“Coming Out Vigil” October 22

Manchester College hosted Pride Week Oct. 19-25 to recognize students of the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) community, and Thursday, Oct. 22 was the Coming Out Vigil in the Petersime chapel.

This event, along with the other events throughout Pride Week, was organized by United Sexualities, an organization that provides support for members of the GLBT students at Manchester College. Siren Frye, Secretary of United Sexualities and host of the Coming Out Vigil, thought the night was a success. “It was really amazing,” Frye said proudly, “it went perfectly.”

The event lasted from 9-11pm, and the pews of the chapel were filled with students who came to show their support. At the beginning of the vigil, students opened up to the audience to speak about their lives and the struggles they have faced dealing with their sexuality. Although many of the topics were serious, all of the speakers were lighthearted. “A lot of them were really funny,” Frye said, “I thought they were all great.”

During the student reflections, a few of the members stood on stage and sang songs. Some songs were dedicated to their partners, while others were dedicated to the people who treated them cruelly in their lives. There was also an interpretive dance. Many of these acts received standing ovations from the audience.
After the student reflections, the group gave the audience a chance to stand up individually to say whatever they wanted. Many stood up and expressed their support as a member of the GLBT community or as an ally of the community.

Frye spoke during the reflection time, and although he was nervous about telling his story, he was glad he did it. “I was incredibly nauseous the whole time, but I felt really good afterward,” Frye said, “I felt like I had done a good thing.” At the end of his speech, Frye concluded by telling the audience, “Find your strength, and own it. Do whatever you can to make sure that no one is ever alone.” Frye also hosted the event, which he said he enjoyed getting the opportunity to do. “I love public speaking,” said Frye, “I also love saying good things about people who deserve it.”

This year was the 12th annual Coming Out Vigil, and Frye, along with the rest of the members of United Sexualities, believe that the event is important for Manchester College and it’s students. “In a lot of places, talking about your sexuality is unwanted and uncomfortable, even if you are straight. Creating a safe place where people can talk openly, as a social meeting with friends, but at the same time serious—a lot of people need that,” Frye said.

The GLBT community, allies, and friends were in attendance at the Coming Out Vigil, and everyone got the opportunity to express their support. Frye had a message for the students at Manchester College: “We are everywhere—and it’s not a big deal.” If any student is interested in getting involved with United Sexualities, as a member or an ally, e-mail safemail@manchester.edu.