



**HELEN & BOB BRILL & HGLHC
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED ON JUNE 16**
(Read about these amazing young people on page 5)



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford
Caring

Volume 19, No. 4

July/August 2010

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

CONDOLENCES: Our sincere condolences go out to Jeanie L. and her son, Johnny, on the loss of both of Jeanie's parents in an automobile accident. Jeanie's mother attended several PFLAG meetings in support of her grandson. She was a very proud grandmother and we were always pleased to have her join us. Our sympathy goes out to their family for this tragic loss.

THANK-YOU to all who either stopped by or volunteered to staff our PFLAG booth on a very hot and humid PRIDE Day. Our booth volunteers were: Becky and John G., Odalys, Jim W., Tom and Mary Beth M., Mike R. and Connie G.

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 21 - Chet D.**
- August 18 - Connie & Mike**
- September 15 - John B.**
- October 20 - Charlotte & Glenn**

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

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

**UPCOMING PFLAG
HARTFORD
BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, August 11, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by Joan J.**

*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:** Group is currently not meeting. Updated information will be posted as changes are made. More Info at: <http://www.hglhc.org/> or lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **TRANS SOFFA SUPPORT GROUP IN CONNECTICUT:** This is a group for Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies of Transgendered, Transsexual and Gender Variant people (SOFFAs). Trans people who are SOFFAs are welcome. Meetings held on the 2nd 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.

WHAT DID I (WE) DO WRONG?

This is the strongest statement I have seen to use in response to the question "What did I (we) do wrong to cause our child to be (gay, bi, lesbian, transgender, etc.)" While it is written specifically by the mother of a transgender child, it applies equally well to all gender variance.

"Neither my husband nor I spend time wondering what we did wrong to make our son become our daughter. Most of our friends and neighbors are not casting blame either. It is a good thing they don't. Otherwise we would wonder what our blind neighbor's parents did to cause her condition. We would wonder why another neighbor has a deaf daughter. We would wonder why different neighbors have an autistic daughter. We would wonder why another neighbor's son had a child with a substance abuse problem. We would ask ourselves why some other neighbors had a dyslexic son.

In reality the children of these neighbors are functional and doing very well. They have become educated, work, gotten married, and one is a loving new dad. The autistic child will always need help but the special schooling has made a big difference and she is loved by her family.

Maybe our neighbors quickly accepted our MtF daughter because they had come to other acceptance in their own families.

My MtF daughter functioned very well despite having to change her name and body and to seek acceptance at work.

Maybe my husband and I did things right for our MtF daughter. Otherwise why would she go through a small private engineering college on a pile of scholarships and have no loans to pay back. Why would she now be doing graduate studies at University with her employer paying for her tuition and books.

We must let go of guilt and get on with living. Our children will appreciate it.

Mother of 30 year old post-op MtF. Please feel free to share this message.

Dave Parker, Treasurer

PFLAG TNET

5011 Harness Lane

Colfax, NC 27235-9808



Thank-you to our May meeting speaker, Jacqueline Larriva. Jacqueline is a graduate student at UConn's Department of Family Studies and Human Development. She moved to Connecticut from Tucson, Arizona, where she was born and raised. At UConn, her research and teaching focus on transgender and gender nonconformist romantic and sexual relationships. Jacqueline was drawn to this work by her own life experiences. She grew up as gender nonconformist, bi-racial (Chinese-Mexican), and queer in a multigenerational home. At the age of fourteen, Jacqueline began her coming out process. She co-founded the Pink Triangle Alliance, now known as ARCUS/Gay Straight Alliance at Tucson High Magnet School. Through her research and teaching, Jacqueline has continued to educate others about people who are marginalized and rendered invisible. Her coming out, and her many accomplishments since her coming out, would not have been possible without the love, support and sacrifice of her parents and extended family.

PORTUGAL BECOMES 6TH EUROPEAN COUNTRY TO ALLOW GAY MARRIAGE AFTER PRESIDENT'S OK

Barry Hatton Associated Press Writer, 4:34 p.m. EDT, May 17, 2010

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Portugal's conservative president announced Monday he is reluctantly ratifying a law allowing gay marriage, making the predominantly Catholic country the sixth in Europe to let same-sex couples wed. President Anibal Cavaco Silva said he would not veto the bill because majority liberal lawmakers would only overturn his decision. The country must focus instead on battling a crippling economic crisis that has increased unemployment and deepened poverty, he said. "Given that fact, I feel I should not contribute to a pointless extension of this debate, which would only serve to deepen the divisions between the Portuguese and divert the attention of politicians away from the grave problems affecting us," Cavaco Silva said. He said he was setting aside his "personal convictions," though he did not elaborate and did not take reporters' questions.

The country's parliament passed the Socialist government-backed bill in January, with the support of all of Portugal's left-of-center parties, who together have a majority. Right-of-center parties opposed the measure and demanded a national referendum.

Elsewhere in Europe, gay marriage is permitted in Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Norway. As well, five U.S. states and Washington, D.C., have legalized same-sex marriage, as have Canada and South Africa.

...

Socialist Party spokesman Vitalino Canas welcomed the president's decision. "This is a memorable moment," he said. "This is a great step forward for us politically and as a society."

Antonio Serzedelo, the president of lobby group Opus Gay, congratulated the head of state for placing "ethical responsibility above personal opinions."

BACK IN THE DAY

Seven Years Ago, on June 26, 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court's *Lawrence v. Texas* decision struck down sodomy laws across the country, which had classified LGBT people as criminals for several generations. In 1986, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force launched the Privacy Project, the first national education and advocacy campaign to repeal consensual sodomy laws, following the Supreme Court's infamous 1986 *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision.

GAY? WHATEVER, DUDE

by Charles M. Blow, Published: June 4, 2010

Last week, ... Gallup released a stunning, and little noticed, report on Americans' evolving views of homosexuality. Allow me to enlighten:

1. For the first time, the percentage of Americans who perceive "gay and lesbian relations" as morally acceptable has crossed the 50 percent mark. (You have to love the fact that they still use the word "relations." So quaint.)
2. Also for the first time, the percentage of men who hold that view is greater than the percentage of women who do.
3. This new alignment is being led by a dramatic change in attitudes among younger men, but older men's perceptions also have eclipsed older women's. While women's views have stayed about the same over the past four years, the percentage of men ages 18 to 49 who perceived these "relations" as morally acceptable rose by 48 percent, and among men over 50, it rose by 26 percent.

I warned you: stunning.

There is no way to know for sure what's driving such a radical change in men's views on this issue because Gallup didn't ask, but that doesn't mean that we can't speculate. To help me do so, I called Dr. Michael Kimmel, a professor of sociology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the author or editor of more than 20 books on men and masculinity, and Professor Ritch Savin-Williams, the chairman of human development at Cornell University and the author of seven books, most of which deal with adolescent development and same-sex attraction.

Here are three theories:

1. The contact hypothesis. As more men openly acknowledge that they are gay, it becomes harder for men who are not gay to discriminate against them. And as that group of openly gay men becomes more varied — including athletes, celebrities and soldiers — many of the old, derisive stereotypes lose their purchase. To that point, a Gallup poll released last May found that people who said they personally knew someone who was gay or lesbian were more likely to be accepting of gay men and lesbians in general and more supportive of their issues. (contd.)

2. Men may be becoming more egalitarian in general. As Dr. Kimmel put it: “Men have gotten increasingly comfortable with the presence of, and relative equality of, ‘the other,’ and we’re becoming more accustomed to it. And most men are finding that it has not been a disaster.” The expanding sense of acceptance likely began with the feminist and civil rights movements and is now being extended to the gay rights movement. Dr. Kimmel continued, “The dire predictions for diversity have not only not come true, but, in fact, they’ve been proved the other way.”
3. Virulent homophobes are increasingly being exposed for engaging in homosexuality. Think Ted Haggard, the once fervent antigay preacher and former leader of the National Association of Evangelicals, and his male prostitute. (This week, Haggard announced that he was starting a new “inclusive” church open to “gay, straight, bi, tall, short,” but no same-sex marriages. Not “God’s ideal.” Sorry.) Or George Rekers, the founding member of the Family Research Council, and his rent boy/luggage handler. Last week, the council claimed that repealing “don’t ask, don’t tell” would lead to an explosion of “homosexual assaults” in which sleeping soldiers would be the victims of fondling and fellatio by gay predators. In fact, there is a growing body of research that supports the notion that homophobia in some men could be a reaction to their own homosexual impulses. Many heterosexual men see this, and they don’t want to be associated with it. It’s like being antigay is becoming the old gay. Not cool.

These sound plausible, but why aren’t women seeing the same enlightening effects as men? Professor Savin-Williams suggests that there may be a “ceiling effect,” that men are simply catching up to women, and there may be a level at which views top out. Interesting.

All of this is great news, but it doesn’t mean that all measures relating to acceptance of gay men and lesbians have changed to the same degree. People’s comfort with the “gay and lesbian” part of the equation is still greater than their comfort with the “relations” part — the idea versus the act — particularly when it comes to pairings of men. As Professor Savin-Williams told me, there is still a higher aversive reaction to same-sex sexuality among men than among women. For instance, in a February New York Times/CBS News poll, half of the respondents were asked if they favored letting “gay men and lesbians” serve in the military (which is still more than 85 percent male), and the other half were asked if they favored letting “homosexuals” serve. Those who got the “homosexual” question favored it at a rate that was 11 percentage points lower than those who got the “gay men and lesbians” question. Part of the difference may be that “homosexual” is a bigger, more clinical word freighted with a lot of historical baggage. But just as likely is that the inclusion of the root word “sex” still raises an aversive response to the idea of, how shall I say, the architectural issues between two men. It is the point at which support for basic human rights cleaves from endorsement of behavior.

As for the aversion among men, it may be softening a bit. Professor Savin-Williams says that his current research reveals that the fastest-growing group along the sexuality continuum are men who self-identify as “mostly straight” as opposed to labels like “straight,” “gay” or “bisexual.” They acknowledge some level of attraction to other men even as they say that they probably wouldn’t act on it, but ... the right guy, the right day, a few beers and who knows. As the professor points out, you would never have heard that in years past.

All together now: stunning.

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\$ _____ 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.

MEET OUR 2010 PFLAG/TRUE COLORS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

Our scholarship fund was created ten years ago to honor PFLAG Hartford founding members, Helen & Bob Brill. At our monthly meeting on June 16, the following three, very deserving, students received Brill Scholarships:

Noah Bogdonoff. The Williams School, New London, CT. Noah will attend Vassar College.

Noah says, "In an ideal world, my double-major in anthropology and drama will dovetail into a career centered around both the arts and the sciences. I would like to use my anthropology degree (with a focus in biological studies) to obtain a research job that would expose me to the world in such a way as to inspire my writing and acting." This amazing student has received many awards for both academic and social activities. He was the founder of a LGBTI awareness group (formerly GSA) at his school and encouraged the school faculty to make a unified effort to regard a transgender student (female to male) as male. Noah also led a comprehensive overhaul of the seniors' commencement dress code to allow for free expression of gender. He was instrumental in creating a new initiative called SPEAK and the first event was a coffeehouse-style function (called a SPEAKeasy) with acts focusing on expression of gender and sexuality. All aspects of these issues are explored so as to encourage discussion. Noah said that people at his school have questions that, for whatever reason, they cannot ask. He feels that it is his task to give them answers and hopes to use this new platform to transform his school from an accepting but stifled environment to an open and excited one.

Alexandra Hoyt Tolland High School, Tolland, CT. Ali will attend Manhattanville College with a major in Foreign Language (Spanish/French) and a minor in Music/Art.

Ali has been active in her high school's GSA for four years and served as Secretary and Co-President. She coordinated, organized and planned various events, including "Rainbow Campaign," which is a week of acceptance and awareness and revolves around the National Coming Out Day on October 11. Each day of the week has a different event, ranging from Rainbow Patterned Clothing Day (so students can show their support for GLBTQ issues) to "Sign My Shirt Day," which lets allies sign GSA member T-shirts to show acceptance throughout the school. She has participated in the GSA's "gym talks" to freshman gym classes to promote understanding stereotypes, what coming out means and derogatory terms, and acceptance in our community. When her GSA was in danger of being cut from the school's budget, Ali wrote to the Superintendent of Schools in an effort to convince the Board of Education just how important the GSA is to the high school and the whole community. She also helped organize a petition to help keep the GSA intact. With over 200 signatures, they were able to keep the GSA running strong. **Ali also received the HGLHC Scholarship.**

Minh Leu William H. Hall High School, West Hartford, CT. Minh will attend Tufts University with a double major in chemistry and political science under the pre-med track. He hopes to continue on to Medical School and become a family physician.

Minh has been a volunteer at Love Makes a Family since his high school freshman year. He campaigned door-to-door for pro-equality legislators; contacted state legislators and collected hundreds of signatures in support of marriage equality. After Connecticut legalized gay marriage in his junior year, he realized that there were countless incidents of discrimination plaguing Connecticut high schools. He served as a student leader in the True Colors Activist Institute, a statewide organization led by Connecticut high school students, which combats issues affecting LGBT youth. This group's advocacy efforts culminated in a public hearing in May 2009 at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford that focused on reducing bullying towards LGBT youth. At this hearing, many stories of bullying, abuse and even rape and family abandonment were told. Minh realized that even though gay marriage in Connecticut is legal, much more needs to be done.

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

**WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOUR TEENAGER SAYS SHE'S GAY,** *WSJ Health Journal, May 11, 2010, by Melinda Beck*

What role, if any, should parents and schools play in a child's emerging sexual orientation? Sparks have been flying around that question this spring. Early last month, a small group called the American College of Pediatricians (ACP) sent a letter to the nearly 15,000 school superintendents in the U.S., stating that most adolescents who experience same-sex attraction at age 12 no longer do by age 25, and warning that prematurely labeling them could lead some "into harmful homosexual behaviors they otherwise would not pursue." The letter also stated that homosexual attraction and/or gender confusion "can respond well to therapy." (contd.)

Risks of Rejection

An estimated 2% to 7% of U.S. teens are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Of these, those who felt accepted by their families fared better than young adults who felt rejected as adolescents. Young people in the latter group are:

- Eight times more likely to attempt suicide
- Three times more likely to use illegal drugs
- Six times more likely to suffer depression
- Three times more likely to have unprotected sex

Source: Family Acceptance Project, San Francisco State University

The far larger American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) posted a statement saying it is in no way affiliated with the ACP and referred schools and parents to its own publications that urge acceptance of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth. (The ACP was founded in 2002 by pediatricians protesting the AAP's support of homosexual parenting.) The National School Boards Association also backed the AAP's position and warned schools not to be confused by the similarly named groups. And several prominent researchers, including geneticist Francis S. Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, accused the ACP of distorting its research to make its case against homosexuality...

Where to Find Help

- Family Acceptance Project familyproject.sfsu.edu
- Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays pflag.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics healthychildren.org

While the development of same-sex attraction isn't completely understood, most medical and mental-health professionals have long concluded that being gay is not an illness and that people cannot choose their true sexual orientation. It seems to develop slowly in early childhood; studies show that, on average, young people, gay and straight, first become aware of sexual attraction about age 10. ...

"By the time children are 11, 12 and 13, they have a very good sense that their sexual orientation may be different from the majority of their friends," says Ellen Perrin, a developmental-behavioral pediatrician at the Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center in Boston. "There is no evidence that people could become gay because of external influences," she adds.

The ACP maintains that homosexual attraction is changeable—and dangerous. ACP President Thomas Benton, a Gainesville, Fla., pediatrician, likens homosexuality to drunken driving: "If I was aware that my teenage son was thinking about getting drunk and operating a car, I'd do everything in my power to prevent him from doing that," he says. Dr. Benton also says that schools "should provide an environment that is safe for all children, but they shouldn't promote an agenda. They shouldn't say, 'Let's have a coming-out party.'" Dr. Benton declined to say how many members it has; others have estimated about 200. The AAP has 60,000 members. Dean Byrd, an ACP adviser and president of National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), which advocates reorientation therapy, added in an email: "The adolescent brain itself is under construction and very much influenced by experience and environment. There is tremendous danger in labeling—premature labeling of adolescents, primarily because of this fluidity." ...

"Families and caregivers have a dramatic and compelling impact on their LGBT children's health, mental health and well-being," says Caitlin Ryan, director of the Family Acceptance Project. She also notes that because gender orientation starts so early, "we tell parents and families that they need to provide a supportive environment for their children before they know who they'll become." ...

Groups like NARTH cite research that sexual reorientation therapy can be effective, but more mainstream organizations say it can do lasting damage. "If kids get the message that who they are is unacceptable, then they will carry that scar for the rest of their lives," says Gary Remafedi, a professor of pediatrics at University of Minnesota. "Telling parents that this is an illness, that they should force their children to seek some cure that doesn't exist is quackery and its malpractice." ...

If adolescents are confused about their sexual identify, should parents try to help, and how?

Margaret J. Blythe, a professor of pediatrics at Indiana University School of Medicine and chairwoman of the AAP's committee on adolescents, says she sees many kids who are uncertain about their sexual orientation who have never played out any of their sexual attraction. "They're afraid of being rebuffed, or they know it's a huge risk," she says. "I think these teens are saying, 'Just let me figure it out.' They will. It becomes very apparent to them." "I often hear them say, 'I knew my son was gay. I just didn't know how to bring it up,'" says Dr. Blythe. She says she routinely tells adolescent patients that "teens in your age group have questions about whether they are attracted to the same sex, or the opposite sex, and having an attraction doesn't mean you are labeled. Some will automatically say, 'No way. I'm only attracted to girls.' They may come back and talk about it later. You've established a foundation that you're open to talking about it."

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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,
Potluck at 6:00 p.m.; Meeting at 7:00 pm

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

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: kreymundi@allianceforliving.org

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

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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.