



*PFLAG, True Colors & the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective
Scholarship Presentations & Reception*

June 16, 2010, 7:00 p.m. (prior to our regular 7:30 meeting)

All are welcome to stay for our monthly meeting. Refreshments will be served.



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 19, No. 3

May/June 2010

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

YOU CAN HELP OUR PFLAG HARTFORD CHAPTER DO MORE!

In the face of rising postage and printing costs, (*approx. \$1800 per year*), as of July 1, we are going to begin e-mailing our *Caring* newsletter to our membership. *Caring* will be sent to you via a secure and private e-mail distribution list. (Members who do not have an e-mail address will continue to receive *Caring* via “snail” mail.) Many PFLAG chapters distribute their newsletters in this manner, freeing up funds for other projects, such as college scholarships, chapter library purchases, and various advocacy projects. Of course, you can always read *Caring* on our website at www.pflaghartford.org. Please let us know your feelings on this money-saving change, and how it will affect you. (HfdPflag@aol.com.)

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians & gays, but we are much more than that. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. GLBTI people come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their GLBTI loved ones. PFLAG is for YOU!

PFLAG HARTFORD MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETS: Third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Immanuel Congregational Church House, 10 Woodland Street (Just North of Farmington Ave.), Hartford. For more information, please call Marie & Bob at (860) 633-7184 or Becky & John at (860) 633-5111.

REFRESHMENT REMINDER:

May 19 - Jeanne L.

**June 16 - Scholarship Presentations
& Reception**

July 21 - Chet D.

August 18 - Connie & Mike

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Student/Limited Income: \$10

Household Membership: \$40

Individual Membership: \$25

*Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and Send it to Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415*

**UPCOMING PFLAG
HARTFORD
BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, August 11, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by Joan J.**

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

UPCOMING /ONGOING EVENTS

- **RAINBOWROOM:** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) -- A welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning "LGBTQ" teens (13-21 years old). RainbowRoom meets the third Sunday of every month, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (Health Collective building), Hartford. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **HGLHC TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP:** Group is currently not meeting. Updated information will be posted as changes are made. More Info at: <http://www.hglhc.org/> or lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **TRANS SOFFA SUPPORT GROUP IN CONNECTICUT:** This is a group for Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies of Transgendered, Transsexual and Gender Variant people (SOFFAs). Trans people who are SOFFAs are welcome. Meetings held on the 2nd Sunday of each month and are facilitated by Kristal Barnes and Kasha Ho. Contact Kristal- u2kristal@yahoo.com 860/878-5256 or Kasha- kho@afsc.org or call 860/523-1534.

HARRY POTTER SPEAKS FOR GAY SUICIDE PREVENTION

NEW YORK (AP) -- Daniel Radcliffe is explaining why he has just filmed a public service announcement for The Trevor Project, the leading organization focusing on suicide prevention efforts among gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth.

Because his parents were both actors, "I grew up knowing a lot of gay men and it was never something that I even thought twice about -- that some men were gay and some weren't," the "Harry Potter" megastar said Friday. "And then I went to school and (for) the first time ... I came across homophobia. ... I had never encountered it before. It shocked me.

"I have always hated anybody who is not tolerant of gay men or lesbians or bisexuals," he added. "Now I am in the very fortunate position where I can actually help or do something about it."

The result is a PSA that was filmed Friday at the organization's Wall Street offices. The announcement is scheduled to air sometime this spring.

Radcliffe first became aware of The Trevor Project, founded in 1998 by three filmmakers, while he was appearing on Broadway in the 2008 revival of "Equus." Their movie, "Trevor," which won an Academy Award for best short film, concerned a gay teen who attempts suicide. The Trevor Project allows young people to call in for counseling or just to talk.

"I have described myself as being 'gently eccentric' and slightly different as a person just because I've had a very different set of influences growing up than anybody else in my peer group did," the 20-year-old Radcliffe said. "I've always felt very lucky to have the life that I've had. I never had to cope with anything serious about my religion or sexual orientation or anything like that.

"I think it's important for somebody from a big, commercial movie series like 'Harry Potter' and particularly because I am not gay or bisexual or transgendered. ... The fact that I am straight makes not a difference, but it shows that straight people are incredibly interested and care a lot about this as well."



FILMS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO VIEW

- Documentary - "Anyone and Everyone" is outstanding - an hour in length and features families from all walks of life sharing their intimate accounts of how their children revealed that they're gay and discuss their responses. They also talk about struggling with the pain their sons and daughters have dealt with... It's not too heavy... is somewhat upbeat and uplifting.
- Another shorter documentary - "Straight from the Heart". Very well done... same sort of format as Anyone & Everyone.
- Another good documentary is "Out of the Past" (70 minutes) told through the eyes of a 17 year old high school student in Salt Lake City, Utah. It explores her history making experience of forming a gay straight alliance in her public school - despite opposition. This is also pretty inexpensive. You can get a new copy on Amazon for less than \$8.
- And, of course, for a really just plain ****FUN**** film - "Tru Loved" is fantastic!

NO GAY CHANGE FOR THE SALVATION ARMY*by Lisa Neff, columnist*

"Did you sign up to ring the bell?" a good-hearted friend asked. She realized even before I voiced my answer that I had not volunteered to ring the bell outside our local supermarket to raise money for the Salvation Army. And she regretted that she had volunteered to collect money for the Salvation Army, which has gone as far as lobbying the White House to obstruct efforts to treat gays and lesbians equally-as citizens and as employees.

Many, many good people - my friends and neighbors - ring the bell for the Salvation Army during December. And many, many good people - my friends and neighbors - donate to the Salvation Army's red kettles during December. But I do not. I do not ring the bell for the Salvation Army. I do not donate to the Salvation Army, because the Salvation Army discriminates against gays and lesbians in employment, works to defeat civil rights measures that protect gays and lesbians and promotes position that gay relationships "do not conform to God's will for society."

Some will say, that the Salvation Army performs good work - the organization feeds the hungry, shelters the homeless, clothes the impoverished, whether gay or straight. Yes, yet there are many other organizations performing the same work as the Salvation Army that do not discriminate against gays and lesbians, that will not use your donation against you.

From the Salvation Army's Web site: "The Army regards the origins of a homosexual orientation as a mystery and does not regard a homosexual disposition as blameworthy in and of itself or rectifiable at will. Nevertheless, while we are not responsible for what we are, we are accountable for what we do; and homosexual conduct, like heterosexual conduct, is controllable and may be morally evaluated therefore in light of scriptural teaching. "For this reason, such practices, if unrenounced, render a person ineligible for Salvation Army soldiership."

I can find a charity more worthy of the stray dollar in my pocket.

I'll tell you that I used to contribute to the Salvation Army, though I was never enthusiastic about the organization's missionary work. But even before the big feud between the Salvation Army and the city of San Francisco over an ordinance mandating that city contractors provide equal benefits to employees, I was made aware that the organization with a reputation for kindness did not take kindly to gays.

I was living in Missouri in the early 1990s and a women's volleyball league was playing its games at a Salvation Army gym. One Sunday night, players arrived and found the gym locked up and dark. Salvation Army officials had been made aware that the league was affiliated with an LGBT sports association. They decided to serve the sporty servers a "get out" notice because the Army's position is that the "sexual union leading to a one-flesh relationship is intended to be between male and female." Maybe, at first thought, barring 30 women from playing volleyball seems small when compared to the Salvation Army served 33 million people last year and raised about \$2 billion for its programs. But think about those numbers, think about the power of the Salvation Army. It is a massive Christian evangelical organization-with a quasi-military structure and raising \$2 billion a year-and it promotes discrimination against gays and lesbians in its employment policy; at local levels of government, going so far as to threaten to close soup kitchens in New York if the city enacted domestic partnership legislation; and at the national level of government, including negotiating with the Bush administration to guarantee that faith-based groups could discriminate against gays and keep their federal funding.

We can find charities more deserving of our dollars and our volunteer time.



THANK-YOU to our March meeting speaker, Elaine Knowlden. Elaine grew up all over the country as an "Air Force Brat" and has resided in Connecticut for many years. She is a psychotherapist in private practice, with a special interest and experience in transgender client care. She came out as a lesbian at age 25, without much drama or difficulty. She has also been a longtime supporter and volunteer HIV counselor at the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective. Elaine, thank you for taking so much time to answer our many questions. Your visit to PFLAG Hartford was both enjoyable and informative.

THANK-YOU to our April meeting speaker, the Rev. Paul F. Goodman, Transitional Minister at Hartford's founding church, The First Church of Christ in Hartford (Center Church). Paul was born in Oakland, CA, and raised in Milford, Connecticut. Paul is a 1983 graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City where he received a Master of Divinity degree. He was ordained in the ministry of the United Church of Christ in 1989. He has served churches in Milford, Westport, Enfield, East Haddam and Ridgefield. Paul and his husband, Patrick, live in New Haven. Thank-you, Rev. Goodman, for sharing your personal story with us.

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL CANCELS PROM RATHER THAN ALLOW SAME-SEX COUPLE TO ATTEND

This post is from HRC Youth and Campus Outreach Associate Director Candace Gingrich-Jones:

A high school in Mississippi has decided that they will cancel the prom entirely rather than allow a same-sex couple to attend. This isn't an unusual occurrence, unfortunately – particularly in the south we have seen schools try to limit the visibility and participation of queer students. Most of the times the schools realize (read: are told to do the right thing) their error and make amends. Just last year the same situation arose at a high school in neighboring Alabama, when Cynthia Stewart wanted to bring her female date to the prom at Tharptown High. The ACLU again got involved, sent a demand letter and the school district reversed their earlier decision.

But not at Itawamba Agricultural High School. Senior Constance McMillian had asked for permission to attend the prom with a female sophomore classmate as her date. She was also told that she could not wear a tuxedo because she is a girl. The high school responded by telling her she could not arrive with her same-sex date to the prom and if she did and they danced together they would be thrown out. With her families [sic] support, McMillian contacted the ACLU (aclu.org) who sent the school district a demand letter [pdf], laying out the constitutional argument in support of the student. They also took it a step further and in the letter asked the Itawamba School District to make it clear to all schools that it is “unlawful to censor peaceful and appropriate expressions by students of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and support for gay and transgender rights.”

For those who have been following the D.C. Catholic Charities saga, the school's reaction may not be surprising: cancel prom. In a move that I certainly hope will not become a trend, the school, like Catholic Charities, decided that if they had to include the homos then they wouldn't allow anyone to participate. The school, similar to CC again, sent a letter to the school insinuating that it is McMillian's fault that prom was cancelled “Due to the distractions to the educational process caused by recent events, the Itawamba County School District has decided to not host a prom at Itawamba Agricultural High School this year.” That's it – when the rubber hits the road find some way to blame the gays and everything will turn out fine.

A decade ago we saw a similar situation when Salt Lake City's East High School chose to cancel 46 non-curricular clubs just so they could avoid recognizing the gay-straight alliance at the school. This particular incident is seen by many to be the birth of the Gay-Straight Alliance boom across the country – thanks to Salt Lake City's narrow-mindedness 10 years ago there are now 4000 Gay-Straight Alliances registered with GLSEN. It is unclear what repercussions there will be in Mississippi – the district has dismissed the issue saying “It is our hope that private citizens will organize an event for the juniors and seniors. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this causes anyone.” With a little luck, McMillian's classmates may realize that discrimination against anyone inconveniences everyone, and a new movement will begin.

PROM UPDATE FROM THE HRC

Unbelievable. A lesbian high school senior in Mississippi was sent to a "fake prom" while the rest of the class had their own, secret prom. It all started when her school board canceled prom for the entire school – all because Constance McMillian wanted to bring her girlfriend. Then parents organized a secret prom. Needless to say, Constance and her girlfriend weren't invited. They were sent to a different location.

...

The school board went to court to defend their bigoted policy of canceling the prom. The court stopped short of forcing them to reinstate the original prom, because the school board told the judge that Constance would be "welcome and encouraged to attend" a private prom sponsored by parents. That invitation never came. Instead, when Constance asked the organizers of the private prom about the time and place of the event, she was sent to the "fake" prom, which was attended by just five other students. The rest of the school partied at a secret location. To add bigotry on top of bigotry: two of the people at the "fake" prom were students with learning difficulties. Clearly they weren't good enough for the prom either. Constance wasn't trying to start a legal battle or a big fight in the national media. All she wanted to do was to celebrate with the rest of her classmates. We've seen this kind of discrimination before. It's cowardly – and it's up to us to ensure they don't get away with it.

Sincerely,

Joe Solmonese, *President, HRC*

THANK-YOU to all who braved the torrential rains to volunteer at the PFLAG Hartford information table at the True Colors Conference on March 12 and 13! Special thanks go to Larry Pysh, who was on duty both days. Larry was there early to set up our display, and stayed late to take it down. Our other PFLAG volunteers were: John B. & Joan J. (both days); Jean C.; Jim W.; Scott L.; Odalys P.; Connie G.; Mike R.; Josh R.

OBAMA EXTENDS HOSPITAL VISITATION RIGHTS TO SAME-SEX PARTNERS OF GAYS

WASHINGTON — President Obama on Thursday ordered his health secretary to issue new rules aimed at granting hospital visiting rights to same-sex partners.

The White House announced the rule changes, which will also make it easier for gay men and lesbians to make medical decisions on behalf of their partners, in a memorandum released Thursday night. In it, the president said the new rules would affect any hospital that participates in Medicare or Medicaid, the government programs to cover the elderly and the poor.

“Every day, all across America, patients are denied the kindness and caring of a loved one at their sides,” Mr. Obama said in the memorandum, adding that the rules could also help widows and widowers who rely on friends and members of religious orders who care for one another. But he says gay men and lesbians are “uniquely affected” because they are often barred from visiting partners with whom they have spent decades.

Richard Socarides, who advised President Bill Clinton on gay rights issues, said that while the memorandum on its own did not grant any new rights, it did “draw attention to the very real and tragic situations many gays and lesbians face when a partner is hospitalized.” Ordering the Department of Health and Human Services to find a better way to handle such situations, Mr. Socarides said, is “the kind of thing the gay community was hoping Obama would do right after he was inaugurated.” Several states have tried to put an end to discrimination against same-sex couples, and Mr. Obama said he intended to build on those efforts. He said the new rules would make clear that designated visitors should enjoy visiting privileges that are no more restrictive than those enjoyed by immediate family members. The rules will take time to draft and put in place, and so Mr. Obama’s order will have no immediate effect. Even so, gay rights groups called it a major advance for the families of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender individuals.

“It’s a huge deal,” said David Smith, vice president of policy for the Human Rights Campaign, which worked with the White House to develop the memorandum, in an interview Thursday night. “Nearly every hospital in the country will now be required to provide hospital visitation rights to LGBT families. It’s an enormous step. In the absence of equal marriage rights in most jurisdictions, this step provides an essential right to LGBT families for a gay person or a lesbian person to spend time with their partner in a critical situation.” In some instances in the past, hospitals have barred bedside visits by the person who held the medical power of attorney for a patient.

Gay rights advocates said the rules change was inspired by one of those cases involving a same-sex couple, Janice Langbehn and Lisa Pond, who were profiled in The New York Times last year. After Ms. Pond was stricken with a fatal brain aneurysm, Ms. Langbehn was denied visiting rights in 2007 by a Florida hospital. Although Ms. Langbehn had power of attorney and she and Ms. Pond were parents to four children they had adopted, the hospital refused for eight hours to allow her and the children to see Ms. Pond, her partner for 18 years. Ms. Pond died as Ms. Langbehn tried in vain to get to her side.

Ms. Langbehn, represented by Lambda Legal, a legal advocacy organization, brought suit against the hospital, Jackson Memorial in Miami, but lost. On Thursday night, Mr. Obama called her from Air Force One to say that he had been moved by her case. “I was so humbled that he would know Lisa’s name and know our story,” Ms. Langbehn said in a telephone interview. “He apologized for how we were treated. For the last three years, that’s what I’ve been asking the hospital to do. Even now, three years later, they still refuse to apologize to the children and I [sic] for the fact that Lisa died alone.”

Mr. Obama campaigned saying he would fight for the rights of gay men and lesbians, but he has been under pressure since the beginning of his presidency to be a stronger advocate for their issues. Many gay men and lesbians grew disenchanted with what they viewed as his foot-dragging on reversing “don’t ask, don’t tell,” the policy that bars them from serving openly in the military. The president said in his State of the Union address this year that he intended to move to overturn the policy, and his administration has been taking steps to do so.

The memorandum is intended to “help ensure that patients will be able to face difficult times in hospitals with compassion, dignity and respect,” a White House spokesman, Shin Inouye, said Thursday night. “By taking these steps, we can better protect the interests and needs of patients that are gay or lesbian, widows and widowers with no children, members of religious orders, or others for whom their loved ones are not always immediate relatives. Because all Americans should be able to have loved ones there for them in their time of need.”

A version of this article appeared on April 16, 2010, of the New York Times.

**CONNECTICUT PRIDE 2010 - Your Rights Our Rights
Human Rights.**

The 2010 Connecticut PRIDE Rally and Festival will be held Saturday, June 5, 2010, in Hartford's Bushnell Park. We're looking for volunteers! Want to help produce Connecticut's largest LGBTI event? Email us at info@connecticutpride.org or call 860.225.5122 for more information.

PFLAG Hartford will have a booth at the Festival. Please volunteer to staff the booth for an hour or two. Sign-up sheets will be available at our May 19th meeting. Don't miss it! It's a great time! See you there!

HGLHC

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Health Collective**
Be well, Be yourself.

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PRESIDENT OBAMA NAMES TRANSGENDER APPOINTEE TO COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

President Obama recently named Amanda Simpson to be a Senior Technical Advisor to the Commerce Department. **In a statement, Simpson, a member of the National Center for Transgender Equality's board of directors, said** that "as one of the first transgender presidential appointees to the federal government, I hope that I will soon be one of hundreds, and that this appointment opens future opportunities for many others." While Simpson is clearly one of the first transgender presidential appointees, Democratic officials say they're unsure if she is the very first one.

The White House had no comment on her appointment.

A 2004 YWCA "Woman on the Move," Simpson recently served as Deputy Director in Advanced Technology Development at Raytheon Missile Systems in Tucson, Arizona. At Raytheon, Simpson — a former test pilot who had worked for the company for more than a generation — transitioned from male to female and was instrumental in convincing the military contractor to add gender identity and expression to its **equal employment opportunity policy.**

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE GOOD WORKS OF PFLAG HARTFORD WITH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF:

\$ _____ My name: _____

*Please cut out this coupon and mail it with your check (made payable to **PFLAG Hartford**) to our Treasurer, Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415.*

PFLAG Hartford has been available as a resource for support to families and friends of GLBTI people in Greater Hartford, and beyond, for over 20 years. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and depend heavily on contributions to enable us to continue to educate and advocate for an end to discrimination and to make this a safer world for our GLBTI loved ones.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DIRECTORY: If you would like to advertise your business/service in *Caring* for one year (6 issues), send your business card and a check for \$40 (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to: Jean Cormier, 156 Randal Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110. Your Patronage of our advertisers, who help us pay the costs of sending the *Caring* newsletter to you, would be greatly appreciated by them and by us. Please mention that you saw their advertisement in *Caring*.

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Connecticut PFLAG Meetings

PFLAG HARTFORD: Information on front page or at our website: www.pflaghartford.org

Helpline: (860) 633-7184

Phone: (860) 633-5111

Transgender Issues: (860) 231-8582

PFLAG NORWALK/SOUTHWESTERN CT

When: 7:30 pm, 1st Wednesday (bi-monthly)
Jan./Mar./May/July/Sept./Nov.

Where: Triangle Community Center
16 River Street (lower level) Norwalk

Help Line: (203) 226-0257 - Sandy
or (203) 322-5380 - Lester

Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CT:

Contact: Diane (860) 435-2738

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

Meetings: Church of the Redeemer, 185 Cold Spring
(Corner of Whitney Avenue.), New Haven

3rd Tues of the Month @ 7:30 pm

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)

When: Second Monday of every month,

Potluck at 6:00 p.m.; Meeting at 7:00 pm

Where: Noank Baptist Church,
18 Cathedral Heights, Noank (Groton)

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: kreymundi@allianceforliving.org

Web site: www.pflagsect.org

Central and Western Massachusetts

Williamstown Area:

When: Second Sunday of every month, 2 pm

Where: First Congregational Church, Williamstown

Contact: (413) 243-2382

Springfield Area:

Where: Agawam

Contact: (413) 732-3240 or (413) 783-7709

Greenfield, MA

Help Line: 413/625-6636

E-Mail: PFLAGPV@valinet.com

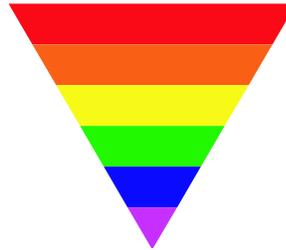
**CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY
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Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

Deadline: 15th of even numbered months. Send articles to: *Jean Cormier*

*156 Randal Avenue,
West Hartford, CT 06110*



This is your invitation to celebrate PRIDE Day with us on Saturday, June 5, in Hartford's Bushnell Park!

Please stop by our PFLAG Hartford Booth.

STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:

In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday, West Hartford, CT.

Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or janenrosie48@yahoo.com or at www.straightspouse.org

FOR OTHER PFLAG LOCATIONS

Contact a Hartford Chapter Board Member or call the National PFLAG office at (202)638-4200. You may also sign onto PFLAG's Home Page at www.pflag.org.