



**HELEN & BOB BRILL SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED ON JUNE 20**  
(Read about these amazing young people on pages 5-6.)



***The Voice of PFLAG Hartford***  
***Caring***



**Volume 21, No. 4**

**July/August 2012**

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

**THANK-YOU** to Tom Murphy for heading up our Scholarship Selection Committee, and to Mary Beth Murphy and Donna Shubrooks for serving as committee members. As you will see on pages 5-6, they did a wonderful job in selecting our 2012 Brill Scholarship winners. Thank-you also to everyone who helped to make our annual Scholarship Presentation such a wonderful event; especially to Rose & Larry Pysh & Becky Glezen, who provided the refreshments.

**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 18 - Mike & Connie**
- August 15 - Eric & Jason**
- September 19 - Lori & Kalie D.**
- October 17 – Bonnie & Zachary**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:**

- Student/Limited Income: \$10
- Household Membership: \$40
- Individual Membership: \$25
- (Paid membership includes a one-year subscription to Caring & the National PFLAG newsletter.)*
- 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 every Sunday from 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](mailto:lizy@hglhc.org) or call 860/278-4163.
- **STONEWALL SPEAKERS** is an all volunteer speakers' bureau composed of LGBT people and allies dedicated to reducing violence and bias while promoting equality for all. We speak to thousands of Connecticut students and adults annually. Listeners will meet LGBT people and their allies in person; hear candid accounts of their lives; and receive honest, informed answers to any questions they have. Let your high school, college, business, religious group or community group know we are available. For more information please contact [coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org](mailto:coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org).
- **XX CLUB "Twenty Club"** – The Transsexual Support Group of New England meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month from 2-5 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT [www.twentyclub.net](http://www.twentyclub.net)
- **LIVING SOULFULLY** (Men Loving Men In Community) meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **Mpower CT** – Social gathering for gay and bisexual men ages 18-35 meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **CONNECTICUT P.R.I.D.E. CELEBRATION** – No information presently available. Please check out the next issue of *Caring* (Sept./Oct.) for date and location.



April 20, 2012

Today, on GLSEN's 17th annual Day of Silence, the White House released a statement of support endorsing the **Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA)** and the **Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA)**.

Today's announcement is a vital show of support to students everywhere of all identities, backgrounds and beliefs who face daily bullying and harassment in school. By speaking out on GLSEN's Day of Silence in support of these two critical pieces of legislation, President Obama has given greater hope to students who often feel that they have nowhere to turn.

It is deeply moving to know that LGBT students who face the multiple threats of discrimination, harassment and violence have the President as an ally in their efforts to win all of the protections that they deserve.

Our good friend Sirdeaner Walker who has been a champion of this legislation said, "Today is a day that I have hoped for since I began my work as an anti-bullying advocate after losing my son Carl. I believe that President Obama's explicit endorsement of the Safe Schools Improvement Act will make a tremendous difference in moving this issue forward."

Sirdeaner goes on to say, "Having met with the President three times, I knew his support for SSIA and the Student Non-Discrimination Act was genuine. While nothing can bring Carl back, I know that these bills can make a real difference to end the bullying and harassment that is faced by too many other sons and daughters today."

We are so encouraged and energized by President Obama's support of SSIA and SNDA! But we know that we still face an uphill battle in a bitterly divided congress before this critical legislation becomes law.

Sincerely,

Eliza Byard

Executive Director, GLSEN

**A GROUNDBREAKING, FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND BOOK** (Now available in the PFLAG Library.)

**Transgender Family Law: A Guide to Effective Advocacy** is a must-have practical guide for attorneys interested in becoming effective advocates for their clients, and a valuable resource for any transgender person who is forming, expanding, or dissolving a family relationship.

This is the first book to comprehensively address legal issues facing transgender people in the family law context and provide practitioners the tools to effectively represent transgender clients.

**Transgender Family Law** covers a full range of family law topics, including:

- Culturally Competent Representation
- Recognition of Name and Sex
- Relationship Recognition and Protections
- Protecting Parental Rights
- Relationship Dissolution
- Parental Rights after Relationship Dissolution
- Custody Disputes Involving Transgender Children
- Protections for Transgender Youth
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Estate Planning and Elder Law

**What People Are Saying:**

*"As more and more transgender people come out and claim their rights, Transgender Family Law: A Guide to Effective Advocacy has come along at just the right time. Any transgender person who is facing a family law issue should hand a copy of this book to their attorney."*

**Mara Keisling, Executive Director,  
National Center for Transgender Equality**

**FROM PFLAG NATIONAL:****FOR TOO MANY, DISCRIMINATION IS A DAILY OCCURRENCE**

- ▽ **Persecuted at work** ... In 29 states, it is legal to fire someone because of their sexual orientation, and in 35 states it is legal to fire someone because of their gender identity. Overall, 60 percent of LGBT workers nationwide are not protected against workplace discrimination.
- ▽ **Bullied at school** ... In a recent national study, nearly two-thirds of LGBT students said they felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation. Another national survey found that more than three-fourths of transgender and gender non-conforming students experienced mistreatment in school. In the past year, almost 90 percent of LGBT students experienced harassment at school.
- ▽ **Discriminated against because of who you love** ... Forty-one states have banned same-sex marriage by defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman.
- ▽ **Denied the right to raise children and families** ... A number of states have laws that ban or severely restrict same-sex couples and LGBT individuals from adopting or fostering children.

**GREAT NEWS! WE ARE ONE ROUND CLOSER TO DEFEATING DOMA!**

May 31, 2012

In a 3-0 ruling, the First Circuit Court of Appeals today upheld the U.S. District Court decision in GLAD's case *Gill v. Office of Personnel Management* finding the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional.

This marks the **first time** that a Federal Court has found DOMA unconstitutional.

Today's decision reaffirms the lower court ruling that all married couples and surviving spouses deserve the same opportunities to care and provide for each other and their families.

The battle isn't over. We expect the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG) of the U.S. House of Representatives to appeal the decision. BLAG stepped forward to defend DOMA from equal protection challenges after President Obama declared he would no longer defend the law in response to GLAD's challenges. We are prepared to fight until our victory is secured.

Lee Swislow

GLAD Executive Director



May 9, 2012

Today, President Obama added his voice to the growing chorus of Americans who believe that all couples should share equally in the freedom to marry. He now becomes the first sitting President to join the majority of Americans whose hearts have opened and minds have changed in favor of the freedom to marry.

Like so many others who have made this journey - from Bill Clinton to Laura Bush, most recently Vice President Biden, and a majority of the American people - President Obama has come to know loving and committed gay couples. Through thought and conversation about these families and their dreams and challenges, President Obama has reflected on his own values of fairness and respect for others, and completed his journey to support for the freedom to marry.

Whether signing our "I Do" petitions, joining us in on-the-ground battles, or having your own conversations with people you persuade, you've been part of Freedom to Marry's campaign as we have led this work nationwide. ...

...

At Freedom to Marry we know--as the President and Vice President have just described--that it's the power of our conversations about why marriage matters that changes hearts and minds. Through our hard work, determination and persuasive conversations, we have won the freedom to marry in six states and the District of Columbia, with states like California, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Washington, and others on the horizon - if we do our work with urgency and persuasion.

The President's announcement of support today marks a historic turning point for our freedom to marry movement.

Yet there is much left to be done. Forty-four states continue to exclude same-sex couples from marriage and because of the federal so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the civil marriages of thousands of same-sex couples are not respected by the federal government, thus depriving families of a crucial safety-net of federal protections and responsibilities.

...

Evan Wolfson,  
Founder and President, Freedom to Marry



*Dear PFLAGers and Friends:*

*May 9, 2012*

*Here is PFLAG National's statement with respect to today's historic announcement by President Obama. It's a great day for our movement and for our country. - Becky and John*

**PFLAG NATIONAL RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT OBAMA'S STATEMENT  
ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY:**

Today, history was made. President Barack Obama took an historic step as the first American president in office to recognize the importance of the freedom to marry for ALL couples. He joins a majority of Americans who believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to create a loving, lasting and legal partnership — marriage — with the person they love, regardless of sexual orientation.

The President now affirms what PFLAG has said for 40 years: that there is power in sharing personal stories and that, when we do, hearts and minds can truly change as we realize our shared values of love and commitment. The President has sent an important message to LGBT people, their parents, families, friends, and allies: that they are accepted for all that they are, that their enduring, loving relationships are the same as all others.

For all of us at PFLAG who believe in the power of love and acceptance, the message the president sends to our LGBT children is loud and clear: You are loved. You are accepted. You are equal. We thank President Obama and welcome him to the PFLAG family.

**AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA***Posted: 05/10/2012, Huffington Post*

Mr. President,

My toddler son met you in Iowa in 2007 at Tom Harkin's Annual Steak Fry. You were greeting the crowd at the fence and came over to say hello to my family. You asked me and my partner, knowingly, if we were his parents and we said yes. You nodded and took our son in your arms. You both regarded each other, and, with a broad smile, you said, sincerely and warmly, "He's beautiful."

That moment now hangs on the wall in the room of our biracial, adopted son because of all of the possibility it represents. It's the possibility that a brown-skinned man can become the President of the United States. It's the possibility that one can be anything, despite challenging odds, but especially when assisted by love and unconditional support. It's the possibility of the difference that one mom (let alone two) can make in a young man's life, especially if he'll never really know his birth father.

I crossed paths with you again at an event in Washington, DC in 2011. As a lesbian living in Virginia with her partner of 19 years and a young son who sees his moms as married, rather than "married," I could have listed all of the things I still wanted from you. Instead, I thanked you for all of the little things you've done to support same-sex couples, including partnership recognition for federal employees. But I especially wanted you to know that I appreciated deeply your leadership on Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

And on an otherwise unremarkable day -- May 9, 2012 -- you touched my heart again when you 'came out' and said publicly that you have come to believe that same-sex couples deserve more than civil unions and should be allowed to marry legally.

It was a moment of honesty above the din of political parsing, and a moment that embraced what our children understand about love and commitment, pure and simple. In that moment, as you spoke, I couldn't find words to replace the tears welling up in my eyes for this gift. Not unlike the first time we met, you embraced my family -- including others like us and generations to come -- in a deeply significant way.

Your words in support of same-sex marriage, Mr. President, were beautiful.

**THE HELEN AND BOB BRILL PFLAG SCHOLARSHIP**

*Our scholarship fund was created twelve years ago to honor PFLAG Hartford founding members, Helen & Bob Brill. At our monthly meeting on June 20, the following five, accomplished and very deserving, students received Brill Scholarships.*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2012 BRILL SCHOLARS:**

**Christopher (Kit) Brown** – Kit has finished his junior year at Emerson College, Boston, MA, and is currently pursuing graduate school opportunities for a fall 2013 entry at the University of Connecticut's Higher Education & Student Affairs (HESA) graduate program. Kit immersed himself in Boston's LGBTI community and declared a minor in Gender Studies at Emerson, which allowed him to explore the intersection of sex, gender and orientation. His fraternity at Emerson has two philanthropies; one of which is HIV/AIDS awareness. Their fraternity has been a fixture at the Boston Living Center, a group home for people with HIV and AIDS. He has worked many hours at Rhode Island's Marriage Equality phone bank and also worked at a phone bank to promote the passage of the transgender rights bill. Currently, Kit is interning at the Family Equality Council, the nation's leading group for LGBT families, helping to plan Family Week activities. He says he goes to work each day with a smile.

**Ian Jackson** - Ian has completed the first semester of his sophomore year at Quinnipiac University with studies for a career as a Media/Communications Specialist. Ian is Vice President of G.L.A.S.S. (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Supporters) at Quinnipiac. He also volunteers on the Board of GLSEN Connecticut and volunteered at the True Colors Conference at Sage College in New York, helping students, teachers, parents and allies to sign up to change the climate for GLBTI students in Connecticut schools. Ian raised funds for AIDS Project, New Haven and helped to organize and participate in a World Aids Day rally. He has also raised funds and worked on the Trevor Project Suicide Prevention Hotline. Ian has been a Global Education Officer/Member of buildOn, and was one of two students chosen to spend two weeks in Sokela, Mali, West Africa, helping to empower youth through service to their communities and to organize young people to help build schools in developing countries. Ian hopes to utilize his education to continue to make an impact on his community. (contd.)

**Rebecca Lynn Lazarus** – Windsor High School. This fall, Becca will attend Warren Wilson College, NC, where she plans to study for a career in Psychology, helping LGBTQ children/youth and their families. Becca and her two fathers have been members of PFLAG Hartford for several years. She has been an activist since the age of 9 when she founded COLAGECT (People with a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender or Queer Parent) and was inducted onto the COLAGE Executive National Board at age 16. Among Becca’s many volunteer activities within the LGBTI community are: President of Windsor High School’s very active GSA; started Chalk 4 Peace at WHS; Day of Silence; Transgender Awareness Day; promoted Safe Zone stickers in classrooms when a new rule prohibiting profanity and bullying words was instituted in her school, and made sure the rule was enforced. Becca has a COLAGECT booth at Hartford Pride and also presents a seminar at the True Colors Conference to bring awareness of the COLAGE organization and to get the word out about families like hers. She was a Councilor in Training for Family Week in Provincetown where she worked with youth who had one or more LGBT parents. She has been a delegate and councilor for Camp Anytown – a camp for Civil Justice/Human Rights where she learned about the “isms,” and how to combat negativity towards any person. “Activism and human rights are my passion and my drive in life, and will always be a part of who I am...”

**Amanda Mercado** – Bulkeley High School, Hartford; Capitol Community College. Amanda’s major field of study is Social Services. She wants to be involved within her community to advocate for growth, development and equal human rights in all areas. Amanda is currently a Co-founder and Yeoman of “Naturelle Evolutions” the first Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at Capitol Community College. Their mission is to promote diversity and understanding of the LGBTQI students and their heterosexual allies at the college and in the Greater Hartford area. As a member of Naturelle Evolutions, Amanda participates in many activities to promote a safe space in an educational environment by advocating support of her peers. During High School, Amanda was very active in an after school youth program in the Hispanic Health Council, and received the Youth Group award in 2006 and 2007. Amanda says, “Many say the thought is what counts but with me my thoughts are always followed by my actions. I will always keep in mind that within my choice of profession it can be quite the workout but I know that within my talents I can give much back to my community. My words will make a difference but my actions will make a permanent change.”

**Matthew Tuscano** – University of Connecticut, PhD program. Matthew will pursue a career in Marriage and Family Therapy; specifically therapy and research with LGBTQQIAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and ally) clients. Matthew is an Honors Scholar and a member of the UConn Speaker’s Bureau, where he facilitated workshops to increase LGBTQQIAA awareness at the college. He is a member of Personal Sexual Assault Awareness Initiatives where he is Co-Founder and CFO of Slut Walk UConn and the RAR (Revolution Against Rape) peer education organization; a facilitator for the Violence Against Women Prevention Program; Men’s Project, which is focused on masculinity and men’s role in ending interpersonal violence; STAAR Program mentor for a young man with Autism Spectrum Disorder; RA for two years at the Ecohouse Learning Community; Research at UConn Diversity Lab (Same Sex Domestic Violence project); Internship at Yale University School of Medicine at the Bipolar Research Clinic. Matthew says that one of the most important issues facing the LGBTQQIAA community is not an issue imposed on us by “others” or heterosexual society, it is a problem that corrodes from within: inter-community phobia, a fear or prejudice held by one subgroup of our community against another subgroup.



### **FROM GLAD:**

Last night the Bi-Partisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG) filed a motion to halt proceedings in *Pedersen v. Office of Personnel Management*, GLAD's second DOMA challenge, which is currently awaiting a ruling in federal court in the District of Connecticut. Rest assured, GLAD will vigorously oppose this motion.

Our plaintiffs, six married couples and a widower, from Connecticut, Vermont, and New Hampshire, are already being denied federal benefits only because of DOMA - they should not be denied access to justice. Not by BLAG or anyone else.

While BLAG tries to thwart this case, Jerry Passaro continues to be denied his late husband's pension. Anne Meitzen continues to be unable to go on her wife, Joanne Pedersen's health insurance. Lynda DeForge continues to be unable to care for her wife, Raquel Ardin, because she can't get Family Medical Leave.

Moments like these remind us of how important it is to be ready for any development, any curveball our opponents throw at us.

Lee Swislow, Executive Director

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

Helpline: (860) 633-7184

Phone: (860) 633-5111

Transgender Issues: (860) 231-8582

### **PFLAG SOUTHWESTERN CT**

When: 7:30 pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday (bi-monthly)

Jan./Mar./May/July/Sept./Nov.

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

Help Line: (203) 226-0257 - Westport

(203) 322-5380 - Stamford

(203) 925-0445- Shelton

(203) 847-9183 - Norwalk

Email: [PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com](mailto:PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com)

### **PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)**

When: Second Monday of every month,

Potluck at 6:00 pm; Meeting at 7:00 pm

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

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: [bjalthen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bjalthen@sbcglobal.net)

Web site: [www.pflagsect.org](http://www.pflagsect.org)

### **PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN**

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437

Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

Church of the Redeemer

185 Cold Spring Street, New Haven

(Corner of Whitney Avenue)

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: [greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com](mailto:greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com)

## **Central and Western Massachusetts**

### **PFLAG FRANKLIN-HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER**

#### **Northampton**

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Where: Highland Valley Elder Services,  
Cutlery Building, 320 Riverside Drive

Helpline: 413/625-6636

Email: [jcmalinski48@gmail.com](mailto:jcmalinski48@gmail.com)

#### **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*

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## **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  
[jcmalinski48@gmail.com](mailto:jcmalinski48@gmail.com)

or at [www.straightspouse.org](http://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](http://www.pflag.org).