



**HELEN & BOB BRILL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
TO FOUR DESERVING STUDENTS (See page 3 for details.)**



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 18, No. 4

July/August 2009

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF JOHN CURRIE The news of John Currie's death was devastating to us and to all members of PFLAG, the organization which he served so loyally and well as vice-president. No one helped carry out our mission of support, education and advocacy better than John. He did it for his family, and he did it because he believed that people were hurting because of misunderstanding, injustice and intolerance, and that he had the tools to make a difference. Did he ever! We will miss him also as a thoughtful, personal friend who was always doing things for us that he knew would brighten our lives. Our hearts go out to Peter and the rest of John's family. We share greatly in your loss and your grief.

Becky and John Glezen

PFLAG Hartford is donating a planting to the Immanuel Church Memorial Garden in memory of John. The chapter is also accepting contributions to the Scholarship Fund in his memory. Contributions should be made out to PFLAG Hartford (with "scholarship fund/Currie" in the memo line) and sent to Joan Jansen, Treasurer, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415.

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:

- July 15 – John B.**
- August 19 – Connie G.**
- September 16 – Karen P.**
- October 21 – Rose P.**

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

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

**UPCOMING PFLAG
HARTFORD
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, August 11, 7 pm
Hosted by Donna S.**

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

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

- **RAINBOWROOM:** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) -- a Welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning "LGBTQ" teens (13-21 years old). RainbowRoom meets the third Sunday of every month, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (Health Collective building), Hartford. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **HGLHC TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP:** This group is currently not meeting. Updated information will be posted as changes are made. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact lizy@hglhc.org 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 (860) 878-5256 or Kasha - kho@afsc.org or call (860) 523-1534 for more information.
- **SAVE THE DATE** The **2009 PFLAG Convention** will be held in beautiful San Diego, California from October 9 to 11 with pre-convention institutes being held October 8th. The convention will be at the beautiful Marriott Mission Valley. Look for more information in upcoming issues of *Caring*.
- **THE WOMEN & GENDER RESOURCE ACTION CENTER** (WGRAC) is planning to host **Peterson Toscano**, a local performance artist and activist, on Tuesday, October 20, at 7 pm. He will speak about his experience in the "ex-gay" movement in a program titled, "**Homo No Mo**". Having lived nearly 20 years as an evangelical Christian, he's experienced firsthand the battle between his religion and his sexuality.

THANK-YOU! Thank-you to the following PFLAGers who manned our booth on **PRIDE Day**: Jim W., Chrissy and Mitch, Dan B., John B., Karen P., LeAnne M., Rita H., Mike R., Connie G., Joan J., John & Becky. It was a wonderful PRIDE Day and your participation is greatly appreciated!

THANK-YOU TO KAREN & BOB : Karen & Bob have been stewards of our PFLAG Hartford library since July 2007, when Ron Seeds retired from that position. They are now "passing the baton" to Connie G., who has agreed to take on these duties. Many thanks to Karen & Bob, and we know Connie will continue to keep our library up-to-date and available to all at our monthly meetings.

MAINE GOVERNOR SIGNS MARRIAGE EQUALITY BILL!

From National PFLAG

As we reported earlier, both the Maine Senate and House approved a bill that would grant marriage equality to all Maine citizens. The bill went before Gov. John E. Baldacci [Wednesday, May 6, 2009]... and he signed the bill into law! This makes Maine now the *fifth* state to allow marriage equality! While many were not sure how to predict the outcome of the Governor's decision today, on his website Baldacci tells the people of Maine, "...my responsibility is to uphold the Constitution and do, as best as possible, what is right. I believe that signing this legislation is the right thing to do." He added, "I have come to believe that this is a question of fairness and of equal protection under the law, and that a civil union is not equal to civil marriage." Maine joins Vermont in being the second state that has approved marriage equality through the state legislative process.

NEW HAMPSHIRE JOINS OTHER STATES IN GRANTING MARRIAGE EQUALITY

June 3, 2009

CONCORD, N.H. New Hampshire became the sixth state to legislate gay marriage Wednesday in a move that reflects the state's changing demographics from reliably Republican and conservative to younger and more liberal. After the Senate and House passed key language on religious rights, Gov. John Lynch – who personally opposes gay marriage – signed the legislation Wednesday afternoon. Lynch, a Democrat, had promised a veto if the law did not clearly spell out that churches and religious groups would not be forced to officiate at gay marriages or provide other services. Legislators made the change.

(More good news could be on the way!)

On the heels of the major win in New Hampshire last week, **New York's marriage equality bill** is about to come up for a vote in the state Senate. This is a huge opportunity. New York's population is nearly the size of Australia's – with over 19 million people. ...The bill's fate hinges on a few undecided state senators. Here's hoping for a successful outcome for our friends in New York State.

2009 BRILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

Alex Bedder, Bethel High School. Alex has been accepted to New York University.

Alex has been an active representative of the LGBTI community in his high school for the past four years. He has worked on the Day of Silence at his school by signing up students to participate and educating them about the significance of this special day. Alex wants to become a filmmaker so he can depart from the melodramatic/operatic portrayals of the gay community and create realistic images and examples of the LGBTI community as he knows it. He is inspired by Dustin Lance Black's fantastic adaptation of *Milk*. Alex has already written plays and scripts that show the kind of gay and lesbian characters he wants to see more prominent in the media.

Kearsten Chau, Greenwich High School. Kearsten has been accepted to McGill University, the University of Connecticut, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Vermont.

Kearsten is president of her school's GSA and she organized the Day of Silence the past four years. She also organized Gay-Straight Alliance panel discussions and LGBT-issue awareness videos for Diversity Awareness Week, where different social issues are highlighted through presentations and discussions. For the past four years, Kearsten has helped raise money for her GSA to attend the True Color's Conference. This year, a record \$600 was raised, and many more GSA members attend the conference. Kearsten went to New York City on November 15, 2008 to protest Proposition 8's ban on gay marriage in California. One of Kearsten's teachers described her this way: "This young woman is not afraid to get down to business!" "I have rarely had the pleasure of working with a student leader as competent and compassionate as Kearsten Chau."

Melissa Izzo, Enrico Fermi High School, Enfield. Melissa has applied to Asnuntuck Community College and Manchester Community College.

Melissa would like to someday own a daycare and learning center. Essentially, it would be a daycare/preschool environment catering to the needs of LGBT parents. Melissa transferred to Fermi High School in her junior year, from Bacon Academy, where she was a member of the GSA, and since there was no GSA at Fermi High School, she created one. She met with the school administration and faculty and got signatures on several petitions. It wasn't until her senior year that a GSA was formed. Melissa also volunteered as a "Tender Loving Care Counselor" at the True Colors Conference during her junior year.

Cassandra Tavaras, Wheelock College, Boston. This excellent student and exceptional ally will be entering her junior year at Wheelock College. She aspires to be a kindergarten/first-grade teacher in an urban setting, where she believes that the quality of education is poor and children are not being accommodated according to their needs. Cassandra believes that, "equal treatment should be blind to color, ability, gender and sexual orientation." She is co-president of the Wheelock GSA and has participated in the True Colors Conference since her high school senior year. Cassandra has created a website targeted toward African American people to provide accurate information and resources for LGBTI people. One of her teachers said that, although this was for a class assignment, her website far exceeded expectations.

Congratulations to all of our scholarship recipients. We wish you all a very bright future.

PFLAG DENOUNCES JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING DOMA June 12, 2009

Washington, DC - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National expressed deep disappointment and strong opposition to the Department of Justice's recent arguments regarding the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in the dismissal of a lawsuit filed on behalf of a gay couple who married in California.

"Since DOMA's enactment in 1996, PFLAG has vocally opposed this blatant and malicious law, which enables legal discrimination against our gay and lesbian loved ones and denies them the right to protect their families and receive equal treatment under the law," said Jody M. Huckaby, executive director of PFLAG. "We are deeply offended by the DOJ's recent arguments and alarmed by the hurtful language that further denigrates our families and friends."

"PFLAG continues to urge President Obama to explore options to repeal this immoral and unethical law that leaves our families and friends unprotected and unequal. DOMA hurts our families and friends by denying them more than 1,100 federal benefits legally recognized married couples currently receive from the federal government. When families are hurt, communities are weakened and all of America suffers. In the name of basic equality and fairness, we ask that the Administration fulfill its commitment to advancing equality for LGBT Americans by acting immediately to overturn this law," Huckaby concluded.

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT RULING BRINGS BITTER NEWS: PROP. 8 WILL STAND

May 25, 2009

While we take some solace that the loving couples who did marry in California will stay married, an estimated one million more individuals have been denied that dignity and right. We are heartbroken. But we *won't* back down. We will work relentlessly, organizing communities of faith and other allies across the state, until Prop. 8 is repealed....

...

Today's decision hurts. But we have known this pain before. **Ours is a movement powered by resilience.** Once again, we will turn our anger into action. In fact, we have already begun. To secure marriage equality, we know we must broaden, diversify and deepen faith-based support. So with California Faith for Equality, we have been **building a coalition of clergy and lay leaders** who will lead a long-term campaign of education and action. We will help train them to **make equality part of their daily ministries.** We'll give them the tools to be **effective spokespeople** who can speak of their faith and their belief in equality. We will also work with them to **expand our volunteer base.**

It's all about winning hearts and minds so we can repeal this hateful marriage ban, once and for all. And it's not just California. We need to keep the recent momentum for marriage equality alive until every loving couple across the nation has the right to marry.

....

Our opponents may be celebrating at the courthouse steps today, but they are on the wrong side of history. In the end, equality will triumph over discrimination, because we will never, ever back down.

Warmly,

Joe Solmonese, President
Human Rights Campaign

**LOVE MAKES A FAMILY TO HELP OTHER NEW ENGLAND STATES SECURE MARRIAGE RIGHTS FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES**

Connecticut was not the first state to allow same-sex couples to legally marry, but we do seem to have been the tipping point. In the 7 months since we secured the freedom to marry, we have celebrated as Iowa, Maine and Vermont have joined Connecticut & Massachusetts as marriage equality states.

At the same time, our loss in California this week clearly demonstrates there is work left to be done.

When we surveyed our members at the end of last year, many of you suggested that we share our expertise with other New England states. We heard you and are pleased to announce that *Love Makes a Family* staff will begin working with other LGBT equality groups in the region to advance marriage equality.

...

We look forward to working with our coalition partners across New England this summer and fall, including MassEquality, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, New Hampshire Freedom to Marry, Marriage Equality Rhode Island, Equality Maine, and others.

Whether you want to help out for a day or an hour, your time will make a difference in securing marriage equality throughout New England. For more information on how to get involved, contact Gannon at gannon@lmfct.org or 860-525-7777 x315.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,
Anne Stanback, Executive Director
Love Makes a Family

**RESOURCES:**

www.fortunatefamilies.com and look for the new "Listening Parents Network" for Catholic parents with LGBT children.

www.familiesmatterusa.org: Families Matter provides a phone service where people with a gay or transgender loved one - parents, siblings, caregivers, and other family members - can talk about their questions and concerns safely and confidentially with someone who has "been there." Our service is free, convenient, and confidential.

STATE MUST EXTEND LEGAL PROTECTIONS TO TRANSGENDER RESIDENTS*The Hartford Courant, May 30, 2009*

Connecticut has done a good job of protecting its residents from discrimination in employment, education, housing, public accommodations and credit. But one small group of people has been left out of specific statutory protection. The legislature should rectify the omission by adding the phrase "gender identity or expression" to anti-discrimination laws.

This could be done yet this session by amendment. A bill to add that language received a public hearing but was not voted out of committee.

The term "transgender" covers a wide variety of people, including transsexuals, who alter their gender through surgery or other means; cross-dressers; and people born with ambiguous genitalia. Legislation would give the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities the authority to investigate complaints of discrimination against them and to order appropriate remedies if discrimination is found.

Thirteen states, including Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island, have such protection for their transgender residents, as do hundreds of municipalities, private-sector companies and colleges and universities.

Connecticut should join them. All residents should be able to live safely and have equal opportunities.

GLSEN FOUNDER & FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KEVIN JENNINGS NAMED TO A POST WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

We have just learned that Kevin Jennings has been appointed by the U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan to the position of Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Safe & Drug Free Schools.

"Kevin Jennings is the founder and former executive director of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), an organization that works to make schools safe for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Prior to his tenure at GLSEN, Jennings served as History Department chair and a history teacher at Concord Academy in Massachusetts and before that as a history teacher at Moses Brown School in Rhode Island. Jennings has also authored six books including *Mama's Boy*, *Preacher's Son: A Memoir* which was named a 2007 Book of Honor by the American Library Association and *Telling Tales Out of School* which was the winner of the 1998 Lambda Literary Award. Jennings received a B.A. in history from Harvard, an M.A. from the Columbia University Teachers College and an M.B.A. from NYU's Stern School of Business."

We at GLSEN Connecticut are proud of the accomplishments Kevin has made and will continue to make for the safe schools movement in this high level position within the Obama administration.

Thank you all so much for all that you do to advance GLSEN's mission!

Leif Mitchell, Co-chair, GLSEN Connecticut

CENSUS TO RECOGNIZE SAME-SEX MARRIAGES IN '10 COUNT*By The Associated Press, June 21, 2009*

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Married same-sex couples will be counted as such in 2010, Census Bureau officials said, reversing a decision of the Bush administration.

Steve Jost, a spokesman for the Census Bureau, said same-sex couples would be counted, "and they ought to report the way they see themselves," adding, "In the normal process of reports coming out after the census of 2010, I think the country will have a good data set on which to discuss this phenomenon that is evolving in this country."

Same-sex couples could not be married in the United States during the last decennial count. But last year, after two states had approved same-sex marriages, the bureau said those legal marriages would go uncounted because the federal Defense of Marriage Act prevented the government from recognizing them.

Since President Obama took office, his administration has been under pressure from gay rights advocates to take a fresh look at the issue.

The White House announced Friday that its interpretation of the act did not prohibit gathering the information.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A TRUE PFLAG MOM!

Dear PFLAG Family and Friends,

It is always a pleasure to find an occasion to salute the phenomenal parents, friends and allies who make up the PFLAG family. Many of these PFLAG leaders have been with us for years – even decades – and their commitment to, and passion for, our work has never wavered. Their long-time support has ensured PFLAG's presence in communities small and large, from coast-to-coast, and their hard worked has moved equality forward in nearly every corner of the country.

One of those PFLAG leaders is Elinor Lewallen, who [celebrated] her 90th birthday on May 17th. Elinor is truly an inspiration to the entire PFLAG family, and I wanted to acknowledge her leadership in a special birthday announcement.

Elinor served as the National President of PFLAG in the 1980s . . . when our National Office was, quite literally, in her basement! For more than two decades, she has been a role model and an undeniable example of the power of PFLAG parents.

And even as she recovers from a recent stay in the hospital, she remains a vibrant part of the community. . . she still attends monthly PFLAG meetings in Denver. And if there's an LGBT chorus event in town, you're almost sure to find Elinor there. She remains a visible, vocal and important part of the community – and PFLAG family – in Colorado.

I hope the entire PFLAG family will join me in toasting Elinor's birthday, saluting her service to PFLAG and vowing to follow in her footsteps and help move equality forward!

Happy Birthday, Elinor, from the entire PFLAG family...

Sincerely,

Jody M. Huckaby, Executive Director
PFLAG National

MOVIE REVIEWS:**“The Times of Harvey Milk”- Documentary- 1985**

by Donna Gore

This is extremely well done and different than the Sean Penn movie. Interviews and film clips enhance the feeling of the time. As the filmmakers said, the trial could have been a movie in and of itself. ‘Don't miss this or the accompanying audio commentary!

“Chris & Don: A Love Story”- 2007

"Chris and Don" is a love story, but more a story of perseverance. An author falls for a boy 30 years younger. The relationship unfolds in retrospect with Don, the artist, now in his 70's telling their tale along with excerpts from others. Don is quirky but sincere and makes no apologies for their relationship. Although they may have been viewed initially as father and son, they were the only out couple in Hollywood at the time... and it worked. This is a touching tale.

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.

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 our website: www.pflaghartford.org

Helpline: (860) 633-7184

Phone: (860) 633-5111

Transgender Issues: (860) 231-8582

PFLAG NORWALK/SOUTHWESTERN CT

When: 7:30 pm, 1st Wednesday (bi-monthly)
Jan./Mar./May/July/Sept./Nov.

Where: Triangle Community Center
16 River Street (lower level) Norwalk

Help Line: (203) 226-0257 - Sandy
or (203) 322-5380 - Lester

Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CT:

Contact: Diane (860) 435-2738

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

Meetings: Church of the Redeemer, 185 Cold Spring
(Corner of Whitney Avenue.), New Haven
3rd Tues of the Month @ 7:30 pm

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)

When: Second Monday of every month, 7:00 pm

Where: Noank Baptist Church,
18 Cathedral Heights, Noank (Groton)

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: bjalthen@sbcglobal.net

Web site: www.pflagsect.org

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

CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD

Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

Deadline: 15th of even numbered months. Send articles to: *Jean Cormier*

156 Randal Avenue,
West Hartford, CT 06110



HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!

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 or at
www.straightspouse.org

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.