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Lorri Jean on the Road for No on 8

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Lorri Jean's election day started at 6 this morning, when she swung by to thank the first shift of workers. Elbow to elbow, laptop to laptop, a team of young political pros handles any problems phoned in by precinct captains scattered around L.A. County. The walls are lined with detailed precinct information, constantly updated.

This morning Jean, executive director of the center, agreed to take me along as she toured polling places. **An unexpected plus in our party was Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Carey's got her whole organizing department on hand to help get out the vote. They lined the Boiler Room along with Center staff and No on 8 ops.**

In the quiet morning light, Jean handled a last couple of e-mails. Asked how this day would go, she gave me that confident moxie we all love. "We're gonna win," she said. "I know it."

Later, in the car, she continued "It's been a long time coming," Jean told me.

And what a time it's been. Volunteers, contributions—more than anybody imagined in their wildest dreams. "Our treasurer and campaign lawyer are both gay," she said as we drove toward Echo Park. "They do this work all the time, and the volume of gifts is unlike anything they've ever seen. We hoped for around \$300,000 worth of small gifts. We've had \$1.3 million -- 60,000 gifts of \$25, \$10, \$5."

The human wealth is overwhelming too. "We hoped we have 5,000 volunteers throughout the state. We've got almost that many in Los Angeles alone, and 10,000 in the state."

The statistics continue: Jean said she had to bring 20 additional people on board because her one treasurer couldn't keep up with the flood of contributions.

Rea Carey discussed the long-term planning for this day: The Task Force began efforts four years ago to build the community coalition that has come forward so emphatically for No on 8 in this campaign. API Equality-L.A. was founded amid this effort and has become a major player in the No on 8 effort, bringing up powerful issues of discrimination against Asian-Americans and others.

We visited a dispatch station in MacArthur Park, where Aimee Kark, a painter who generally works in a framing shop, has closed down her day job in order to defeat Prop. 8. Aimee handled shifts of volunteers who went to an assigned polling place, handed out materials, and returned for more assignments. Kark talked about "our community," and I asked: Was she gay? No. Instead, she had the most charming answer ever. "My husband and I would probably be gay if we hadn't found each other. I say, I love everybody, but I love my husband best."



Not that everything has been sweetness and light. Back at the Center, I heard voices telling about individual episodes of harassment. These are written down on separate reports, and calls are returned with instructions, support, or reinforcements in the form of the campaign's roving zone leaders, who are prepped to talk to the press or the cops or pro-8 poll workers.

One written report I saw came from Misti, a volunteer at Rincon Elementary School, a polling place in Culver City. "Spit on," the report said.

And an addendum: "In good spirits, staying strong." (Anne Stockwell)