

## Safe Zone: Where are we at JJC?

In the fall semester of 2009, the Office of Student Activities was approached by a student interested in seeing JJC implement the Safe Zone program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students. Originally, JJC had embarked on the Safe Zone training in 2005 but it was never completed. Given the change in administration and the request of this student, we approached the Diversity Advisory Council and broached the subject once again.

In the spring of 2009, a committee of Student Activities, Multicultural Student Affairs, faculty, counseling, students, and administration began meeting as a Safe Zone Committee to continue the process. In our investigation, we discovered a local resource in Carlos Serrato who is the Director of Multicultural Student Affairs at Lewis University. Carlos was enlisted to conduct three informational sessions for JJC staff to begin the Safe Zone process. We felt that making staff aware of what Safe Zone was necessary in order to proceed and to offer trainings in the future.

As of May 6, three sessions were conducted to educate JJC staff about Safe Zone, expectations of the allies, background information and discussion have been conducted. The first session was held during Wellness Week with approximately 26 staff members in attendance. The second session was held upon request from faculty members on April 30 and two staff members attended. The final session was held on May 6 with 13 staff members attending. So through these information sessions, 41 staff members have been made aware of what Safe Zone is and how we will be implementing it on our campus.

In the fall Personal and Professional Development week, two trainings for allies will be conducted. An ally is a person committed to working toward providing a safe, confidential support network for members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning students. Currently, two sessions are being scheduled based upon feedback from staff to determine the optimum time for the sessions.

The Office of Student Activities with the help of students is in the process of developing a Safe Zone Manual for all allies. A list of resources for referrals will be included as well as information for the allies.

A logo has been developed and will be used for decals to designate the locations of allies. Additionally, there has been discussion about developing a button for the allies.

We are looking forward to the training in the fall opening week. The next logical step to continue the Safe Zone program will be to train JJC staff members to facilitate ongoing trainings as well as providing a network of allies who meet regularly to address issues that may need to be discussed.

Safe Zone is coming to JJC and we're going to establish a solid program for our GLBTQ students!