



# PFLAG Colorado Springs

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

2019 is Our 25th Anniversary Year!

August 2019

## Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention—A Conversation

Marie McQuillan, who became the Executive Director of Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention (PPSP) on April 1, will talk with us about suicide prevention at the August PFLAG meeting.

She will provide advice about how family and friends can approach someone who is considering suicide, and will share information about the programs and training available at PPSP.

Marie came to PPSP with years of experience in the non-profit sector, working specifically with the American Red Cross supporting the Service to the Armed Forces program. Marie was instrumental in building a team to expand Red Cross services for our military across the state of Alaska, to include the previously under-served remote areas of the state.

Following that project, Marie served in Kuwait and Djibouti for nine months providing emergency communication services for military members and their families, made resiliency programs available to deployed troops, and ran canteen facilities on the installations. Most recently she has been work-



Marie McQuillan

ing locally as the Red Cross Volunteer Services Manager for South-eastern Colorado, working to create partnerships and building capacity in our community.

The Suicide Prevention Hotline is (844-493-8255. Contact PPSP at (719)573-7447. Online website: <https://bit.ly/2Tg4gg2>

**AUGUST PFLAG MEETING**

**Tuesday  
August 20, 2019  
7:00 p.m.**

**Conversation with  
Marie McQuillan  
Executive Director  
Pikes Peak  
Suicide Prevention**

**The Dwelling Place  
508 North Tejon Street**

**Light Refreshments**

**Social Time starts at 6:30  
p.m.**

**Everyone is welcome.**

## Dinner Celebrating 25th Anniversary of Colorado Springs PFLAG on September 21

Colorado Springs PFLAG will celebrate its 25th Anniversary with a festive dinner in the private room at Red Gravy restaurant in downtown Colorado Springs on Saturday, September 21, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Current PFLAG folks and the wonderful people who started the chapter and kept it vibrant for so many years are invited to come together to honor this milestone.

Reservations are required and seating is limited to 40, so be sure to reserve your place as soon as possible by going to the PFLAG website at [www.cspflag.org](http://www.cspflag.org). Click on the "25th Anniversary" button on home page.

The dinner, including a pasta buffet, salad, rosemary focaccia, non-alcoholic beverage and dessert

(including the tip) is \$27.00. There will be a cash bar. Please make your reservation online and pay by credit card. We want you to join us!

PFLAG participants are invited to share anecdotes, stories and memories by sending messages by U.S. mail or e-mail to our chapter. What do you remember about the early years (1994-95) of our chapter?

Were you there when Eva McGeehan marched in our first Pride Parade by herself while her fellow PFLAG members cheered from the sidewalk? (Students and families were not out in the high schools very much in those days and some PFLAG families did not want to "out" their children at school.) Do you remember going into the back door of

All Souls Unitarian Church for PFLAG meetings to protect the privacy of our members? Do you remember the mantra of the Gay Rights Movement—"Everybody Needs to Come Out of the Closet!"

What does PFLAG mean to you? Please share your stories, both old and new. E-mail us at [info@cspflag.org](mailto:info@cspflag.org).

Colorado Springs PFLAG was formed in 1994 in response to the November 1992 statewide voter approval of Amendment 2 to the Colorado Constitution, prohibiting the passage of any law that would protect LGBTQ rights.

Amendment 2 was subsequently overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1996 in Romer v. Evans, a landmark decision for gay rights. See Wikipedia: <https://bit.ly/2X3Qa2z>



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.

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To join the local chapter and receive this 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](mailto:info@cspflag.org)

Support Line: (719) 425-9567

P.O. Box 49131  
Colorado Springs, CO 80949

PFLAG Colorado Springs website:  
[www.cspflag.org](http://www.cspflag.org)

PFLAG Colorado Springs on Facebook:  
PFLAG - Colorado Springs  
<https://www.facebook.com/PFLAGCS/>

PFLAG National Office website:  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

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To receive your newsletter by e-mail, send a request to [info@cspflag.org](mailto:info@cspflag.org)

### PFLAG Webinar Online 8/27

PFLAG will provide a free online one-hour webinar on Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Mountain Time. The topic of this month's webinar is "When Someone Comes Out: A PFLAGers' Guide to Demonstrating Support and Acceptance."

The term "coming out" has become so mainstream that many people assume that the word – and the actions it entails – are simple. However, PFLAGers know that it can still be harrowing for individuals and families.

This brand-new webinar has some great tips, tools, and ideas for supporting LGBTQ+ individuals who are planning to come out and new (and potential) allies who want to demonstrate their acceptance of LGBTQ+ folks in their lives.

For more information, and to register online for the webinar, go to: <https://bit.ly/2OFSXyX>

The national office of PFLAG schedules a webinar about once a month. If you do participate in this webinar, please bring your thoughts and ideas about it to our September meeting.

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.

This is Important!  
You don't always know where other people are on their journey. THEREFORE, PFLAG meetings are always a safe space.  
Who you meet, and what you hear  
Must remain strictly confidential.  
- Thank you.

**TransParent Group**  
The TransParent group at Inside/Out for parents of gender variant and transgender youth usually meets on the third Thursday of the month from 6:00—7:30 p.m. at Inside/Out Youth Services, 223 North Wahsatch Ave. For more information, send an e-mail to [transparenting@insideoutys.org](mailto:transparenting@insideoutys.org) or call Inside/Out at 328-1056.

### Drag Queens at PrideFest



Loretta Lovely holds one of the corners of a huge rainbow flag as the parade turns the corner at Tejon Street and Colorado Avenue

Colorado Springs PrideFest 2019 celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York that sparked the Gay Rights Movement. The parade route was lined with thousands of colorfully-dressed supporters, many waving rainbow flags and cheering as friends and groups passed by.

Organizers said that this year's PrideFest, with the theme "Rise Up: Remembering Fifty Years of Stonewall", was the largest ever in Colorado Springs, with more registered vendors and parade participants.

This year's PrideFest headliners were five drag queens from RuPaul's Drag Race. See: (Wikipedia) <https://bit.ly/2s73MLI>

Drag queens were important participants in the Stonewall demonstrations. It was largely trans women of color and drag queens who were the ones who fought back first and were the leaders of what became the broader LGBT rights movement.

Local drag queen Tiffany Alexander could recall a time when drag queens were stopped and "stripped down" by police to check if they were wearing male clothing. If they didn't have an article of men's clothing on, they could be jailed.

"Stonewall was one of the few places where we had freedom to be who we wanted to be," Alexander said. "And the government as well as society was trying to take that away from us, so we fought back to keep it."



## PrideFest 2019—50th Anniversary of Stonewall



PFLAG Marchers

[PFLAG Salutes School District 11.](#) This year marked the first time a Colorado Springs school district marched in the Pride Parade. Dr. Michael Thomas, who came to Colorado Springs from Minneapolis a year ago to take the post of Superintendent of the district, encouraged his educators to march in the Parade. Over 200 teachers and staff marched, and even brought along a yellow District 11 school bus!

*The following is an excerpt from a July 24, 2019 article in the Colorado Springs Indy, written by Brandon Flanery:*

"During Dr. Thomas' time as a chief of academics, leadership and learning back in Minnesota's Twin Cities, it was commonplace to have school districts march in city Pride parades. So when Thomas received pushback about marching in Colorado Springs in 2018, it was quite a curveball.

"He didn't think that there was a problem with standing in solidarity with his queer staff and students. But, with it being his first year, he decided the district would not march. He wanted to try and understand the culture better before making waves.

"After a year of waiting and observing, he decided it was time.

"If we embody the spirit of inclusivity," Thomas said, 'all means all. It's not just some aspects of our community. It's everyone. [As a superintendent] it is my ethical and moral obligation to take a stance that serves all students.'

"But taking a stance for inclusivity did not go unchallenged. Dr. Thomas received "very mixed feedback" after he announced the district would be marching, ranging from teachers thanking him for 'giving us permission to be here today,' to e-mails asking, 'What is the process for firing a superintendent?'

"When I ask Thomas if he is nervous about the negative feedback or fears for his job, his response surprises me.

"I'm not here to do a job,' he says. 'I'm purposed to be here. It's much bigger than me. It's not just a job. I moved here to be a part of instrumental and fundamental change.'

"Thomas points to statistics that, as a queer person myself, I have become all too familiar with: 60 percent of LGBTQ students hate going to school because they don't feel welcome; LGBTQ students are twice as likely to experience bullying, three times as likely to attempt suicide.

"As a superintendent, I have to respond to this data' he says. And that's why he marches. He wants his staff and his students to know they are seen and they have a place.

"hough they didn't 'dominate T-Mobile, (Dr. Thomas's competitive nature wanted to beat every other group in size, as he had done back in Minneapolis)

*(Continued on page 4)*

## "Love Calls Back"

### Editor's Note:

Verizon and PFLAG have teamed up to make a beautiful three-minute video we hope everyone will watch.

If you haven't already found out about it on our PFLAG chapter's website and/or Facebook page, then you can click on it right here and watch it: <https://vimeo.com/340500513>

Many of us who have been with PFLAG for a while have had the heart-warming experience of seeing a parent reach out to an LGBT family member from whom they have been estranged, sometimes for many years.

Watching this, I cried. My daughter's first girlfriend had a hard time finding common ground with her mom, who was strongly religious. Many years later, as the daughter was transitioning (F to M) they were finally able to reconcile, with joy and relief.

If you know someone who might be trying to figure out how to reconnect with a relative, please share this little video with them. These reconnections can be priceless. It's never too late for love to call back.



One Colorado, the powerful LGBT advocacy group, will hold its annual Ally Awards event on August 24 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Denver. The 2019 award recipients are:

- UHealth Integrated Transgender Program;
- Cynthia H. Coffman, former Colorado Attorney General;
- Crisanta Duran, former Colorado Speaker of the House; and the

*Lifetime Achievement Award will go to*  
— Christine Bland, Lockheed Martin engineer and transgender activist.

Starting at 6:30 p.m., the event will kick off with a cocktail reception and hors d'oeuvres on the pool terrace.

Guests will then move to the Four Seasons ballroom for an awards ceremony with guest speakers, delectable desserts and champagne.

For more information and to purchase tickets, go to <https://bit.ly/2YOa5GR>



**BULLETIN BOARD**

**Aug.18 — Pueblo Pride**—10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Mineral Palace Park, 1500-2100 North Santa Fe Avenue. Who is interested in marching in this Pueblo Pride Parade that morning and carrying our Colorado Springs PFLAG banner? E-mail us if you want to participate. For more information about the event, see: <https://www.socoequality.org/events/pride19>

**August 24 — Ally Awards.** Presented by One Colorado. Four Seasons Hotel in Denver, 6:30 p.m. See article p. 3

**Sept. 21— Colorado Springs PFLAG 25th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration**— Red Gravy restaurant. Be sure to sign up on the PFLAG website and celebrate with PFLAG. Everyone is invited, to join us as we celebrate this milestone. See article p. 1.

**Oct. 3 — Ally Up! Annual Fundraising Breakfast for Inside Out Youth Services.** Antlers Hotel, Cascade and Pikes Peak Avenues. Save the date, Plan to sit at the PFLAG table.

**October 25-27—PFLAG National Convention** — Kansas City, MO. Several members of Colorado Springs PFLAG will attend. If you are interested in joining them, send an e-mail to [info@cspflag.org](mailto:info@cspflag.org). Early registration costs less.

**Nov 3 — Night Out** — Urban Peak challenges the community to gather pledges and sleep outside overnight near the Urban Peak Shelter, to raise funds to support homeless youth. More information next month.

**Short Notes:**

Thank you to all the PFLAG folks who staffed the PFLG booth in America the Beautiful Park on July 13-14, and marched in the Pride Parade. We were so pleased to have members of Mom Hugs and also parishioners from Calvary United Methodist Church with us in the parade.

Congratulations to the Springs Ensemble Theatre (SET) for its simply wonderful production of “The Laramie Project” in July. This ten year old theater company, located at 1903 East Cache la Poudre, is one you really want to know about. Bill Oliver and Karen Stith participated in “talk back” sessions with the audience on behalf of PFLAG after the Sunday matinees. Website: <https://springsensembletheatre.org/>

**City Installs PrideFest Crosswalk**



On June 25, a city crew erased a temporary rainbow crosswalk painted by an artist collective at the corner of Platte Avenue in the Knob Hill area the night before.

The LGBT community was not happy about this, and city officials were asked to consider an alternative.

About two weeks later, just in time for the PrideFest weekend, the city approved installation of a fresh new temporary rainbow crosswalk at the corner of Tejon Street and Colorado Avenue where the Pride Parade turns to head west. The crosswalk idea was supported by the Downtown Partnership, met legal safety standards, and involved no taxpayer money.

Good call, Colorado Springs. Thank you. Watch the KRDO TV video about the new rainbow at:

<https://bit.ly/33hUHlj>

School District 11 (Continued from page 3)

nearly 200 people from District 11 joined him, and all of the onlookers cheered at their presence. In Thomas’s words, they received ‘an outpouring of support’ in spite of the scathing criticism in the weeks leading up to the event.’

“Things are changing in this city. People are standing up for equality, in spite of threatening emails and aggressive protesters. And it’s happening because brave people like Dr. Michael Thomas stand up for what they believe is right, and refuse to give in to fear.

“As a queer person in Colorado Springs, I want to say thank you, Dr. Michael Thomas, and thank you to everyone else who chooses to not only see queer people, but to support us, even when it’s not popular to do so.”

**Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member**

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New member \_\_\_\_ Renewing member

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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.