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The Lasso

UNT forum speaks out against hate crimes

by Nicole Giorgio
Contributing Writer

On Wed., Nov. 15, the University of North Texas in conjunction with COURAGE, the University Programs Council and a group of Denton citizens will bring Dianne Hardy-Garcia to UNT for a discussion forum called Promoting Tolerance.

The event will be held from 3 p.m.-5 p.m. in the Silver-Eagle Suite, located in the Union Building.

The program is an educational outreach on hate crimes involving sexual orientation, race, religion and gender.

Hardy-Garcia will address students, citizens of Denton and the North Texas Region.

Hardy-Garcia is the Executive Director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas and has focused national attention on hate crimes in Texas. She has worked as a legislative aide to State Representative Elliott Naishtat, and as a social worker and organizer on issues concerning homelessness, domestic violence, AIDS, women's rights, mental health, criminal justice and lesbian/gay/bisexual civil rights.

A native Texan, Hardy-Garcia will speak candidly in a question and answer session. The program will define hate crimes and offer that no 'special rights' are involved in seeking equal treatment for people hurt by hate-initiated violence.

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-Kathy Massey, president of the Denton chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

"We're very excited the University Programs Council is working with us," Scot Maitland, COURAGE Vice-President explains, "There are two forms of activism 'in your face' and 'gently leaning.' Denton is often isolated, and this is a chance to get some local information."

Kathy Massey, president of the Denton chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays said the program is intended to promote tolerance.

"It is creating a sense of awareness to honor and respect our differences," she said. "At a time of unrest, a program like this will be beneficial to the area. This is not something that's across the world - it's right here on University Drive."