



TRUE COLORS XVIII ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Friday, March 11 & Saturday, March 12, 2011
University of Connecticut – Storrs, CT



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 20, No. 2

March/April 2011

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

PFLAG HARTFORD & TRUE COLORS WILL AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS to LGBTI students or allies. Application forms for the Brill Scholarship will be available at the True Colors Conference, to be held at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, on March 11 & 12, as well as on our PFLAG Hartford website (www.PFLAGHartford.org). Just click on the True Colors link. **Deadline to apply is April 15.**

OUR PFLAG HARTFORD CHAPTER is a proud sponsor of the *True Colors Conference* for youth, to be held at the UConn Storrs campus on March 11 and 12. On those days, we will have a PFLAG Hartford booth where we will hand out pamphlets and information. Volunteers are needed so, if you plan to attend, please stop by our table and perhaps lend a helping hand for an hour or two.

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:

March 16 – Connie & Mike

April 20 – Laurie R.

May 18 - Gary

June 15 – Scholarship Presentation
& Reception

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

*It's amazing what the
power of parents and
love can do!*



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.
- **STONEWALL SPEAKERS** is an all volunteer speakers' bureau composed of LGBT people and allies dedicated to reducing violence and bias while promoting equality for all. We speak to thousands of Connecticut students and adults annually. Listeners will meet LGBT people and their allies in person; hear candid accounts of their lives; and receive honest, informed answers to any questions they have. Let your high school, college, business, religious group or community group know we are available. For more information please contact coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org.

PFLAG NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

PFLAG National is proud to announce its 2011 scholarship season is now open. To apply, simply visit our website at www.pflag.org and click on the Education and Programs tab. LGBT students and student allies are encouraged to apply online, print supporting documentation and review the biographies of our 2010 scholarship recipients.

PFLAG National is dedicated to creating a world in which our young people may grow up and be educated free from the fear of violence, bullying and other forms of discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation or that of their families and friends.

We ask that you please assist us in sharing the information about our scholarships with your community. Last year we received over 1,000 scholarship applicants and this year we anticipate even more interest, so please encourage students to apply early for this amazing opportunity.

ALL COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2011.

All 2011 scholarship applicants and winners will be notified by Friday, May 13th, 2011. The checks for the scholarship recipients will be disbursed in August 2011 and the checks will be sent directly to the school. For additional information, contact Mekina Morgan-Safe Schools and Diversity Outreach Coordinator 202/467-8180, ext. 212 or mmorgan@pflag.org

“The Bible contains 6 admonishments to homosexuals and 362 to heterosexuals. This doesn't mean that God doesn't love heterosexuals, it's just that they need more supervision.”

- *Anonymous*

THANK-YOU!

Our January meeting speaker was Leif Mitchell. Leif is the Co-chair of GLSEN Connecticut and a member of GLSEN's National Advisory Council and Training of Trainers team. He has compiled, edited, published and updated a resource module for educators, *Tackling LGBT Issues in School*, which has been distributed throughout the US and abroad. Leif has been providing training since 1992 on sexuality and diversity issues for colleges, universities and organizations, including GLSEN and the Anti-Defamation League's *A World of Difference* program. His full time position is Assistant Director of the Community Research Core at Yale University's Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS. It was an honor to have Leif speak to us at our January meeting.

Leif enjoys the rich diversity of life in New Haven, Connecticut, with his partner, Will, with whom he celebrated a civil union on October 14, 2006.

HARTFORD COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL VOTES TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE.

January 11, 2011- Last night the Hartford Court of Common Council voted unanimously in favor of two ordinances which protect gender identity or expression from discrimination. The Council's action makes Hartford the first municipality in Connecticut to have anti-discrimination provisions on the basis of gender identity and expression. This ordinance adds gender identity or expression to race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability as classes protected from discrimination in City employment, employment with City contractors and housing. It also mandates that gender identity be incorporated into the City's Affirmative Action Plan and also allows aggrieved individuals to seek redress with the City's Office of Human Relations.

Regina Dyton, chairperson of the Hartford LGBT Commission was quoted as saying: "I appreciate the generations of work and organizing of the transgender community. The LGBT commission acknowledges and is immeasurably grateful for the hard work of those that came before us in making this ordinance possible."

Cindy Dubuque, secretary of the LGBT Commission stated: "The passage of this ordinance is a great first step within the state of CT. Hartford has proven to be a leader on policy matters related to equality based on gender identity and gender expression. I hope that our state legislature will follow Hartford's leadership."

Jerimarie Liesegang of the CT TransAdvocacy Coalition expressed: "CT TransAdvocacy is pleased to have worked with the LGBT commission in its tireless efforts to secure passage of this important ordinance. This ordinance will have a very positive impact on the Hartford transgender community and sends a strong message that Hartford embraces the diversity of its residents."

Congratulations to Regina, Cindy, Jerimarie and all your colleagues on this wonderful news! Great work!



It's been said that to know where you're going, you've got to know where you've been – and as we kick off 2011, this is more true than ever.

As a movement of individuals committed to fairness and justice for all, we have so many things to be grateful for in 2010 –from the repeal of the discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law to the creation of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention to focus on the needs of LGBT youth, to the State Department's elimination of a surgery requirement to obtain the correct gender marker on a passport along with securing hospital visitation rights for LGBT families, we continue to make unprecedented breakthroughs that extend basic rights and protections to all of our LGBT family and friends.

Even with these successes, however, we must acknowledge the difficult obstacles ahead that must be overcome to ensure that our loved ones are treated with dignity and respect.

At the federal level, we continue to work to ensure that everyone has the right to a family, the opportunity to learn free from bullying and harassment, a job in a safe work environment, access to affordable and competent mental and physical health services, and protection from violence, harassment, and exploitation. In order to reach these goals we continue to advocate for the passage of bills like the Every Child Deserves a Family, Safe Schools Improvement, Student Non-Discrimination and Employment Non-Discrimination Acts.

We anticipate that many of these bills will continue to receive growing support thanks to your successful advocacy efforts in sending e-mails, making phone calls, in-person lobby visits in home districts, and constantly engaging your members of Congress on these important matters. This progress could not have been achieved without your committed voices.

And in 2011, as we enter a challenging political climate, we ask you to continue speaking out against discrimination and encouraging your federal, state and local legislators to support bills promoting LGBT equality, and to oppose any legislation that hurts our loved ones. The fight for equality will not be any easier in 2011 – and we need all of your help to challenge the homophobia and transphobia propagated by extremist groups like the National Organization for Marriage, the Family Research Council, and Focus on the Family.

As we begin to take on the challenges that lie ahead we will need your ongoing support throughout this journey to help move equality forward for all of our family and friends.

We wish you a Happy New Year and would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to PFLAG!
Sincerely - The PFLAG National Team

WHETHER KIDS ARE GAY OR STRAIGHT, FAMILY LOVE IS KEY*By Kim Painter*

"It was like he kicked me. ... I came home and I cried. ... It was crushing ... a slap in the face." Those are the voices of parents remembering the day their children told them they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. The parents are featured in a new documentary film called *Lead With Love*. The message of the film: Such reactions are common in a world that still often rejects gay people — but the sooner parents can move past their shock and offer their children acceptance and love, the better.

Acceptance can be a matter of life and death, says David Huebner, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Utah. He produced the 35-minute film with colleagues and posted it online a few weeks ago (at leadwithlovetofilm.com) in hopes of reaching as many parents as possible. Driving his urgency: His own studies and others that show gay youths rejected by their parents, in big or small ways, are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, have unprotected sex, become depressed and attempt suicide.

In recent months, media attention has focused on gay teens who killed themselves after they were bullied by peers. But rejection by parents plays an underappreciated role in the struggles of gay youths, Huebner says.

"You hear anecdotes about people who disown their children and throw them out," Huebner says. But more common forms of rejection, such as complaints about "gay" clothing or pleas for teens to delay coming out to the wider world, can hurt more deeply than parents know, he says. "Parents don't react badly because they are horrible people or hate their kids," he says. "They react badly because they care so much and they are worried."

Jody Huckaby, executive director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (pflag.org), a national advocacy group, says: "This film really communicates the honest struggles that many families have," while sending the message that "family acceptance is the key to young people's success ... and that's true whether they are straight or gay."

A daughter's story

Lauren Wood says she had a good reason for coming out to her parents at age 16: "I had a girlfriend I wanted to introduce to them."

Wood, now an environmental studies major at the University of Utah, says her parents responded lovingly, but not without a few tears and worries. "My mom cried. ... She was concerned that I'd never get married or have children," Wood says. (Today Wood's mother, Jan, says she fully expects Lauren to find a life partner and raise kids.) "My dad wanted to make sure I didn't pigeonhole myself," Wood says. "But he didn't know I'd already spent four years processing what was 30 seconds of information for him."

Her advice for parents hearing similar news: "Just tell them that you will always support them and always love them. ... The rest is kind of icing on the cake."

Jan Wood, 52, a mom from Salt Lake City featured in the film, says she was scared when her then-16-year-old daughter, Lauren, announced that she had a girlfriend. "She was popular, captain of the swim team, class president," Wood says. "I thought that this was going to destroy all of that for her." She and her husband urged their daughter not to tell too many people about her sexual orientation and to try dating some boys. Today, she says, they understand that by the time Lauren talked to them, she had known for a long time that boys didn't interest her in that way.

"They reacted very well, considering the society in which we live," says Lauren Wood, now 22. "The first thing they said was, 'We support you and we love you.' So I knew it was going to be OK." Not everyone gets to "OK" quickly, Huebner says, but "we're trying to get parents to react a little bit better, a little bit sooner."

To that end, the film offers the mainstream scientific view on homosexuality — that it is a normal biological variation, not a choice or an illness. Some, but not all, religious groups label it a sin, but most also ask parents to love and support their gay children, the film notes. The filmmakers suggest four specific ways to do that, with the acronym LEAD:

- **L**et your affection show. Keep up the hugs, back pats and praise.
- **E**xpress your pain away from your child. Talk to understanding family members, friends or a counselor.
- **A**void rejecting behaviors. Even a few cutting remarks can hurt a vulnerable young person.
- **D**o good before you feel good. In other words, do all of the above even if you are hurt, angry or depressed.

Huebner says: "Fake it until you make it."



TRANSGENDER LIVES

The Intersection of Health and Law Conference

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE 2011 TRANSGENDER LIVES CONFERENCE

April 30, 2011, University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington, Connecticut.

To register via our new and improved online registration just click on the link below to register early for our Fifth Annual Conference. All conference details and updates are located on our website TransgenderLives.org

The fifth annual Transgender Lives: The Intersection of Health and Law Conference being held on Saturday, April 30, at the UConn Health Center from 8:00 AM till 5 PM. This all day conference is geared towards Service Providers, Medical and Legal Professionals, allies and all those interested in the Health and Law issues facing the Trans and gender non-conforming communities.

ACLU CHALLENGING HALF-PAY FOR DISCHARGED GAY SERVICEMEMBERS

Thank-you to PFLAG of Greater Providence Newsletter for this article

The American Civil Liberties Union is suing the federal government on behalf of a gay former Air Force sergeant denied full separation pay after he was forced out because of his sexual orientation. Former Air Force Staff Sgt. Richard Collins says he only wants what is given to other military veterans who leave involuntarily. The Air Force paid Collins, who was stationed at eastern New Mexico air base, \$12,351 instead of the expected \$25,702 when he was honorably discharged in March 2006 after nine years. As part of an effort to ease their transition to civilian life, separation pay is granted to military personnel who served at least six years but were voluntarily discharged. But the Department of Defense has a list of conditions that trigger an automatic reduction in that pay, including “homosexuality and homosexual conduct.” That policy went into effect in 1991, two years before “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The ACLU, which filed the suit in November in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C., argues that the Department of Defense cannot reduce the amount for people discharged for their sexual orientation to a rate below that given to personnel discharged for other reasons.

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.

**FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN "HRC":
U.S. PASTORS ARE EXPORTING BIGOTRY TO UGANDA, WITH BRUTAL RESULTS.**

This is an issue close to my heart, because I've spent over a decade working for equality as a lay leader in my own church, and now, as acting director of HRC's Religion and Faith program – which helps religious leaders of all stripes speak out for equality and fight back when hatred is promoted in the name of religion.

On Thursday, [2/10/11] that perversion of faith cost Ugandan gay rights advocate David Kato his life. He was bludgeoned to death in his home after his name was among those listed in an anti-gay magazine, under the headline "Hang them!"

Since at least 2009, **radical** U.S. Christian missionaries have added anti-gay conferences and workshops in Uganda to their anti-gay efforts in the U.S. – and now they're beginning to ordain ministers and build churches across East Africa focused almost entirely on preaching against homosexuality.

These American extremists didn't call for David's death. **But they created a climate of hate that breeds violence – and they must stop and acknowledge they were wrong.**

...

- **Scott Lively** of Massachusetts held an anti-gay conference in Uganda with two other U.S. pastors. A few months later, a bill was introduced in Uganda that would make homosexuality punishable by death.
- **Lou Engle**, a Missouri preacher whose rallies draw tens of thousands in the U.S., spoke at a rally in Uganda this year that focused on praying for the bill's passage. (Engle claims not to support some parts of the bill, but internal documents show he came to speak about "the threat of homosexuality," and defend the Ugandan government's efforts to "curb the growth of the vice using the law.")
- And **Carl Ellis Jenkins** of Georgia is presiding over a group that's opening 50 new churches in Uganda to "help clean up bad morals, including homosexuality" according to his staff.

They have been stirring up hostility in a country where homosexuality is already illegal, violent attacks are common, rape is used to 'cure' people of their sexual orientation – and a shocking law has been proposed that would make homosexuality punishable by life imprisonment or even death.

And they're in lockstep with some of the largest and wealthiest right-wing groups in the U.S. **When the U.S. Congress considered a resolution denouncing the grotesque Ugandan death-penalty-for-gays bill, the extreme-right Family Research Council – now classified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center – spent \$25,000 lobbying to stop the resolution from passing.**

Religion should never be used to spread hate. These men do not speak for me or the millions of diverse religious people who support equality not *in spite of* our faith, but *because of* it.

That's what our Religion and Faith program is all about: helping people of faith from all different traditions speak out so we can reclaim the core religious values we hold dear in America.

At the heart of every religious tradition is love of humanity and love of creator – not hatred for our neighbors. Creating a climate of hate runs contrary to the very idea of faith – but that's exactly what the right wing in America is doing.

...

Whether or not we're people of faith, we cannot stay silent or stand idly by while a radical minority pushes a hateful agenda in God's name. Please stand with us and speak out today.

Sincerely,

Sharon Groves, Religion and Faith Program



THANK-YOU to our February meeting speaker, Carole MacKenzie, LCSW.

Carole has been a member of PFLAG Hartford for at least 8 years. She is an AASECT Certified Sex Therapist, certified in EMDR, and has a private practice in Hartford. Carole graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, and received her MSW from Smith College School for Social Work.

Carole teaches Human Sexual Behavior in the psychology department at the University of Hartford. Her favorite classes are on gender and sexual orientation when she invites GLB students from UHart and transgender folks to speak to her students. As PFLAG members well know, there is no substitute for face-to-face individual stories to open hearts and minds. After hearing the speakers, her students tell her they will never be the same.

Carole, thank-you for your good work and for sharing your experiences with us.

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 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 - Westport

(203) 322-5380 – Stamford

(203) 925-0445- Shelton

(203) 847-9183 - Norwalk

Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437

Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

Church of the Redeemer

185 Cold Spring Street, New Haven

(Corner of Whitney Avenue)

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)

When: Second Monday of every month,

Potluck at 6:00 pm; Meeting at 7:00 pm

Where: Noank Baptist Church,

18 Cathedral Heights, Noank (Groton)

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: bjalthen@sbcglobal.net

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

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Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

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

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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.