Our Hearts Are with You Orlando

By Hilary Broman

Staff Reporter

A Candlelight Vigil was held to honor the victims of the Orlando Massacre on Friday, June 17 on Main Campus.

The event was set up and organized by the Executive Council of Students.

Outreach officer, Albert Montoya, stated that the council’s motivation for holding the vigil was to let the families who were affected by the shooting know that they are not alone and that they have support all the way in New Mexico, he said.

“It shows that America is still what it used to be. There is still a big sense of community and everyone still looks out for each other,” he said.

The Orlando Massacre has left a sense of fear across America but Montoya is hopeful that it will also have a positive effect, he said.

“I think a lot more people are going to be scared now, but I think it is also going to empower a lot of people to stay strong,” he said.

The Orlando shooting has once again raised concerns about gun violence, LGBTQ protection laws and terrorist threats in America.

Omar Colòn, ECOS Montoya Satellite Representative, realizes that there is not one simple resolution but he believes that the key to preventing violent events such as the Orlando Massacre is kindness, he said.

“I think the thing people need to take from this is an understanding that less of this will happen the better you treat the people around you,” Colòn said.

Colòn spoke out about how upsetting it is to have to hold events like the candlelight vigil.

“I was distraught thinking about how unnecessary it is for us to meet on this Friday because it never should have happened in the first place,” Colòn said.

The student council encourages CNM students who were affected by the Orlando Massacre to stay strong, said Wesley Berry, ECOS Finance Officer.

“Be careful, be mindful, don’t let this get you down, move forward in life,” Berry said.

Philip Lister, faculty advisor for the LGBTQ support group at CNM, recognizes the effect the shooting had on the LGBTQ community, he said.

“It is hard not to be shaken by the tragedy in Orlando, and those events are a tough reminder that the LGBTQ community still has a long journey towards acceptance and equality,” Lister said.

Lister communicated the importance of community in times like these.

“There are far too many that feel alone and without support, and it is at times like this that we need to reach out to them and show them they aren’t alone in their journey,” Lister said.

Colòn wants to encourage students who are struggling to cope with the recent tragedy, coming out, or with school in general to reach out, he said.

“School is a stressful place. If someone is at that level of stress I implore that they go out and speak to someone, use the resources, that’s what we’re here for. Utilize those, don’t be afraid,” he said.

The resources that are available to CNM students can be found on the CNM.edu home page under the student resources tab.

Students who are interested in getting involved with the LGBTQ support group are advised to contact Philip Lister, LGBTQ support group advisor, at plister@cnm.edu.

The support group was disbanded last year due to key members leaving CNM, but Lister is hopeful that there will be enough interest generated to start the group again in the fall term, he said.

“I would love to see the LGBTQ student group restart and thrive, as it can serve such an important role in supporting the LGBTQ community at CNM and helping students that are struggling with coming out, discrimination, and events like Orlando,” Lister said.