



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

November/December 2010

www.pflagsanjose.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

♥ NEED HELP? ♥ Call the Help/Info Line: (408) 270-8182 ♥

President's Message

PFLAG's three missions are: support — to cope with an adverse society; education — to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy — to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. We've come a long way in all three areas in the last few decades but, to quote Robert Frost, we have "miles to go before we sleep."

The story of another teen suicide appeared on Facebook yesterday, and I've been reading about the young man who took his life after attending a city council meeting where whether to declare October "Gay Pride Month" was discussed. We keep hearing "Stop the kids from bullying!" But I believe the problem goes way beyond the young bullies (though they are a contributing factor) to a society where words and actions by adults, discriminatory and hurtful, appear acceptable.

It's all part of the big picture that contributes to the tragic deaths of these GLBT kids — deaths which have been occurring for decades in disproportionate numbers, but recently brought to attention through the press and internet. Even in homes where parents are open and accepting, kids experience negativity about gay people from an early age. Debates in their churches, towns, states, and in Washington feature discussions of ways in which allowing gays to marry, or serve in the military or public office, or take leadership in our religious institutions, or teach in our schools, will "harm children," "destroy our families," "weaken our military protection," etc., etc. Just watch the news some night, or read the paper or articles and blogs on the internet. Any debate about a gay issue, from DADT to not recognizing a gay day in a small town, encourages statements that can be crushing to a young person struggling with his or her sexuality.

Two examples (you could come up with hundreds) of what we all hear daily: The military sent out a questionnaire asking how troops feel about serving with gays. Would they do this if there weren't an assumption that there is something potentially wrong with living and working with gay people? A man at the city council meeting mentioned above said he moved to that town to live somewhere where there would be no recognition of anything gay. Would he have said in public that he moved there to get away from some other minority?

All of this not only serves as fodder for bullies in our schools, it makes our GLBT kids more vulnerable to bullying, and more vulnerable to being emotionally harmed by the taunting. GLBT kids come to the school situation with their defenses down, already questioning their self worth.

So yes, we must do something about the bullying in our schools, but we as PFLAGers and as citizens of the world need to continue to offer support, education and advocacy wherever we go.

Thanks for all you do!
Laurie

Meeting Calendar

~ NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ~

Nov.8 Redwood City Support - 7:30 PM
Dec.13 Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)

Nov.10 San Jose Support - 7:30 PM
Dec.8 First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)

Nov.16 Board Meeting
UU Church of Palo Alto
505 E. Charleston Rd., Palo Alto
(No December Board Meeting)

Nov.18 Straight Spouse Support - 7:30 PM
Dec.16 Call San Jose Helpline for info.
(3rd Thursday of the month)

Dec. 7 Board Holiday Potluck
& White Elephant Party - 6:00 PM
At the Carter's home
ALL ARE WELCOME!



GILROY and other locations:
Call the Helpline
for support and information:
(408) 270-8182



*Newsletter Stuffing in San Mateo
Contact the editor for more info*

**January Newsletter Deadline:
Friday, December 24**



**Wishing you
Healthy and
Happy
Holidays!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PFLAG Support Meetings

Redwood City — November 8
San Jose — November 10



Faces and Facets of Transgender Experience, a new film produced by the PFLAG Boulder chapter, will be shown and discussed at both meetings. Eighteen persons of all ages reveal a glimpse into the lives of transgender and gender diverse people and their families. The film dispels misinformation and stereotypes, and expands empathy for and understanding of what it means to be trans. What makes *Faces and Facets* different from other films about transgender persons is that it focuses on the joyfulness of living life authentically as the persons they were meant to be. We will discuss some practical next steps to provide support and resources for gender diverse people and their families.

The premiere in Boulder this past September played to an enthusiastic overflow crowd of both trans and non-trans persons. One viewer said, "I was most affected by the changes in the children when they began to live their lives with authenticity. How can you help but lift up all who have yet to become their true selves and those who have gone before them?"



San Jose — December 8
Redwood City — December 13

At **Holiday parties** this month we will enjoy the company of old friends and new — and celebrate the many years of service that **Laurie and Bob Carter** have given to our PFLAG Chapter. Please bring hors d'oeuvres, snacks, or a beverage to share. Dessert will be provided. We will collect cash donations for the DeFrank Center HIV Testing Program in San Jose; or for Ellipse Peninsula HIV Support Services in San Mateo. And/or bring canned food for Second Harvest Food Bank.

This will be our opportunity to bid farewell to the Carters, thank them for their exemplary years of service to our PFLAG chapter, and wish them well in their new life in Oregon. **Please join us!**



All On Board

Our Chapter PFLAG Board is always looking for new, creative ideas for helping families, getting our word out, raising money for scholarships, and just having fun together. We'd love to have you become part of the Board, just attend a meeting, or send us your ideas. The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 16, at the Palo Alto UU Church on Charleston Avenue, just off 101. Take the San Antonio Road exit, then turn right on Charleston.

There will be NO Board meeting in December!



Prop 8 Trial — 9th Circuit Court to hear Oral Arguments on December 6

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has announced that they will be hearing oral arguments for the appeal of *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, and of Judge Walker's historic ruling finding Prop 8 unconstitutional, on Monday December 6 at 10 AM. Prop 8 Trial Tracker will provide live updates and commentary on the case. Check the website:

<http://prop8trialtracker.com/>



You Don't Have to Wait

Check out PFLAG National's video blog, *You Don't Have to Wait* (<http://community.pflag.org/claimyourrights>), a response to Dan Savage's *It Gets Better Project*. All of us at PFLAG would like to acknowledge Dan and Terry for vocalizing concerns regarding the effect that bullying, harassment and discrimination have on kids in schools across the country. Building from this message, PFLAG wants to reassure students facing bullying that there are ways to be proactive in schools to make them safer right now. Whether you're actually or perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, we want you to know that you don't have to wait.

Make it Better Project: The GSA network's *Make It Better Project* gives students the tools they need to make their schools better today. The Project encourages students and adults to not wait until high school is over for their lives to get better; and encourages school community members to take action today to make schools safer now. Visit: (<http://makeitbetterproject.org/>)



YES! - 2010 Youth Empowerment Summit December 11

YES is a FREE conference for LGBTQQI youth activists and their allies who are dedicated to defeating homophobia and transphobia, and to creating safe, supportive schools for everyone. High school and middle school students, teachers, GSA advisors and the community are all welcome!

Who: LGBTQQI youth activists and their allies

Where: Horace Mann Middle School
3351 23rd Street, San Francisco

When: Saturday, December 11 — 9 AM-5 PM

Cost: FREE, including breakfast and lunch!

What else: The after-YES booty shakin' dance, 5-8 PM!

Register at www.gsanetwork.org/yes



Many Thanks to Laurie and Bob Carter

Our wonderful chapter president, Laurie Carter, and her husband Bob are moving to Oregon after the first of the year. Laurie and Bob have been among our chapter's most impassioned and tireless "movers and shakers" and have been a source of inspiration for our chapter for the past 18 years. Since 2006, Laurie has served as president of San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG.

Laurie and Bob have done so much on behalf of PFLAG, that it is impossible to compile a list without missing many of their contributions! So here are just a few:

Laurie connected us with the Redwood City Fourth of July Parade and organized our participation in that event nearly every year since 1995. Bob arranged for the PFLAG cable car/bus every year at San Francisco Pride; Laurie spoke out as an impassioned advocate for the cause of marriage equality at numerous rallies; both have been active participants in our Speakers' Bureau, bringing awareness to thousands of kids over the years. Laurie created the PFLAGnews email group to keep us all up to date on important events and developments. Laurie and Bob represented PFLAG at numerous events all over the Bay Area. Their passion for this work is self-evident!

We wish Laurie and Bob all the best in their new life in Oregon. Their commitment and contribution to PFLAG will be sorely missed in our chapter.

Be sure to come to the December meetings (see page 2) to help us give Laurie and Bob our thanks and a proper send off to the adventures that await them.

True wealth is not measured in money or status or power. It is measured in the legacy we leave behind for those we love and those we inspire.

Cesar Chavez



PFLAG Speakers' Bureau

It's about changing hearts and minds – face to face

Are you looking for a way to make a difference? It's as easy as sharing a personal story. If you enjoy talking to people and sharing your experience, consider becoming a speaker for PFLAG. For over 25 years, San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG's Speakers Bureau has provided speakers for schools, community, religious, and corporate organizations. We always need more speakers to fulfill the increasing requests for our programs.

For more information about the San Jose/Peninsula Speakers' Bureau, please email Stephen at: speakersbureau@pflagsanjose.org — or visit: <http://www.pflagsanjose.org/psb/>

Dear PFLAG Supporter

Each year we all have the privilege of showing our support for PFLAG by financially participating in furthering the important work done by our organization. It is that time of year again, and we want you to know how much we appreciate your help in assisting PFLAG in our mission of support, education and advocacy for transgendered, bisexual, lesbian and gay people, their families and friends.

All our efforts and commitments are not without good results. We are seeing some progress in many important areas such as Proposition 8 and the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. These issues continue to require our support and attention. Tragically, an area of continuing concern is the number of gay and trans youth lost to suicide or murder. It is obvious that we need to aggressively continue our work in providing an environment of acceptance for the entire GLBT community.

Renew your membership today! Write your check or donate online at: www.pflagsanjose.org. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

In the words of a very important person, "Thanks for all you do!" Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Your Finance Committee:
Mike Raymond, Dave McClure, Veronica Martinez, Pete Koopman, Marc Fuentes, and Dick Duncan

PFLAG Dad Sends An Open Letter to Youth

This excerpt is from a letter written by PFLAG National president, John R. Cepek. Read the entire letter at: <http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=1330&frcrld=1>

My wife and I have two sons. We think that they are the best kids in the whole world. They're very different, with very diverse personalities, talents, and interests. One of the other things that makes them different is that one is straight and one is gay. But the important thing is this: we love them equally.

I can't imagine a world in which either of my kids felt like life wasn't worth living because people rejected them, and I have a hard time imagining what some of you might be going through right now. But please know that you're not alone. There are people to talk to, and families and friends nearby who will support you and your own family, too. All you need to do is ask.

I hope that one day we will meet and I'll know that you made it. You deserve to be happy, you deserve to be alive, and you deserve to be loved. Lots of people agree with me on that. Trust me.

Sincerely,
John R. Cepek
President, PFLAG National

