

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

June 19, 2013, 7:00 p.m. (prior to our regular 7:30 meeting)

All are welcome to stay for our monthly meeting.

Refreshments will be served.



Looking to the future

The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring



Volume 22, No. 3

May-June 2013

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

THANK-YOU to our PFLAG volunteers at the March 22 & 23 True Colors Conference on the UConn campus in Storrs: Connie G. & Mike R.; Becca, Charette, Jason & Eric L.; Shelly F.; Krista H.; Bev, Bob & Kelli H.; Kaylee H. Special thanks to Jim W. for setting up and taking down our booth.

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 15 – Bev & Bob

**June 19 – Scholarship Presentation
& Reception**

July 17 – Niki M.

August 21 – Gina & Justin K.

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

- **RAINBOW ROOM:** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) - - A welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning "LGBTQ" teens (13-17 years old). Rainbow Room meets the first Sunday of every month from 2-5 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.
- **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.
- **XX CLUB "Twenty Club"** – The Transsexual Support Group of New England meets the 2nd & 4th Saturday of every month from 2-5 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT www.twentyclub.net.
- **LIVING SOULFULLY** (Men Loving Men In Community) meets the 4th 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 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **QUEER PROM 2013** Rainbow room presents "Once Upon a Time" on Friday, June 21, 7-11 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall, 50 South Main St. \$10 at the door. Contact Juan 860/278-4168, Ext. 17, or intern@hglhc.org.

BISEXUAL OR PANSEXUAL? WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? by Donna Shubrooks, RN STD Program Coordinator
 Reprinted with permission of the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective.

ASK DONNA

Question: It seems like no one really understands people who identify as "bisexual". I am "bi" and I also have friends who are "pansexual". What is the difference and why do you think there is so much division in the broader LGBT community about this?

Bi, Happy & Proud

Dear BHP,

These can be complicated issues and questions that 10 people might answer in 10 different ways. In general, "bisexual" people are romantically and/or sexually attracted to either males or females. Under many circumstances, most of us would actually fall into this category, but life experiences have resulted in us selecting gay or straight identities to define our sexual orientation.

For "pansexual" individuals, the difference is that their romantic and/or sexual attractions to others are regardless of where that person identifies on the gender and sexuality spectrum. Pansexuals can be attracted to cismen, ciswomen, transmen, transwomen, intersex people, androgynous people or others who may define themselves in many different ways. (Cismen or ciswomen are those whose gender self-perception matches their biological birth sex). Pansexuality is considered to be an even more inclusive term than bisexuality.

You are right that there is division even among people in the broader "queer" community. We don't even all accept THAT term. But of course what really matters is that we each find what is right and true for ourselves. Self imposed labels may be sometimes useful, but finding real joy must start with self acceptance, (no matter HOW we identify), living with integrity, and respecting everyone else no matter where their life path leads. If we could just do that, why would labels even matter?

Think about the motto of the Health Collective. It really says it all: **Be well. Be yourself.**

THANK-YOU to our April meeting speaker, Marianne Murawski. Marianne shared with us her experiences as an out lesbian on the New York City police force. While she remained closeted on the job for much of her career, she was eventually "outed" and became a member of the Gay Officers Action League, where she trains new officers on how to work with LGBT people. Marianne also shared her difficult coming out to her strongly religious family. Marianne and her partner have two children.

FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

February 28, 2013

The Obama Administration just filed a brief at the Supreme Court arguing for the first time – in no uncertain terms – **that a law denying gay and lesbian couples the ability to marry is unconstitutional.**

A victory in this case, which challenges California's discriminatory Proposition 8, would be a decisive point in this movement – one I've been working toward since I helped bring the case as co-founder of the American Foundation for Equal Rights. The president's brief brings us one step closer.

Last year, President Obama became our first sitting president to support full marriage equality. Today, he put that support into action. He needs to know that millions of people are with him.

...

In his second inaugural address last month, the president said our journey is not complete until "the love we commit to one another" is equal as well.

His words inspired a nation, and this amicus brief puts them into concrete action. It argues that Proposition 8 violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection. The Obama administration courageously stopped defending the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 2011, but this brief marks the first time it has weighed in on a state law barring same-sex couples from marrying. I'm proud to say that President Obama and the U.S. government are standing by our side against Prop. 8. This move fits within a proud tradition of the United States standing on the right side of history in civil rights cases. Almost 60 years ago, the Justice Department filed an amicus brief in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark school desegregation case.

Our children will look back on the struggle for equality as the defining civil rights battle of our generation, and President Obama deserves our thanks for playing such a bold role in that struggle.

...

I'm prouder than ever, not only to be an American, but to be part of this movement. ...

Sincerely,
Chad Griffin, President



BILL CLINTON: DOMA SHOULD BE OVERTURNED BY SUPREME COURT

March 7, 2013

WASHINGTON -- Former President Bill Clinton is calling on the Supreme Court to overturn a law he signed that bars federal recognition of same-sex marriages.

Clinton says the Defense of Marriage Act is incompatible with the Constitution. He says he signed the law in 1996 to avoid legislation that would have been even worse for gays.

Clinton writes in a Washington Post op-ed that American society has changed. He says he now realizes the law discriminates against gays and provides an excuse for others to discriminate, too.

The Obama administration has stopped defending the law in court, and the Supreme Court is expected to take up a challenge to it later this month.

Separately, the high court is also considering whether California's gay marriage ban should stand.

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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 GLSEN CT:

As you have probably heard on national and local news a Wolcott High School student who was threatened with suspension or expulsion for wearing an anti-LGBT T-shirt last year will be allowed, in the future, to wear shirts expressing his views on homosexuality. See the article in the [Hartford Courant](#) that includes GLSEN's response:

"The student's T-shirt expression on a day when students throughout the country participated in the event to raise awareness about anti-LGBT bullying was 'ironic' said Andy Marra, GLSEN's public relations manager. "We recognize the student has the First Amendment to express his views, but we hope he can agree with the basic premise that all of his peers deserve to feel safe and treated with respect regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity."

Despite these challenges in Connecticut schools, we know that you are among the leaders throughout the state working to make our schools safe and affirming environments for all students, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Peace,

Leif Mitchell & Kristi Leimgruber

Following is a message I received in reply to an article published in our last issue of Caring regarding the Boy Scouts of America's policy changes. Unfortunately, PFLAG National and the HRC were unaware of the work done by Mr. Knapp and his church to obtain even "half a loaf." This is akin to our struggle for same-sex marriage rights here in Connecticut where we first settled for Civil Unions and then were able to move on to full marriage rights.

– PFLAG Caring Editor

Dear Jean,

Thank you for publishing in *Caring* the excellent, thoughtful, and accurate article from PFLAG National about the proposed change in BSA policy re: homosexual membership - new in 1978, and contrary to what their P.R. representatives tell the media that this has been the policy since 1910! It is terrible, outrageous, and discriminatory to allow the Catholic Church, Southern Baptists, Mormons and any organization sponsoring a Cub Pack, Scout Troop, Explorer/Venture Program to continue to prohibit membership of gay boys and leaders.

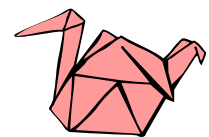
However, for 19 years, I have been trying valiantly to get them to repeal this horrible and totally unnecessary policy. I was expelled from the BSA in 1993, at age 67, solely for being gay. I, and many others, including "Scouting For All," have been completely rebuffed by both the local BSA Councils here in Connecticut and the National Office - no reply to phone calls, letters, or anything else!

The policy now being considered and voted on comes from me, the Peace, Affirmation, and Justice Committee of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, and the Connecticut Yankee Council of the BSA (New Haven & Fairfield County) and asks for "half a loaf" - distasteful and painful as that is! My U.C.C Church, which has a 50 + year old Scout Troop, and has gay Scouts (as do most Troops) could "legally" (according to BSA policies) allow them continued membership. We know which organizations are vehemently voting against changing the policy.

Now that gay supportive organizations, such as PFLAG, the Human Rights Campaign, etc., have asked all their members to call for a negative vote, our adversaries will falsely claim that the gays and gay organizations are against changing the existing policy! If this compromise is voted down it will be a long time before the subject is brought up again at the National BSA, and gay Scouts and leaders will continue to not join, drop out, or be subject to fear and harassment if they stay in.

Dave Knapp, Eagle Scout

Former Professional District Scout Executive

**HALL HIGH SCHOOL GSA PRESENTED "A NIGHT OF 1,000 CRANES"**

On February 27, The Hall High School GSA put on a wonderful night of entertainment. This effort was led by Justin K., a PFLAG member and President of the Hall High School GSA. They organized, built the beautiful set and presented an evening of music, skits and poetry. Origami cranes were made and sold to raise funds for the Ali Forney Center, an LGBT youth shelter in Brooklyn, NY. To date, \$350 has been received, with more on the way. Several PFLAG members were delighted to attend.

WHY THE DAY OF SILENCE IS IMPORTANT:

In response to GLSEN's Day of Silence, Senator Dennis Guth of Klemme took to the Iowa Senate floor yesterday with some pretty horrific and ignorant comments about LGBT people:

“Just as there are multiple ways that your smoking hurts me, such as secondhand smoke, increased insurance costs ... so it is with same-sex relationships ... there are health risks that my family incurs because of the increase in sexually transmitted infections that this lifestyle invites. For example there are more and more medical tests required before giving blood or giving birth.”

The shocking words certainly speak for themselves, but they also speak to why GLSEN's Day of Silence is so important. LGBT youth face this type of harassment and discrimination in school *every day*.

Our research shows that more than 80% of LGBT students are verbally harassed each year at school, almost 40% are physically harassed and nearly **20% are physically assaulted** because of their sexual orientation.

GLSEN's Day of Silence and the hundreds of thousands of students who participate bring attention to this real problem, by educating students and adults about the consequences of bullying in our schools. Unfortunately, Focus on the Family, the American Family Association, Mission: America and their supporters, like Senator Guth, still try to demonize our work and the students we work to protect every day.

Sincerely,

Eliza Byard, PhD

Executive Director, GLSEN

**GLAD FILES COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF MA TRANSGENDER WOMAN DENIED ACCESS AT HOMELESS SHELTER**

In a case highlighting both the clear need for anti-discrimination protections for transgender people in public accommodations, and the critical issue of LGBT youth homelessness, GLAD filed a complaint March 22 with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) on behalf of a young transgender woman who was denied appropriate access to the women's dormitory at a local homeless shelter.

Ms. Doe shared her experience at the area shelter with staff members at the Boston GLASS community center, who put her in touch with GLAD to explore legal options for addressing the mistreatment she faced.

Ms. Doe resided at the shelter between June and September of 2012. Upon her initial arrival, she asked for a bed in the women's dormitory. When the staff learned that she is a transgender woman, they refused her access, and instead housed her in a segregated room designated for storage of donated clothing. There was no bed in the room, and Ms. Doe had to sleep on a mat on the floor. She also describes the room as being “unkempt and dirty,” and lacking air conditioning, which was available in the women's dorm.

In addition to being segregated and subjected to substandard conditions, the discrimination Ms. Doe faced at the shelter also barred her from accessing additional services offered there, including a long-term housing and substance abuse recovery program.

Because current case law is split as to whether homeless shelters are housing accommodations or public accommodations, GLAD Attorney Allison Wright assisted Ms. Doe in filing a complaint against the shelter for both housing discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex, and public accommodations discrimination on the basis of sex.

“Gender identity is currently not protected in public accommodations in Massachusetts,” says Wright. “But Ms. Doe's experience of being denied both fair housing and access to critical services from which she could have benefited clearly points to the need for such protections for transgender people in Massachusetts. The high rate of homelessness among LGBT youth, and particularly LGBT youth of color, should encourage the Commonwealth to do everything in its power to protect and assist young people in Ms. Doe's situation.”

The complaint seeks monetary damages for Ms. Doe and policy changes at the shelter.

“The treatment Ms. Doe faced is not uncommon,” says GLAD Transgender Rights Project Director Jennifer Levi. “Even when shelter staff have some competency on LGBT issues, they often don't have clear information on how to treat transgender clients fairly. We are hoping one result of this complaint will be a model policy that can be used at shelters throughout the state to improve conditions for transgender people.”



Just like any other couple, Matthew and I are working around the clock to make sure everything will be perfect for our wedding—the ceremony, the reception, even the cake.

But for us, there's more to worry about than just the wedding details. Imagine .. the anxiety and fear of wondering how you will live together as a family—without federal support—when your military husband or wife is transferred to an overseas duty station.

This is not just a hypothetical situation for Matthew and me. Matthew is a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps and he will be transferred to Japan this summer for at least two years. Traditionally, the military provides support for families being relocated, but not for families like ours.

Matthew's dedication to the military and protecting our country is just one of the many reasons why I love him, but our family is not the type of military family for which things happen easily. In order for me to travel with him when he is transferred, I'll have to travel as a civilian. As far as the military is concerned, I'm not even there.

This is just one in a long list of 1,138 protections and responsibilities that married same-sex couples are denied because of DOMA.

Every day, Matthew and I are reminded that our marriage is different from everybody else's marriage—and it's just not right. Until DOMA is repealed, gay and lesbian service members will not be seen as equals by the military and the federal government.

Thank you,
Ben Schock

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 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

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

Central and Western Massachusetts

PFLAG FRANKLIN-HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER

Northhampton
 When: Second Tuesday of every month
 Where: Highland Valley Elder Services,
 Cutlery Building, 320 Riverside Drive
 Helpline: 413/625-6636
 Email: 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

CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD

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

On June 19, 2013
 PFLAG Hartford will present
 The Helen and Bob Brill Scholarships
 SUPPORTING OUR GAY & LESBIAN
 CHILDREN AND THEIR ALIES

Recipients of our Brill Scholarships will be highlighted in the July/August issue of PFLAG Hartford *Caring*



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 jcmalinski48@gmail.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.