



# Ally continues down path of social justice

## An ongoing series celebrating the 15th anniversary of 1n10

By Megan Trombetta

We've seen over the past few months just a few of the bright young stars of the LGBT community who began their path to activism and community involvement at 1n10. But two of the great strengths of 1n10 lie in the universality of the values taught in their programs and the welcoming culture of the organization. Meet Celia Williams, a straight ally whose passion for social justice and human rights will surely change our world.

Williams first came to 1n10 in support of her best friend, but quickly found the welcoming atmosphere to be just the support she needed in her own life. Williams found solace in 1n10 as a safe haven where she could be genuine and open with peers. As a regular member she began to notice the similarities between the struggles of her friends and her own struggles as a young Latina woman.

"I was born here, there's no way that I could ever be deported, but because of the color of my skin there are still ways that I am victimized even as a United States citizen," says Williams. "I think there is a lot that needs to be taken care of as far as human rights and civil rights go. That's where my passion lies."

Williams is currently finishing a degree in justice studies at Arizona State University. She has recently completed her second consecutive term as an Americorps volunteer and hopes to pursue a career in civil rights, human rights and refugee rights. "I realized that these issues impacted me in so many more ways than as a personal individual. It was people that I cared about and people that I loved. I had to stand up for them," Williams says.

During her second Americorps term Williams worked at Public Allies Arizona as their Alumni and Community Outreach Coordinator. Public Allies is a program for emerging leaders at the ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation. Williams' program manager, Brittany James, describes Williams as creative, innovative and a wonderful asset to the team. "For me, Celia embodies our mission- she is a young emerging leader, coming from a diverse background and is passionate about many social issues. She is taking the knowledge and tools gained in the public allies program to continue



*Straight ally Celia Williams*

to be a social change agent," says James.

In 2007, Williams received two peer-nominated awards for collaboration, and diversity and inclusion. According to James, 2007-2008 Allies agreed that one of the most meaningful training sessions was a training coordinated by Williams in collaboration with Madelaine Adelman of GLSEN. The training focused on the social construction of stereotypes and bias, and how those stereotypes can affect work in the nonprofit and public sector.

But of all the work Williams does, it is impossible to deny that serving 1n10 is nearest to her heart. She served two consecutive terms on the youth council, working as communications specialist. "Being on the youth council, and being a strong presence as an older participant, I kind of felt like it was my way to give back. Within three weeks I was in love with Beck. She was an amazing mentor."

Williams worked as a coordinator for 1n10's Heroes program, which encourages and facilitates youth volunteer service in the community. She is also a volunteer for 1n10's QSpeak theatre, a creative performing arts venue for LGBT youth and their allies.

Micheal Weakley, program coordinator for 1n10, worked extensively with Williams

on a variety of projects. "She catches your attention immediately. Her bright smile and brilliant personality not only light up a room, but make it glow. When she starts talking about her passion for working with under-represented communities you realize that this girl has a genuine heart and an impeccable brain," says Weakley.

Weakley says that he has seen Williams grow stronger and more powerful over the years. He believes that her involvement in 1n10 played a pivotal role in shaping the activist Williams is today. "The 1n10 experience is a mixture of social and cultural exchanges as well as political and community growth," says Weakley. "Celia's work with 1n10 programs and activities has helped her to develop into a well versed person who is accepting and loving of people, regardless of color, sexual orientation, gender identity or socioeconomic status."

For Williams, it was more than the activities she was involved in. She credits the volunteers and leaders of 1n10 for her success and dedication to the organization.

"You become a family. I really feel that the people that are still in my life are not here just because I chose them but because they chose me. And that says a whole lot about being in this fight together."

*Over the past 15 years 1n10, formerly VOIT/ Horizons, has been a resource and support for thousands of youth. Although we cannot include all their stories we hope to highlight as many as possible through the end of the year.*

**Beck!**

thank you for your time, creativity, dedication, caring, and friendship!

We are grateful to you for taking 1n10 to a whole new level.

Michael, The Old Timers, Volunteers and particularly the youth of 1n10