



**HAPPY 2008 TO OUR PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY!**

**TRUE COLORS XI, MARCH 14 & 15  
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, STORRS, CT**



**The Voice of PFLAG Hartford**

**Caring**

**Volume 17, No. 1**

**January/February 2008**

**IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:**

**REMEMBRANCE:** Jean Friar, long-time PFLAG member, passed away on December 15. We will remember Jean as a steady voice for equal rights for all. We will miss her relentless good spirit... as she struggled to get to meetings these last few years.... on her walker... driving herself! "Long story, short " we will miss her.

**THANK YOU** to our December 19 meeting speaker, Cari Bohm, the new Community Organizer at Love Makes a Family. It was our pleasure to meet Cari and to learn more about LMF.

**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:**

**January 16 - John B.**  
**February 20 - Jerimarie L.**  
**March 19 - Valerie P.**  
**April 16 - Nina & Heather**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:**

Student/Limited Income: \$10  
Household Membership: \$40  
Individual Membership: \$25

*Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and Send it to:  
PFLAG Treasurer, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415*

**UPCOMING PFLAG  
HARTFORD  
BOARD MEETING  
7:00 p.m., January 7, 2008  
Hosted by Donna S.**

**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 and young adults (up to 21 years old). Sundays, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective building). For more information please visit our website at [www.hglhc.org](http://www.hglhc.org) or contact us at [sensae@aol.com](mailto:sensae@aol.com) or call 860/278-4163.
- **Trans SOFFA Support Group in Connecticut:** This is a group specifically for Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies of Transgendered, Transsexual and Gender Variant people (SOFFAs). Trans people who are SOFFAs are welcome. Meetings will be held on the second Sunday of each month and are facilitated by Kristal Barnes and Kasha Ho. Contact Kristal - [u2kristal@yahoo.com](mailto:u2kristal@yahoo.com) (860) 878-5256 or Kasha - [kho@afsc.org](mailto:kho@afsc.org) or call (860) 523-1534 for more information.
- **HGLHC Transgender Support Group:** This professionally facilitated group offers an affirming non-judgmental environment for Transgender folk to explore issues and concerns that matter to them, and to give and take support. Each participant decides what to do with emotions and personal life-choices or body image, sexuality, relationships, HIV issues and anything else of concern. As with all other HGLHC Support groups, all participants must register in advance to determine whether this group is right for you. Location: Hartford. Contact HGLHC at (860) 278-4163 X21 or e-mail [lizy@hglhc.org](mailto:lizy@hglhc.org)

### **Mark Your Calendar: *True Colors XV: A Global Perspective***

**Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 15, 2008**  
**Pre-Conference Professional Best Practices Institute Thursday, March 13, 2008**  
**University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut**

True Colors XV will be held at the University of Connecticut on Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 15, 2008. Registration will begin at 8:00 AM each day with closing ceremonies ending about 5:30.

**Student Registration by 1/31:** Friday Only-\$20; Saturday Only-\$20; Friday & Saturday-\$30 (Lunch Included)

**Student Registration after 1/31:** Friday Only-\$35; Saturday Only-\$35; Friday & Saturday-\$50 (Lunch Inc.)

**Adult Registration by 1/31:** Friday Only-\$70; Saturday Only-\$70; Friday & Saturday-\$85 (Lunch Included)

**Adult Registration after 1/31:** Friday Only-\$85; Saturday Only-\$85; Friday & Saturday-\$95 (No Lunch)

Please consider sponsoring youth to attend the True Colors Conference. Most youth rely on a partial or full scholarship to attend, and your generous gift will play an important role in the life of a LGBT youth or youth ally. One youth can attend the two-day conference for your gift of \$45. Sponsors will be recognized in the conference guide, and all donations are tax deductible.

For more information, go to [www.ourtruecolors.org](http://www.ourtruecolors.org)

## **2008 HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN BUYING FOR EQUALITY GUIDE**

This buyer's guide helps you support companies that support equality – so you can "make change" every time you pull out your wallet. Who offers domestic partner benefits? Which businesses have instituted anti-discrimination policies? Our HRC Workplace Project has answered these questions and many more.

Corporate America is clearly ahead of the curve on GLBT equality. This year, a record 195 companies received a 100 percent score on our Corporate Equality Index. And with the historic passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in the U.S. House, we're closer than ever to workplace equality. But many companies still have considerable room for improvement. Our Buying for Equality guide will help you send the message that GLBT equality is good for business.

We're already seeing real progress in workplaces across the country. Together, we can make it a revolution.

Warmly,

Joe Solmonese, President

To download the Guide, go to <http://www.hrc.org/buyersguide/2008/index.asp>.

***Dear PFLAGers:***

***We wanted to lift up this beautiful response of our national organization to the idea that even for those who are persuaded to seek it, a change of sexual orientation doesn't work-and shouldn't be attempted. Becky and John***

## **OUR VIEW**

**Unconditional love seeks no 'cure' for gays.**

November 17, 2007

A conference on "restorative therapy" recently came to a large Indianapolis-area church. More than 800 people attended, drawn by the premise "that individuals don't have to be gay and that a homosexual identity is something that can be overcome."

In response to the Love Won Out conference (sponsored by Focus on the Family), the Indianapolis chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays held a gathering near the church. Some may ask why we object to what may seem a positive parental approach to gay children. Let us explain.

As parents and family with gay loved ones, we understand that many people find it difficult to reconcile their religious faith with a family member's expressed homosexuality. We also know that every gay child who comes out struggles to do so, and that every parent hearing this from a child must come to terms with it. No doubt many who attended the conference ached for reassurance that homosexuality can be cured.

It can't. Science has repeatedly disproven this, and personal experience has taught us a better way to come to grips with family members who come out. As the American Psychological Association definitively explains, "There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that sexual orientation can be changed." The APA statement goes on to caution that positions like those of Love Won Out "create an environment in which prejudice and discrimination can flourish."

Some messages of Love Won Out are heartening -- for example, that parents should love their gay children and not reject them. What a contrast to past condemnations by the religious right -- such as the late Jerry Falwell's assertion that "Homosexuality is Satan's diabolical attack upon the family that will not only have a corrupting influence upon our next generation, but it will also bring down the wrath of God upon America."

Love Won Out fails, though, when it cites research purporting to show that homosexuality is not a sexual identity but a developmental disorder, placing it in the realm of mental illness. In fact, every major mental health and medical organization in the U.S. has rejected this notion. Homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1973.

Indy PFLAG moms, dads and supporters gathered near the Love Won Out event to celebrate unqualified acceptance of our gay children. Our unconditional love doesn't require them to change or be cured of their sexual orientation. If our presence showed even one or two vulnerable youth that they are not fundamentally flawed, but are whole and intact exactly as they are, then perhaps they'll be saved years of anguish.

With love, acceptance, faith and facts, we can help our children understand who they are and take their rightful places in a richly diverse world.

*Elizabeth Hampton Brown, Director of Policy and Programs  
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)  
1726 M St., NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036*

*phone- 202.467.8180 ext 211 fax- 202.467.8194 email- [ebrown@pflag.org](mailto:ebrown@pflag.org) web address- [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)*

***Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is the nation's foremost family-based organization committed to the civil rights of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender persons. Founded in 1973 by mothers and fathers, PFLAG has 200,000 members and supporters in more than 500 chapters throughout the United States. To learn more, please visit <http://www.pflag.org>***

## **PFLAG COMMITS TO INCREASING CONGRESSIONAL EDUCATION EFFORTS ON THE NEED FOR GENDER IDENTITY PROTECTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE**

*Organization Disappointed that Massive Groundswell of Family Voices Supporting a Fully Inclusive ENDA were not Heard*  
**November 7, 2007**

**Washington** ---Today the House of Representatives voted 235 to 184 in favor of HR 3685-a version of the **Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)** that does not include protections based on "gender identity." ENDA was originally introduced in April by Barney Frank (D-MA), Deborah Pryce (R-OH), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Christopher Shays (R-CT) with legislative language that included protections based on both "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" (HR 2015). Along with over 360 other member organizations in the United ENDA coalition, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) opposed HR 3585 for its failure to effectively protect our community. PFLAG will continue to work aggressively in coalition with United ENDA and other allies to develop strategies towards passage of an inclusive version of the bill in 2009.

### **Statement of Jody M. Huckaby, Executive Director, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG National):**

"Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is committed to increasing our Congressional education efforts around the need for gender identity protections to make the Employment Non-Discrimination Act truly effective legislation for our GLBT loves ones. We know from our family experiences that gender identity and expression are at the root of much of what we know as anti-gay discrimination, and this is particularly true in the workplace. It is disappointing that the thousands of family voices supporting the original iteration of the bill were not heard," said PFLAG Executive Director Jody M. Huckaby.

"While PFLAG applauds Congress for tackling GLBT workplace discrimination and is grateful for our stalwart champions of equality on Capitol Hill, it is clear that all of us must commit to more Congressional education on gender identity. We are particularly grateful to Representative Tammy Baldwin who worked with many of her colleagues in attempts to amend HR 3685 to achieve what everyone in the civil rights community wants - a fully inclusive and effective ENDA.

"With today's House vote behind us, PFLAG welcomes the opportunity to harness the passion and strength of our members to work towards passage of an inclusive version of ENDA in 2009. We are optimistic that the community can achieve this goal. PFLAG stands with our allies on the Hill and our 360 coalition partners in United ENDA in our commitment to bring an ENDA to the floor that the entire civil rights community can proudly support.

"Members of Congress must craft legislation that protects all American workers. We believe when it comes to stopping rampant employment discrimination, everyone in our community must be protected. PFLAG members have demonstrated strong support for an ENDA that would cover all of our loved ones through meetings with legislative staff, Congressional visits, and thousands of constituent phone calls, letters and postcards. PFLAG will continue to encourage its tremendous network of local chapters to educate and lobby around the country for legislation that effectively and fully protects the GLBT community. We will not leave members of our families behind."

Visit <http://www.pflag.org> for updates on activities related to ENDA legislation and other related issues.

### ***I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE GOOD WORKS OF PFLAG HARTFORD WITH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF:***

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ My name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please cut out this coupon and mail it with your check (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to PFLAG Treasurer, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415.*

**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.*

**HERE'S A GREAT REPLY TO A "LETTER TO THE EDITOR" REGARDING OMISSION OF THE GENDER IDENTITY PROVISION IN ENDA.**

**MY TURN: Include Gender Identity in Non-Discrimination Act**

*Scripps Newspaper Group-Online, Kitsap Sun*

I want to comment on Saturday's column by Star Parker on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). I am not going to address all of the tangential ideas that she included in her column, but I do want to clarify a couple of points.

While very little of Ms. Parker's column was about gender identity, she did mention that Tammy Baldwin, a representative from Wisconsin, wants to add gender identity back into ENDA. Protections for gender identity were removed in hopes that the bill would be easier to get passed.

What was missing from Ms. Parker's column is the fact that over 300 organizations, including most of the national gay rights groups as well as other equality groups, have voiced a united opposition to any version of ENDA that is not inclusive of gender identity. With an unprecedented focus, these groups are determined to stand up for what is right, and ensure that everyone in our "family" is included under the essential protections offered by this bill.

Ms. Parker makes reference to the concept that being gay or lesbian makes us "slaves to our sexual impulses." This is not true; someone can be gay without even being sexually active, just like someone can be heterosexual and celibate. I also disagree with the implication that being gay or lesbian is a choice, however it should not really matter — people are protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for their religion, and that is not something genetic.

Why does anyone need to talk about what they do in their bedroom while they are at work? They do not. Being gay or lesbian is not just about sex; it is about whom someone falls in love with. When heterosexuals talk about their spouses and families they are, in effect, announcing their sexual orientation without giving inappropriate details. All that gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people want is to be able to do the same without risking their jobs.

ENDA is simply about preventing discrimination against someone based on something that does not affect his or her work. In fact, when people are not afraid of losing their jobs or being harassed for being themselves, they can be honest contributors in their workplace, and cohesiveness of the work force around them is strengthened.

Not discriminating in the workplace on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation is promoting justice and fairness and will make the workplace better for all of us.

*Marcie Mathis*

*Pacific Northwest Regional Director*

*Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)*

*BREMERTON*

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**PFLAG CRITICIZES REMOVAL OF HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION BY CONGRESS**

*Group Stunned by Rejection of Equal Protection, Promises to Renew Fight in Next Session*

**December 6, 2007**

**Washington** ---Washington, D.C.-Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) condemned a move by Congress today for removing the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (LLEHCPA), also known as the Matthew Shepard Act, from existing legislation, effectively killing the bill. The passage of the legislation would have extended federal law to cover crimes motivated by hatred for people based on their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. ⇨

"PFLAG is saddened that Congress has decided at this time not to protect all Americans, especially our children," said John Cepek, National President of PFLAG. "We had come so close in this session for Congress to enact crimes protections for all - the progress made was historic, as was this callous act to end our effort."

LLEHCPA passed the House of Representatives and then the Senate, where it was attached as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, a Department of Defense spending bill. Had it been included, it would go before the President to potentially be signed into law.

"This isn't the end of the fight for this basic and necessary legislation," said Jody M. Huckaby, PFLAG's executive director. "We'll double our efforts to send the message to Congress that our families deserve basic protections too."

Huckaby noted that thousands of PFLAG members have contacted their representatives in Congress, trying to convince legislators that this is a law whose time has come.

He added that "State laws are inadequate to respond to these crimes. Only 27 states and the District of Columbia have hate crimes laws inclusive of sexual orientation, and only five of those and D.C.'s are expressly transgender inclusive. We need an inclusive Federal law that protects everybody, regardless of where they live and who they are."

PFLAG will also continue to encourage its vast network of members to press for change in their own home states and local governments to further equality. Visit <http://www.pflag.org> for updates on activities related to Hate Crimes legislation and other related issues.



### **HOMOPHOBIC "CONGREGATION" SLAMMED WITH \$10.9 MILLION PENALTY**

After a year and a half of anger, grief and legal maneuvering, the father of a marine killed in Iraq has said the success of his suit against a fundamentalist sect that picketed his son's funeral means more than the jury's \$10.9 million damage award on October 30 in Federal District Court in Baltimore. Albert Snyder, whose son, Lance Cpl. Matthew Snyder, 20, was killed in early 2006, said, "I want to shut this church down, if you can call it a church. I call it a cult or a hate group. I sat in that courtroom for over a week and never once heard them say a good thing about God." He added that he doubted he would ever collect the award.

Mr. Snyder said he had decided to sue the leaders of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, for invasion of privacy and inflicting emotional distress, two months after its members demonstrated at his son's funeral. The church has 60 members, mostly related to its founder, Rev. Fred Phelps. Many members have picketed soldiers' funerals because they say the deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan are God's punishment for the United States' tolerating homosexuality. They carry signs such as "Thank God for dead soldiers" and "God hates fags."

Mr. Snyder said he hoped that other military families whose relatives have been picketed would take this victory as a signal to step forward. "I don't even know how I got the courage to do it," he said, adding that his only hope was to cripple the church financially. Leaders of the church claim it has \$1 million in assets, and will appeal the verdict, asserting that the First Amendment to the Constitution permits them to picket as they did, 1,000 feet away from the funeral, and that they were following their religious beliefs.

A number of states have passed laws regarding funeral protests, and Congress has passed a law prohibiting such protests at federal cemeteries. But the Maryland lawsuit is believed to be the first filed by a fallen serviceman.

[*Editor's note:* Mr. Phelps's "ordination" was not done by any recognized seminary but was received by mail-order. And when his little group shows up anywhere to spew their venom, the event often brings out massive numbers of right-thinking people in counter-protest. Those good people might never have publicly shown their acceptance for glbt people if the bigots had not demonstrated. A delicious irony.]

*Thanks to Myra Shays, President of PFLAG of Greater Providence, for this article, and comment, which appeared in their December/January newsletter. Several years ago, Fred Phelps's hate group visited several locations in Hartford, most notably the Congregational Church on Main Street. Several PFLAG families attended church services that Sunday morning and, although it was very difficult to ignore the hate directed at our loved ones, Rev. Phelps and his group were completely ignored. Even more disturbing was seeing the children in his group, some as young as 5-6 years old, holding those hateful signs.*

**Connecticut PFLAG Meetings**

**PFLAG HARTFORD:** Information on front page or at [www.pflaghartford.org](http://www.pflaghartford.org)

**PFLAG NORWALK/SOUTHWESTERN CT**

**When:** First Wednesday of every month, 7:30 pm  
**Where:** Triangle Cmnty. Center, 16 River St. Norwalk  
**Help Line:** (203) 226-0257 or (203) 438-0530  
**Email:** PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

**PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT:**

**Contact:** Diane (860) 435-2738

**PFLAG MADISON/SHORELINE**

**No Meetings**  
**Email:** davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com  
**Help Line:** (203) 453-1395

**PFLAG GROTON (NOANK) /SOUTHEASTERN CT**

**When:** Second Monday of every month  
**5:30-6:30 Potluck Dinner**  
**6:30-8:00 Meeting**  
**Where:** Noank Baptist Church, 18 Cathedral Heights  
(Childcare is available)  
**For Information call Mike (860) 447-0884**

**PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN**

**When:** Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30 pm  
**Where:** Church of the Redeemer  
Corner: Whitney Ave./Cold Spring St., NH  
**Help Line:** (203) 907-0518  
**Email:** greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

**Central and Western Massachusetts**

**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](mailto:PFLAGPV@valinet.com)

**CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD**

*Caring* welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

**Deadline:** 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered months. Send articles to PFLAG EDITOR, 156 Randal Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110.

Or, via e-mail - [editor@pflaghartford.org](mailto:editor@pflaghartford.org).

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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**PFLAG'S STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:**

**In Central Connecticut and Central Mass.,**  
**Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or [janenrosie@hotmail.com](mailto:janenrosie@hotmail.com)**

**In Southern Connecticut, Call Joan Rolnick at**  
**(203) 438-0530)**

**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](http://www.pflag.org).**