

President's Message A Time for Advocacy



As the emotions surrounding the presidential election begin to subside, many of us are thinking about the threat to LGBTQ persons and families that the new administration may pose. We want to do something now to protect and advance LGBTQ civil rights.

Advocacy is the answer. Unlike the fight for marriage equality, which had a single focus, the effort to defend the civil rights of our community will have to be fought on many fronts, including legislation, court nominations, and executive actions. It will also be fought for years.

The PFLAG Los Angeles board is considering the formation of a special subcommittee on advocacy. At the moment, we think its tasks would be to keep track of governmental actions and

reporting on actions including legislation, nominations, and executive actions with the potential to harm LGBTQ persons.

But you don't have to wait to take action. Right now you can begin to inform yourself about the issues by signing up for PFLAG National's action alerts at www.pflag.org or checking out information on the HRC (Human Rights Campaign) website.

Our voices are powerful. But only if we use them. We all recognize how important it is to vote. It is equally important—even essential—to be active citizens during the next four years, advocating for the rights we have fought for 40 years to win.

Support Our Work

If you are looking for value when you make a contribution, PFLAG Los Angeles does a lot with little. Our very modest budget supports five monthly meetings—three in Spanish and one Gender Focus meeting. We maintain two websites—one in English and one in Spanish, and publish the newsletter you are reading. We host a help-line phone service which directs calls in English and Spanish to PFLAG parents. Our Speakers Bureau has more than 40 engagements a year—many to multiple school classes. We participate in special events such as the celebratory Pride Parade and Models of Pride.

We couldn't do this without the hard work of volunteers—officers, board members, meeting leaders, and Speakers Bureau volunteers. And we can't do it without your financial help. When you become a member and/or donate to PFLAG

Los Angeles, your dollars go to direct services for LGBTQ persons and their families—life saving, life enriching services. Please remember us this holiday season and in your estate planning.

Models of Pride

On October 29, the 24th annual MODELS OF PRIDE conference took place, with workshops for youth and for adults (parents and professionals). This was the first year that Lifeworks has assigned a member of their staff, Nia Clark, to oversee the Parents and Professionals Institute (PPI). Polly Kim and I served on the Steering Committee as the PPI transitioned from an all-volunteer effort to a fully integrated part of the conference. It's great to see parents, family members and professionals working with LGBTQ youth recognized as an important part of LGBTQ youth development.

Approximately 20 PFLAG Los Angeles board members, members and speakers from our Speakers Bureau participated in four workshops, a resource fair, and a new, evening PFLAG meeting for parents. We were joined by members from PFLAG Pasadena, PFLAG South Orange County, and PFLAG Santa Clarita.

There was a significant increase in the number of PPI workshops and attendees. For the first time, the PPI workshops were approved by the National Association of Social Workers to offer up to 4 continuing education credits.

As usual, the best part was the opportunity for deep conversations with parents and professionals and the excitement of the young people attending.

Our Stories *Debra Kaufman, Loving Sister*

My brother was born in 1957. My father was an aerospace engineer, my mother was a teacher, and we just led a pretty normal life in the San Fernando Valley. From the very beginning my brother was kind of different from all of us. He was very quiet, for one thing. We all loved him and thought of him as a very special kid.

And in that era there was absolutely no visibility whatsoever for gay people. None, zero. So as a result, Peter's announcement that he was gay took everyone by surprise. It was like somebody just told you they were a Martian. Nobody had any context, nobody knew gay people.

Peter came out when he was 17. I remember we had been to Westwood to go to the movies.

I remember we were in a bookstore before the movies, looking at books, and he looked at a book of Greek statues of nude men. I remember watching him and it sparked something in me. I was recognizing something but on a really subterranean level that I couldn't express.

And then when we came home he came out to me. I'm happy to say that *(continued inside)*



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www.pflagLA.org

PFLAG Los Angeles is an all volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization run by parents, family members, LGBTQ persons and their friends. Each of us came for help, found support, and joined the organization to assist others on their journey to acceptance. Our chapter, together with a group in New York City, founded the national PFLAG organization, which provides assistance to over 350 independent chapters nationwide.

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Did You Know? From the editor:

Did you know...that our first newsletter with me as the editor came out in August 2000?

Back then I also asked "Did You Know?" and wanted to make sure that you know that the word heterosexuality did not always mean "sexual feeling or behavior directed toward a person or persons of the opposite sex" as defined in dictionaries today. Funk & Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary of the English Language from 1913 defined heterosexuality as "depraved feeling toward the opposite sex." Dorland's American Illustrated Medical Dictionary, Second Edition, Revised 1902, defined it as "abnormal or perverted sexual appetite toward the opposite sex." When I share this, the majority of people hear homosexuality. Huh? Heteros can be very happy that this definition has changed. After all, who wants to be considered abnormal or perverted?!

I also wanted readers to know that the King James Version of the Bible has 142 references to "abominations." TWO out of the 142 refer to "...lying with mankind as with womankind..." It also names 61 situations where someone "shall surely be put to death." ONE out of these 61 refers to "...lying with mankind as with womankind..." NONE of the Ten Commandments mentions homosexuality. And neither does the list of Seven Deadly Sins. But all we may hear is "lying with mankind as with womankind" (aka homosexuality) again and again to the exclusion of everything else. Why is that?

Lisa Diguardi allowed us to use numerous historical events from her "This Day in Gay History" collection, such as this one for February 21, 1976: "In Detroit, \$200,000 in damages were awarded to a man who claimed that he was turned into a homosexual as a result of an auto accident in which he was rear-ended (no pun intended)."

Throughout the years, I've asked you, the readers, various things: Is an atheist allowed to legally get married? Because if yes, it means that civil marriage has nothing to do with religion. Katha Pollitt said it this way: "Gay marriage – it's not about sex, it's about separation of church and state."

Katrina C. Rose gave us the following to think about: "Since any pro-gay study being authored by a gay person must be a conflict of interest, I have the utmost confidence that people will wholeheartedly agree that pro-Christian

'studies' put together by Christians should be regarded as tainted by conflicts of interest and, in turn, of no validity whatsoever." And Ernest Gaines asked, "Why is it that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands?"

We reviewed LGBT-related books and movies, and in 2006 added TransAction. Newsletter #244 was the first one that could be accessed online. In fall 2012 we presented you with a brand new design that added color. We named it the PFLAG Los Angeles STARR after Adele Starr, in honor of our founder.

The goal of our newsletter is and has been to keep you informed of PFLAG's still relevant and much needed work and to connect you with others. Because no matter how many laws are passed, no law will make the struggle of a parent less painful when their child comes out as LGBT. If you are struggling, please know you're not alone. Share your story because I know it will help others who may feel that their world is crumbling right now.

Spreading the Word in the community through our Speakers Bureau engagements/ education, activism & advocacy

Maurie Davidson and Cara O'Donnell talked to students and alumni at the UCLA LGBTQ Alumni Assn.

Christie Carney, Mike/Michelle Dennis, Liz Mullen, and Chris Tompkins spoke to 7th graders at the Alliance Kory Hunter Middle School. This was the first time that we were invited to the school. One month later, they invited us back to talk to their Parent Association. We were presented by Ana C., Gizella Czene, Candelaria Medina, and Laura Vargas.

PFLAG presented the following workshops at Models of Pride: Parents of LGBTQ Youth (Presenters: Ana C., Terri Duba, Barry & Karen Mason, Liz Mullen, and Cara O'Donnell); Keeping Faith: Honoring Your Child and Your Beliefs (Presenters: Rev. Ed Hansen, Stuart Huggins, Karen Mason, and Mariette Sawchuk); Coming out in Families of Color (Presenters: Stuart Huggins, Edgar Mejia, Domingo & Evelyn Torres-Rangle, and Janet Uradomo); Coming out to Parents (Presenters: Polly Kim, Steve Krantz, Eric Sherman, and Sylvia Weisenberg).

Jehanne Eily, Elizabeth Gilbert, Betsy Hanger, Liz Mullen, and Melanie Woloz were invited by the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies to talk to student support trainees.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK!

As an all-volunteer organization, our work is made possible only with the generous contributions of our donors. Your contributions support our monthly meetings, website, helplines, Speakers Bureau, and outreach to ethnic and faith communities. PFLAG Los Angeles is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and 100% of your donation supports our programs.

When you make a donation of \$35 or more to PFLAG Los Angeles, \$15 of your donation goes to PFLAG National and makes you a member of PFLAG National as well.

Use the envelope provided or donate online at: www.pflagLA.org/join-donate

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We Need YOUR Stories!

We all have a PFLAG story to share. Some are about growth while others are painful and heart-breaking. Stories of real peoples' lives can be teaching moments to some and life-savers to others.

Please e-mail your story, request to be interviewed, or any questions to NewsletterEditor@pflagLA.org

Mike/Michelle Dennis, Barry Mason, Chris Tompkins, and Sylvia Weisenberg spoke to Raytheon Corporation's LGBT Group.

Betsy Hanger participated in the Early Childhood Directors Conference where she talked to conservative Jewish early childhood educators.

Cristina Hudson, Chris Tompkins, Liz Mullen, and Chris Angel Murphy talked to 7th graders at The Country School.

Our Stories *(continued from cover)*

my very first reaction was to just hug him. Everything was fine between us even though I didn't really understand what gay was. I had one friend come out years before. I remember at the time it was the same thing of like "what's that?" I didn't really know what it was or what it meant, but I accepted it. So when Peter came out, that was my only context, this friend from ten years earlier who had come out.

It didn't work so well with my parents. But my brother was very smart. When he came out he gave them the name and phone number of a support group that was just starting. It had literally just started in Los Angeles. That was the very beginnings of PFLAG. It was Adele Starr and it was just a small group of people. Basically, my parents were founding members of PFLAG Los Angeles.

I have to say that my parents didn't behave well to my brother coming out. I didn't realize this til later but they didn't see each other for a few years. But my parents did go to the PFLAG meetings. And my mother said she remembered that they all just kind of sat around, heartbroken and mystified and not knowing. There were no books, no model for them to know what to think about what they'd just learned about their children. No celebrities, no people of any standing who were out, no gay organizations, no gay community. That was the beauty of PFLAG, these parents trying to piece it all together. So it was very rough for them because they were creating something that didn't exist.

What happened with them is that later, down the road, my parents were traveling to Europe where my brother was and they met in Amsterdam and reconciled. By then my parents had become huge supporters of PFLAG. They marched in all the Gay Pride parades. So my parents had a big turnaround. But it was a long process because there was no context for it, nobody in society who you

We encourage you to share YOUR story. The focus should be on your personal story as it relates to the coming-out of an LGBTQ family member/loved one. If you prefer, we can interview you over the phone and write the story for you! All stories are welcome and submissions are subject to editing. By submitting your story you give PFLAG permission to publish it in our newsletter, on our website or other media to promote PFLAG. If requested, your name will not be published.

could point to. It was this big empty space where people didn't have any way of understanding what the gay experience was.

When we asked Peter when did he first feel like he was different or might be gay, he said when he was five. I talked to plenty of other gay people who pretty much said the same thing. So, clearly, when you think you're different when you don't even understand sexuality...it's not the thing you would adopt when you're eighteen to make your parents miserable.

When I look back, it was a no-brainer for me. I didn't have to think about it. I just wanted to be there for him. It was my way of saying, I don't care what you are, I love you. Even though I don't understand what you are.

And my parents became trailblazers after a period of time of being very confused and sad. They made it their cause. I don't think my parents for a second ever stopped loving my brother. They just had a hard time with the news. It is to their credit that they did the work to maintain the relationship with him. So here is my advice to families who are struggling: Go to PFLAG.

Quote - Unquote

"Once the law starts permitting exceptions based on "sincerely held religious beliefs" there's no end to the mischief and discrimination that will ensue."

— George Takei, Actor, Director, Author, Activist, and Mr. Sulu from Star Trek

RESOURCES

MEETINGS - CONTACTS - ORGANIZATIONS

SUPPORT MEETINGS

SPONSORED BY PFLAG LOS ANGELES

Westwood*

Westwood United Methodist Church
10497 Wilshire Bl. LA 90024
3rd Wednesday of each month
7:30 - 10:00 pm / Free Parking

*Visit our website for upcoming speakers
www.pflagLA.org

Gender Focus *(new location)*

Bienestar in Hollywood
4955 W. Sunset Blvd., LA 90027
2nd Thursday of each month
7:30 - 9:30 pm / Free Parking

Boyle Heights *(Sólo Español)*

Mi Centro - Boletín
553 S. Clarence St., Los Angeles, CA 90033
2nd Wednesday of each month
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Free Parking

East LA *(Sólo Español)*

Bienestar East LA
5326 East Beverly Blvd, Los Angeles 90022
3rd Thursday of each month
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

San Fernando Valley *(Sólo Español)*

Bienestar Centro del Valle de San Fernando
8134 Van Nuys Blvd., #200, Panorama City 91402
4th Friday of each month
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Free Parking

South LA

Meetings suspended until further notice

CONTACTS

PFLAG Los Angeles Speakers Bureau
Contact Liz Mullen at
SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org

HELPLINES

PFLAG Los Angeles
1.888.PFLAG 88 (1.888.735.2488)
English and Spanish

Transgender Support
818.985.9319 (Chris)

The TREVOR PROJECT
24-hour suicide prevention line
866.488.7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

ORGANIZATIONS

PFLAG National
202.467.8180
www.pflag.org

REMEMBER

When you no longer need PFLAG that's when PFLAG NEEDS YOU!

www.pflagLA.org



P.O. Box 24565
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OUR VISION: PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

OUR MISSION: By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through:

SUPPORT for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ; **EDUCATION** for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ; **ADVOCACY** in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.

FALL 2016

TransAction

The State of Trans Health

"Our organization, in partnership with The California Endowment and Jacqueline Caraves [Cesar Chavez Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, UCLA], embarked in a new task to amplify the needs of Trans Latin@s in the southern part of our golden state. The sole purpose of this project was to make an assessment about what are the needs that would make Trans Latin@s in southern California healthy individuals," said Bamby Salcedo, President & CEO of the TransLatin@ Coalition at the launch event held on November 29 at The California Endowment in Los Angeles, introducing to the public this invaluable and first-of-its-kind report.

"Today, there is a new era that will mark the history of the work that our organization is doing on behalf of the Trans community. As an organization that is led by trans people who are striving to make the necessary changes to ensure the needs of our community are met, we are unveiling the results of The State of Trans Health: Trans Latin@s and Their Health Care Needs," said Bamby Salcedo.

This in-depth report is structured in different sections and addresses housing, employment, medical care, sexual health, mental health, and spiritual services. It provides recommendations, and strongly recommends further research.

After Bamby and Jackie shared some background information on how the report came to life and presented findings, a short video was shown that documented the undertaking of the study.

With a focus on Southern California, 129 individuals from the areas of Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Santa Ana, and San Diego participated in the survey and responded to 70 survey questions.

Following the video was a three-trans-member panel, facilitated by Bamby. These three courageous members of the trans community allowed the audience to take a deep look into their past lives, lives that were too often endangered and threatened by societal norms.

After the presentation the group moved into the courtyard where light refreshments, an art exhibition, and entertainment awaited them.

Artwork was about and from the Trans community, including pieces by rommy torrico and Chucha Marquez. After an awards presentation by Bamby Salcedo to honor trans community members, the world's first LGBTQ+ mariachi band Mariachi Arcoiris de Los Angeles closed out the program in grand style with their music. [Visit their website at www.arcoirisdelosangeles.com]

To download the report "The State of Trans Health: Trans Latin@s and Their Health Care Needs" go to the TransLatin@ Coalition's website at www.translatinacoalition.org and click on Blog.

[The TransLatin@ Coalition is an organization formed by Trans Latin@ leaders in 2009 to organize and advocate for the needs of Trans Latin@s who are immigrants and reside in the US. Since our inception we have done advocacy work across the US to ensure the voices of Trans Latin@s are heard. The TransLatin@ Coalition's sole purpose is to address the unique and specific challenges and needs of Trans Latin@s who live in the United States. Working with policy makers and supporting organizations we find solutions to our unique needs and create structural changes to better our quality of life.]