



AT PFLAG HARTFORD, WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS.



# The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

# Caring

Volume 21, No. 6

November/December 2012

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

Annual Meeting:

**CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK-YOU** to the PFLAG Hartford board members who were elected at the September Annual Meeting. They are: John & Becky G., Joan J., Rose & Larry P., Jean C., Donna S., Connie G., Mike R., Tom & Mary Beth M. In addition, at the October meeting, Bonnie S. was unanimously elected to serve on our board.

Thank-you also to David O. for his many years of service on the board (and as our former Treasurer). David, you will be greatly missed.

**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:**

- November 21 - Eric & Jason
- December 19 - Megan R.
- January 16 - Bev & Bob
- February 20 - Len & Tom

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:**

- Student/Limited Income: \$10
- Household Membership: \$40
- Individual Membership: \$25



*(Paid membership includes a one-year subscription to Caring & the National PFLAG newsletter.)*

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

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 every Sunday from 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](mailto:lizy@hglhc.org) or call 860/278-4163.
- **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](mailto:coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org).
- **XX CLUB "Twenty Club"** – The Transsexual Support Group of New England meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month from 2-5 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT [www.twentyclub.net](http://www.twentyclub.net)
- **LIVING SOULFULLY** (Men Loving Men In Community) meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **MPOWER CT** – Social gathering for gay and bisexual men ages 18-35 meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **THE 10TH ONE BIG EVENT:** The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective is well known as an important force in the LGBT and HIV/AIDS communities in the greater Hartford area. But did you know they throw a mean party? It's true! To find out for yourself, mark your calendar now for the 10th One Big Event (OBE) on Saturday, November 17. For information, or to get involved, please contact OBE Coordinator, Dan Millett at (860) 278-4163, Ext. 18.
- **TRANSGENDER LIVES: THE INTERSECTION OF HEALTH AND LAW CONFERENCE** will be held April 27, 2013 at the UConn Health Center in Farmington, Ct. (See page 4 for more information.)

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### THEY TOLD HIM HE WASN'T HUMAN

This year Ashton started a new school on the eastern edge of Cincinnati, Ohio and couldn't have been more excited. However, he didn't always feel that way.

Last year, he took the courageous step of coming out as a transgender youth and his life quickly became a nightmare:

*"I was harassed and bullied every day — in school, online, at my house — basically everywhere. I got called all kinds of names. I got 'it' a lot — as in 'it's a freak' or 'keep me away from it.' I was even told that I wasn't 'human' — that one hurt the most. "No one wants to feel like they aren't human."*

Ashton tried to play by the rules, but they wouldn't let him. Even after going to his principal, things didn't get better. The principal told him there was nothing he could do, that it was just 'kids being kids.'

Ashton did what many LGBT students can't do — he decided to change his situation. He is now at a school with supportive faculty, staff and students. His counselor is even helping him form a GSA.

Stories like Ashton's break my heart but they also inspire me to continue this work with GLSEN. They also demonstrate the importance of GLSEN's efforts to create safe and affirming schools for every student.

...

Together we *can* make a difference.

Sincerely,

Eliza Byard, Executive Director, GLSEN



*Christine Jorgensen was the first nationally known transgender American. She used her fame to speak out on behalf of transgender people. "Nature made a mistake, which I have had corrected." - Christine Jorgensen*

**“I THOUGHT GOD HATED ME”**

I was a young teenager when my family learned I am gay. My parents reacted harshly, and they decided to take me to a "therapist" ... who promised to stop me from being gay.

[The doctor] tried hard to convince me that something was fundamentally wrong with me. I almost believed him. After all, I was just a young kid. This psychological abuse nearly destroyed my life, and for me, it resulted in drug abuse, homelessness, and thoughts of suicide that lasted a decade. No child – no person – should have to endure this pain,

...

Leading medical organizations – including the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association – agree that these practices are dangerous. But beyond that, we know that teaching a young LGBT person that he or she is defective is incredibly harmful. This harmful treatment stole a decade from my life and nearly destroyed my family. An HRC report this summer proved the prevalence of this kind of messaging – 89 percent of LGBT youth ... say they've heard negative messaging about being gay, most of it from elected leaders.

[This doctor] is still inflicting this kind of child abuse, and he recently attempted to innocently explain to CNN that he's just "trying to bring out the heterosexuality" in his patients. This practice hurts people, children, and families. It has no basis in fact, and it needs to end.

Now is the time ... to send a strong message to LGBT youth all over the country: your lives are valuable and you are perfect the way you are.

...

I will never be able to fully undo the damage that this abuse has caused me, but together we can guarantee that no child has to live through this type of abuse again.

...

For too many kids,  
Ryan Kendall



September 30, 2012

Late last night, **California Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law Senate Bill 1172**, a bill to protect young people from dangerous and disproved efforts designed to change their sexual orientation or gender expression that have proven to inflict great emotional harm, which we believe to be child abuse.

We are grateful to Gov. Brown for his leadership by standing with California's children. LGBT youth will now be protected from a practice that has been proven to have drastically negative effects on their well-being, but also has been debunked as junk science by all major medical and mental health organizations.

Nearly 50,000 of you signed our petition urging the Governor to sign the bill. This outpouring of support showed Gov. Brown that we will not tolerate these harmful efforts. We, along with our friends at the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and Equality California (EQCA) will continue our fight against these practices.

This newly signed law is now a model for the country, and our hope is that other states will adopt it in short order to end this child abuse.

Sincerely,  
Chad Griffin, President  
Human Rights Campaign

**FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES TAKING POSITIVE POSITION ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY**

Major US companies are taking on more of a public role in support of equality this election year.

General Mills and Starbucks, for instance, recently have spoken out against LGBT discrimination and stand with the Human Rights Campaign and other LGBT-related groups at both the federal and state level. They're drawing some fire from the conservative right but aren't backing down.

For a full list of companies and business leaders, see [www.hrc.org/positivestance](http://www.hrc.org/positivestance).



Every transgender girl has the right to be treated like other girls.

GLAD Senior Attorney Ben Klein was in Bangor, Maine, yesterday, with Transgender Rights Project Director Jennifer Levi, arguing just that point on behalf of our client Susan.\*

Susan is a transgender girl whose elementary education was disrupted when her public school did an "about face" by excluding her from the girls' bathroom.

Maine has a statewide law prohibiting discrimination against people based on gender identity and expression in all areas, *including public education and public accommodations*, plain and simple.

Susan's school initially did the right thing and treated her just like any other girl. But after a male student repeatedly harassed her, the school not only excluded Susan from the girls' bathroom - *treating her differently than all other girls* - it forced her to use a completely separate facility - *treating her differently than all other students*.

That's not right. GLAD is committed to fighting until Susan - and all other transgender students - are treated fairly and with respect.

You can [visit GLAD's blog](#) to read more about yesterday's argument, which is just the first step in a process that may lead ultimately to a decision from the Maine Law Court, the state's highest court.

I look forward to keeping you informed as this important case moves forward.

Sincerely,

Lee Swislow, Executive Director

\*A pseudonym for the case

## **CT TransAdvocacy Coalition**

Our Seventh Annual *Transgender Lives: The Intersection of Health and Law Conference* will be held on April 27, 2013 at the UConn Health Center in Farmington, Ct. In preparation for this conference we are announcing our **CALL FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS** for the conference. We encourage you to submit your proposal as soon as possible, for our firm deadline for all submissions is November 21, 2013.

We also encourage you to forward this Request for Workshop proposals to any colleagues, friends, family or distribution lists you feel would be interested in doing a workshop at the 2013 Transgender Lives: The Intersection of Health and Law Conference.

As this conference has dramatically grown over the years, we recognize that many of you have very important topics and experience which fold into our theme of *The Intersection of Health and Law*. Workshop space is *limited* and all proposals will be reviewed for applicability and relevance to the Conference theme and audience. If you feel you have a workshop that would benefit the conference then we encourage you to submit your proposal at your earliest convenience, and most definitely before the deadline date of November 21, 2012.

If you have any questions, please email us at: [conference2013@transadvocacy.org](mailto:conference2013@transadvocacy.org)

Sincerely,

Transgender Lives Organizing Committee  
CT TransAdvocacy

## **2<sup>ND</sup> CLASS CITIZENS?**

That's what gay people are – in the eyes of the Boy Scouts of America. The leadership of the Boy Scouts recently announced they would uphold its ban on “open or avowed homosexuals.” In other words, LGBT people are less-deserving, not equal and not good enough to participate as members or leaders. All this from a 2.7-million member group that touts its ability to build character. HRC urged its members to ask Bob Mazzuca and Wayne Brock, the Boy Scouts' current and incoming chief scout executives, respectively, to lift the ban. More than 74,000 responded, sending e-mails. “At a time when America is moving in the direction of acceptance and inclusion, the Boy Scouts have decided to uphold a practice of exclusion, even though it espouses ‘helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible and productive society,’” HRC President Chad Griffin wrote in an op-ed in the *Dallas Morning News*

**ED MURRAY, GAY WASHINGTON SENATOR, REMAINS ROOTED IN HIS CATHOLIC FAITH**

SEATTLE -- Two churches in Elma, Wash. -- one Catholic, one Episcopal -- share a bond of flesh and blood: Both were built, in part, by state Sen. Ed Murray's paternal and maternal grandparents, respectively. The town commemorates his family in other ways, too: a road, a park, huddled-together headstones in St. Joseph's Cemetery. From these grandparents -- all Irish-born Catholics except for one Protestant grandmother who later converted -- as well as other relatives, Murray inherited an awareness of the "different faces of Catholicism," a keen sensitivity to nuances of faith, ranging from his father's family's traditional stance to his mother's lively theological debates.

Chair of the Washington Senate Ways and Means Committee, Murray holds a position of influence and power, yet he has made it his life's work to represent the vulnerable and marginalized. Since his election to the state's House of Representatives in 1995, he has focused on issues such as affordable housing, transportation and civil rights, including sponsorship of a "marriage equality" law, passed by the legislature in February 2012, that would grant civil marriage to same-sex couples if Referendum 74 is upheld this fall (NCR, Sept. 28-Oct. 10).

As a devout Catholic, his decades-long position on this last issue has also invited much scrutiny and debate, not least because he's gay.

Murray's resilient faith and his willingness to speak out on complex issues can be traced to his mother's love of dialogue, especially when related to Blessed Pope John XXIII (whom she adored), and her affinity for Catholic writers such as Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. At church and at school, Murray's childhood was also infused with Catholic teachings focused on ministry to the poor. Beloved nuns and priests, representative of "a larger family in the best sense of that word," offered support and care, encouraging Murray and his six siblings "to grow in our prayer lives and our commitment to other people," he said.

...

At this time, he also encountered official church teachings regarding sexual orientation, in the catechism and elsewhere, describing homosexual orientation as not sinful, yet deeming homosexual activity "intrinsically disordered." The unavoidable sentence for gay Catholics: a lifetime of celibacy. For years, Murray wallowed in anger and avoided church, deeply hurt.

Then, while staying alone at a cabin for a few days after his second legislative session, Murray picked up *The Cloister Walk* by Kathleen Norris. The Protestant author and poet records her time spent living in monasteries, steeped in Catholic tradition and liturgy. "It was as if a glass wall shattered in front of me," Murray explained. "I realized: This is me. This is my tradition." It was a spiritual homecoming that has, nonetheless, led him to feel at times partially accepted, destined to "always have one foot in and one foot out." Prayerfully grounded yet nimble, possessing an informed conscience that takes into account both doctrine and discernment in light of experience and convictions, Murray continues to set aside time for reflection and renewal at remote monasteries and hermitages when time permits.

Murray said three aspects of his faith keep him rooted: fellow Catholics who "continue to affirm me as a human being and continue to affirm my 21-year relationship with my partner, Michael"; the belief that followers of Christ are called to live with, and love all people, regardless of other factors; and the fact that his prayer life and spirituality continue to be fed and challenged. Murray acknowledged, "My faith has helped me see people who strongly disagree with me as important and wonderful people, even when I can't stand them and they can't stand me."

Just after Easter, Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle asked for a meeting to discuss a letter the archdiocese had sent to Catholics urging them to vote against legislation granting same-sex couples the right to civil marriage. The archbishop and senator met in the senator's office. After Murray was thanked for his work on social justice issues, the conversation turned to what Murray referred to, simply, as "their disagreement." After some discussion, Murray asked, "Are you going to deny me the sacraments?" According to Murray, Sartain answered, "We're going to continue to be clear on our message but we're going to continue to be welcoming." Murray said he was left "feeling that at least the door hadn't been shut in my face." Sartain's office did not respond to NCR's questions about his meeting with Murray.

...

... Murray's own journey toward wholeness offered an apt reflection: "The mystery of Christ, to some extent, is the mystery of finding hope and joy in very, very difficult situations," he said. "Sometimes, I'm very discouraged as a Catholic. Other times, I try to sit in hope and anticipation that we will come around the table and celebrate the Eucharist and heal each other."

*By Julie Gunter, who is a Seattle-based contributor to National Catholic Reporter.*

**RULING BOOSTS GAY MARRIAGE**

*by David G. Savage, Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON – A federal appeals court in New York struck down part of the Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA] on Thursday and became the first to rule that gays and lesbians are a minority group deserving of special protection from discrimination under the Constitution

Judges of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan joined a growing list of judges in New England and California to conclude that the U.S. government may not deny equal treatment to legally married gay couples.

In the case decided Thursday, the judges said Edith Windsor, an 83-year-old widow, cannot be forced to pay \$363,000 in federal estate taxes after the death of her partner of 44 years. The two were married in Canada and lived in New York, one of six states where same-sex marriage is legal.

The earlier decisions invalidating DOMA, while significant to thousands of same-sex couples, focus on the rights of same-sex couples but do not say whether gays and lesbians have a constitutional right to marry.

But in its opinion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit is the first to set out a constitutional framework for deciding that official discrimination against gays and lesbians is like discrimination against women or racial minorities and generally forbidden by law.

“Homosexuals have suffered a history of discrimination,” Chief Judge Dennis Jacobs said for a 2-1 majority. And while gays have been winning political victories, they are still subject to a series of discriminatory laws, he said. Jacobs was appointed to the court by former President George H.W. Bush.

The appeals court concluded that official discrimination against gays and lesbians should be subject to special scrutiny, like discrimination based on gender. Judged under this standard, discriminatory laws are usually struck down.

The Supreme Court is expected to take up DOMA this year and rule on its constitutionality next year.

The Obama administration has refused to defend the law in court. Instead, House Republicans have funded the defense by using private lawyers.

*Published in The Hartford Courant, 10/19/12*



**THANK-YOU** to our September meeting guest speaker, Miguel Gonzalez. Miguel is an out gay man who was born in Mexico but who has lived in the U.S. for many years and is now a citizen. Miguel works in HIV prevention and outreach at the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, concentrating particularly on helping Latino gay men to stay healthy. Miguel’s story of family rejection touched all of us. Thank-you, Miguel, for sharing your trials and triumphs with us. We look forward to seeing you at future PFLAG meetings.

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***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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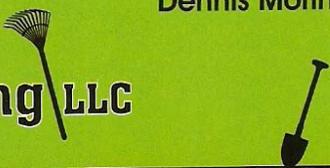
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## **Connecticut PFLAG Meetings**

**PFLAG HARTFORD:** Information on front page or at our website: [www.pflaghartford.org](http://www.pflaghartford.org)

Helpline: (860) 633-7184

Phone: (860) 633-5111

Transgender Issues: (860) 231-8582

### **PFLAG SOUTHWESTERN CT**

When: 7:30 pm, 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:PFLAGSWCT@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](mailto:bjalthen@sbcglobal.net)

Web site: [www.pflagsect.org](http://www.pflagsect.org)

### **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](mailto:greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com)

## **Central and Western Massachusetts**

### **PFLAG FRANKLIN-HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER**

#### **Northampton**

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Where: Highland Valley Elder Services,

Cutlery Building, 320 Riverside Drive

Helpline: 413/625-6636

Email: [jcmalinski48@gmail.com](mailto:jcmalinski48@gmail.com)

#### **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](mailto:PFLAGPV@valinet.com)

## **CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD**

Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

*Caring* welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

**Deadline:** 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered months. Send articles to: *Jean Cormier*

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[jcmalinski48@gmail.com](mailto:jcmalinski48@gmail.com)

or at [www.straightspouse.org](http://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](http://www.pflag.org).