

STARR NEWSLETTER

www.pflagLA.org

FALL 2017 / #276

PFLAG LOS ANGELES

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS ALLIED WITH THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the new
Digital Edition of
our Starr Newsletter

December 1981, Issue 1

PFLAG Los Angeles has had a newsletter for most of the chapter's 41-year history. The earliest copies were a flag logo with the name The P-FLAG Pole, and its purpose was to keep members and supporters up-to-date

on formation of the new national federation. Issues were typed on an electric typewriter and collated, addressed and sorted for mailing by hand.

My earliest copy dated August/September of 2002 was written and edited by Chris Haiss, who is still our editor 15 years later. It included chapter news, book and media reviews, a summary of Speakers Bureau activities, articles on sexual orientation and gender identity. Legislative Corner, written by Haiss, updated readers about bills important to LGBTQ rights, and was the precursor of our website's TAKE ACTION page. A tireless Nancy Zaun put on address labels, prepared the mailings, and lugged boxes of newsletters to the post office.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Continued

In 2012 the newsletter got a new look—in color—and a new name, STARR, after our founder Adele Starr. New features were added including the popular “Our Stories” column, written by members and supporters. But in the past five years, more and more copies have been returned by the post office as undeliverable. New members and supporters have increasingly asked to receive the newsletter by email. At the same time, the cost of printing and mailing has skyrocketed.

Officers and board members have decided that it's time to go digital. The advantages include opportunities to add more photos and content—no more page limits! Each member/supporter will get immediate delivery, and we will be able to update our mailing list more easily. We look forward to your feedback.

We are especially asking any of our readers who are editors and writers to get in touch with us. After almost 20 years as newsletter editor, Chris Haiss is seeking a very well deserved rest. We're looking for fresh, new talent and new voices.

Trainings: Speakers Bureau and Facilitators - From January 1 to June 30, our Speakers Bureau had more engagements than in the previous 12 months; so many, in fact, that we couldn't meet all the requests. The pace of inquiries did not slacken over the summer. In the usually quiet month of July, five requests for panels came in and are scheduled for September.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Continued

To meet the new demand, Speakers Bureau coordinator Liz Mullen and Chris Tompkins held a training session for 14 new speakers in conjunction with the August Westwood meeting. The enthusiasm and diversity of the trainees is exciting, and their addition to the large number of committed existing speakers will help us meet the increasing demands.

The enthusiasm and diversity of the trainees is exciting, and their addition to the large number of committed existing speakers will help us meet the increasing demands.

PFLAG Los Angeles is also experiencing a need for facilitators. With five monthly meetings—the traditional Westwood meeting, the Hollywood Gender Focus meeting, and three Spanish language meetings—the need for facilitators is great. I was able to train nine people, including newer board members and interested supporters, some with mental health backgrounds. Several are interested in restarting a South Los Angeles meeting. Two leaders of our three Spanish language meetings were trained and will translate the materials provided into Spanish so that future facilitators can be trained in their own language.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Continued**MODELS OF PRIDE: 25 years!!!**

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Models of Pride which will be held on Sunday, October 29. Once again there will be both youth workshops and a conference for adults—parents and service providers—who support LGBTQ youth.

The theme this year is Together We Rise. The free Parents and Professionals Institute will help you expand your knowledge of issues affecting LGBTQ youth. Workshops will include topics such as being an ally, coming out, dating and healthy relationships, faith and spirituality, legal rights, and transgender challenges. Lunch and networking opportunities are provided.

The concurrent free conference for LGBTQ youth includes workshops of all kinds from coming out and bullying to dating, creative arts, and spirituality. Lunch, a resource fair, and affirming safe spaces for youth will be provided as well as entertainment, dinner, and a dance

**Click here to sign up for both
the Parents and Professionals Institute
and the Youth Program
at www.modelsofpride.org**

Have a great time while supporting PFLAG Los Angeles!

A private LGBTQ party for all ages. Enjoy an evening of fun. The party is closed to the general public for this special LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly event. (NO regular tickets or season passes accepted.)



Annual **Out On
The Mountain** event
Friday, Sept. 22, 2017
6:00 pm –1:00 am

NEW THIS YEAR! You also get free admission to join the general public from 10:30 am to 6:00 pm. Make sure to get your blue wristband at entrance so you stay for our private party that starts at 6:00 pm. To support PFLAG Los Angeles you must purchase your tickets on-line using the link before September 22.

**When purchasing just be sure to type "Los Angeles"
as your PFLAG Chapter when prompted.**

There are only a limited number of these on-line discounted tickets available, so order them soon!

<http://www.outonthemountain.com/pflag.html>

Standard Ticket \$49

When purchased in advance on-line through the link above.
(\$67 if purchased at the gate)

VIP Package \$150

When purchased in advance on-line through the link above.
Includes: Admission ticket, VIP parking, Golden wristband for front-of-the-line ride access 6pm-12am, mazes 8pm-12am, and \$40 in Bugs Bunny Bucks for meal/drinks/concessions (no change provided).

Our Stories — Mary Ruiz, Loving PFLAG Mamá

Six years ago, when my daughter was in 11th grade, she said, Mamá, I have to tell you something. I said, OK. And she said, I am pansexual. And I asked, What is that?

Deep, deep inside I had that feeling that something was different with her and I thought she would say, I am lesbian. I didn't know that word - pansexual. So she explained it to me and I said, OK. I asked, Do you want to go to a therapist? Because I thought there was something wrong. I thought she was confused about her sexuality. At that time I didn't know too much about this community. But she said, No, I don't have to go to a therapist or anything like that. I know what I want. I know what I feel. So I said, OK, and that I just want that she will be happy. After she told me, nothing changed for me about her. My love is still there. I told her, Since you were born I've loved you and I accept you as you are. But I was scared because a lot of people don't know about these communities and think wrong about them.

Sometimes I heard people older than me say, Oh, these young people don't know what they want. But I think, no, young people know what they want. The bad thing is, sometimes we, the others, don't have time to listen to the young people, find

OUR STORIES - Continued

out what they think, what they want, what they feel. My daughter was sixteen. She was old enough to know what she feels.

The family knows, and they should be the ones to know. The first person in the family that knew it was my youngest daughter who was 12 at that time. Then me. And then my husband, last year. I told my daughter that she has to tell him. I would be there for support. Since she told me, we were trying to teach him about the LGBT community and a few times we took him to events. Then after the event we listened to him when he talked about the event. And then we tried to not change his mind, his thoughts, but to see things differently. Like, don't say that word because if you say it you can hurt someone's feelings. So when my daughter told him he took the situation very calmly and he just told her that he loves her and he wants to keep her going to school and be happy.

But every situation is different. Sometimes people don't have enough information. Sometimes because of the culture, sometimes because of the macho culture. Sometimes people are afraid of what others are going to think about their family. Every situation is different. In my case, I didn't care about anyone. Only about my family and my daughter. I didn't have enough information to understand but I was open to learn to give support to my daughter. Because our sons and daughters are the most precious treasures that we have. They are our blood, they are

OUR STORIES - Continued

part of us. My daughter or my son depends on me. Their happiness is on me too. I have heard about people in that situation, they don't even think about those things. Since my daughter came out I learned a lot. Because of her I have attended some workshops and I have met a lot of people. I learned from them and I continue to keep learning about these things.

A big challenge in our communities is that families don't talk about the LGBTQ community or sexuality in general. It's a taboo. The kids don't feel like, oh, I want to ask my mommy about this. They feel like, I'm afraid because she may get mad. There's no trust to ask those things. It's the culture. That's why I like to be part of PFLAG because we teach the people there's nothing wrong, there's nothing different with our members and families and the LGBTQ community. If we give love, if we show them how they can learn about this, they can spread the information to others and they can change their minds. Like my husband.

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 goes to PFLAG National and makes you a member of PFLAG National as well.

Donate on-line at: www.pflagLA.org/join-donate

Shop at AmazonSmile

and Amazon will make
a donation to:

PFLAG Los Angeles

amazonsmile

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.

smile.amazon.com/ch/95-3707418

OUR STORIES - Continued

I heard about PFLAG from Juan Castillo from the Latino Equality Alliance when I attended one of his workshops at the school of my youngest daughter. Because I didn't know anything about LGBTQ, I was very curious to hear what he was teaching and the meaning of all these letters.

After attending his workshops, I went to my first PFLAG meeting at Bienestar in East LA. I liked it because I felt the good energy from other people. We're all on the same page. We give support to others and others to us. A lot of the people there wanted to have PFLAG closer, in Boyle Heights. And about a year ago, a support group started at Mi Centro. Juan invited me and said, You're going to be one of our co-facilitators. And I said, WHAT?! And then, OK. It was such an honor! And I've been facilitating ever since the group started in Boyle Heights. The first time I was a little nervous. But, so far, it has been easy for me because all the members come every month. We are like a family. We give support to each other.

"I went to my first PFLAG meeting at Bienestar in East LA. I liked it because I felt the good energy from other people."

OUR STORIES - Continued

Also, after what happened in Orlando, Juan invited me to speak about it at an event on the front steps of City Hall and I said OK. There was Lady Gaga who spoke. And then I realized, oh my gosh, where am I?! I didn't expect it but there was a large, large group of people. Over 2, 000 according to the

"A lot of people in the LGBTQ community don't have the support of their parents which is sad."

LA Times. When it was my turn to speak, I stood up in front of all these people. I was reading my paper but I was also looking at them. I saw lot of them hugging, some were sad, some of them were crying. But all of them were quiet and listening while I was talking. And then I started to get nervous, but I had my two daughters next to me giving me support. After that I was happy because I noticed that I sent a very good message. They clapped and I started to shake in my whole body because of the energy. I looked at the crowd, seeing all those faces, and wished I could just open my arms and hug everybody.

My daughter was crying, because in my speech I did say that she wasn't in Orlando, but being part of the LGBTQ community, what if she was there or in a situation like this? A lot of people

OUR STORIES - Continued

in the LGBTQ community don't have the support of their parents which is sad. So it's appropriate to see me there especially in LA which is predominantly Latino, seeing a Latina mom, as a reflection of the Latino community, and the unconditional love.

That's what I've always advocated for, that's what I advocate for in PFLAG. I can't imagine if my daughter didn't have my support. I think when we give a positive message, good advice, people can understand. It's not easy but we have to be constant. For me it has been an honor to be part of PFLAG.

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.

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.

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

Noteworthy Posts — mykidisgay.com

My Son Isn't Ready for Me to Go to PFLAG

"I would really like to go to my local PFLAG meeting to learn more about how to better support my gay son, but he is not ready to be out to everybody and would be very embarrassed if I went. I really think I need that extra support and opportunity to meet other people going through the same thing, but I also want to respect his request. What should I do?"

Polly Says: PFLAG meetings are an excellent source of information and would be a wonderful place for you to go to meet other parents of LGBTQ kids and discuss your journey – when your son is ready for you to go. You may be tempted to go without telling him, but he trusted you by coming out to you, and you would risk jeopardizing that trust he has in you, so you are right to respect his request. His relationship with you and your support of him is what is most important to him now while he is getting used to being out to you and deciding who else he wants to tell.

You do need support too, and PFLAG can provide support in other ways besides their monthly chapter meetings. You can go to their website, pflag.org, to get information and resources. You can find a link to your local chapter's website, email them or call their hotline, and someone will be happy to talk to you on the phone or meet with you. Having someone to talk to is very important

NOTEWORTHY POST - Continued

for you—it's hard being in the closet as a parent. Gently let your son know your feelings and ask him if there are people close to you—friends or family—he would feel comfortable with you telling so that you can have a confidante to talk to until you start going to PFLAG and develop a wider circle of friends for support. You can slowly work on changing your son's mind about your attending a meeting. Tell him that PFLAG has a confidentiality policy. No one there will out him or you. He may eventually feel comfortable attending a meeting with you—my chapter often has teenagers attend, sometimes enough to have their own circle during the "rap session." That's the time when everyone has a chance to share whatever they

"Tell him that PFLAG has a confidentiality policy. No one there will u."

want to talk about—their coming out story, something happening lately in their life, feelings about a current event—or they can choose to pass. It's wonderful being in such an accepting, welcoming group where you know people are not judging you and you all have something in common as members of the LGBTQ community and allies.

You mentioned in your question that one reason you want to go to a PFLAG meeting is to learn more about how to support your son. The best way is to tell him you want to be supportive and to ask him what he would like you to do. Since he would be

NOTEWORTHY POST - Continued

embarrassed if you went to a PFLAG meeting, it sounds like he would not want you to start wearing rainbows and attending Pride parades. But you can show your support of the LGBTQ community in more subtle ways that can let him know you care and help him realize being gay is nothing to be embarrassed about. Educate yourself and share resources you find from websites like this one, your local LGBTQ center, and books. Make sure he knows you are ready to listen, and be patient if he doesn't feel like talking about it now. Most importantly, tell him how much you love him and that there is nothing wrong with him. For most kids, telling their parents is the scariest part of coming out. Let him know that now you are in this together and you are there for him.

The above post was originally published on mykidisgay.com, an organization that provides advice and support to families of LGBTQIA young people. Polly Kim is the mother of 21-year-old twins, including a daughter who came out at age 15.

Polly joined PFLAG Los Angeles soon after and is now a board member.

Quote - Unquote

"People who are transgender, they don't choose to be transgender. They're born that way and why should we hold that against them?"

— Orrin Hatch, U.S. Senator (R-Utah),
in response to President Trump's ban
on transgender people serving in the military

Spreading the Word in the community through our Speakers Bureau

Mike/Michelle Dennis, Jehanne Eily, Shervin Khorramian, and Liz Mullen were invited by the Unitarian Universalist Church in Santa Monica to talk to a group of teens who had just completed lessons on gender identity and sexual orientation, and to a group of parents.

Gizella Czene, Cara O'Donnell, and Rudy Perez were part of Cleveland Humanities Magnet High School's 11th grade LGBTQ+ Panels. These panels have been hugely successful.

Cara O'Donnell, Steve Krantz, Liz Mullen, Rudy Perez, Chris Tompkins, and Sylvia Weisenberg talked to students at Polytechnic Freshman School in Sun Valley.

Polly Kim, Shelby Kim, Chris Angel Murphy, Chris Tompkins, and Kimmy Tran were invited to talk to members of the LA Sparks Girls Youth Program.

Elizabeth Gilbert, Steve Krantz, Liz Mullen, and Chris Tompkins were invited by the chairperson of an employee resource group (ERG) that represents LGBTQ people and their allies at Northrop Grumman in Palmdale to participate in their "Lunch and Learns" event.

Learn more or participate in our Speakers Bureau

[DESKTOP](#)

[MOBILE](#)

Transgender Service Members

Last year, transgender military members, people willing to give their lives to protect you and me, were finally allowed to serve openly. But this may change under President Trump who thinks that these service members have no place in our armed forces:

On July 26, 2017, President Trump tweeted: After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow... Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming... victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail. Thank you

On August 25, President Trump released the following memo:
The White House / Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release / August 25, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBJECT: Military Service by Transgender Individuals

TRANSACTION - Continued

Section 1. Policy. (a) Until June 2016, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (collectively, the Departments) generally prohibited openly transgender individuals from accession into the United States military and authorized the discharge of such individuals. Shortly before President Obama left office, however, his Administration dismantled the Departments' established framework by permitting transgender individuals to serve openly in the military, authorizing the use of the Departments' resources to fund sex-reassignment surgical procedures, and permitting accession of such individuals after July 1, 2017. The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security have since extended the deadline to alter the currently effective accession policy to January 1, 2018, while the Departments continue to study the issue.

In my judgment, the previous Administration failed to identify a sufficient basis to conclude that terminating the Departments' longstanding policy and practice would not hinder military effectiveness and lethality, disrupt unit cohesion, or tax military resources, and there remain meaningful concerns that further study is needed to ensure that continued implementation of last year's policy change would not have those negative effects.

(b) Accordingly, by the authority vested in me as President and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States

TRANSACTION - Continued

under the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including Article II of the Constitution, I am directing the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Homeland Security with respect to the U.S. Coast Guard, to return to the longstanding policy and practice on military service by transgender individuals that was in place prior to June 2016 until such time as a sufficient basis exists upon which to conclude that terminating that policy and practice would not have the negative effects discussed above. The Secretary of Defense, after consulting with the Secretary of Homeland Security, may advise me at any time, in writing, that a change to this policy is warranted.

Sec. 2. Directives. The Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Homeland Security with respect to the U.S. Coast Guard, shall: (a) maintain the currently effective policy regarding accession of transgender individuals into military service beyond January 1, 2018, until such time as the Secretary of Defense, after consulting with the Secretary of Homeland Security, provides a recommendation to the contrary that I find convincing; and (b) halt all use of DoD or DHS resources to fund sex reassignment surgical procedures for military personnel, except to the extent necessary to protect the health of an individual who has already begun a course of treatment to reassign his or her sex.

TRANSACTION - Continued

Sec. 3. Effective Dates and Implementation.

Section 2(a) of this memorandum shall take effect on January 1, 2018. Sections 1(b) and 2(b) of this memorandum shall take effect on March 23, 2018. By February 21, 2018, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall submit to me a plan for implementing both the general policy set forth in section 1(b) of this memorandum and the specific directives set forth in section 2 of this memorandum. The implementation plan shall adhere to the determinations of the Secretary of Defense, made in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, as to what steps are appropriate and consistent with military effectiveness and lethality, budgetary constraints, and applicable law. As part of the implementation plan, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall determine how to address transgender individuals currently serving in the United States military. Until the Secretary has made that determination, no action may be taken against such individuals under the policy set forth in section 1(b) of this memorandum.

Sec. 4. Severability. If any provision of this memorandum, or the application of any provision of this memorandum, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this memorandum and other dissimilar applications of the provision shall not be affected.

TRANSACTION - Continued

Sec. 5. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or (ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person. (d) The Secretary of Defense is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

DONALD J. TRUMP

Although nobody can see into the future, there is hope. Several organizations have already stepped up and filed lawsuits. Among them: National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), Lambda Legal, OutServe-SLDN, and the ACLU. Stay tuned.

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.

SUPPORT EDUCATION ADVOCACY



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.

P.O. Box 24565
Los Angeles, CA 90024

info@pflagLA.org
888.735.2488

PFLAG LOS ANGELES BOARD

Adele Starr, *Founder*

OFFICERS:

Mariette Sawchuk, *President*
Stuart Huggins, *Vice President*
Steve Krantz, *Secretary*
Karen Mason, *Treasurer*

BOARD: Gizella Czene, Maurie Davidson, Polly Kim, York Knowlton, Blair Lewis, Barry Mason, Liz Mullen, Alexander Sawchuk, Lucy Benji Terrell, Melanie Woloz

Newsletter Editor: Chris Haiss

Graphic Design: York Knowlton, imagine-Y.com

RESOURCES

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

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

South LA

Meetings suspended until further notice.

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

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Contact Liz Mullen at
SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

PFLAG National
202.467.8180
www.pflag.org

INFO / HELP LINES

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

The Trevor Project

24-hour suicide prevention line
866.488.7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

REMEMBER

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

www.pflagLA.org