



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

August 2009

www.pflagsanjosel.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A few nights ago Bob and I watched the *Primetime: Family Secrets* show chronicling Chloe and Rene Prince's life during the time husband Ted became wife Chloe. In many ways it was yet another tragic story of someone suppressing who they really are to fit into society's mold of who they are supposed to be. Chloe was very happy after her transition to being a woman, but would have liked to be a wife and be with a man. Rene was forcing herself to accept their situation because of the family she committed to, but really wanted a husband. Their situation seemed far from ideal.

I kept thinking about how their lives would have been different if Ted, who as a teenager had told his mother that he felt he should be a girl, could have known from an earlier age how to live as who he was.

How would so many families' lives be different if young people all knew that being gay or transgendered was OK instead of feeling they had to bury those feelings in a heterosexual marriage.

All of us in PFLAG know the importance of family, and of supporting GLBTQ people of all ages towards accepting themselves. We work to help families love and accept their GLBTQ family members unconditionally and to know that gender identity and sexual orientation just represent other ways of being.

But there are many hurdles in our society that must be overcome before most people see the world as we do. There are still lots of messages out there telling kids and adults that they and their family members are not OK. That they must learn to fit into society's mold or pay the price, even as we know the real price they pay for doing just that.

The same day we watched this show, I got a message from the Billy DeFrank Center in San Jose—an organization striving to help kids and adults to find acceptance—saying the Center will have to close its doors if funds cannot be raised. How many people has the DeFrank Center enabled to live their lives as who they are? Indeed, how many lives has the Center literally saved? We thought of this as Chloe (as Ted) told of coming close to ending his life one night, and if it weren't for his 2 boys, he might well have.

The DeFrank Center has been serving our community for 28 years, helping everyone from youth to seniors. Recently Paul Wysocki, a long time San Jose gay activist, was hired to turn the Center around. In an article in the July 26 *Mercury News* he said that in order to keep things going on a much tighter budget he hopes to get people to commit to monthly donations totaling \$20,000. And he expects much of that needs to come from the GLBT community and its supporters. (Among others, that's us — PFLAG.)

MEETING CALENDAR

~ AUGUST ~

Aug. 10 Redwood City Meeting - 7:30 PM
Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)

Aug. 12 San Jose Meeting - 7:30 PM
First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)

TBA Board Meeting
Date and time to be announced
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Aug. 20 Straight Spouse Support - 7:30 PM
Call San Jose Helpline for info.
(3rd Thursday of the month)

Gilroy — Call the Helpline for
support and information:
(408) 270-8182

Sept. 3 — Newsletter Stuffing

2009 Schedule

Last Thursday of Oct.
1st Thursday of Sept, Oct.
Last week of Dec.



→ **September Newsletter Deadline:**

Thursday, Aug. 27

With gay rights increasingly accepted, that's not always an obvious sell.

"People say, 'Well, what do you need a center for? You guys are all comfortable,'" explains Wysocki. "Yes, I'm comfortable. But there are still people who drive around the Center five times before they have the guts to come in. There's a lot of diversity in this valley, but there are still kids who face harassment."

It's our Valley. Let's do what we can to help.

Laurie Carter

PFLAG Support Meetings

Redwood City — August 10

Charles Lerner, Coordinator of **Pride and Joy**, a **Bay Area LGBTQ foster care/adoption program** will be our speaker. Family Builders, a nonprofit agency, established Pride and Joy two years ago to address the unique needs of LGBTQ youth in foster care. Sadly, many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth end up alone and unwanted. Rejected by their birth families and by potential foster parents because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, these youth survive in a system that cannot adequately fulfill the role of parent or family. There are thousands of children and youth in foster care in the Bay Area. A disproportionate number of these children are LGBTQ. Until recently, this group has been invisible.

Family Builders is asking for the community to step up to help these young people grow up to be healthy and happy adults. They need people — gay and straight, young and old, couples and singles — to open their hearts and homes to these youth. Family Builders understands that not all PFLAG members will be able to open their homes to a youth. There are however several other contributions members may be able to make. Charles looks forward to speaking with the groups to explore these possibilities.

If you are interested in this program and unable to attend, please feel free to call Charles at 510-272-0204 to learn more.



San Jose — August 12

Ray Hixson will address **current issues in the marriage equality movement**, including:

- Recent polling studies on where people in California currently stand, and the key issues that influence views on marriage equality
- An update on key strategic decisions being made regarding possible 2010/2012 ballot initiatives
- The latest legal developments, and history of the legal struggle against GLBT discrimination and oppression
- Volunteer needs and opportunities in the movement.

Ray is an attorney who was a partner in two of California's largest and most prestigious firms, and he founded a new law firm in September 2008 called Hixson Nagatani LLP. Ray had a Southern Baptist upbringing in Tennessee, and experienced harassment in school for being gay from 5th grade through his high school graduation. He is co-chair of the Santa Clara County Chapter of Marriage Equality USA, and is a frequent speaker on legal issues involving marriage equality and discrimination against GLBT people. His passion is to promote education on scientific, religious, and legal GLBT issues, to defeat the myths and ignorance that underlie homophobia.

Scholarship Update

This year we awarded five \$2000 scholarships. One of these scholarships was in honor of Joyce Palmer Fulton. In order to be able to do the same for next year we need to raise about \$6,000 for our Scholarship Fund.

So far this year we have received contributions totaling \$3,499.00 plus \$500 in honor of Joyce Fulton. Hopefully, we can raise another \$1,500 in honor of Joyce Fulton plus another \$501.00 to reach our goal by the end of the year.

If there is anything that you can do to help, it would be so appreciated. Supporting GLBTQ and ally student activists is such a special thing that our Chapter does.

Thank you!

A Letter to PFLAG

On Sunday, June 28, 2009, my wife Marsha and I had the wonderful opportunity to march in the San Francisco Gay Pride Parade with the PFLAG contingent. As we walked down Market Street, the love, support and appreciation poured off the sidewalks and washed over us. If anyone ever wondered if PFLAG was having positive results, all they needed to do was to experience this incredible outpouring of emotion from the crowd. WOW! PFLAG admirers were everywhere along the route.

Sadly, despite that support, much work needs to be done. As you know, the issue of equality of gays and lesbians is most visible in the conflict over same-sex marriage. I encourage you to continue to speak out to others who are not supportive in an effort to engage in dialogs about this issue.

Richard

Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits

Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits (BAAIT-S) is a community-based volunteer organization offering culturally relevant activities for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex Native Americans, their families and friends.

Two-Spirit refers to the commonly shared notion among many Native American tribes that some individuals naturally possess and manifest both masculine and feminine spiritual qualities. American society commonly identifies Two-Spirit People as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Visit their website for more information: www.baait.org/

**For a thought to change the world,
it must first change the life of the
person who carries it.**

Albert Camus

Way To Go, PFLAG Cable TV Crew!!!



Dear PFLAG TV crew and friends:

I'm sure you'll be proud to learn that our PFLAG cable TV show, *Parents, Families & Friends*, has won a 2009 Hometown Video Award!

Hometown is a national competition, open to all public, educational, and governmental (PEG) cable-access shows throughout the United States. It has three divisions — youth, non-professional, and professional — with about 40 categories in each division. This year there were about 1,200 entries, or an average of 10 entries per category.

I submitted episode #0808 (Jen King & Melissa Holmes—www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R5b4jrRMMs) in two categories: Informational Talk Show and Gay/Lesbian. In 2007 we won in the Gay/Lesbian category, but this is the first time we won in the Informational Talk Show category — easily one of the most competitive categories (37 entries), and significantly more competitive than the Gay/Lesbian category.

In summary, this award is among the highest honors a cable-access show can receive. Thanks to all of you for making it happen!

Note: If you are interested in learning how to become involved with the production of this show, you will receive great training, and the crew will be happy to have your help!

W.S.



The New Beginning Initiative

PFLAG National, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and a group of other expert organizations, have come together to create the *New Beginning Initiative*, a project designed to push for concrete federal administration policy and regulatory changes directly benefiting the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and eliminating discrimination from federal policies.

The initiative, an outcome of the National Policy Roundtable, began more than a year ago in preparation for a more LGBT-favorable administration. More than 80 initial policies recommended for changes span the authority of the White House and more than 30 federal agencies. The recommendations focus on pro-LGBT public policy changes the Obama administration can implement without legislative action.

The New Beginning Initiative is the first time such a coalition of LGBT and allied organizations has come together in this way to affect administration policy.

For more information, and to track progress on their electronic scorecard, see:

<http://pflagblog.blogspot.com/2009/06/pflag-to-play-key-role-in-new-beginning.html>

www.thetaskforce.org/newadmin/newbeginning_intro.html



Judy Rickard Speaks Up for Immigration Rights

Judy Rickard, a long-time San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG member and supporter, took early retirement and a reduced pension to spend more time with her partner, a British citizen whose stays in the U.S. are limited to six months.

Rickard, 61, would have preferred to keep working at San Jose State University and sponsor her partner, Karin Bogliolo, for U.S. residency, just as heterosexual couples can. But U.S. law does not allow for that.

That could change, as more than 100 lawmakers in the House and about 20 in the Senate have signed onto bills that would add the United States to the 19 countries that already recognize same-sex couples for immigration purposes.

Gay rights groups are encouraged that President Obama has signaled that he would like to include couples like Rickard and Bogliolo in the bills. The long-standing fight over the country's estimated 36,000 same sex couples of two nationalities is a small but emotional part of the debate over immigration reform, and including same-sex couples in the mix could make it harder to pass an immigration overhaul.

A key ally in past immigration fights, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said it would not support a measure that has a same-sex provision, saying it would "erode the institution of marriage and family by according marriage-like immigration benefits to same sex relationships."

Rep. Mike Honda, lead author of the *Reuniting Families Act*, credited Rickard, one of his constituents, for bringing the issue to his attention. Honda said his Japanese heritage contributed to his taking a closer look at protecting same-sex couples through an overhaul of the nation's immigration law.

Japanese-Americans were sent to internment camps during the fallout from Pearl Harbor and redefined as persons of enemy alien ancestry, Honda said. "The lack of political leadership played a big part in what happened to us," Honda said. "And that's true in almost every civil rights case."

The NAACP and the American Bar Association also spoke in favor of including "permanent partners" as part of an immigration bill, saying that current law amounts to discrimination.

Rickard said she may reluctantly move to Great Britain or another country when her partner's current travel visa expires in November. Bogliolo, however, said she would prefer to live in the U.S. for her partner's sake.

"Judy has elderly parents and family here and she's also lived here all her life whereas I've lived in many different countries," Bogliolo said. "I think Judy would find it very difficult after a whole life in San Jose to move over to Europe, so I decided if at all possible that I would move over here."

Read more at: www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2009/07/18/national/a073002D38.DTL

Our thoughts are with Judy and Karin, praying that the *Reuniting Families Act* will soon become law.



The PFLAG NEWSLETTER

Published monthly by San Jose/Peninsula Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, Phone: (408) 270-8182.

Peninsula Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is a tax- exempt, volunteer, community based nonprofit organization.

The San Jose/Peninsula chapter is a member of National PFLAG which is headquartered in Washington, D.C..

Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.

**Would you like to volunteer?
Call the information lines.
We need your help — Call today!**



MEETING TOPICS ♥ 2009



Meetings are held from 7:30—9:00 PM
Small groups for support are held at all meetings.

Redwood City: Charles Lerner: LGBTQ foster youth
San Jose: Ray Hixson: Marriage Equality update



Please bring a food donation for AIDS services providers.

PFLAG'S MISSION

We provide love and support for all family members and friends. We work to create an environment of understanding so that our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender loved ones can live with dignity and respect. These are our goals:

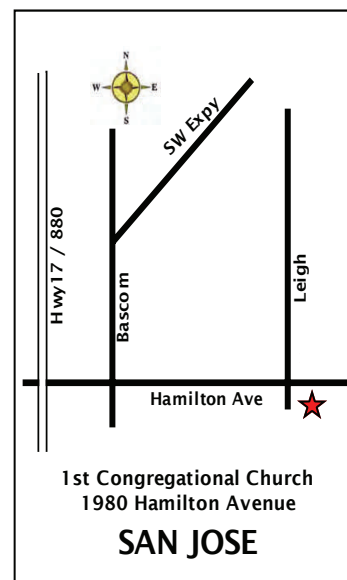
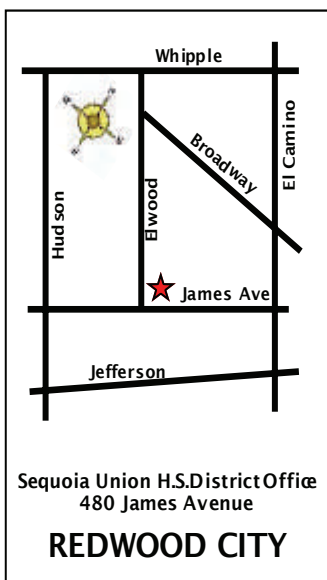
SUPPORT • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY



WHAT IS PFLAG?

"PFLAG" is Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays. We are a national support, education and advocacy organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people, their families, friends and allies. With 200,000 members and supporters, and local affiliates in more than 500 communities across the U.S. and abroad, PFLAG is the largest grassroots-based family organization of its kind. PFLAG is a non-profit organization and is not affiliated with any religious or political institutions.

Your financial support makes PFLAG's work possible. As a chapter member you can also become engaged in the vital work of providing support, education and advocacy in your community. Even if you're not sure that you need PFLAG, remember that PFLAG NEEDS YOU!



MEMBERSHIP IN SAN JOSE/PENINSULA PFLAG ~ 2009

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