



**PFLAG HARTFORD WISHES YOU ALL A  
VERY HAPPY 2009!**



# ***The Voice of PFLAG Hartford***

# ***Caring***

**Volume 18, No. 1**

**January/February 2009**

**IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ROSS ZACHS & MICHAEL MILLER!**

West Hartford Town Hall, November 12: Amid hundreds of white balloons, red roses and cheering well-wishers, Ross & Michael became legally married on the first day that marriage licenses were issued to same-sex couples in Connecticut. Ross and his family have been long-time members/supporters of PFLAG Hartford. We wish Ross & Michael a long and happy married life!

**THANK-YOU** to Tiffany Moyer-Washington, our December meeting speaker. Tiffany gave us insights into the challenges she faces in her personal, religious and work life.

**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 Calvin at (860) 633-7184 or Becky & John Glezen at (860) 633-5111.

<p><b><u>REFRESHMENT REMINDER:</u></b></p> <p>January 21 - Charlotte &amp; Glen</p> <p>February 18 - Chrissy &amp; Mitch</p> <p>March 18 - Kerri</p> <p>April 15 - Valerie</p>	<p><b><u>MEMBERSHIP DUES:</u></b></p> <p>Student/Limited Income: \$10</p> <p>Household Membership: \$40</p> <p>Individual Membership: \$25</p> <p><i>Please make your check payable to <b>PFLAG Hartford</b> and Send it to: Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415</i></p>	<p><b>UPCOMING PFLAG HARTFORD BOARD MEETING Tuesday, January 6, 7 pm Hosted by David O.</b></p>
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**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)



*(This article is a little long but well worth reading, especially if you have a school-age child.)*

### **YOUNG TEENS OPENLY EXPRESS SEXUALITY: GAY AT 12: PROUD, NOT SAFE**

Many Middle Schools Don't Have Policies to Safeguard Against Anti-Gay Bullies

Sean has felt since the age of 2 or 3 that he was a boy in a girl's body. Telling his parents at age 11 was difficult but coming out as transgender among his seventh-grade classmates was like walking into a lion's den. When Sean first shared his sexuality with his mother, "She didn't take it well," he said. "She cried for about a week, but then went on the Internet and understood it better." About a month before Sarah's "transition" to Sean, his mother informed school officials, but no one told teachers or students. "One day I was Sarah with female pronouns and Monday I was Sean with male pronouns, without any explanation," said Sean, a pseudonym for the central New Jersey teen who wants a fresh start in high school this fall. "I was bullied every day, shoved into lockers, beaten up and made fun of," said the 14-year-old. "The teachers were standing right there, saying nothing or just not aware of it." Things got so bad for Sean that he dropped out of middle school and his mother home-schooled him for the remainder of the year.

Like Sean, an increasing number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender -- LGBT -- children are "coming out" earlier than high school because of greater cultural acceptance. But in the immature and sometimes predatory world of middle school, Sean's experience is not uncommon, according to advocacy groups. Taunting and bullying often goes unnoticed by teachers, and administrators have few policies in place to handle it. Only 11 states have enacted laws to protect schoolchildren from being bullied specifically because of sexual orientation. At Sean's school there wasn't even a sex education program, according to his mother.

**More Teasing in Middle School** In a 2005 study conducted by Harris Polling, "From Teasing to Torment," teachers reported that middle school students were 30 percent more likely to be teased about their sexual orientation than high school students. "There seems to be something about the onset of puberty that makes those years different," said Kevin Jennings, founder and executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. "Moving from small to larger schools, cliques and social pecking order are a bigger deal." Most children are aware of their sexuality between the ages of 8 and 11, according to Jennings, but are told they are "too young" to know their orientation. "That makes it even harder for them," he said. "People don't believe them."

In the last year, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network has seen a "huge surge of interest" in addressing anti-LGBT bullying in middle schools. Much of it has been a reaction to the February killing of openly gay student Lawrence King. The 15-year-old was shot twice in the head by a classmate in California.

In 2007, students from 520 middle schools participated in a Day of Silence to raise awareness about sexual orientation. After King's 2008 murder, 1,046 middle schools participated in a vigil. Today, the network sponsors about 110 gay-straight alliances -- or GSA clubs to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students -- nationwide. But that number, compared with 3,000 such clubs at the high school level, may still not be enough.

**Cyber-Bullies Threaten** Josh Rivero enrolled in a virtual high school after he was repeatedly threatened at his Brevard County, Fla., middle school after trying to start a GSA club. "The conversation [about his sexuality] started in eighth grade, but since elementary school he'd been called a fag," said his mother, Lisa Rivero. By middle school, Josh's grades began to drop and his stress level soared. One classmate bullied Josh in cyberspace, sending homophobic messages and calling him names on the school's MySpace page. "The school did nothing," said Lisa Rivero, who sought help and later began a local chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, or PFLAG, where she now serves as president. The threats soon became physical and Josh's mother, at the suggestion of the school's principal, reluctantly filed a temporary restraining order against her son's tormentor. "He had a right to go to school and get an education without being bullied," she said. "We had no issues with him being gay. What we had the most difficulty with was accepting our fear that we knew our son would be a target." Rivero said students need support, but teachers also need training. "It starts with teachers in the classroom," she said. "A lot of them stepped up and intervened, but there were other teachers who looked up at him and said, 'What do you want me to do?'" The Riveros lobbied unsuccessfully for a Florida law to outlaw sexual orientation bullying. As his mother sought support, so did Josh, now 16 and in high school, forming a GSA at his school.

**Students 'Take Control'** Josh "took control" of the situation, his mom says. Indeed, it is the students themselves who are emboldened to make their schools more comfortable for all those with differences.

Leah Matz of St. Peter, Minn., first came out as a lesbian at the age of 12 in the seventh grade where she says gay issues were talked about in "hushed tones." The taunts began after she pioneered the first GSA. "The harassment started right away," said Leah, now 15. "They were hollering derogatory terms; then it escalated to physical harassment. I was tripped, pushed and spit on by both boys and girls." The GSA grew in numbers, but so did the taunts. Her breaking point came when she found the words "Dykes Suck" painted on her locker. Club members organized a rally against bullying and homophobia, selling T-shirts that read "Stop hate, just love." Leah called the press and got television and newspaper coverage of the event. Not all reaction was positive: Leah was criticized in a letter to the editor in the local newspaper for "recruiting" students into the "gay lifestyle." But she says this is a school safety issue, and most of the members of her GSA are not gay, but "straight allies." "Students feel more comfortable now in schools because of GSAs," said Matz. "Because of our efforts we are stronger people and face our adversaries." Leah's mother, Kathy Chalhoub, had no problem with her daughter's sexuality. "I feel really fortunate to have a child who felt free to come to me," she said. "My fear was for her." "There's always a blessing in every curse and what Leah has gone through has had such good come from it."

But experts say many middle school administrators have no policies in place when it comes to sexual orientation bullying. "I never dealt with this as a middle school principal in the 1990s," said John Norig, director of program development for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, which is beginning to address the issue. But even progressive schools with strong anti-gay harassment policies said coming out is particularly hard in middle school. "I still don't believe it's safe for 11- to 14-year olds to come out without support," Alison Boggs, principal at Casey Middle School in Boulder, Colo., told ABCNews.com. She has seen one or two students a year come out. "About 98 percent of the kids are questioning at this age," she said. "Many are not coming out right away and some are not gay." But for those few who feel strong enough to come out, the school sends them to a counselor so they feel "supported and accepted" at the school.

**Doing 'Whatever It Takes'** The Boulder school starts each year explaining to students that all categories of harassment are forbidden. When incidents occur, they are dealt with swiftly and individually. "We do whatever it takes," said Boggs. "We can't let it go and assume we did it in class and everyone heard it." "Like other forms of sexual harassment, once they are educated, kids do pretty well and will stop if we make it clear," said Boggs. "In this age group, they are still forming their identity, and they may be sure, but not all that sure," she said. "But they are feeling safer to express themselves."

Jody Huckaby, national president of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, agrees, but said, "There's so much more work to be done to create a safe environment for these kids." Even in families with parental acceptance, there is a great need for support and education and information for their family members, neighbors and the community, said parents and advocates. And now, many children who have been raised in same-sex families are entering elementary and middle school. "When Bobby shows up with two mommies, sexual orientation presents itself at earlier and earlier ages," said Huckaby. "The work to develop curricula has to be done earlier. It's a reality that gay people exist and it's easier and easier for kids to develop a language around the fact that they are different."

*By Susan Donaldson James, abc news, July 16, 2008 -*

***NOTHING IN LIFE IS TO BE FEARED. IT IS ONLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD - Marie Curie, Nobel Prize-Winning Polish Chemist (1867-1934)***

***POETRY CORNER***

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Where did it come from? Why do we care?  
What makes us all gay or straight?  
Lots of big theories, someone to blame  
just helps them fuel all the hate.

Why does it matter? What is so wrong?  
Why do we question the genes?  
Why can't we see that we're just who we are?  
And learn that's what family means.

Research keeps asking what makes our kids gay?  
Do gay parents make children the same?  
When straight folks make straight kids we don't ask  
them why?  
Homophobia has other names.

People are people, more alike than you'd think,  
and the rights we deserve should be equal.  
If all were respected and treated the same  
hate crimes would just not have a sequel.

Time and money are wasted when we study the cause,  
and the outcomes and futures of gays.  
Let's just ACCEPT that it IS what is IS,  
and stop searching for answers and ways.

Being ourselves is a gift we could share  
so let's not think of different as wrong.  
Pathology seeking when there is none there  
threatens lives where hate does not belong.

So quit asking for reasons and see the real truth.  
Get beyond all the what, when and who.  
If you celebrate families from old age to youth  
a great joy will be given to you!

Celebrate this new year with your commitment  
to embrace the diversity in each of us.  
Happy New Year – 2009 – Donna Shubrooks

***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 our Treasurer, Joan Jansen, 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 some recommended reading from Jody M. Huckaby, Executive Director of PFLAG National:

**Crisis** is a powerful new book from out furniture designer, and philanthropist, Mitchell Gold. I was honored to be one of 40 contributors – along with Ari Gold, Alec Mapa, Elke Kennedy and others – to this moving collection of stories about overcoming personal, social and religious discrimination in America. And, the book's publisher will donate a portion of the proceeds to LGBT organizations, including PFLAG, to help fight inequality. *Crisis* is available from Lambda Rising and other booksellers, and makes a terrific holiday gift, too.

**The Transgender Child**, by Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper, is a comprehensive first-of its-kind guidebook that explores the unique challenges that thousands of families face every day raising their children in every city and state. Through extensive research and interviews, as well as years of experience working in the field, the authors cover gender variance from birth through college. I was proud to offer an endorsement for this truly ground-breaking work, which will be an essential resource for *every* parent. *The Transgender Child* is available for sale online now.



### **PFLAG APPLAUDS DECISION TO REVIEW CALIFORNIA'S PROPOSITION 8**

#### ***State Supreme Court Will Review Ban on Same-Sex Marriage in 2009***

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) today applauded a decision by the California Supreme Court to review Proposition 8, a ban on same-sex marriage that was approved by voters on November 4. In an order issued on Wednesday, the court agreed to hear a challenge to the proposition as early as March 2009. In the interim, the court has declined to issue a stay. The court challenge was brought by a coalition of organizations working in California, including The American Civil Liberties Union, Lambda Legal and The National Center for Lesbian Rights. The City of San Francisco is also challenging the measure.

“The California Supreme Court has taken a second, bold stand for families in the state and we welcome its decision to review Proposition 8,” said Jody M. Huckaby, executive director of PFLAG. “The proper checks and balances role of the judiciary is to ensure that majority rule doesn't undermine minority rights, and the court has an important role to play in that process. Loving couples and their families should be protected, not neglected, under the law. Proposition 8 singled out a specific community of Californians for discrimination and created a category of ‘separate and unequal’ for same-sex couples. That is wrong, and the measure should be struck down by the court.”

In May, California became the second state, following Massachusetts, to grant same-sex couples the right to marry. According to the Williams Institute at the University of California-Los Angeles, more than 102,000 same-sex couples live in the state, and more than 50,000 planned to wed in the next three years. More than 18,000 couples have already been married in the state. Following California's decision, Connecticut has also recognized marriage equality for lesbian and gay couples.

“The California Supreme Court has blessed our family,” PFLAG parents Ken and Molleen Matsumura of Oakland, California, wrote shortly after the May decision. “All loving parents hope to see their child secure in the love of their chosen partner in life, if the child chooses to marry. That means someone who can visit her in the hospital, tell the doctors what to do if she can't speak for herself, share their earnings and insurance and support each other in building financial security [and] share a name if they so choose.”

The court has invalidated three similar ballot measures in the past. California Attorney General Jerry Brown encouraged the court to review Proposition 8, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger expressed strong support for the original ruling, recognizing full marriage rights for all couples.

“As the court considers the future of Proposition 8, all of us must continue to educate Americans from every state about the legal jeopardy our families face because of measures like these,” said Huckaby. “Our opponents are already targeting other parts of the country for campaigns similar to the one in California. From Massachusetts to California, and right through America's heartland, there will be a coordinated effort to roll back equality. PFLAG families have a unique role to play in combating those efforts, alongside allies such as those who brought this challenge in California, and we will continue to do so.”

**DONNA'S MOVIE REVIEWS***by Donna Gore***Movie Review: "Love My Life" (2003)**

"Love My Life" is a story about innocence and a young relationship that seemingly breaks apart due to one's secret past.... and then endures. The film takes place in Japan with girlfriends Ichiko and Eri. Ichiko is cute as a button, social and a good friend to a nerdy gay guy who hasn't come out of the closet. Her father is a widower with a secret of his own. Eri is reserved, sullen throughout and determined to be the first female lawyer in the family "just for spite." Don't expect the usual stormy drama featured in lesbian films. Things progress rather smoothly.

The act of writing becomes the tie that binds father to daughter, and ultimately brings the couple together after a long absence. The match may not be made in heaven, but you root for them as a couple. The central character's acting is believable. The storyline may be somewhat implausible. However, you want it to work by the end of the film. I'd assign it three out of five stars.



**OBAMA TO NAME OPENLY GAY NANCY SUTLEY TO HEAD WHITE HOUSE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

*December 10, 2008, Chris Johnson, From the AP:*

A Democratic official says President-elect Barack Obama has selected a deputy mayor of Los Angeles to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

The official said that Mr. Obama's choice is Nancy Sutley, who supported Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in her primary campaign for the presidency. The Democratic official with close knowledge of Obama transition operations spoke on grounds of anonymity because the selection has not yet officially been made public.


...Sutley is the first prominent member of the gay and lesbian community that Mr. Obama has named to a senior role in his administration.

**CONNECTICUT TRANSADVOCACY COALITION**

Some say the Gay Rights Movement began in 1969, the night of the Stonewall riot. And, as many trans-identified folks know, a Trans person was at the forefront of that fateful night - Sylvia Rivera! Sylvia and many others launched a major social, economic and cultural change in the homosexual community and within society as a whole. Since that day, homosexuality has been declassified as a mental illness, numerous and significant gay rights laws have passed, corporate non-discrimination policies updated to include sexual orientation and many other landmark successes have been realized. However, the rights of the trans-identified person and community were, and are still being, essentially ignored. In addition, prominent among those being cast aside during this period was Sylvia Rivera herself. However, this did not stop Sylvia! She fought daily for the trans-identified person and community; as well as fighting the gay, lesbian and straight communities for recognition and equal rights of the trans-identified individual and community. And from such spirited Direct Actions and confrontations, a few, then more, and then many more Trans Activists came to her aide, and to the forefront, in this struggle for Trans Activism and Advocacy. For many trans-identified people this struggle occurs in the midst of their worlds crumbling economically and socially around them as they come out. However, more and more of us are learning to balance coming out socially and economically with our coming out as Activists and Advocates. Nationally more and more statewide TransAdvocacy groups are forming and fighting for equal rights. We are fighting in Connecticut and in nearly every state for Inclusion, Respect and Equal Rights! Transgender-rights' advocates won an unprecedented series of political victories in 2002. The governing councils of 14 cities and counties voted to include transgender people among the groups protected by local nondiscrimination laws. In no previous year had more than six jurisdictions taken such action. Fourteen Fortune 500 companies have included gender identity or expression within their corporate EEO policies, with two occurring within the last year. And for this reason, the Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition exists. This Coalition grew out of two venues: From ITCT, a chapter of the first major national and statewide grass roots Trans Civil Rights organization and Connecticut's 2002 Day of Remembrance.

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DIRECTORY:** If you would like to advertise your business/service in *Caring* for one year (6 issues), send your business card and a check for \$40 (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to: Jean Cormier, 156 Randal Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110. Your Patronage of our advertisers, who help us pay the costs of sending the *Caring* newsletter to you, would be greatly appreciated by them and by us. Please mention that you saw their advertisement in *Caring*.

*Healing begins within the heart...*



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## **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 Community Center  
16 River Street Norwalk  
Help Line: (203) 226-0257 or (203) 438-0530  
Email: [PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com](mailto:PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com)

### **PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CT:**

Contact: Diane (860) 435-2738

### **PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN/SHORELINE**

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437, (203) 458-0493  
Email: [greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com](mailto:greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com)  
Meetings: Church of the Redeemer  
185 Cold Spring St. ( Corner of Whitney Av.), New Haven  
3rd Tues of the Month @ 7:30 pm  
Help Line: (203) 907-0518  
Shoreline Area Help Line:(203) 453-1395  
Shoreline Area email: [davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com](mailto:davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com)

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

When: Second Monday of every month, 7:00-8:30  
Where: Noank Baptist Church, 18 Cathedral Heights  
Helpline: (860) 447-0884  
Email: [robertmarrion@sbcglobal.net](mailto:robertmarrion@sbcglobal.net)  
or [www.pflagsect.org](http://www.pflagsect.org)

### **PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN**

When: Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30 pm  
Where: Church of the Redeemer  
Corner: Whitney Ave./185 Cold Spring St., NH  
Help Line: (203) 458-0493  
Email: [greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com](mailto: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**

Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

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

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



## **STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:**

**In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts**  
Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday,  
West Hartford, CT.

Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or  
[janenrosie48@yahoo.com](mailto:janenrosie48@yahoo.com) or at  
[www.straightspouse.org](http://www.straightspouse.org)

### **In Southern Connecticut**

Call Joan Rolnick at (203) 438-0530) or  
[janenrosie@hotmail.com](mailto:janenrosie@hotmail.com)

## **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).