



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

May 2009

www.pflagsanjose.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

♥ NEED HELP? ♥ Call the Help/Info Lines:

♥ (408) 270-8182 ♥ Gilroy: (408) 846-9105

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What's it like for kids in school these days? Two experiences this week demonstrated the best and worst of dealing with differences in the lives of our nation's children.

First I made certificates for 5 young people, Jonathan, Hiu, Parisa, Leslie and Jessie, to honor them for winning our PFLAG scholarships. These words are on the Award certificates: "PFLAG scholarships are given to individuals who have demonstrated support for justice and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning persons in their communities."

Subsequently I read Charles M. Blow's column in the New York Times (<http://blow.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/24/two-little-boys/>) about two 11 year old boys, Carl and Jaheem, who tragically took their own lives. One in Massachusetts, one in Georgia, they had both "endured relentless homophobic taunts at school."

We can all be very proud of the 5 high school kids who will be receiving our honors at our San Jose meeting on May 13th. They have all dedicated themselves to making their schools and communities a better place for everyone. They have worked to ensure that their schoolmates are safe and have a chance to learn.

At the same time, we mourn for the lives of two children, lost before they even had a chance to experience high school. I am reminded of a sign on a teacher's door at Woodside Elementary: "Sticks and stones can break your bones but words can break your heart."

These two boys were victims not only of homophobia (neither was known to have identified as gay) but of "today's poisonous boy culture ... where the message is that to be something other than the narrowest, stupidest sort of guy's guy is to be unworthy of even being alive."

It occurs to me how far women have come in the freedom to be whomever they choose. Girls can dress as they want, be athletic or bookworms, be tender or tough, brave or easily frightened, enjoy sports or ballet or anything in between. And yet boys still need to wear boy clothes, be tough, not cry, like sports, play rough and not be interested in any "girl" things.

Thanks to PFLAG, thanks to the GSAs in our schools, and thanks to many straight allies, perhaps the next generation of teachers and parents will help young children to value and accept everyone's differences and allow all students to feel safe in school, no matter their interests, or the way they dress and behave.

Come to the awards ceremony at the May San Jose meeting, no matter where you live. It inspires hope to be with these bright, articulate young people who will be tomorrow's leaders.

Thank you all for what you do.
Laurie

MEETING CALENDAR

~ MAY ~

May 11 Redwood City Meeting - 7:30 PM
Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)

May 13 San Jose Meeting - 7:30 PM
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD NIGHT
First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)

May 20 Board Meeting - 7:30 PM
(3rd Wednesday of the month)
ALL ARE WELCOME!

May 21 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) 846-9105

May 28 — Newsletter Stuffing

2009 Schedule

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



→ **June/July Newsletter Deadline:**
Thursday, May 21



PFLAG Scholarship Awards Ceremony



Wednesday, May 13
7:30 PM

First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. , San Jose

Note: This event will take the place of our usual San Jose Support Meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PFLAG Support Meetings

Redwood City — May 11

Our program topic will be Suicide Prevention. More than 30,000 people in the United States die by suicide every year. It is this country's 11th leading cause of death, and the third leading cause of death among people ages 15-24. Suicide is not about wanting to die, but about a powerful need for pain to end. People choose suicide because they feel unable to cope with feelings of pain, hopelessness, helplessness, isolation, and uncertainties. Suicide is a permanent "solution" to what is most likely a temporary problem.

The more you know about suicide, the better you will be able to help someone struggling with these issues. You will learn more about the warning signs of suicide, and what you can do to help promote suicide awareness and prevention.

The speaker will be a staff member from the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Center, one of 23 programs offered by Youth and Family Enrichment Services (YFES), a nonprofit based in San Carlos, serving all of San Mateo County. To learn more, go to www.YFES.org

San Jose — May 13

Annual PFLAG Scholarship Awards Ceremony
More information on page 3!

Marriage Equality Meet-Up/Potluck May 9

All are welcome to meet up with local activists to share a potluck dinner and an evening of conversation and camaraderie in support of marriage equality on Saturday, May 9 from 6 - 8 PM on the Stanford University campus. Bring a dish to share from your kitchen or favorite deli. This event is co-sponsored by the Peninsula Marriage Equality Coalition (PMEC) and the Emma Goldman Society for Queer Liberation.

Sign up on the PMEC website to receive the exact address:
www.peninsulamariageequalitycoalition.com

Annual Bay Area Gay Prom June 13th

Project Eden Lambda Youth invites all LGBTQ and straight ally youth (age 20 and younger) to the 15th annual Gay Prom, 7-12 PM, at Centennial Hall, 22292 Foot-hill Blvd. in Hayward 94541. The theme is *A Walk in Wonderland*.

Cost: \$25.00 per person at the door or for advance tickets contact (510) 247-8200.

This is a substance-free event!

For more information, go to:
www.gayprom.org or www.myspace.com/gayprom

Pride Parades — Save these dates!

**San Jose Pride Festival and
Parade — June 13-14**

**San Francisco Pride Parade —
June 28**



Join PFLAG in June to celebrate GLBT Pride! We will again have the gay-ly decorated bus in San Francisco for those who don't wish to walk. More information coming soon!



Redwood City

4th of July Parade

The PFLAG Redwood City Fourth of July Parade committee is off to a good start on participation this year. The overall theme for the Parade is *All Things Musical*.

One suggestion for the PFLAG contingent that already has a running start and is a natural for our community is *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. Our PFLAG theme will need all the pizzazz that we can give it — and to accomplish that, we need to hear from you!

If you want to march in the parade with the PFLAG contingent or have ideas for making our contingent stand out and be noticed, contact pflag-info@pflagsanjose.org

Take Action for LGBT Immigration Rights

The **Uniting American Families Act (UAFSA -H.R. 1024/S. 424)** was introduced by Rep. Jerrold Nadler and Sen. Patrick Leahy. The U.S. government discriminates against gay and lesbian bi-national couples by not allowing them to sponsor their foreign-born life partners for immigration. Thus, they face the terrible choice of separating from the person they love or leaving their country.

The UAFSA would fulfill the pledge of family unification under current U.S. immigration policy by allowing gay and lesbian Americans to sponsor their life partners for immigration to the United States. *The Washington Post* and *The San Francisco Chronicle* both recently endorsed passage of UAFSA, and the American Bar Association recently adopted a resolution endorsing UAFSA.

Contact your Senators and Representatives to help spread the word about this very important issue. Your action can help ensure that this bill will pass!

Learn more and take action at National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) website: www.nclrights.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issue_immigration_uafa



Marriage Equality — State By State

Massachusetts — Full marriage equality (State Supreme Court decision).

Connecticut — Full marriage equality (State Supreme Court decision).

Iowa — Full marriage equality, as of April 3, when Iowa's Supreme Court ruled that the state's ban on same-sex marriages was unconstitutional. In its summary, the Supreme Court said the ruling "reaffirmed that a statute inconsistent with the Iowa Constitution must be declared void, even though it may be supported by strong and deep-seated traditional beliefs and popular opinion". It said the ruling would remove language from Iowa's legal code which limited marriage to being between a man and a woman.

Vermont — Full marriage equality, as of April 7, when Vermont became the fourth state to legalize gay marriage — and the first to do so with a legislature's vote. The Legislature voted to override Gov. Jim Douglas' veto of a bill allowing gays and lesbians to marry. The vote was 23-5 to override in the state Senate and 100-49 to override in the House. Under Vermont law, two-thirds of each chamber had to vote for override. The vote came nine years after Vermont adopted its first-in-the-nation civil unions law.

District of Columbia — On April 7, the D.C. Council overwhelmingly voted to recognize gay marriages from other states — a move city lawmakers lauded as a step toward legalizing such marriages in the city. If signed into law, the bill will allow gay D.C. couples to marry in one of four states that allow such marriages, then return to the District and have the marriage recognized under city law. The D.C. legislation faces final approval by the council next month, then it must be reviewed by Congress, which has final say over most city laws.

Maine, New Hampshire, New York — legislation currently in progress.

New Jersey, New York — Recent polls find that 53 percent of New York State voters support gay marriage, as do 49 percent of New Jersey residents (43 percent opposed). New Jersey lawmakers are likely to consider a gay marriage bill later this year. NJ now offers same-sex couples civil unions, which offer the legal benefits of marriage.

California, New Hampshire, Oregon, Washington and the District of Columbia have laws that recognize either civil unions or domestic partnerships, affording same-sex couples rights similar to marriage.

Go get married, live happily ever after,
live the American dream.

Dennis Johnson,
Lead co-counsel for the same-sex couples
who won the right to marry in Iowa



PFLAG Scholarship Awards Ceremony 2009

Please join us on Wednesday, May 13 at 7:30 PM for the 2009 PFLAG Scholarship Awards Ceremony. The event will be held at First Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh) in San Jose. We have another wonderful group of students this year! Let's join together to celebrate their impressive accomplishments.

Light refreshments will be served immediately following the award ceremony. Many thanks to this year's Scholarship Committee members and readers!

The future belongs to those who give
the next generation reason for hope.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Everyone Matters: Dignity and Safety for Transgender People

Alishia is a firefighter. Enoch is a university professor. Dana is a software engineer. Jesse is an HIV prevention educator. Each makes invaluable contributions in the workplace and in the community. And each faces the threat of losing a job, being denied housing or health care, and suffering violence and harassment simply for being transgender.

Everyone Matters: Dignity and Safety for Transgender People is a new video produced by the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) Transgender Rights Project, the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, and MassEquality. In the film, Alishia, Enoch, Dana, and Jesse talk about their jobs, their family, their hopes, and their worries. Framed by hope and optimism, their stories nevertheless show how vulnerable transgender people still are, and highlight the need for comprehensive laws to ensure that people can obtain and retain employment, remain safe on the streets, and have access to health care and housing.

To watch *Everyone Matters* on YouTube, go to:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq6gfvJONSU

TNET — PFLAG's Transgender Network

Visit <http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=380> for information, resources, support and advocacy provided by this "virtual" PFLAG chapter.

New Advocacy Page

Check out the new Advocacy page on our website:
www.pflagsanjose.org/advocacy.php

The PFLAG NEWSLETTER

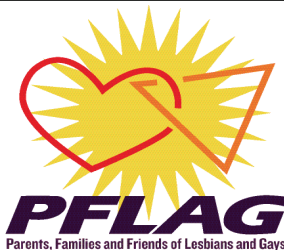
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Peninsula Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is a tax- exempt, volunteer, community based nonprofit organization.

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: Suicide Prevention
San Jose: PFLAG Scholarship Awards Ceremony



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:

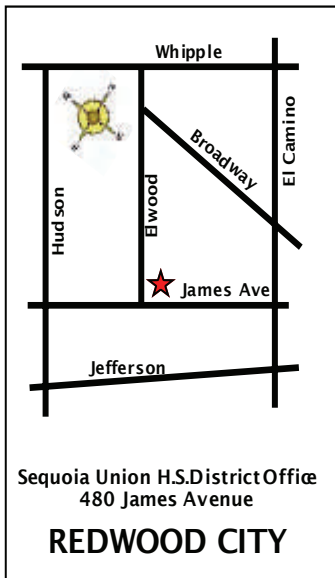
SUPPORT • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY



WHAT IS PFLAG?

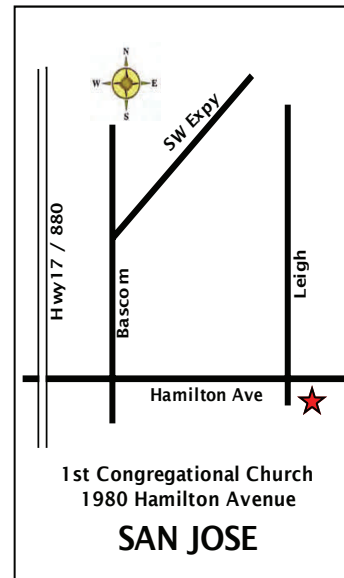
"PFLAG" is Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays. We are a national support, education and advocacy organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people, their families, friends and allies. With 200,000 members and supporters, and local affiliates in more than 500 communities 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!



Sequoia Union H.S. District Office
480 James Avenue

REDWOOD CITY



1st Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Avenue

SAN JOSE



MEMBERSHIP IN SAN JOSE/PENINSULA PFLAG ~ 2009

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Make checks payable and mail to: PFLAG • PO Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087. Your donations & membership are tax deductible.