

President's Message

#ResistMarch: A Different Kind of Pride



The Pride Parade that so many of us look forward to each year will be different in 2017. We're going back to our roots. This year, LA Pride is hosting a human rights march, reminiscent of the original 1969 march protesting the Stonewall raid.

The LGBTQ community is particularly well-placed to demonstrate against the attack on human rights by the forces that seek to divide the country. Our community includes people of every race, religion, philosophical belief, immigration status, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Because so many of us, our families, and neighbors are experiencing increasing levels of hostility and discrimination, we must stand united to protect one another.

Mourning the Creator of the Rainbow Flag

Gilbert Baker, creator of the rainbow flag, died on March 31.

Over time, the rainbow flag has come to signify inclusion, acceptance, and pride in embracing the sexual and/or gender identity.

This march is not, therefore, an LGBTQA-only event. The march is an expression of our resistance to homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, sexism and racism. All who believe in the fundamental equality and dignity of every person are encouraged to come and march.

There will be no floats, bands, or contingents. The event will consist of people – lots of people – moving through the streets.

Logistics

The parade will take place on June 11, 2017 from 8 am to 1 pm. The parade route will be different this year, beginning at Hollywood and Highland in Hollywood (not West Hollywood). There will be a rally with speeches at 8 am and also at the conclusion of the march. The parade route is still being negotiated, but the length of the march is estimated to be 3.2 miles.

There will be no formal areas for individual groups such as PFLAG Los Angeles to meet. The organizers suggest designating a place where those who wish to march together can convene. At the May meeting of the PFLAG Los Angeles board, we will be identifying a meeting location. We strongly encourage those who wish to march with us to wear PFLAG t-shirts or red shirts. It will help us to stay together in the crowd.

Please check our website for specific information about the meeting place and time, the parade route, and any other information important for the march. PFLAG Los Angeles t-shirts are available to purchase at pflagla.com/tshirts.html.

Baker's flag, created at the request of martyred gay icon Harvey Milk, was to be more celebratory than the pink triangle symbol then in use, which has ties to Nazi Germany. And, according to Gay Star News, Baker imbued the flag with even more meaning: "Each stripe on the original eight-color flag had a meaning starting with hot pink which represented sexuality. Red represented life, orange was healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, turquoise for magic and art, blue for serenity and harmony, and violet for spirit."

Our Stories

Interview with Juan Castillo-Alvarado

[Juan, Director of Public Education Programs at Latino Equality Alliance, was instrumental in the creation of our Boyle Heights satellite.]

How it all started? I've been doing parent workshops at schools that cover bullying, homophobia, transphobia, family acceptance and unconditional love, and mental health and resources. At almost every single meeting there was somebody who would either come out saying I have a family member or I think I have a son or a daughter and what can I do? The support was: well you can call me.

We didn't have an office so it was really hard for us to meet. But it was always a conversation. And then I would always refer them to PFLAG, and would never hear from them again. So we kept seeing the need. Every time we met it was somebody. And finally when we opened Mi Centro in October 2015 we had the space. So I started speaking to Gizella from PFLAG Los Angeles and said that we need a PFLAG in Spanish. And so that's when we started the conversation to do a satellite. We wanted to do this with PFLAG because of the structure and support.

I heard about PFLAG probably in the '80s during Gay Pride. I would always see them march. In my mind I thought I can't join because being a gay man I didn't want to invade their space since this is a support group for parents. Then I was invited to a PFLAG meeting at Bienestar and felt really welcome. That was about a year ago. There I met two parents who were interested in the creation of a Boyle Heights satellite. These two women, Ana and Mary, are now the co-facilitators of our PFLAG meetings, and it's going really really well. We held our first meeting on July 13, 2016, and soon will celebrate our first anniversary.

For our first meeting we created a flyer, and started passing out PFLAG (continued inside)



P.O. Box 24565
Los Angeles, CA 90024

info@pflagLA.org
(1.888.735.2488)

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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Christians, Here's Why You Don't Have to be Afraid to Support Gays

By Susan Cottrell, a loving Mom, a fierce, relentless advocate and ally, and former Vice President of PFLAG Austin.

I wanted to share this, from a Mom who is part of my private Facebook support group for Moms of LGBTQI children. I'm pretty sure there are a lot of moms – and dads – who feel the same way.

Being only two years into this journey with my son, I still once in a great while read people's anti-accepting comments and blogs and wonder "am I being deceived?" Oh how I wish Jesus would have just come out (haha) and SAID what many of us know he's showing us. But then I think...this journey is such a challenge, for us on "this" side, for those on "that" side, and for our gay friends and family caught in the middle. And challenges force us to draw near to God. If we allow them to, challenges CHALLENGE our thinking, our past teachings, make us take a look at our convictions (are they Biblical, just what we've been taught, or just the way we "feel"), encourage us to open our hearts AND our minds, to delve deeper, and to fervently pray our hearts out to the Lord.

I love her thoughts. When I started writing and speaking about LGBTQI issues, I kept saying, "PLEASE God, don't let me lead anyone astray!" I love Jesus with all my heart, and that's the *last* thing I would want to do. I felt like I'd stepped onto a high wire without a harness. I prayed not to fall before I reached the other side...and it felt like a perilous walk.

But God kept confirming me in gentle ways. People would comment that they could see the love of Jesus in what I shared, or they felt that someone had finally heard them and loved them as is.

That is the whole point. How could that *not* be God's doing? Of course, I'd have preferred a text directly from God early on saying I was doing and believing the right thing, but God is more subtle than that.

Jesus taught outright, "I accept and love ALL people." Period. He did not add *regardless of orientation*, just like he did not add *regardless of race, or age, or gender*. Many Christians seem to need that, and if he had, they would have just moved on to another battle.

Perhaps God gave us the journey this way to focus on *relationship instead of on right and wrong*. Perhaps there was a plan here to encourage us to dive deeper into the road Jesus laid out for us, of love first, love last, and love throughout. Perhaps there was a plan to help us deepen

our love for and relationships with those we may have been taught did not "deserve" our love and attention, and those we were taught are somehow "less than." Jesus did not add anything.

Many Christians add things so that they can have another platform to stand on and be right about. It has led, and continues to lead to marginalization and oppression of groups of people – simply because of who they are.

Now, I have *no doubt* that God is moving – not just in me but in so many others. Prejudices are breaking down. Walls are breaking down. Pastors are rethinking their entrenched positions. Parents are choosing their child over learned doctrine that doesn't reconcile with their lived experience or with the heart of God and teachings of Jesus. I see it every day.

There are many of us walking that wire. We know we are not alone, and it's much closer to the ground. I long since stopped being afraid. I know I am living in truth, and on the right side of God's heart and the right side of history. I affirm LGBTQI *because* of my faith, not in spite of it. All it required was trust in that still small voice. And it showed me that I was hearing God all along. You can hear that too. You have nothing to be afraid of.

Please check out her ministry website
at www.freedhearts.org

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

Christie Carney, Ana C., Elizabeth Gilbert, and Martin Vitorino were invited to speak to graduate social work students during two classes on sexuality at Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California.

PFLAG was invited back to University of Southern California's School of Social Work. Our speakers Bill Fields, Elizabeth Gilbert, Betsy Hanger, and Chris Tompkins volunteered to represent PFLAG Los Angeles.

Steve Krantz and Chris Tompkins spoke at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Studio City to a class of 7th-9th graders seeking to learn more about the range of non-heterosexual orientations and gender-nonconforming identities.

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

Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make
a donation to:

PFLAG Los Angeles

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Smile, you're supporting PFLAG Los Angeles
Your everyday purchases or gifts
can help PFLAG Los Angeles expand its
mission of support, education, and advocacy.

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-3707419>

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

PFLAG speakers were invited on two days to speak to health class students at Arleta High School. Ana C., Mike/Michelle Dennis, Jehanne Eily, Steve Krantz, and Chris Tompkins spoke to the students on the first day, and Ulandsey Peterson, Martin Vitorino, and Sylvia Weisenberg on the second.

Elizabeth Gilbert, Steve Krantz, and Kimmy Tran spoke to health students at Polytechnic Freshman School in Sun Valley.

Elizabeth Gilbert, Cristina H., and Steve Krantz were invited to speak to graduate students at Cal State Northridge Graduate School of School Psychology.

Our Stories *(continued from cover)*

satellite cards. We also called every single parent that had gone to my workshops. Not too many of them responded. We had about 10 attending the first meeting. Since then it's been increasing and we have anywhere from 15 to 20, sometimes 25. Most of them come consistently every month. I also invite new parents, asking them if they mind if I have one of the moms call them and they're like, sure. So they connect immediately with our group. That brings down the level of anxiety.

I think the biggest challenge is not being educated, and misconception. Not knowing about the topic. A big myth is that parents aren't accepting which is a total myth because they are. A lot of them just don't know how to accept.

We're not quite ready to be our own PFLAG chapter. Hopefully in five years we might be. But even if we're not I think just having other satellites that parents could easily access would be very helpful because LA's so large with all these pockets where there's so much need.

We're just really grateful that PFLAG LA has given us this opportunity. I know when I spoke to them, their concern was, we're going to open something and then a couple months later it'd be like, no, we're not available. We see parents who really have committed to being here and really feel the support. So we need to make sure that the space is there for as long as possible.



Quote - Unquote

"I thought I would be disappointing them [my fans]
if they knew I was gay. So I never did anything."

— Barry Manilow, coming out as gay at age 73. Manilow has been in a relationship with husband Garry Kief, who is also his manager, since 1978.

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
Los Angeles, CA 90024

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.

SPRING 2017

TransAction

Trans Immigrant Defense Effort (TIDE)

Transgender Law Center's Trans Immigrant Defense Effort (TIDE) recruits and trains pro bono attorneys to meet the urgent need for legal services for transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) immigrants.

TIDE's objectives are: 1) Provide TGNC immigrants with legal information and connect them to pro bono attorneys and legal service providers; 2) Recruit a cadre of lawyers across the country willing to meet the critical need for culturally competent pro bono legal services for TGNC immigrants; 3) Train pro bono attorneys to represent TGNC immigrants in all types of immigration relief; 4) Support and provide ongoing technical assistance to attorneys who take on pro bono cases of TGNC immigrants; 5) Work with grassroots community partners to develop a community-led deportation defense model that places directly impacted community members at the center of their own defense and advocacy.

If you are a trans or gender nonconforming immigrant and want to contact TLC with any

immigration law-related questions or concern, please call 510-587-9670 or email Pro Bono Coordinator Lorraine Torres Colon (pronouns: she/her) at lorraine@transgenderlawcenter.org

TRUTH

TRUTH, a collaboration between Transgender Law Center (TLC) and GSA Network, is a national trans and gender nonconforming youth storytelling program that aims to build empathy, understanding, and a movement for youth to share their stories in their own words and in their own way.

Launched by Transgender Law Center and GSA Network, TRUTH builds public understanding and empathy through short video profiles of youth and their families; provides support through a Storytelling Toolkit guiding youth and families through the process of speaking out; connects trans and gender nonconforming youth through a national youth council and regional youth councils that work on media campaigns and build peer support infrastructure; and educates media professionals on best practices of reporting on trans and gender nonconforming youth.

TRUTH is not just a program for trans and gender nonconforming youth, but a program developed and led by young people – both through staffing and our national and regional TRUTH youth councils. To find out more about TRUTH, share your story, watch the videos, or access media resources, please go to transgenderlawcenter.org/programs/truth

NCTE Celebrates 14 Years!

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) was founded in 2003 by transgender activists who recognized the urgent need for policy change to advance transgender equality. With a committed board of directors, a volunteer staff of one, and donated office space, they set out to accomplish what no one had yet done: provide a powerful transgender advocacy presence in Washington, D.C. Today, NCTE has grown to a staff of 14, and, under the leadership of Mara Keisling, the organization has become the nation's leading social justice advocacy organization winning life-saving change for transgender people. Find out more about NCTE at transequality.org