with what you said. Every "angry" moment in a sex educator's life creates a great opportunity for sexuality education.



**Jennifer Rehor**

on Dec 01,  
2009 01:40pm

**Ignorance**

As a sex educator, shouldn't we expect a certain level of ignorance from those we're trying to teach? If everyone were fully informed of these issues, there would be no purpose for sex education. Also, don't assume that just because someone is involved in an alternative sexual community that they must have a certain level of tolerance toward every aspect relating to sex. The BDSM community is just as diverse as any other community with a wide variety of attitudes.



**Richard C Garcia**

on Dec 10,  
2009 02:17pm

**Jen**

I cant knock people's lack of knowledge on a topic, I can however be upset when folks are judgmental and rude. And I dont want tolerance, I don't think anyone should have to be 'tolerated', they should be respected. I expected some people in the crowd at folsom to at least be less judgmental and potentially respectful, I was wrong.

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