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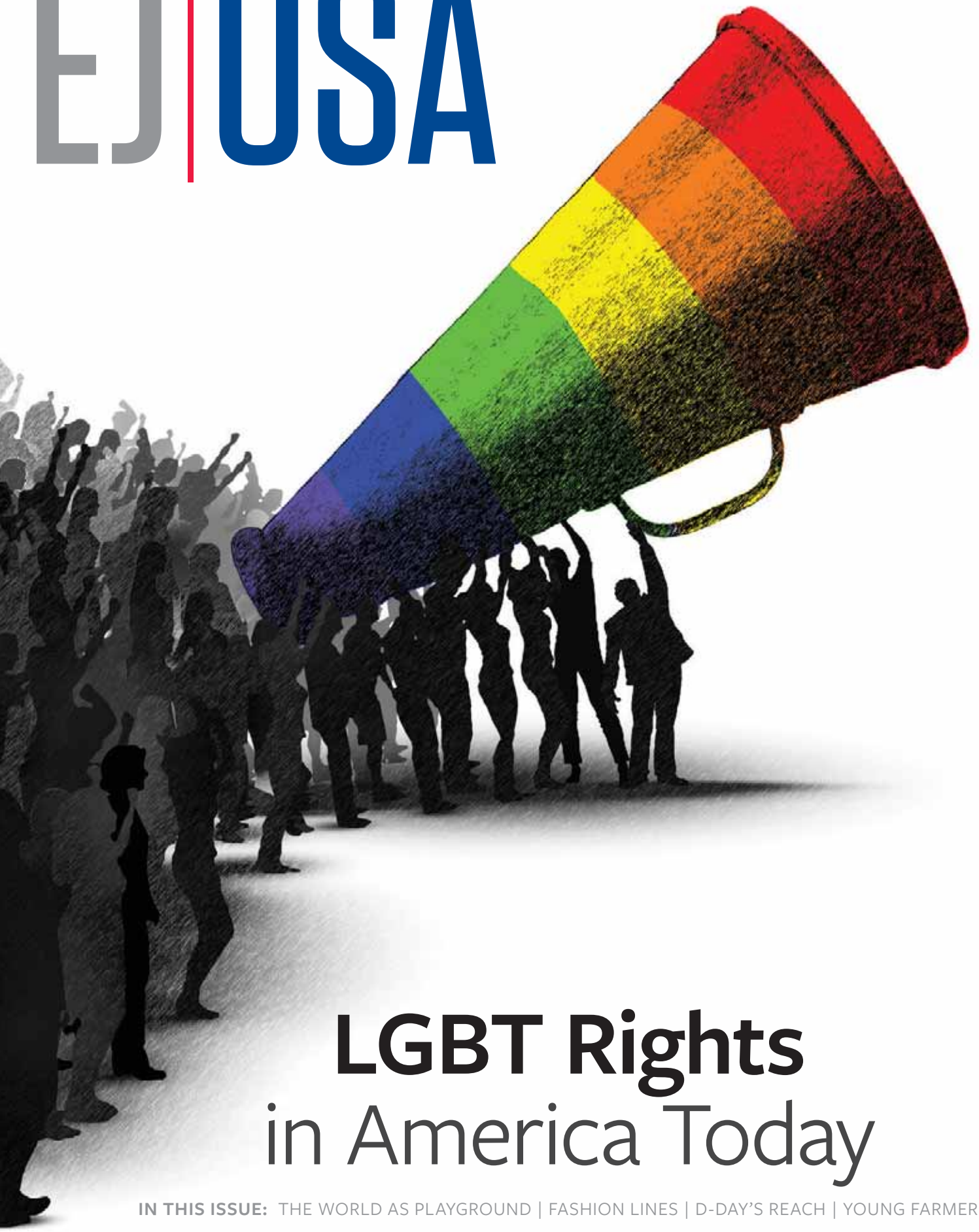

LGBT Rights in America Today

IN THIS ISSUE: THE WORLD AS PLAYGROUND | FASHION LINES | D-DAY'S REACH | YOUNG FARMERS

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EJ|USA

June 2014

lgbt rights in america today

support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

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June 6 marks the 70th anniversary of D-Day.

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Looking Back, Looking Forward

In this issue of *EJ|USA*, I have enjoyed looking both back and forward.

Whether reading Assistant Secretary Ryan's contribution on the work done to preserve ancient sites or in my research for the piece on the anniversary of D-Day, I find that history is personal. (My father landed on the beach in Normandy in June 1944, and I grew up hearing stories about his experience and impressions of wartime Europe.)

This issue also offers a feature on history in the making in its coverage of gay rights. U.S. public opinion is undergoing a shift toward protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

President Obama has voiced his support for marriage equality for same-sex couples, as have many other public figures. These stories are personal too. Supporters of gay rights include people like Senator Rob Portman, of Ohio, whose gay son urged his father to reconsider his earlier views that marriage could only take place between a man and a woman. *EJ|USA* includes stories of courageous people working to guarantee LGBT rights everywhere, from athletic fields to school hallways to the workplace.

Many Americans (including me) have gay family members, and we stand with them. All of us deserve the same rights, protections and opportunities. It is simple justice, and it is the American way.

–Lauren Monsen

ILLUSTRATION: DOUG THOMPSON

Snapshots of America

The Founding of Father's Day

The idea of Father's Day is accredited to Sonora Dodd, who wished to honor her father for raising her and five siblings after their mother died. Her heavy campaigning led to the first celebration in 1910, hosted in Dodd's home state of Washington. In 1966, Father's Day became an official holiday when President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed it as occurring on the third Sunday of June — the month when Dodd's father was born. The day was made a permanent national holiday when President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1972.

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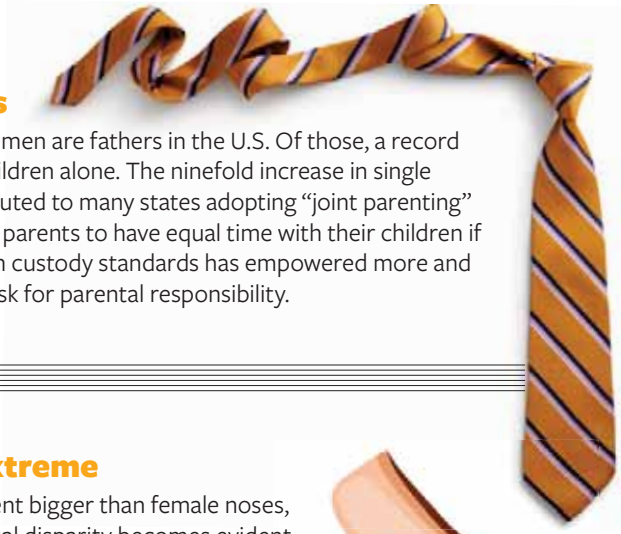
Today's Fathers



©SHUTTERSTOCK

An estimated 70 million men are fathers in the U.S. Of those, a record 2.6 million raise their children alone. The ninefold increase in single dads since 1960 is attributed to many states adopting "joint parenting" legislation, which allows parents to have equal time with their children if they divorce. The shift in custody standards has empowered more and more single fathers to ask for parental responsibility.

Nosey to the Extreme

Male noses are 10 percent bigger than female noses, a report claims. The nasal disparity becomes evident around age 11, when puberty results in more lean muscle mass in men and more fat mass in women. Larger noses deliver more oxygen to the body, which is particularly useful for nourishing muscles. Previous studies have also shown that nose size and shape are influenced by climate.

©SHUTTERSTOCK

Sleepy Heads

Sleep is important not only for health and longevity, but for learning and memory. A recent poll on sleep finds that different race/ethnic groups in America get a different night's rest. African-Americans report the most consistently sound sleep. Caucasians report the least, and are most likely to take sleep aids. Hispanics have the most disrupted sleep and attribute that primarily to financial worries, while Asians have the least interrupted slumber, but claim what keeps them up at night are concerns about their personal relationships.

ILLUSTRATON: DOUG THOMPSON

Saintly Cities

Contrary to the popular Hollywood movie *Sin City*, not all U.S. cities are "sinful." New York topped the list of the most "saintly cities" put together by a real estate firm. It was the only major metropolis ranked in the top 10, with Gilbert, Arizona, and the three California cities of Fremont, Glendale and Chula Vista following New York. The firm used various data — including the number of cosmetic surgeons per capita — to rank residents' humility, generosity, kindness and other saintly criteria.

ILLUSTRATON: DOUG THOMPSON

Enseña Chile teacher Facundo Diaz.

Primed for Teaching

JUAN CASTILLO

Juan Paulo Sanchez, 28, remembers the moment with vivid clarity — the worry that swept over him, the hollow sensation in his stomach. One of his fifth-grade students in his native Chile came to him after class, tears streaming down her face.

"I was kind of scared," Sanchez said.

To his surprise, the girl from the small, rural municipality of Cunco, came to thank him. For the first time she had grasped how to solve a division problem in math class. She credited Sanchez's instruction for her breakthrough.

"I realized then that what I was doing was really powerful," said Sanchez.

A civil engineer by training, Sanchez volunteered in 2010 for Enseña Chile (Teach for Chile), part of Teach for All, an international network of nongovernmental groups that tries to broaden access to quality education in poor communities around the world. National organizations such as Enseña Chile follow the Teach for America model developed by Wendy Kopp in the early 1990s in the U.S. They recruit top college graduates and professionals like Sanchez to teach for two years in schools located in low-income communities. Enseña Chile has teachers in 80 schools in 30 local school districts.

©COURTESY OF ENSEÑA CHILE

Teach for All

Social enterprises in 32 countries are aligned under the umbrella of Teach for All, founded in 2007 by Wendy Kopp, the U.S. founder of Teach for America, and Brett Wigdortz, the U.K. founder of a program in England called Teach First.

Teach for All

- Has reached more than **5 million students**
- Has recruited more than **55,000 teachers**
- Has produced more than **35,000 alumni**

About two-thirds of alumni teachers are still teaching or working on educational issues.

Sanchez had not considered teaching as a future career. After studying at one of Chile's top universities, he thought of Enseña Chile as merely a steppingstone to Stanford, Harvard or another top-tier university in the U.S. But teaching changed him, Sanchez said. He became closer to his students and their families and got to know their aspirations.

Data showed that only one in five of his students was likely to complete a university education. "Many of their dreams weren't going to happen just because they were low-income," said Sanchez. "For me, this was completely new. I was angry. I got really engaged."

More than half of the Chilean population's poorest 20 percent have neither jobs nor education, and 40 percent of Chileans who complete the eighth grade do not comprehend what they read, according to Enseña Chile.

In many countries, as in Chile, educational systems often fail to offer good schools to impoverished or far-flung communities because of insufficient funds and poorly trained teachers. A weak educational system in turn perpetuates poverty by undercutting job creation and economic growth.

The goal of creating a level playing field for all students might seem unattainable, said Enseña Chile head Tomás Recart. "It can be so overwhelming, it could lead you to do nothing," he acknowledged. But something must be done, Recart said, to develop the potential of young Chileans, whom he views as his country's greatest asset.

Parents of underprivileged students hope Enseña Chile will make a difference in the lives of their children. Karina Peña, whose daughter is in the eighth grade in Cunco, where Sanchez taught, likes Enseña Chile's young, motivated instructors. Their energy is so infectious, she said; it has helped her daughter to become a good student.

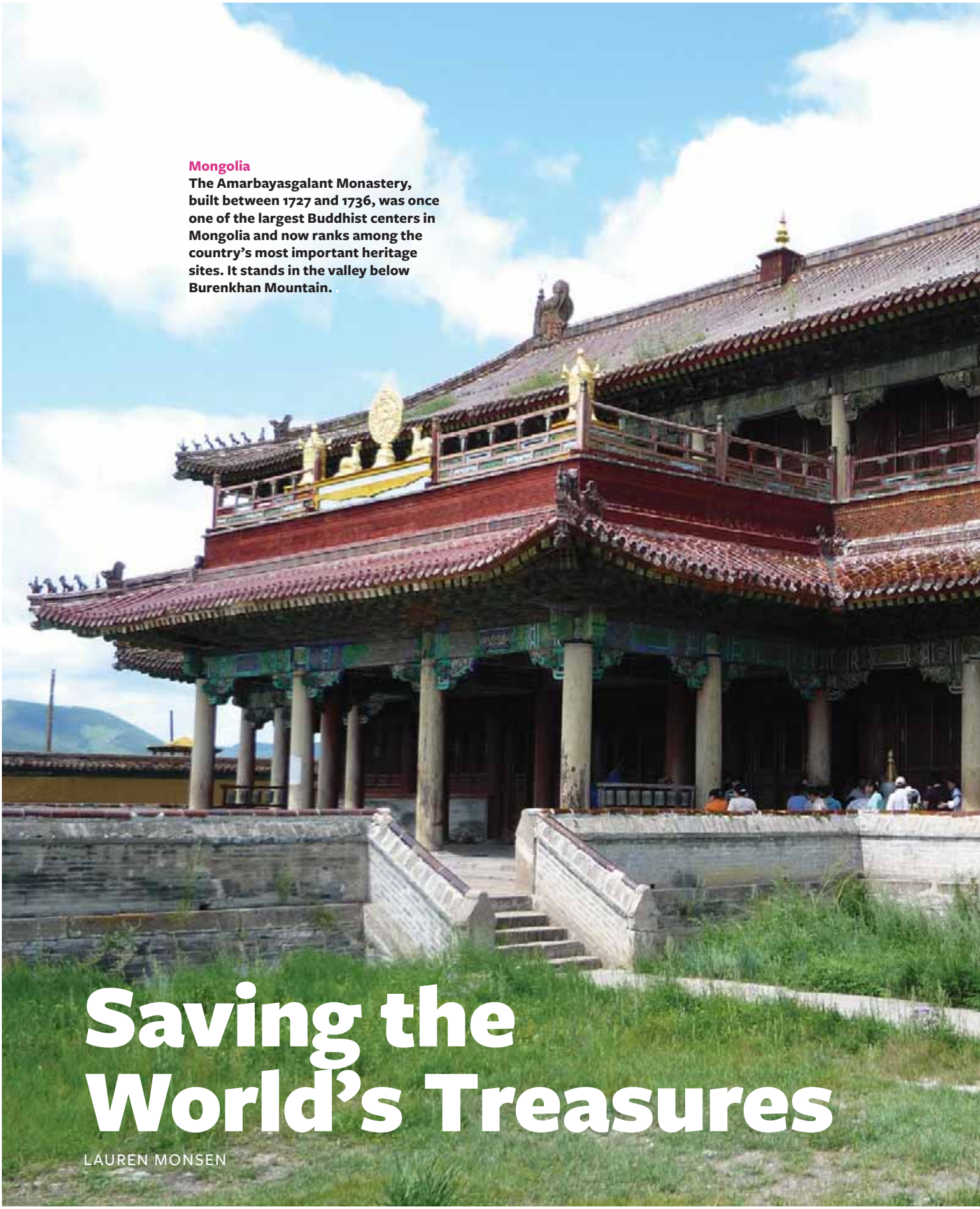
A recent Inter-American Development Bank study found that Enseña Chile–participating schools registered greater educational gains in Spanish and math than regular schools and that the students at the Enseña Chile schools report improved self-esteem.

Recart said the program's greatest benefit may be its ability to retain a significant percentage of teachers after their two-year contracts end.

Sanchez, who could earn good money in engineering, is one of those who will stick with education. With like-minded friends, he plans to open a nonprofit school in 2015 for 250 students in pre-kindergarten through the second grade.

"I look forward to Mondays," he said. "I love what I'm doing."

Perpetuate: to cause (something that should be stopped, such as a mistaken idea or a bad situation) to continue



Mongolia
The Amarbayasgalant Monastery, built between 1727 and 1736, was once one of the largest Buddhist centers in Mongolia and now ranks among the country's most important heritage sites. It stands in the valley below Burenkhan Mountain.

Saving the World's Treasures

LAUREN MONSEN

BOGOMOLOV.PL

Since its inception 13 years ago, the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation has contributed millions of dollars to preserve cultural sites and objects, and traditional forms of expression, worldwide.

These projects include the restoration of buildings, conservation of manuscripts, protection of archaeological sites and documentation of vanishing crafts. The preserved sites and objects are all testaments to the experiences of humanity. ▧

Explore!

Learn about the U.S. Ambassadors Fund in the book *Priceless*.

http://goo.gl/Fvqy6l

The Gereza Fort in Tanzania will be featured in next month's issue of *EJ|USA*.

STATE DEPT.

©TAL SHPANTZER

Business by Design

ELLEN LEE

"Be brave" is the advice fashion designer Jade Chiu gives to up-and-coming designers. She backs up the suggestion with practical tips on the U.S. market and a promise to feature aspiring couturiers on a website she is building for Asian designers who want to break into the New York fashion scene.

To help young designers gain exposure, Chiu introduces them to people in the fashion world such as production, public relations and sales representatives. The connections help business upstarts gain a foothold in a notoriously hard-to-crack industry.

Chiu urges designers to continue watching the latest trends as they create their collections. In both the U.S. and international markets, a demand for functional and fashionable accessories and wearable technology is growing.

Growth. Employment. Income.

1 The number of small businesses in the United States has increased **49 percent** since 1982.

2 Small businesses create **64 percent** of net new private-sector jobs.

3 Small businesses pay **43 percent** of private-sector salaries.

Years ago, Chiu wasn't such a risk taker. She wasn't even involved in the fashion industry. Working as a graphic designer at a Silicon Valley dotcom several years ago, she would return home from the office and watch *Project Runway*. As she saw aspiring designers compete on this popular reality television show, she realized that she didn't want to grow old with regrets. She decided to pursue her dream, born during her younger years, of being a fashion designer.

In 2005, Chiu quit her job and enrolled in classes at Parsons School for Design and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Between her classes, she took on an internship as a production assistant for the head designer at Diane von Furstenberg. Next, while continuing to work on her fashion-studies certificate, she worked part-time as an intern in the showroom of renowned fashion designer Anna Sui.

In 2009, she started a line of jewelry and accessories, Fusion Lovers and Fused Babes. Her products are inspired by her Chinese heritage, featuring the Chinese zodiac — dark, edgy pieces such as a dragon eye patch, a skull ear cuff and an armor-like body necklace.

Chiu's big break came in 2012, when she was selected to be part of Trano, a fashion trade show in Paris. She was able to show her collection to stylists, retailers and fashion editors from around the globe. Her pieces have since been sold in boutiques in Italy, Israel and Hong Kong, and photographed for *Italia Vogue* magazine. Actors promoting the movie *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* at the 2013 Cannes International Film Festival in France wore her accessories.

During a trip to Taiwan in 2013, Chiu met young designers who needed help establishing themselves in New York in order to sell their wares in the United States. She hopes her website will connect them to key players in the New York fashion industry — other designers, as well as photographers and the stylists who dress celebrities for red-carpet events and pull together the looks featured in fashion magazines.

The industry may seem glamorous from the outside, but Chiu tells aspiring designers, "If you want to be an entrepreneur for your own brand, you have to focus on business strategies and make sure you know about marketing and sales."

©TAL SHPANTZER

Jade Chiu

©LUCAS HUANG

CONNECTING THE DOTS: NEW YORK ●; CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA ●

POLICY POINTS: SMALL BIZ, BIG TRADE

Jenny Lai

©ADOLFO DORING

Jenny Lai has always sketched and been a musical performer. Her unusual combination of visual and aural talents is behind her status as one of New York's fashion designers to watch.

At age 13, while interning with a clothing designer in Cupertino, California, Lai designed dresses and a silk bowtie and cummerbund. She and her siblings wore the pieces to a wedding. Later, she attended the Rhode Island School of Design and, after graduating, traveled. She studied weaving and embroidery at a studio in Mexico City, designed jewelry in Rwanda and apprenticed for two European fashion-design houses: Viktor & Rolf in Amsterdam and Boudicca in London.

When she was ready to start her own business, she was influenced not only by her early experience making wedding attire but also by a childhood full of music and dance — learning the piano, clarinet, tap and Chinese folk dance.

Her fashion sense, developed under the NOT label in 2011, is inspired by performance and movement. Pairing different materials, such as wool and high-tech spacer fabric, her statement-making designs are gathered, pleated and cut out in distinct, sometimes asymmetrical shapes. In addition to her ready-to-wear womenswear line, she also creates custom pieces for performing artists, including members of the New York–based contemporary dance company Gallim Dance.

"What I had in mind was different from anything else I was seeing. I had my own ideas for what I wanted to put out there," she said. Recently, Lai traveled to South Africa to collaborate with a fashion photographer, local designers and dancers in Cape Town and Johannesburg to produce garments, photos and videos. She and photographer Chris Saunders plan to present them in a gallery show in New York, featuring photographs and four one-of-a-kind garments that were created in South Africa.

One of the challenges of launching her own line is that Lai is in charge of the entire operation, including managing the business side of the studio, which is time-consuming. She tells young designers that making it in the fashion world is a marathon, not a sprint. "It's really important to have endurance to be successful in this industry," she said.

Success requires thinking long-term about business strategy in order to sustain one's creativity. "I really love being able to create my own thing, from start to finish," Lai said. "Obviously I have a lot of pressure. I don't have time off. I don't have a weekend when I can clock out. But it feels like what I should be doing." ▧

Asian Americans Ascending

The share of new entrepreneurs in the United States who are Asian rose substantially in recent years.

3.5% » 2008

6.1% 2012

Dotcom: a company that sells its products or services only on the Internet

Intern: a student or recent graduate who works for a period of time at a job in order to get experience

Couturier: a person or business that designs and makes clothes for women

©EARL CHON

D-Day: The Difference It Made

LAUREN MONSEN

Seventy years ago, June 6 — the day of the Allied invasion of France during World War II — marked a turning point in the fight against fascism in Western Europe. Better known as D-Day, the Allies' Operation Overlord involved 160,000 U.S., British and Canadian soldiers and 195,700 Allied naval and merchant navy personnel who landed on the beaches of Normandy. The Allied soldiers paved the way for victory over Nazi forces and for the return of stability and prosperity to Europe.

As the United States and Europe mark the anniversary of D-Day and honor a dwindling number of surviving World War II veterans, a look back at the aftermath of this decisive event reveals how trans-Atlantic friendship and cooperation have deepened:

1 The defeat of fascism and the restoration of liberal democratic governance in Western Europe provided a strong basis for the promotion of democracy around the world.

3 Following the Marshall Plan, trans-Atlantic economic cooperation and open-market institutions contributed to a fast economic expansion and to financial integration among countries, offering a basis for economic development in developing nations.

5 The collapse of communism in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989 marked the end of the Cold War; the triumph of democracy and free markets; and the peaceful reintegration of Europe, in which the United States played an instrumental role.

7 A free-trade agreement proposed in 2013 by the United States and European Union (EU) promises new cooperation. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership currently being negotiated could add $300 billion to the U.S. and EU economies and $145 billion to economies in the rest of the world as well as support hundreds of thousands of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

2 The Marshall Plan was established in 1948 to help post-war Europe recover from human and economic devastation. Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the United States' four-year, European Recovery Program provided economic support to reconstruction efforts and helped remove trade barriers, modernize industry and make the region prosperous again.

4 The North Atlantic Treaty, signed in 1949, established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The organization's system of collective defense, which pledges its members to aid one another in response to an attack by any external party, and the U.S. security guarantee for Europe stabilized the continent.

ALL IMAGES ©APIMAGES

6 NATO now claims 28 member states across North America and Europe. Since NATO's inception, its role has expanded to include peace-support and crisis-management efforts in conflict zones, humanitarian relief, counterpiracy maneuvers, maritime surveillance and — keeping pace with 21st-century security challenges — cyberdefense operations.

8 As the crisis in Ukraine unfolded in March, President Obama reaffirmed the importance of NATO as "the bedrock of America's security as well as European security."

Fascism: a way of organizing a society in which a government ruled by a dictator controls the lives of the people and in which people are not alllowed to disagree with the government ...
Maritime: of or relating to sailing on the sea or doing business (such as trading) by sea ...

Katie Miller shows her Scratch Farm to members of the Young Farmer Network.

COURTESY TESS BROWN-LAVOIE; ROOTS IN TITLE ©SHUTTERSTOCK/KSTUDIA

Rooting for Young Farmers

ANDRZEJ ZWANIECKI

Even before Margiana Petersen-Rockney, 25, graduated from college, the pull of farming proved hard to resist. Petersen-Rockney, who grew up on her mother's goat farm, started a garden on Brown University's campus in Providence, Rhode Island.

After graduating in 2009, she returned to Rehoboth, Massachusetts, leased two hectares from her mother and began growing vegetables and raising hogs and chickens. But despite some success — 60 customers subscribing to her products — she was uneasy.

She had a sense of belonging but missed engaging with the wider community. When she met other novice farmers in the area, she realized they shared her feeling.

Petersen-Rockney is part of a new generation of farmers needed to replace aging farm owners. But new farms tend to be too small to be profitable; farming land is hard to come by, and banks are reluctant to lend startup capital to inexperienced farm owners. Many are

repaying debts they incurred to cover the cost of college and must seek outside jobs to supplement farm income. Most of Petersen-Rockney's peers face all these challenges.

In 2011, she started Young Farmer Nights, biweekly meetings that brought together up to 30 farmers from Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts, each time at a different farm. They would tour the farm, have a potluck dinner and socialize around a bonfire.

When Petersen-Rockney got a fellowship from Wild Gift, a nonprofit that offers social entrepreneurs startup capital and mentorship, she gave up farming to develop a stronger organizational structure for Young Farmer Nights and to work on a new initiative.

No Longer Out Standing in a Field

The result of Petersen-Rockney's efforts is the Young Farmer Network, made up of 300 farmers, many of them college-educated women in their 20s and 30s. Because most members have college degrees in nonagricultural subjects and only limited farming experience, the network has become crucial to their success.

Tess Brown-Lavoie considers the Young Farmer Network, which she helped organize, "a really valuable opportunity."

"It can be so instructive to see how your neighbors are doing things," she said. Members share equipment and a stand at a farmers market. Because access to local markets is a key to success for small-scale agriculture on the outskirts of big cities, Petersen-Rockney came up with a plan to attract potential local customers to the various farms. Her Pasture to Plate initiative helps farmers offer public workshops and family-friendly activities, including meals cooked with farm-fresh products.

Social relationships engendered by the network matter too. They help "you realize that being a farmer isn't actually as solitary as it feels sometimes," Brown-Lavoie said. Because of the community that now stands behind her, she said, she worries less about making mistakes.

Brown-Lavoie has two business partners, and all three hold down "city jobs" to eke out a living. "We don't have enough land to support three farmers," she said.

Yet she and her farming friends persevere because they cherish the value of environmentally sustainable, small farms. They love growing food and working with their hands.

Even Petersen-Rockney, though busy managing the Beginning Farmer Network of Massachusetts as her day job, continues to grow garlic in a small plot. "I didn't want to let my variety die out," she said. ▧

Potluck: a meal to which everyone who is invited brings food to share
Engender: to be the source or cause of (something)

CONNECTING THE DOTS:
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND ●; REHOBOTH, MASSACHUSSETTS ●
SEARSMONT, MAINE ●; JOHNSTON, RHODE ISLAND ●

City Transplant

Tess Brown-Lavoie, a daughter of Boston teachers, offered to help a woman farmer in the field to see what farming was about. She quickly learned, it was all about hard labor. Despite that, Brown-Lavoie enjoyed developing what she calls her "physical intelligence."

Several farming apprenticeships later, she, her sister and a friend started a farm in Searsmont, Maine. "It was a seat-of-our-pants learning experience," Brown-Lavoie said. Eventually, a landowner took over that farm.

In 2011, the trio went on to grow chemical-free vegetables on a vacant lot in Providence, Rhode Island. "I was suddenly a full-time urban farmer," Brown-Lavoie said.

It seems to be taking. These days, she said, "in midseason, I have the dirtiest knees and messiest hair of anyone in the post office, library or bar."

Brown-Lavoie's farm, called Sidewalk Ends Farm, sells produce at a farmers market, to a restaurant and through consumer subscriptions. The three farmers rely on bikes and bike trailers to do most of the hauling. In 2013, they expanded their operation to a friend's farm in Johnston, Rhode Island.

As her skills improve, so does her confidence. "I put down roots and invest," Brown-Lavoie said.

Washington Inputs

A farm bill signed into law by President Obama in February 2014 offers new farmers these benefits:

1. Training backed by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
2. A streamlined application process for Agriculture Department microloans designed for small, beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers.
3. Easing of experience requirements for farm mortgages for applicants with nontraditional training.

70% OF U.S. FARMERS UNDER 30 YEARS OLD RENT LAND, ABOUT DOUBLE THE SHARE OF FARMERS OLDER THAN 30.

THE NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

3/4 OF YOUNG FARMERS RANK APPRENTICESHIPS AS THE MOST VALUABLE PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNERS.

THE NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

LGBT RIGHTS

LGBT Rights in America Today

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

DOUG THOMPSON

Scout's Honor

MARK TRAINER

"I had a massive support group. It gave me the ability to do something."

©RAFAEL SUANES

When Pascal Tessier was in eighth grade, he told his family he was gay. They were supportive.

Tessier had not considered the effect this might have on his membership in the Boy Scouts of America, a group he'd happily participated in for years. The Scouts banned gay members.

Founded in 1910 and with 2.7 million members today, the Scouts' mission is to combine fun and learning to teach leadership.

The conflict between who Tessier knew himself to be and the Scouts' policy would not become an issue until years after that conversation with his parents. He squarely faced the problem when he became eligible to become an Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable. It was 2013, around the time that a gay scout in California who had completed the rigorous requirements for Eagle Scout was informed that he was ineligible.

"I had a choice," Tessier said, "to come out publicly and say who I am or just stay quiet and get my 'Eagle.'" The support of his family, friends, school and Scout troop helped him decide what to do. He announced that he is gay, and he asked the organization to change its policy. "I was a voice for people in the same position who could not speak out," he said.

Tessier's older brother, Lucien, who is also gay, started a petition — it was titled "Boy Scouts: Vote to end your anti-gay policy so my brother can earn his Eagle award" — through the website Change.org, and 130,000 supporters signed it. The petition fueled a movement against the "no gays" policy. That movement had been sparked by an alumni group called Scouts for Equality and by GLAAD (formerly the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation). Major League Soccer voiced disapproval of the Scouts' no-gays policy, and corporations, including Intel and Lockheed Martin, withdrew financial support.

In May 2013, the Boy Scouts put the question — Should Scouts allow gay members? — to a vote at its annual meeting of delegates in Grapevine, Texas. Tessier and his mother, Tracie Felker, traveled from Maryland to Texas to witness the vote. A "no" vote would end Tessier's Scouting career. "I woke up thinking, 'This could be the last day I get to call myself a Scout,'" he said.

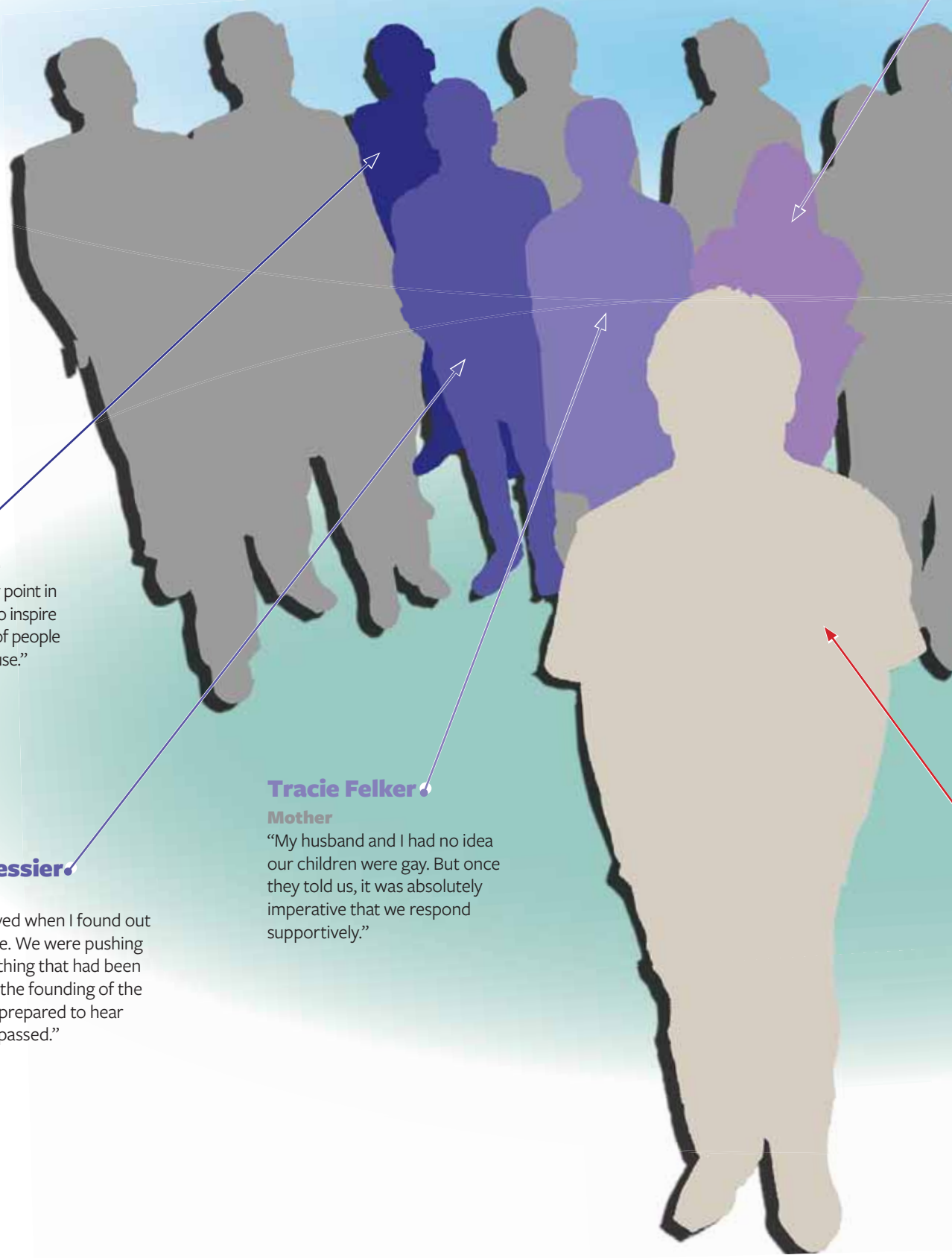
From a hotel room, Tessier and his supporters awaited the results. "The room got very, very quiet," Felker said. "Then all of a sudden, everyone's cellphones started going off with text messages and calls. Someone yelled out, 'It's a yes!' People screamed and jumped up and down, they were so happy."

The vote to accept gay members helped Tessier become the first openly gay Eagle Scout in February 2014. "We've learned so much," said Felker, "including that it takes many, many people working very hard to cause social change. Pascal has an amazing Scoutmaster, Don Beckham, and friends in activist groups who have supported him through thick and thin. These great people helped him reach his goal."

But there's work left to be done. While Tessier would like to become a troop leader next, the Scouts ban gay leaders. On his birthday, in a few months, he will turn 18, and he will no longer be welcome. ▧

The Support Group

"It takes many, many people working very hard to cause social change."
— Tracie Felker



Mark Anthony Dingbaum
Advocate, Change.org
"It's easier now than at any point in history for one individual to inspire unprecedented numbers of people to come together for a cause."

Tracie Felker
Mother
"My husband and I had no idea our children were gay. But once they told us, it was absolutely imperative that we respond supportively."

Lucien Tessier
Brother
"I was overjoyed when I found out about the vote. We were pushing against something that had been in place since the founding of the Scouts. I was prepared to hear that it hadn't passed."

Ariella Knab
Affiliate Member
"People started to fight for what they really believed in. And once that happened, people couldn't shut up."

Don Beckham
Scoutmaster
"For Scouting to survive, progressive parents have to feel that their values are being honored by Scouting, that it's not going to be a discriminatory organization."

Walter Ellis
Fellow Scout
"Troops around the nation were having their voices heard. There were a lot of troops that disagreed with the ban.."

Pascal Tessier
"The Boy Scouts are the ones who taught me how to take responsibility, how to lead and how to make a difference. We're not trying to change Scouting, we're trying to make it better."

DOUG THOMPSON

FRONT CENTER: PASCAL TESSIER

FIRST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: DEBBIE HELLER (SCOUTS FOR EQUALITY), TAMRA-SHAE OATMAN (PFLAG), LUCIEN TESSIER, TRACIE FELKER, ARIELLA KNAB, JOHN BECKHAM, WALTER ELLIS, AIDAN KNAB
SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: MICHAEL JONES (CHANGE.ORG), SETH ADAM (GLAAD), MARK ANTHONY DINGBAUM (CHANGE.ORG), OLIVER TESSIER, JANE SHERMAN, MOYO MYERS, SAM SHERMAN, DON BECKHAM (SCOUTMASTER, TROOP 52)
THIRD ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHN KNAB, JOHN DINGER

ALL ADULTS NOT OTHERWISE IDENTIFIED ARE PARENTS OF SCOUTS.

Fly Like an Eagle

The Eagle Scout is the highest rank in Boy Scouting and requires 21 merit badges, earned in areas including first aid, community citizenship, national citizenship, lifesaving and environmental science. Of the 110 million Americans who have participated in Boy Scouts since its founding, only about 5 percent have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

Felker described what being an Eagle Scout meant to her son: "It's a real statement of your commitment to Boy Scouts and a real statement of who you are."

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Coming Out

***EJ|USA* asked successful advocates for gay rights what it was like for them or their loved ones to come out of the closet and what would help the next LGBT geneation to thrive.**

©AP IMAGES

Jai Rodriguez

cast, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, a 2003-2006 reality TV show

Coming out is personal. I came out on *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.* (I wasn't particularly brave; I didn't think anyone would see the show.) Before then, people didn't know. Being gay wasn't and isn't something that defines me.

The show forced me — it was titled *Queer Eye.* The word "queer," unique and with a positive power, helped. When the world celebrated the thing I thought I should hide — being gay — I embraced it. *Queer Eye* was the first all-gay cast on network TV. I won an Emmy Award for it. That's acceptance.

Dozens of men and women have told me that coming out was easier for them when the show was on because their parents went from not knowing any gays to inviting five gay men into their homes via television.

Emily Dievendorf

executive director of Equality Michigan, anti-violence and advocacy group

LGBT people need to know that they have a safe space — that their families will be supportive and that their friends will talk to them about being LGBT. They should be aware of stresses and issues they will face. They need leaders who will stand up for them. That's what anyone needs to come out as gay, lesbian or transgender.

The more of us who come out, the more other people will feel comfortable coming out. We have to be visible.

It's time to stop apologizing for being ourselves. The world is on our side. Our rights are civil rights.

Cason Crane

adventurer and the first openly gay person to climb Mt. Everest

My coming-out was relatively easy; I grew up in an open-minded community with an accepting family. Despite this, I experienced name-calling because of my sexuality. I overcame it, but realized how lucky I was. Many young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning Americans face worse.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning people need political protection and accepting communities.

Our country is quickly adopting more positive legal frameworks to ensure equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning people. But we need to match that with progress in our communities. Adult allies should offer support to young people who might need it in order to come out. Support can prevent suicides.

I hope for more progress, both politically and in communities, so that young LGBT Americans will be able to come out in a positive environment.

Judy Shepard

Co-founder of the Matthew Shepard Foundation

In 1998, I lost my son, Matthew, to a murder motivated by anti-gay hate.

One reason families reject their LGBT kids is that they think being gay is a choice their kids are making. Many parents think that, if their child makes this choice, he or she rejects the family's interpretation of religion.

Families need to understand this: Being gay is not a choice — it's who you are.

Within the family, condemn offensive remarks about LGBT people. Respect is a basic part of kindness and humanity.

Wade Davis

director, You Can Play Project, a campaign dedicated to ending homophobia in sports

As a gay man and LGBT advocate, I'm not looking for "acceptance" because that language implies that I need to be tolerated and creates a dynamic where LGBT people are seen as "other." We should all celebrate and learn about our differences and should embrace the fact that we are all human beings. We need to create spaces that engage people in conversations where all points of view are valued, free from the fear of judgment. It is only through vulnerable and honest dialogue with one another that we can see each other as mirrors that reflect back our shared humanity.

Avery Stone

22-year-old lesbian ice hockey player and advocate for LGBT athletes

As a student, when I was struggling with being in the closet, I searched for LGBT narratives with which I could identify. Knowing that I wasn't alone was a big deal. Role models tell kids they belong somewhere and are not "other."

My coming-out process was like dominos. I came out to my closest friends, one by one, and word simply started to spread that I am gay. I was a nervous wreck. But I didn't lose any friends. Being honest strengthened my bonds with my classmates and teammates.

When I look back on my closeted self now, after five years of being out, it's hard to put myself back in that place!

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY PHOTOS

LGBT in America: Progress, with Room to Improve

JAKE GROVUM

Society

"LGBT people have relationships with partners, they have children, they form families like everybody else, and people get that."

—CLINTON ANDERSON, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION'S LGBT PROJECT

An estimated 9 million Americans identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. That's almost 4 percent of the U.S. population.

Two-thirds of Americans think same-sex couples can be as good at parenting as opposite-sex couples, and the same share said those couples should have the same rights as their opposite-sex counterparts.

More than 90 percent of American LGBT adults report that society is more accepting of them than it was 10 years ago. The same share expects it to be even more accepting 10 years from now.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S "SURVEY OF LGBT AMERICANS"; PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S "GROWING SUPPORT FOR GAY MARRIAGE: CHANGED MINDS AND CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS"

Federal

"This is one of those issues where Congress is really lagging behind the country. Young people can't even understand why these [issues] are controversial. Young people are already there. We just have to catch up."

— REPRESENTATIVE DAVID CICILLINE OF RHODE ISLAND

Although members of Congress have introduced bills to protect gays from discrimination, none have passed.

In 2009, the Obama administration hosted the White House's first LGBT Pride Month reception celebrating the LGBT community.

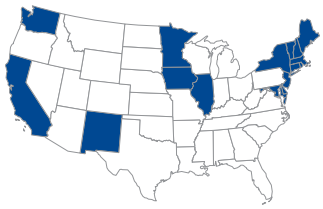
In 2013, the federal government for the first time recognized same-sex unions by opening up thousands of government programs and offering benefits to same-sex couples.

States

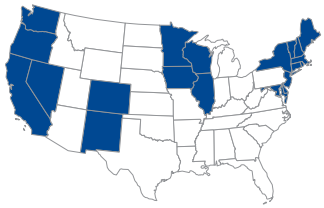
"Changing policy improves people's status in the world. If laws get better, then people feel safer."

—CLINTON ANDERSON, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION'S LGBT PROJECT

More than a third of the U.S. population lives in a state that either allows same-sex marriage or recognizes the rights of same-sex couples married in another state where such marriage is legal.



Seventeen states and the District of Columbia now allow same-sex marriage, and other states have proposed changes as a result of court rulings.



Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have legal protections for LGBT people against employment discrimination. A similar number bar discrimination in housing.

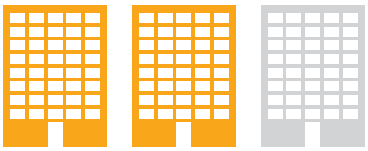
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

Business

"Businesses recognized that LGBT inclusion is essential to staying relevant to a changing workforce. LGBT equality is both the right thing to do and smart business."

—Deena Fidas, Human Rights Campaign

The leaders of more than 90 percent of the Fortune 500, *Fortune* magazine's ranking of the top U.S. companies, are committed to a workplace in which employees are not discriminated against based on sexual orientation, and 61 percent also have anti-discrimination policies to protect employees who define their own gender identities.



Two-thirds of Fortune 500 companies offer full benefits to same-sex partners.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN'S CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX REPORT

Education

"Campuses today want to be called LGBT friendly."

—Shane Windmeyer, Campus Pride, An LGBT Rights Group

U.S. colleges and universities are taking steps such as establishing LGBT-friendly housing options, supporting related student groups, and supporting LGBT-focused counseling and health services. At least 149 schools have gender-inclusive housing, in which students can have a roommate of any gender they choose, a policy intended to curb harassment of LGBT students in collegiate housing.

In 2013, Campus Pride rated 400 U.S. colleges and universities, or 9 percent of the total, to be gay friendly. That share was up from the 7 percent that ranked gay friendly two years earlier.

CAMPUS PRIDE REPORT

Pace of Change

President Obama and Joseph Rocha after the signing of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act.

WHITE HOUSE

In the mid-1990s, two major policies were adopted in the United States placing formal limits on the rights of homosexuals. Within two decades both policies were overturned — reflecting the speed with which American society is giving up long-held prejudices against the LGBT community. "What's astonishing is how the change in public attitudes is outpacing the law," said William Yeomans, a professor of civil rights law at American University.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was adopted in 1994. The policy was actually a loosening of the former outright ban on gays in the military. It allowed them to serve if they hid their sexual orientation. Joseph Rocha, who was in the Navy, was one of many servicemen and servicewomen thrown out of the armed forces under the policy. (He told a commanding officer he was gay when reporting harassment.)

President Obama repealed the policy in 2011, saying, "Patriotic Americans in uniform will no longer have to lie about who they are in order to serve the country they love."

Rocha, 27, has recently been selected to be a Marine Officer. "I've always wanted a military career," he said.

In 1996, Congress enacted the Defense of Marriage Act, which blocked the recognition of same-sex marriages and denied federal benefits — including Social Security survivor benefits, immigration rights and family leave — to legally married gay couples.

In 2013, in a 5–4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional saying it made some "marriages less respected than others."

Charles Divan and Lennie Carter, a same-sex couple in Washington who have been together 17 years, were among thousands who married in the wake of the ruling. Doing so gave them the administrative and tax advantages that other married couples have long enjoyed. Ultimately, said Divan, a microbiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, their wedding in an Episcopal church before 150 friends and family members gave them something more: "It validated this long-term relationship." *–Burton Bollag*

©GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE NETWORK

The Fight for Gay Rights in the U.S

SHARON JACOBS

Emily Dievendorf might someday lose her job — and be happy about it.

That's because Dievendorf directs Equality Michigan, part of a network that advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, state by state. When the day comes that LGBT Michiganders are treated equally by law and in society, Dievendorf's work will be done.

"You know you're doing a good job when you have to think about the possibility that you might not have work to do in so many years," said Dievendorf, who joined Equality Michigan in 2010. She doesn't know yet when that day will come — Michigan's current legal protections have not caught up with its population's support for LGBT rights — but she takes pride in piecemeal achievements, like pushing an anti-bullying bill through the legislature to become law.

A century ago, Equality Michigan would have been unthinkable. The first U.S. gay rights organization, the Society for Human Rights, formed in 1924 but was shut down a year later under intense political pressure. Laws forbidding homosexual activity were only gradually repealed — beginning with the state of Illinois in 1962 — and the American Psychiatric Association considered homosexuality to be a mental illness until 1973.

Seeds of Change

Accepting attitudes toward homosexuality and gender expression have grown slowly over decades. The first major shift happened in June 1969, when a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a New York bar

known to serve LGBT customers, resulted in riots. Hundreds of protesters rose up, inspiring activist groups to form. Each June, the Stonewall riots are commemorated with gay pride parades in cities from New York to Vienna to Shanghai.

Today, hundreds of American activist organizations fight for laws and policies that support the LGBT community. They want to increase the number of states (now 17 of 50) where it is legal for gays to marry. They help homeless youth, 40 percent of whom identify as LGBT. (Many homeless youth are runaways who are fleeing rejection.) They push for LGBT families to receive the same immigration rights as heterosexual families and for LGBT refugees fleeing persecution to find asylum in the U.S.

Young activists address age-specific issues. Teenager Isaias Guzman led his Los Angeles secondary school's Gay-Straight Alliance, a club for students to counter homophobia.

Witnessing verbal and physical harassment of gay students near his school, Guzman convinced the administration to institute a complaint form in 2010, when he was in 10th grade. Students use the form to request assistance when they encounter harassment. It helps the school's staff become aware of situations that affect LGBT students.

Now in college, Guzman is a board member of the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, which connects school clubs across the nation and trains activists.

Outside Support

For more than 40 years, Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) has recruited straight "allies" to stand with their gay and lesbian loved ones. "Being an ally might be something as simple as saying, 'That joke you just told about a gay person isn't funny,'" said Rabbi David M. Horowitz, president of the PFLAG national board. Members contact government representatives to push for changes, such as laws to prevent hate crimes.

"When we speak with members of Congress, we change minds," said Horowitz, whose daughter came out as a lesbian the night before her college graduation. Coming from a place of love and family helps PFLAG members influence leaders. "It's hard to be angry with a person who loves his or her children," Horowitz said.

The Human Rights Campaign has a strong track record. Since 1980, its more than 1.5 million members have led campaigns to defeat bans on same-sex marriage and immigration by HIV-positive people. In 2013, the campaign welcomed its first two global engagement fellows, young activists from outside the U.S. who serve as the "eyes and ears" of their native communities.

LGBT today issues as part of a larger framework of rights. "It's important to be aware of all the different types of discrimination," said Guzman, who is Latino. He recently organized a summit for Northern California LGBT youth of color, who face both homophobia and racism. By recognizing the rights of all races and religions, he said, activists can make a bigger difference. ▧

Peer-to-Peer, Straight or Gay

A popular program at New York University is called "Guess the Straight Person." An audience faces a panel of five students, one of whom is heterosexual, and must guess who is gay and who is straight.

While it sounds like an insensitive game, that is the point. The event quickly becomes a serious discussion about stereotypes and issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students, according to Ian Koncagul, a student who has led the program and is trained to support fellow students who might struggle with sexual orientation or gender-identity issues.

Janelle Wilson, Southern Oregon University's Queer Resource Center coordinator, said that when peer educators like Koncagul connect with an audience, all parties leave more informed and sympathetic to one another. "The 'us-versus-them' attitude dissipates as meaningful dialogue transpires in a safe, respectful, open-minded atmosphere," she said.

Marcos Olivarez, a peer educator at Ohio State University, said he felt comfortable discussing sensitive topics with anyone until he met a student who self-identified as asexual. "It isn't just about changing pronouns, it's about changing your whole conversation," he said. "I had to learn how to be sensitive to what [asexuality] means for her."

Peer education programs at U.S. colleges include anonymous chat rooms, discussion groups and counseling. Student educators are typically trained to be mentors by counselors from the schools' health departments.

"I am consistently surprised by how curious, and often very considerate, my peers are about issues around sexuality when a safe space is established," said Dixon Li, an LGBT peer educator at Princeton University. *–Kourtni Gonzalez*

How to Start an Activist Group

1 Gather a network. It can be difficult for LGBT people and allies to get in touch, especially in places where coming out is dangerous. Ty Cobb of the Human Rights Campaign suggests using private Facebook groups or other social media.

2 Get an adviser. For youth activist groups, it may be helpful to recruit a supportive older person — perhaps a teacher or mentor — to supervise meetings and advise on activism methods.

3 Find a location. The Gay-Straight Alliance Network suggests holding activist meetings in a private place where you can discuss sensitive issues without fear of being overheard.

4 Lay down ground rules. Whenever you're discussing an issue that is controversial or intensely personal, treat each other with respect and compassion.

Baer at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

U.S. MISSION PHOTO

A Nation's Principles

DANIEL BAER

Daniel Baer is ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The internationally recognized human rights principle that all people are born equal in dignity and rights has been at the center of the U.S. Constitution and our identity as a country for more than 200 years. Yet, in each generation, there seem to be particular groups of Americans whose struggles for equality test us and bring us to a better understanding of our common birthright.

In my generation, there's no question that LGBT people are such a group. The work to guarantee LGBT Americans equality under the law is reflected in TV shows and on editorial pages, in courtrooms and legislatures, at churches and on sports teams.

Even where people disagree, for the most part they make arguments that implicitly acknowledge that the discussion is about making good on the promise of human rights.

Before taking up my post as ambassador, I was proud to spend almost four years working on human rights issues for the U.S. State

Baer (left) with his partner, Brian Walsh, and their greyhound, Cleo, in Washington

STATE DEPT

Department. Under the leadership of President Obama and former Secretary Clinton and now Secretary Kerry, the U.S. has been a forthright defender of human rights for every person, including LGBT people. U.S. leaders recognize that America's diplomats should represent America's diversity. And though we still have work to do, it is significant that today there are five openly gay ambassadors serving on three continents.

Advocating for the human rights of LGBT people around the world, including in the almost 80 countries where being gay is still a crime, is part of American foreign policy. For some observers, this looks to be something new — but really it's the continuation of a long tradition. The role of the U.S. as a leader in the world stems in no small part from the many times in which we have been a voice for the voiceless.

As Ronald Reagan put it at his first inauguration: "We must realize that … no weapon in the arsenals of the world is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women."

Today, as then, moral courage is called for in defending the human rights of all people, no matter who they are, no matter whom they love. ▧

What's It Like?

People often ask me what it's like to be an openly gay ambassador: "Does it make your job harder? Does your partner get invited to events? Do officials from other countries ever refuse to work with you?"

Whenever I am asked these questions, I feel a flash of gratitude, because it just hasn't been an issue. At all.

It's far more important that I'm an American ambassador than that I'm a gay ambassador. I have never felt that being gay is a hindrance to doing my job. My partner, Brian, and I have been greeted warmly by friends in the diplomatic community. We attend events as a couple, and sometimes we get the feeling that we might be the first gay couple at a particular dinner table, but never that we're not welcome. We're a team, just like many other ambassadors and their spouses or partners.

Michael Sam told NFL reciuters he is gay.

©AP IMAGES

Out of the Closet, Still in the Game

TIM NEVILLE

When Ana Juarez was a teenager, she played as many sports as her studies at a New Mexico secondary school would allow. In the winter, she played soccer as a center forward, and in the spring she ran at track and field meets. Later on she joined the softball team.

"I'll never forget hitting my first home run my senior year," she said. "It was the greatest feeling in the world."

But through much of her education, Juarez had a secret. While her teammates would gossip about boyfriends on the field and in the locker room, Juarez had nothing to add. "What was I going to do?" she said. "It's not like I could talk about my girlfriend."

In her junior year, Juarez "came out" as a lesbian to her friends and teammates. By her senior year, she felt comfortable enough with her sexuality to look the way she wanted to, with short-cropped hair and less-girly clothes. But while her coaches, closest friends and family all supported her, Juarez still counts herself among the many young Americans who struggle to reconcile a talent for sports with their teammates' — and society's — insensitivities toward lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) athletes.

"When I told my friends, they wanted to know why I hadn't told them earlier," Juarez said. "I was afraid."

That is a common experience for young athletes, said Sam Marchiano, the outreach director with Athlete Ally, a nonprofit group that works to end homophobia in the athletic community. It empowers "allies," or LGBT-friendly athletes who aren't gay, to stand up for LGBT rights in sports. The founder of the group, Hudson Taylor, was a straight secondary school wrestler who grew tired of his teammates' homophobic language. To show solidarity with those his teammates would belittle, he stuck a symbol of LGBT equality — a sticker with a yellow equal sign on a blue background — to his headgear. Though his fellow wrestlers criticized him for it, Taylor's stance endeared him to thousands of parents, athletes and coaches, who rallied behind him.

"Ending discrimination is all about respect, no matter your sexual orientation, your race, your gender or where you're from," Marchiano said. "For an LGBT athlete, the question isn't just, 'Will my teammates accept me?' but 'Will my coach still let me play and keep me on the team?'"

Time is on their side. Many signs indicate the United States is becoming a fairer place for LGBT athletes. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center shows that an overwhelming majority of LGBT adults — 92 percent — say society has become more accepting of them in the past 10 years. An equal percentage of the nearly 1,200 adults surveyed believe the next 10 years will bring even more acceptance.

"People in the 18- to 24-year-old range are by far the most inclusive, equality-minded generation," said Ellen Kahn, director of the Family Project at the Human Rights Campaign, a group that works to achieve equality for the LGBT community. "They are the generation that won't even understand why something like same-sex marriage was ever an issue. That attitude shift would translate to the soccer team and swim team and other sports, and mean less shock and drama when someone does come out."

The shift is already starting. Athletes at all levels of sports have recently come out with little detriment to their careers. In May 2013, Jason Collins, a professional basketball player, publicly announced he was gay in a *Sports Illustrated* article. In March 2014, a University of Notre Dame tennis player, Matt Dooley, did the same. In one of the more sensational cases, Michael Sam, a university football player, made sure that recruiters and coaches in the National Football League (NFL) knew he was gay before drafting him. Some NFL executives and coaches believed the announcement would hurt his chances of becoming a professional athlete because, as one commentator said, a gay player would not be welcome in an NFL locker room.

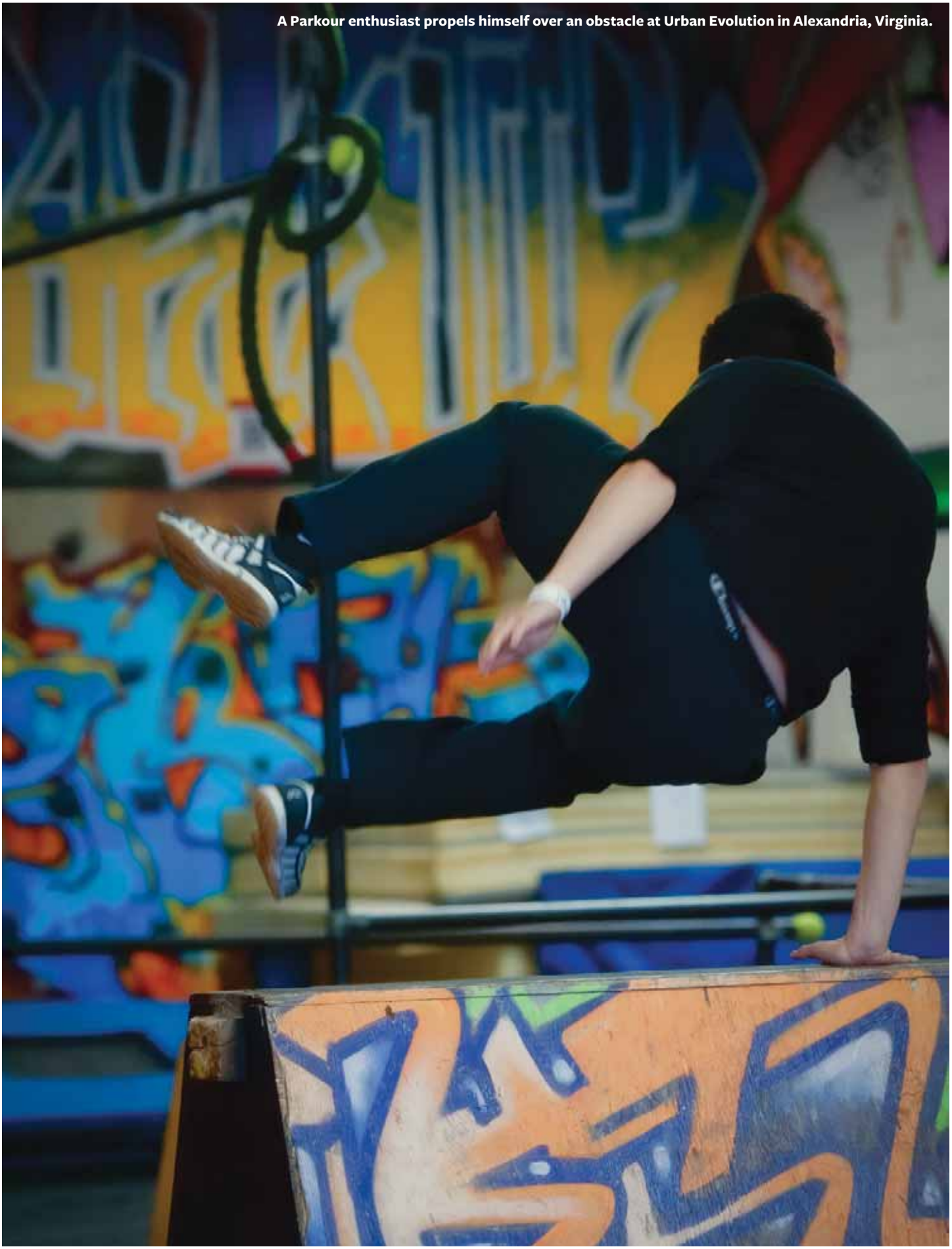
Dale Hansen, a Dallas television sportscaster, offered a blistering on-air retort to show how hypocritical it would be to limit Sam's chances of being drafted based on whom he loves. "Players [are] accused of rape and pay the woman to go away. You lie to police, trying to cover up a murder. We're comfortable with [NFL players who have done] that," said Hansen. "You kill people drunk driving? That guy's welcome. You love another man? Well, now you've gone too far."

Whose logic will prevail won't be known until the NFL holds its annual draft for college athletes like Sam. As for Juarez — now 23 — she works two jobs and plays soccer with the Hot Shots of Santa Fe, New Mexico, a city-league team that won the championship in 2013. One of her jobs is to help kids make positive choices in their lives. When she meets someone struggling to accept his or her sexuality, she has a few words of advice.

"I tell them things are going to be OK and to reach out to their closest friends," she said. "In 10 years, I hope I won't have to have that conversation at all." ▧

"Ending discrimination is all about respect, no matter your sexual orientation, your race, your gender or where you're from."

— Sam Marchiano, outreach director of Athlete Ally, a nonprofit whose mission is to end homophobia in sports



A Parkour enthusiast propels himself over an obstacle at Urban Evolution in Alexandria, Virginia.

Parkour: Our World Is Our Playground

KATE HOIT

It takes only three steps for 32-year-old Sean Hannah to scale a 9-foot wall at Urban Evolution, a gym in Alexandria, Virginia. A practitioner and coach of parkour, Hannah is like a secret street ninja. He insists his ability is the result of mental and physical discipline — the core principles of parkour. He also insists that anyone has the ability to scale a 3-meter wall.

To some, urban landscapes and concrete jungles can be alienating — their surfaces cold, their sharp edges unforgiving and their narrow spaces restricting. But at a time when more than half of the world's population lives within the confines of towns and cities, according to the United Nations Population Fund, the activity is taking off and making urban spaces more inviting.

Parkour, a form of fitness and mental training, challenges urban constructs. Its traceurs, or practitioners, view the environment around them as a series of obstacles to conquer. They leap from one platform's edge to another. They climb and scale walls. They swing and vault. They land with precision. They are eerily stealthy.

"Parkour allows you to unlock efficient movements and discover new possibilities while developing a mind and body connection," said Hannah, who coaches everyone from former soldiers to teen gymnasts to those who simply want to be less clumsy on their feet.

There are no official movements or tricks in parkour, allowing those who practice it freedom to create their own. With the flood of YouTube videos featuring the most stomach-churning parkour moves and pop culture references — such as James Bond jumping from buildings in Casino Royale in 2006 — the discipline can be misinterpreted.

"The most common misconception of parkour is that we're crazy or reckless or trying to get hurt," said Blake "Thor" Barrett, a 25-year-old parkour coach at StrikeGym in Coconut Creek, Florida.

A Zigzagging History

Twenty-six years before James Bond scrambled his way up a 10-inch steel beam, parkour was born on the streets of France. Raymond Belle, who was orphaned during the Indochina War and later taken in by the French military, trained on a military obstacle course and eventually become an elite military firefighter. The physical conditioning tests he espoused inspired his son, David Belle, who became the founder of parkour.

The movements grew out of the need to efficiently get from one point to another. The goal of training was to develop skills that could help save and protect others. Survival meant overcoming mental barriers and emotional obstacles. Raymond Belle's methods were so effective that they later were adopted by U.S. forces, the British Royal Marines, and firefighters and first responders worldwide.

Today, people in the United States, Europe and Asia who want to learn the fundamentals of parkour have taken it off the streets

Joe Torchia jumps from one ledge to another at Ohio State University.

and into gyms swathed in graffiti. While indoor facilities may offer a tamer version of the urban landscape, some traceurs argue that it doesn't dull the experience or lessen the challenges.

Barrett, who has endured bumps and bruises on the streets of downtown Miami during his eight years of training, recognizes the benefits of practicing in a gym. There's a sense of community and a realization that the art form isn't just about jumping from roof to roof.

"Training in a gym that is structured allows people to guide you through the learning process and train for precision before taking anything outside," said Barrett.

The basics include learning to land extremely quietly on both feet or to roll without injuring the neck. Every detail counts. The position of the hands or the degree to which the legs are bent means the difference between a broken or uninjured body part. Once the symmetry between the mind and body begins to develop, so does self-confidence.

For Kyle (who asked that his surname not be used), a 25-year-old former competitive gymnast who discovered parkour through a group practicing on the College of William & Mary campus in Williamsburg, Virginia, the active lifestyle is a great way to stay healthy. "The community always seems to be pushing its own boundaries and encouraging others to do the same," said Kyle.

There's also something exhilarating about learning the art behind the fitness form. According to Hannah, the majority of his clients hates working out but enjoys parkour. "One of my goals while coaching parkour is to introduce the concept of play into modern life," said Hannah. "It makes me feel like a kid again." ▧

"Training in a gym that is structured allows people to guide you through the learning process and train for precision before taking anything outside."

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Striving for Health

With more than one-third of U.S. adults and 17 percent of kids under age 19 considered obese, more Americans need to eat healthfully and exercise. First lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign is striving to create a healthier future for Americans.

Her program has four basic goals: understand nutrition, eat smart, increase accessibility to healthy foods and commit to physical activity. The basic guidelines allow for people everywhere to improve their health on their own terms.

When it comes to fitness, Let's Move is all about trying new forms of exercise in any type of surroundings. Parkour, which relies on the ability to navigate one's environment by running, jumping and climbing, can be practiced anywhere. No equipment is needed — just a commitment to getting outside. It's one way to follow the Let's Move recommendation of 30-60 minutes of daily physical activity.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA; COCONUT CREEK, FLORIDA; WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

Monuments Woman

EVAN RYAN

During her college years, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan visited Rome's Colosseum. She came away with a reverence for all historic sites, including the comparatively young Washington Monument, under repair after an earthquake.

"A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive."

These words are engraved on a sturdy plaque at the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul. While the plaque recently replaced a tattered banner, its message has been an enduring one. It confirms my belief that cultural heritage reminds us (and will remind future generations) of earlier people's contributions and of humanity's historical experiences.

One notable example is the Amarbayasgalant Monastery, once one of the largest Buddhist centers in Mongolia (see page 6-7), preserved through a State Department program called the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation.

Through this program the United States helps other countries protect their cultural heritage, whether by preserving ancient sites or museum collections or by documenting endangered languages.

Investments in cultural heritage yield lasting benefits beyond the preserved site itself.

Some benefits are environmental. The adaptive reuse of historic buildings can replace urban sprawl. The preservation of historic sites is an ethical alternative to demolition. Such actions make the most of existing resources without degrading natural landscapes or water and air quality.

Other benefits are societal. Preserving cultural traditions — especially of ethnic or rural communities whose ways of life are disappearing — brings respect for diversity. In the aftermath of conflicts or natural disasters, events that can devastate populations and undermine spiritual and material well-being, preserving beloved cultural sites helps make communities whole again.

There are economic benefits too. With the rise of a cultural tourism industry in many countries, heritage sites play a part in boosting economic vitality.

Now is a great time to learn about the traditions of your ancestors. Volunteer at a local museum. Try your hand at weaving or another ancient craft. Embark on a career in archaeology or cultural-heritage management. By doing so, you will join a worldwide effort to preserve cultural heritage and ensure that traditions and sites in your own region will be enjoyed by generations to come. ▧

ILLUSTRATION: DOUG THOMPSON

policy points

Farming's Future

"We have nearly a million young people who served in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade who are coming back to this country looking for opportunity, and there's no reason why a significant number of them can't be in the farming business." — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack at the 2014 Agriculture Outlook Forum See pages 12–13, *Rooting for Young Farmers*

Strength Starts at School

President Obama's Race to the Top initiative has dedicated more than $4 billion to primary- and secondary-education reform, including efforts to make teachers more effective. The initiative aims to enhance the United States' "ability to compete and to collaborate on the world stage," according to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan. See pages 4-5, *Primed for Teaching*

Affirming Others' Aspirations

Instead of targeting our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, we can use our laws to protect their rights. Instead of defining ourselves in opposition to others, we can affirm the aspirations that we hold in common. That's what will make America strong. That's what will make Europe strong. That's what makes us who we are." — President Obama, Address to European Youth, March 26, 2014. See p. 22, *Cover Package*

Education, Not Discrimination

President Obama, like other presidents before him, is honorary president of Boy Scouts of America. "The President believes the Boy Scouts is a valuable organization that has helped educate and build character in American boys for more than a century. He also opposes discrimination in all forms, and as such opposes this [now overturned] policy that discriminates on basis of sexual orientation." — White House statement August 8, 2012. See pages 16–19, *Scout's Honor*

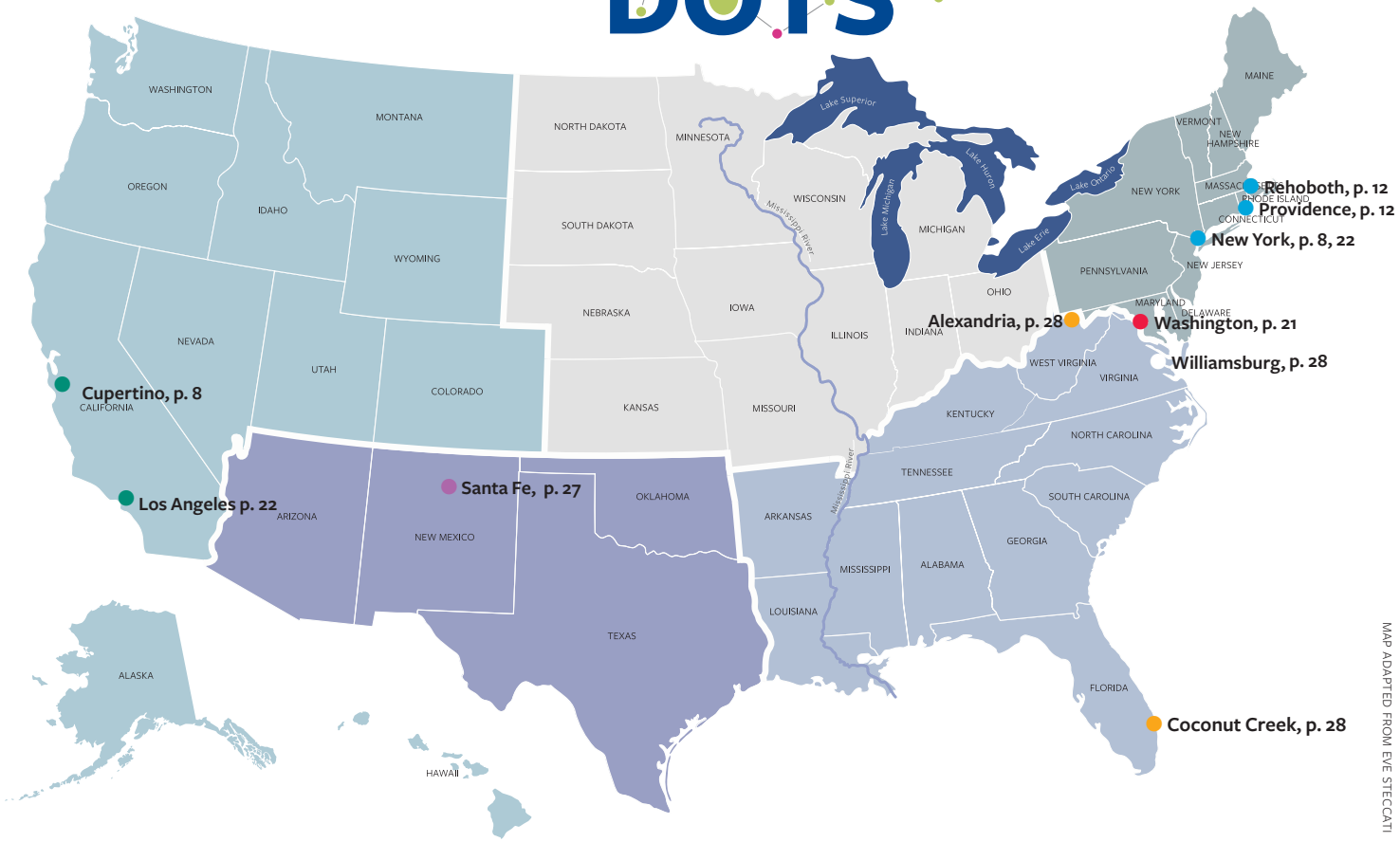
Small Biz, Big Trade

"Over the past five years, my administration has made more loans to small business owners than any other. And when 98 percent of our exporters are small businesses, new trade partnerships with Europe and the Asia-Pacific will help them create more jobs." — President Obama, State of the Union Address, Jan. 28, 2014. See pages 8-9, *Business By Design*

Our European Allies

"Our NATO allies are our closest partners on the world stage. Europe is the cornerstone of America's engagement with the world." – President Obama, remarks in Amsterdam, March 24, 2014. **See pages 10–11, D-*Day: The Difference It Made***

CONNECTING THE DOTS



MAP ADAPTED FROM EVE STECCATI

Embassy of the United States of America

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS