



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

September/October 2009

www.pflagsanjose.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Note: As this newsletter goes to press, Laurie and Bob are visiting their son and his family in Vermont, enjoying every minute they get to spend with Maddie (19 months) and Del (3 months). Laurie wished to use this space to honor Senator Edward Kennedy, who, at age 77, died on Wednesday, August 26 of brain cancer.

We mourn the loss of Senator Edward Kennedy, a true champion of the people and a dear friend to our community. This tribute to Senator Kennedy is from the PFLAG National web site:



Senator Edward Kennedy, who became known as "the liberal lion of the Senate" over the 47 years he served in the chamber, scored a 100 percent rating from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), introducing historic pieces of pro-LGBT legislation and making critical votes. He was one of only 14 senators who voted against the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that prohibits the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages. He was an outspoken supporter for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and of increased funding for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

During the unsuccessful attempt by conservatives to pass the 2004 Federal Marriage Amendment constitutionally banning same-sex marriage, Kennedy said from the Senate floor, "We all know what this issue is about. It's not about how to protect the sanctity of marriage, or how to deal with activist judges. It's about politics and an attempt to drive a wedge between one group of citizens and the rest of the country, solely for partisan advantage ... The Constitution has never been used as a tool to entrench currently popular views at the expense of an unpopular minority - and it should not be used that way now."

Among his slate of progressive legislative sponsorships, Kennedy pushed such bills as the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

In 2007, he introduced the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act, which passed as an amendment to the Defense Department reauthorization bill but was eventually dropped from the legislation after President George W. Bush threatened to veto it. Kennedy reintroduced the measure this year with 45 cosponsors and again it was attached as an amendment to the 2010 defense appropriations legislation, which must be reconciled with the House version of the bill before being sent to President Obama's desk.

Kennedy also introduced ENDA in 2007 after the House legislation went through a tumultuous journey that ultimately stripped it of protections for transgender individuals. This year, he and lead senate sponsors Jeff Merkeley, Olympia

MEETING CALENDAR

~ SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER ~

Sep. 9 San Jose Meeting - 7:30 PM
Oct. 14 First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)

Sep. 14 Redwood City Meeting - 7:30 PM
Oct. 12 Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)

Sep. 15 Board Meeting
Oct. 20 UU Church of Palo Alto
505 E. Charleston Rd., Palo Alto
(3rd Tuesday of the month)
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sep. 17 Straight Spouse Support - 7:30 PM
Oct. 15 Call San Jose Helpline for info.
(3rd Thursday of the month)

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

Newsletter Stuffing will be held in San Mateo
Contact the editor for more info

▼

→ **Nov/Dec Newsletter Deadline:**
Thursday, Oct. 22

Snowe, and Susan Collins, reintroduced the legislation, which became the first transgender-inclusive bill in the Senate's history.

"We had no greater hero in Congress," said David Smith, vice president of programs for HRC who also worked for Kennedy as communications director for a little over a year. "His loss is stunning; he's not replaceable."

To view Senator Kennedy's long record of support and leadership on GLBT issues, go to:
<http://www.hrc.org/13439.htm>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September PFLAG Support Meetings

San Jose — September 9

Rahel Negusse, Family Recruiter of **Pride and Joy**, a Bay Area LGBTQ foster care/adoption program will present our program. Family Builders, a nonprofit agency, addresses 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. 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. Although not all PFLAG members will be able to open their homes to a youth, other contributions are possible. Rahel looks forward to exploring these possibilities with us.

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



Redwood City — September 14

Our speaker will be attorney **Ray Hixson**, co-chair of the Santa Clara County Chapter of **Marriage Equality USA**, and 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. Ray 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.



For a new season of hope that my Uncle Teddy envisioned, where we rise to our best ideals, and close the book on the old politics of race and gender, group against group, and straight against gay, we pray to the Lord.

Jack Kennedy Schlossberg, taking part in the Prayers of the Faithful at his uncle's funeral

October PFLAG Support Meetings

Redwood City — October 12

San Jose — October 14

Drew Mayen, Resource Family Recruiter for **EMQ Families First**, will be our speaker at both meetings. EMQ Families First provides full-adoption services, teen transition programs and a mentoring program. The nonprofit agency works with families of all shapes and sizes including same-sex parents, single parents, as well as alternative families who want to support children and families in crisis.

Drew will cover foster care and adoption opportunities and the foster-adopt program that will provide a no-cost adoption level home study to families. The agency connects families with adoption social workers who are there with the families every step of the way in the adoption process from the start to finish.

EMQ Families First also has a unique program supporting at-risk teenagers that is designed to help them build permanent family connections. The participating parents mentor and provide role models for the youth in their home as the agency staff works with them for six months to determine their hopes, dreams and goals and designs an individualized plan for them.

Drew will bring information about a mentoring program which connects community members to a youth in need of a role model and coach. The volunteer works with the youth two hours per week or four hours every other week.

For more information about EMQ Families First, see www.emqff.org.



Newsletter News

Due to your editor's vacation at the end of September, we have a combined September/October issue this time.

We are trying out a new printer in San Mateo, so the stuffing of this issue and the next has moved to San Mateo as well. An update will follow!



—> Mark your Calendar <—

- Sept. 10 - *Ballot Measure 9* shows at the DeFrank Center
- Sept. 12 - DeFrank Center Rainbow Elephant Community Sale
- Sept. 13 - Rev. Troy Perry at San Jose MCC celebration service
- Sept. 26 - BAYMEC Dinner—Lt. Dan Choi
- Oct. 11 - National Coming Out Day
- Oct. 11 - GLBT Equality March in D.C. equalityacrossamerica.org

PFLAG Scholarship Fund Update

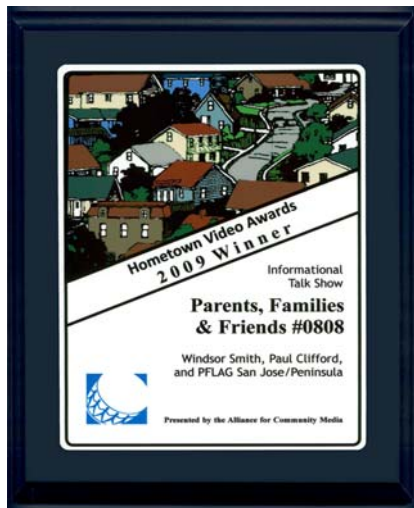


This year we awarded five \$2000 scholarships to worthy students who made a difference in the lives of GLBT members of their communities. One of these scholarships was in memory of Joyce Palmer Fulton, an active PFLAG member, award winning teacher, and the previous editor of this newsletter. **In order to be able to continue this great program 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!



PFLAG Cable TV — It's a Winner!

Our PFLAG cable TV show, *Parents, Families & Friends*, won a 2009 Hometown Video Award!

Hometown is a national competition, open to all public, educational, and governmental cable-access shows throughout the United States.

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

Episode #0808 (Jen King & Melissa Holmes—www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R5b4jrRMMs) was submitted 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.

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!



Meeting Lt. Dan Choi

by Timothy

Without sounding too much like a back-to-school writing assignment, my meeting Lt. Dan Choi this summer was too important to not put down in words.

Dan, a West Point graduate and Arabic-speaking Iraqi war veteran, now fights his discharge from the service while advocating an end to America's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. After coming out on *The Rachel Maddow Show* earlier this year, Dan found himself speaking at events across the country which included being a Grand Marshal in San Francisco's 2009 Gay Pride Parade.

An excellent speaker and very personable man, Dan's knowledge of the military from the inside makes him a perfect spokesman to denounce the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. His focus on unit cohesiveness strikes directly at the primary straw man argument for keeping DADT. He emphasizes how deceit fosters lack of trust and how the subsequent loss of members does more to destroy the unit than anyone's sexual orientation.

As the son of a Korean American Baptist minister, Dan also provides insight on the marriage equality debate and issues specific to his parents' religious community. From listening to his talks and speaking with him one-on-one, I came away with a fresh understanding of how various laws and policies do more damage to groups they purport to protect.

Dan will be speaking at BAYMEC's upcoming Fundraising Dinner on September 26. Here's a perfect opportunity to hear directly from Dan regarding issues which affect each of us.



Join PFLAG at BAYMEC September 26

You are invited to be seated at the PFLAG table for the 25th anniversary dinner of BAYMEC, the political action committee (PAC) for San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, Saturday, September 26 at the San Jose Fairmont Hotel. You can sign up and pay on the web site www.baymec.net The cost is \$150 per person.

The featured speaker is Lt. Dan Choi, an Arabic translator and US Army combat veteran of the Iraq war who was discharged from military service because he is gay. He is now an effective advocate against the "Don't Ask, Don't tell" policy.

Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee (BAYMEC) has been lobbying and fighting for LGBT civil rights for 25 years. Go to the web site to learn more about this powerful organization founded by Wiggys Sivertsen and Ken Yeager.

Several PFLAGers have already signed up. The contact persons for PFLAG are **Pat and Pete**. Please let them know of your participation. When you sign up online, be sure to indicate that you wish to be seated at the PFLAG table.

If you can't attend, but wish to support BAYMEC, please consider donating a \$75 scholarship to help another PFLAG member attend!



The PFLAG NEWSLETTER

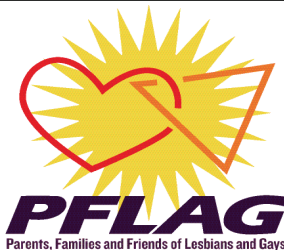
Published monthly by San Jose/Peninsula Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, Phone: (408) 270-8182.

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.

September: *San Jose:* LGBTQ Foster Youth
Redwood City: Marriage Equality Update

October: *San Jose & Redwood City:* EMQ Families First



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:

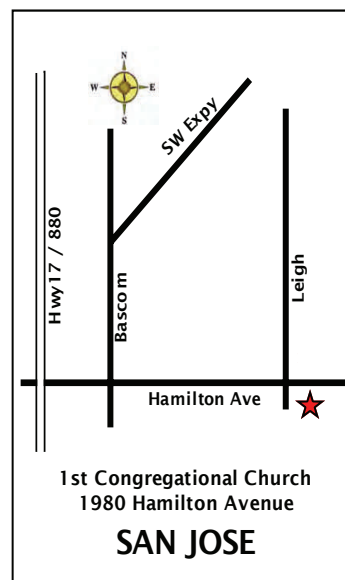
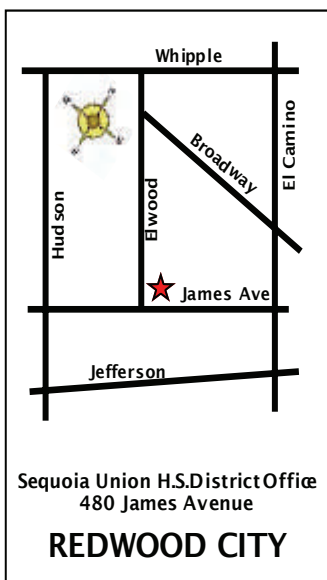
SUPPORT • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY



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

Send in this coupon to join, renew, or change your address!

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- Angel \$100 and up
- Diva \$1,000 and up
- Student or Newsletter Only \$15
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(for those who are already members to give to others too far away to come to meetings)
- Donation for Scholarships \$ _____
- Endowment Fund \$ _____

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