



PFLAG Colorado Springs

Parents, Families, Friends, and Allies United
With LGBT People to Move Equality Forward

March 2018

“Families Are Forever” - Short Film at March Meeting

“Families Are Forever” is a twenty minute award-winning film demonstrating the profound role family acceptance plays in the coming out experience of LGBTQ individuals.

It is the work of Dr. Caitlin Ryan, a researcher and founder of *The Family Acceptance Project* at San Francisco State University. See the website: <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu>.

Her extensive research demonstrates the dramatic difference in outcomes when a child coming out is provided even modest acceptance by his/her family – and the often-tragic outcomes when acceptance is withheld.

Tom and Wendy were devout Mormon parents living in a conservative community: Attending church every Sunday, obediently serving in their ward, raising five children and knocking on doors to promote support for California's Proposition 8. Then one day, Wendy read 13-year-old Jordon's diary and discovered he was gay. What happened next changed their lives.



This is a touching and ultimately beautiful story of a devout Mormon family discovering that their 13-year-old son is gay. The trailer can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/2EEKDq0>

The Family Acceptance Project helps families from diverse cultural, racial and religious backgrounds accept their LGBTQ family members, using a research-based, culturally grounded approach. Dr. Ryan has been engaged in this research for over 15 years, and has created the world's first broad program involving research, intervention, education and policies aimed at diverse families.

Support Groups for Christian Parents of an LGBT Child

Article provided by Bill Oliver, PFLAG Board Member.

In addition to the key support and resources provided to parents at our monthly PFLAG meetings, there are two local groups that were created specifically to support Christian parents and their special struggles. This can be especially helpful if they come from denominations that continue to condemn lifelong committed same-gender relationships. The bottom line: they do not have to choose between their kid and God.

The older group was formed over a dozen years ago at *First Presbyterian Church* when a small group of parents started meeting and sharing the stories of their beloved gay kids. That church

later split with the denomination over the issue of partnered gay clergy. The group now meets the First Tuesday of the month at the *Colorado Springs Conservatory*, and parents of all Christian backgrounds are most welcome.

A similar group was formed about five years ago at *Holy Apostles Catholic Church* with the support of the pastor at the time. It currently meets the Third Wednesday of the month at a private home.

In both groups it is a given that the parents love their kids unconditionally, gay or straight. Most, if not all, would also hold that God

(Continued on page 3)

MARCH PFLAG MEETING

Tuesday
March 20, 2018
7:00 p.m.

The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street

Short Film:
“Families are Forever”

Discussion of the work
of Caitlin Ryan, PhD and the
Family Acceptance Project

Social time begins at 6:30 p.m.
Coffee, Cookies
Everyone is welcome.

USAF Col. Gary Packard To Speak at April PFLAG Meeting

USAF Col. Gary Packard will speak to us about “Morality, Religion, Social Justice and Military Service – A Don't Ask, Don't Tell and Transgender Military Service Journey” on Tuesday, April 17th. This will be a very good program. Put it on your calendar and be sure to invite your friends.

See Four Youth and Gender Films—Screening March 3

On March 3, Springs Equality, in collaboration with Inside Out Youth Services, PFLAG and BRIDGE/PAGE, will present four excellent short independent films that focus on transgender and gender nonconforming youth.

Screening will be at The Gallery Below, 718-B North Weber Street, 6-9 p.m. Discussion with representatives of the four organizations will follow the screening.

These films are the work of the Youth and Gender Media Project. For more information, see their website: <http://youthandgendermediaproject.org>



This newsletter is published by the Colorado Springs Chapter of PFLAG.

PFLAG Vision Statement. PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

PFLAG Mission Statement: By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through:

Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ

Education for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ

Advocacy in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.

To join the local chapter and receive the newsletter regularly, complete and mail the membership form on page four. To receive complimentary copies of the newsletter, please contact us.

E-mail address: info@cspflag.org

Support Line: (719) 425-9567

P.O. Box 49131
Colorado Springs, CO 80949

PFLAG Colorado Springs website:
www.cspflag.org

PFLAG National Office website:
www.pflag.org

Newsletter Editor: Karen Flitton Stith
E-mail: karenfstith@gmail.com

To receive your newsletter by e-mail, send a request to info@cspflag.org

PFLAG Parents on the Front Lines

From a PFLAG dad's powerful plea for his transgender son to a devastated dad speaking out against a sexual predator, PFLAG parents were engaged in some of the highest profile moments of last year.

In Texas, Ken Ballard, 45, engaged in advocacy in the most PFLAG way—by speaking about his difficult journey toward unconditional support for his transgender son, Ashur. His video garnered positive messages from around the world. View it on YouTube at:

<http://bit.ly/2sW75nD>

In response to these messages, Ballard said that he was just doing his job as a dad. Ballard and his wife, Melissa, run a group for trans kids and their families which affiliates with PFLAG chapters in Texas, and testified in Texas to the state legislature, helping to successfully beat back anti-transgender legislation in that state.

In Georgia, PFLAG dad Nathan Mathis shared his personal story in order to make a case for keeping virulent anti-LGBTQ candidate Roy Moore out of office. He made a YouTube video posted at:

<http://bit.ly/2GxjVjv>

Years ago, his lesbian daughter died by suicide, and at the time he didn't support her. Read the *Daily Beast* newspaper article about her

death at: <http://thebea.st/2AUuWKf>
His regret has led him to become a vocal advocate.

Finally, Deb Munn, the mother of Charlie Craig (the plaintiff at the center of the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case recently heard by the U.S. Supreme Court) is a fierce advocate for her son, and also a PFLAG mom!



"It was Never About the Cake"
Deb Munn and her son, Charlie Craig

Follow this link to a Huffington Post article in which Deb talks about the case that is now at the forefront of the movement for equality.
<http://bit.ly/2oau3lj>

Cartoons by Emma Oosterhous

Colorado Springs native and CU Boulder graduate Emma Oosterhous was recently interviewed on Colorado Public Radio in Denver after winning a prestigious Marshall Scholarship. She plans to use the support to get her master's degree in comics and graphic novels at the University of Dundee in Scotland. Congratulations, Emma!

Emma worked as an intern at Inside/Out Youth Services in Colorado Springs, where she began drawing cartoons to illustrate the stories young people were telling her. During her college years, she encouraged LGBTQ youth to send her ideas for the cartoons she has regularly published on her website, Alphabet Soup.

From time to time, we have included an Alphabet Soup cartoon in the Colorado Springs PFLAG newsletter. To see more of her work, go to:
<http://alphabetsoupcomic.tumblr.com/>

Emma's February 15th interview on the program *Colorado Matters* is available on the Colorado Public Radio website at: <http://bit.ly/2opZPAV>
And a TV interview can be seen at: <http://bit.ly/2oo5c2P>

Trans Youth Education and Support (TYES)

TYES is a PFLAG affiliate that offers education and support to families with gender variant children. TYES information is available at PFLAG meetings.

TYES families in the Pikes Peak region keep in touch by phone and through a private Facebook page. To contact the Colorado Springs TYES volunteers, call PFLAG at (719) 425-9567 or send an e-mail to info@cspflag.org.

The TYES program originated and is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado.

More information is available at the national TYES website www.TYES-Colorado.org



Report From the Gay Christian Network Conference

Provided by Bill Oliver, Board Member, Colorado Springs PFLAG

The Gay Christian Network (GCN) was founded in 2001 by Justin Lee, initially as an online community, a safe space for social networking and support. From the beginning it welcomed LGBT Christians irrespective of whether they were "Side A" (affirming same-gender marriage) or "Side B" (embracing celibacy as the only option).

Mr. Lee was brought up in a conservative evangelical family. It was only after several years of agonizing struggle, which included enduring "reparative therapy," that he was able to finally reconcile being both gay and Christian.

He is the author of "*Torn – Rescuing the Gospel from the Gay-vs.-Christian Debate*," 2012. It was among the first of now several books by prominent evangelicals who have taken a deeper look at the few so-called "clobber" (anti-gay) passages in the bible and have changed their minds regarding same-gender marriage.

Since 2005 GCN has hosted a national conference in cities around the country, eventually becoming the largest annual LGBT Christian event in the world with attendance around 1200-1500. I was delighted to attend my first GCN conference recently when it came to the Denver Convention Center, Jan 18-21.

There were prominent keynote speakers, plus numerous breakout sessions on a variety of topics. Hosting author tables were many authors with whom I was familiar, including:

Rev. Colby Martin, "*Unclobber – Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality*," 2016.

Susan Cottrell, "*Mom, I'm Gay – Loving Your LGBT Child and Strengthening Your Faith*," second edition, 2016.

PFLAG meetings are a safe space.

Who you meet, and what you hear ...

must remain strictly confidential.

Thank you.



Amber Cantorna, "*Refocusing My Family – Coming Out, Being Cast Out, and Discovering the True Love of God*," 2017. Amber's father (name not revealed) was and remains in a high position at *Focus on the Family*.

Long planned, it was announced during the conference that GCN is changing its name to *Q Christian Fellowship* - <https://www.qchristian.org>

One evening a special presentation was hosted by Dr. Caitlin Ryan, a researcher and founder of *The Family Acceptance Project* at San Francisco State University. Her 20 minute film "*Families Are Forever*" was shown to conference participants. This film will be shown and discussed at the March meeting of Colorado Springs PFLAG.

Thank You

To the Saponas Foundation, First Congregational United Church of Christ and the Ruskey/Bianchi Family for their significant, ongoing support of Colorado Springs PFLAG.

Amazon Smile Program

Colorado Springs PFLAG participates in the Amazon Smile program. When making purchases on Amazon, please enter the site through our portal:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/84-1281187>

When you do this, Amazon will send 0.5% of the value of your purchase to our chapter. Pick up a flyer on this program at PFLAG meetings.

Christian Parent Support

(Continued from page 1)

loves their kids more than they could imagine, gay or straight, and whether called to a lifelong committed relationship or to celibacy.

I am not a parent. I am a Christian, a big part of who I am, and I'm gay, a small part of who I am. I am blessed beyond measure to help support these two groups as a resource person. As is also true at PFLAG meetings, it is profoundly moving to hear the stories shared by parents when a child first comes out, especially if it was unexpected.

It means so much to hear how other parents have had similar experiences and moved forward in their walks with the Lord. Being prayerfully accompanied in this uncertain journey can be a relief and gift beyond measure.

I also maintain a list of "*Welcoming Congregations*" in the Pikes Peak region. It can be found on our website: <http://cspflag.org/readinglinks.html> It will be updated again ahead of Pride weekend this summer. It is also available at our meetings.

Please contact me for more information about either of the Christian Parents Groups and to confirm that a monthly meeting is going forward and its location. - Bill Oliver – 719-548-9280. E-mail: gnarlybill@hotmail.com

Rafting Trip.

I'm an openly gay outdoorsman who recently published the first LGBT-focused op-ed in *Outside Magazine* thanks to my world record journey to all 417 U.S. national parks. I thought your members might be interested in joining my world record project for a "queer rafting trip" I'm organizing with Holiday River Expeditions down the Colorado River in Canyonlands National Park this August 20 - 25, within driving distance of any Colorado resident.

Rafting Trip: <http://bit.ly/2FiKSbc>
Outside Magazine op-ed "Have You Ever Seen a Gay Guy in an Outdoors Ad": <http://bit.ly/2Fj18cb>

For more information, contact: Mikah Meyer at www.MikahMeyer.com

Editor Note: Even if you don't want to go rafting, take a look at these links!!!



BULLETIN BOARD

March 3 — Four Short Films — PFLAG will be collaborating with Springs Equality, BRIDGE/PAGE and Inside/Out to present four independent short films about transgender and gender nonconforming youth. The Gallery Below, 718-B North Weber Street, 6-9 p.m. See p. 1.

April 21 — Red Ribbon Ball — Honoring This Year's Heroes With a Touch of Magic. Honoring Heroes Mary Ellen McNally and Mary Lou Makepeace. Cheyenne Mountain Resort, 3225 Broadmoor Valley Road This event supports the Southern Colorado Aids Project (S-CAP). Purchase tickets at: www.RedRibbonBall2018.Kintera.org Let's have a PFLAG table at the Ball this year! If you are interested, call Karen Stith at 634-4433.

April 27 — Queer Prom 2018 — A Victorian Steam Punk Tea Party 7—11 p.m.— Tickets \$5. Palmer High School gymnasium. Sponsored by Inside/Out Youth Services. More information in the April PFLAG newsletter.

Alphabet Soup Comics—By Emma Oosterhous

"UNFAIR" © ALPHABET SOUP 2018



Remember kids, if your partner isn't cool with your identity or label, that's a big red flag. You deserve better! And ladies, can we get a little more wlw solidarity in here? I'm tired of lesbians and bi women tearing each other down.

Support PFLAG

Pick up a King Soopers/ City Market Gift Card at a PFLAG meeting or ask us to mail one to you.



The free card is already loaded with \$2.50 for groceries. You add money to the card using your credit card, and use the gift card to pay for purchases. King Soopers will donate 5% of your grocery, gas and pharmacy purchases to our local chapter of PFLAG. Now, that's an easy, powerful fundraiser. To receive a card by mail, call Cindy Waldmann at (719) 488-9887.

Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.

Name: _____

____ New member ____ Renewing member

Address: _____

- ____ Regular Membership \$ 30
- ____ Supporting Member—Silver 40
- ____ Supporting Member—Gold 60
- ____ Supporting Member—Platinum 100

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Check here if you wish to receive the newsletter by e-mail _____

Each year our chapter must contribute \$15.00 for each paid membership to the PFLAG national office to support its mission.

Make checks payable to Colorado Springs PFLAG and mail to P.O. Box 49131, Colorado Springs, CO 80949. Membership fees and additional donations are tax deductible. All information will remain confidential. PFLAG is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization.