

# Kalamazoo Loses the Perfect Mom: Kelly Miller

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

**KALAMAZOO** —“Kelly Miller was the mom that we’d want in every gay kid’s home,” said Zack Bauer, executive director of the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center. “Her son Jack is gay and she was one of those PFLAG moms that just jumped in to support her son, and in doing so touched the lives of so many people.”

Miller was just fifty years old when she lost her battle to cancer on July 12. The news of her passing hit home for many in the West Michigan community, who remember Miller volunteering every year at Pride, volunteering around the center and participating in other community events.

“She was a fundraising Tour de Force,” Bauer said. Miller served two years on the Pride Steering Committee, and last year was given a Community Award from the organization. “This is the first year that Kelly couldn’t come to Pride and her absence was definitely felt.” Bauer said that she and her husband James would jump in and do any task, even though they weren’t the youngest volunteers in the bunch. “Last year at Pride they were moving these big concrete anchors and it’s like ‘no, you guys don’t have to do that.’ But you could always count on her to come in and set up or tear down, active in everything.”



Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center Executive Director Zack Bauer presenting Kelly Miller with a 2011 Community Award for her volunteer service to the LGBT community. Photo courtesy of KGLRC.

He said one thing people loved was that for fundraisers she would create sculptures of people out of clay pots that would be raffled off as auction items.

In addition to volunteering in the LGBT community, Miller participated in community

volunteering events through her work at State Farm Insurance, including an anti-bullying campaign and walking in Relay for Life.

Bauer said Kelly Miller will most be remembered in her role as mom, not just to her sons Matthew and Jack, but to a whole generation

of youth at the Kalamazoo Lesbian and Gay Resource Center. “You know how when it’s Pride season and you’re working with different people and it can get a little stressful? There’d be snipping or a little bit of drama and she could just walk right in and mellow everybody out,” Bauer said.

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Miller had lived in the Kalamazoo area since the late 90s and was married for 33 years to James Miller. In addition to two sons, Matthew and Jack, the couple had two grandchildren Addison and Emma.

Miller’s family has asked that in lieu of flowers people consider giving a donation to Kairos Dwelling, a home for people in their last days of life. The home is free of charge for the terminally ill who are receiving hospice care, and it depends on donations to provide this service.