



# PFLAG Colorado Springs

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

August 2014

## A Personal Journey - The Trans Experience

At the August PFLAG meeting, Holly Webster will share her recent transition experience and the years that led up to the decision to embark on a life changing journey. Holly is an engineer and a retired Air Force officer (USAF grad) who up until beginning her transition worked for Northrop Grumman at Schriever AFB. After taking off two years to transition, she has just reentered her career field with a small company as the real her.

She is a friend of PFLAG chapter president Doug Kirkpatrick, who first met her in graduate school in Texas. They then both taught on the faculty at the Air Force Academy.

Holly's military career and security clearance left no space for exploration of her transgender identity. She commenced the transition process two years ago, after having retired from both the military and Northrop Grumman.



Holly Webster

"I'm glad that society has loosened up and information is readily available so that kids can better understand and express themselves in a more accepting environment than I experienced" she said. "Parents and society can't count on their children growing up the way they might have expected or demanded."

## LGBT Youth With Unsupportive Parents Sound Off Anonymously On *Whisper App* - *Huffington Post*

With marriage equality expanding internationally and more U.S. states approving anti-discrimination legislation, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community is gradually gaining new levels of validity and recognition in the eyes of the mainstream public slowly, but with certainty.

Given that ever-growing list of global LGBT victories, it's easy to overlook how difficult life can be for teens and young adults who are still coming to terms with their sexuality. What follows is a heartbreaking collection of youth submissions from the *Whisper*

app, which allows users to express themselves anonymously.

According to *Whisper's* Head Of News Slade Solmer, the series comprises user submissions from Fredericksburg, Virginia; Avalon, Pennsylvania; and Vass, North Carolina; others came from Ireland and Saudi Arabia, among other locations. A sample of the postings:

*"I told my mom I'm gay. She's gonna find a good psychiatrist to 'cure' me."*

(Continued on page 2)

## AUGUST PFLAG MEETING

Tuesday  
August 19, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Program:

Holly Webster  
A Personal Journey

The Dwelling Place  
508 North Tejon Street

Everyone is welcome.

Coffee, cookies  
Social time begins at  
6:30 p.m.

## PFLAG Annual Meeting

**Board Elections.** The Annual Meeting of the Colorado Springs chapter of PFLAG will be held at the next monthly meeting on September 19th. Active volunteers will be elected as Board members for the year from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015.

**Memberships.** Plan to renew your PFLAG membership when a request is sent to you with the September newsletter. Your support is vital to keep our chapter strong. If you have been receiving the newsletter but have not yet become a member, now is the time to join!

**Volunteers.** If you would like to help with the chapter's outreach to the community, newsletter, or monthly meeting, call Doug at 963-9638 or Elaine at 598-7265.



Whisper App (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

"I told my mom I'm gay today. Her immediate response was 'Don't tell the rest of the family'."

"Today I told my dad I'm gay. He said when the weather gets nice, I have to move out."

"I told my parents I am trans two months ago...mom is still mad and tells me to volunteer and go to church!"

"When I was finally comfortable and accepting myself about my sexuality, my mom said: 'Who the fuck wants a gay son or a lesbian daughter? that's embarrassing!'"

"I introduced my boyfriend to my dad

and he calls him my 'friend' because he doesn't want to believe I'm gay."

"I've been with my partner for six years. Our parents still introduce us as 'friends' to other people."

"Well, I came out to my parents today and my mom is mad...and I don't think she will come around because she used to talk crap about my gay uncle...sorry, mom, I'm a lesbian, but I'm happy for once."

"My parents don't accept that I'm gay. I act like it doesn't bother me but it hurts worse than anything. I resent them and I don't know if I will ever forgive them."

"I told my family I'm gay. They told me I'm not welcome any more."

"I told my dad that I'm gay. He told me that it's an abomination and it's the devil working on me. I'm not going to apologize for happiness."

These parents need the support of other parents who have learned about the GLBT community and have embraced their GLBT children. These parents need PFLAG.

Everybody Welcome Festival—August 10th

PFLAG will have a booth at the Everybody Welcome Festival, an annual celebration of culture and diversity organized by the Colorado Springs Diversity Forum. If you can help at the booth, please call Bill Oliver at 548-9280.

The Festival will take place at America the Beautiful Park from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. A USO show will honor the legacy of Fannie Mae Duncan, a local African-American businesswoman and pioneer in the fight against segregation in Colorado Springs. The top performer is Daniel Rodriguez, famous as "the Singing Policeman" performing the National Anthem in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks.

This newsletter is published by the Colorado Springs Chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

PFLAG Mission Statement:

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) persons, their families and friends through:

- √ support, to cope with an adverse society,
√ education, to enlighten an ill-informed public, and
√ advocacy, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

\*\*\*\*\*

PFLAG IS FOR EVERYONE

If you've never been to one of our meetings, we feel you will find it rewarding and may find it leads to a new sense of family.

Membership is not required. All are welcome.

\*\*\*\*\*

To join the 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: karenstith@gmail.com

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

Urban Peak Off the Street

Urban Peak's Off the Street Breakfast on July 23rd was a great success. Seven PFLAG members joined 530 other supporters for breakfast under a huge tent erected in the middle of Vermijo Street.

Urban Peak is a shelter and support program for homeless youth, many of whom are LGBT. Several of the youth told their stories and Executive Director Shawna Kempainen, formerly of Inside/Out, made a passionate plea for donations.

Over \$68,000 was raised. Urban Peak hopes to purchase an apartment building for transitional housing.

Trans Youth Education and Support (TYES)

TYES is a satellite program of PFLAG offering education and support to families with gender variant children. TYES information is available at PFLAG meetings, and also at the PFLAG/TYES booth during PrideFest on July 19-20

A TYES meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 9th. To contact the local TYES group, call PFLAG at (719) 425-9567 or send e-mail to info@cspflag.org. The national TYES website is www.TYES-Colorado.org



*A Note to My Kid is a program of PFLAG. PFLAG National is grateful to have adopted A Note To My Kid from its founders, Patrick Wallace, Mike Curry, and Michael Volpatt.*

Launched in November 2011, A Note To My Kid (ANTMK), is a project designed to give members of the LGBT community, their parents, family and friends the opportunity to share their unconditional love with one another via notes, videos and photos, with the hope that these public expressions of love, support, and affirmation will help those who haven't yet been supported or accepted by their own family and friends.

"Since 2011, we have provided a safe haven for people around the world to express the unconditional love they have for their LGBTQ family and friends, said ANTMK co-founder Patrick Wallace. "We're honored that PFLAG, an organization built on one mother's love and exceptional bravery, will leverage its network and wide reach and support to share real stories of acceptance, unity, and unconditional love with the world."

Every day, people who are LGBT and their families and friends reach out to PFLAG National and its many chapters with their questions, hopes, and fears. PFLAG National will work with chapters so that ANTMK will become part of the answer we provide: that family support and unconditional love are crucial.

You can visit A Note to My Kid at its website ([www.anoetomykid.com](http://www.anoetomykid.com)), on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/anoetomykid](http://www.facebook.com/anoetomykid)), and on Twitter (@anoetomykid).

Notes, videos, and photos can be submitted via email to [antmk@pflag.org](mailto:antmk@pflag.org) and will be shared widely across PFLAG National's network of online communications so that they can be available to chapters.



Heike, Jerry, Elaine and Anna in the Pride Parade. Thank you to the sixteen volunteers who worked in the PFLAG booth and/or marched in the parade. Over 50,000 people attended PrideFest, up from 35,000 in 2013.

## PFLAG Joins Pikes Peak Equality Coalition

At its July meeting the PFLAG Colorado Springs Board voted unanimously to join the Pikes Peak Equality Coalition (PPEC).

Quoting from the PPEC website - <http://coppec.org>:

*"Our vision is a strong and vibrant Colorado Springs where the most vulnerable are cared for, the environment is protected and we have a responsive leadership that values diversity, equality and a robust democracy."*

*"Our mission is to build a cohesive, well-respected and strong Colorado Springs by sharing ideas, strategies and resources to advance equality and to create diverse representation in voter turnout, elected officials and community leadership."*

*"For the past eight years, the Pikes Peak Equality Coalition has been an unwavering voice for traditionally underrepresented communities in the region. Through nonpartisan voter education, election protection and legislative advocacy, we have helped reinvigorate the Human Relations Commission, sustain a viable local health system for Colorado Springs, and ensure that all committed relationships have the legal recognition they deserve."*

Participating organizations are: Citizens Project, 9to5 Colorado, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, Inside/Out Youth Services, ONE Colorado, Colorado Common Cause, Sierra Club, Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission, Women's Resource Agency, NAACP, Colorado Springs Diversity Forum, Urban Peak Colorado Springs and The Independence Center.

Many of these sister organizations are well known to us for their ardent LGBT support and services - and all of them support Marriage Equality.

The PPEC is headed by Regional Coordinator Sarah Musick. Sarah was one of the recent honorees of *The Independent's* inaugural Inclusion Awards, celebrating LGBT leadership and achievement of individuals in southern Colorado.



**BULLETIN BOARD**

**Aug. 9 — Trans Youth Education and Support (TYES)**

This will be the first family event held in Colorado Springs. For more information, contact PFLAG at (719) 425-9567.

**Aug. 10—Everybody Welcome Festival—** Sponsored by the Diversity Forum. America the Beautiful Park. 11 a.m.—4 p.m. (see article p. 2)

**Aug. 16-17—Pueblo Pride—** Parade, Festival, Equality Run/Walk, 2POP Picnic. For more information, see the SCEA (Southern Colorado Equality Alliance) Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pueblo.pride](http://www.facebook.com/pueblo.pride)

**Aug. 16 — Ally Awards Event** - The annual signature event of the One Colorado Education Fund. Cable Center, Denver, 7:30—10:00 p.m. Tickets \$15 and \$20. The evening will culminate in an awards presentation to straight allies who work to advance equality and who make a substantial difference in the lives of LGBT Coloradans. The awards will be accompanied by live music, guest speakers and entertainers, a hosted bar, and heavy passed/stationed hors d'oeuvres. More information at [www.one-colorado.org](http://www.one-colorado.org).

**Aug. 22—Diversity Day at Schriever AFB—** article p. 4.

**Oct. 3-5—The Pacific Northwest PFLAG Conference** will be held in Boise, Idaho. The Gem State welcomes diversity supporting individuals, families and allies in the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual & trans\* community. This conference is open to PFLAG members and others interested in an opportunity to grow their support, education and advocacy. Please register as soon as possible at <http://bit.ly/1mC55fR>. If this does not take you to the registration form, try cutting and pasting it into your browser.

**Oct. 11— Coalition of PFLAG Chapters Meeting.**

**Oct 23 — Ally Up! Breakfast for Inside/Out** - Fund-raiser 7:30-8:30 a.m. at the Antlers Hilton Hotel.

**Diversity Day at Schriever AFB - August 22**

Jordan Simonson, Captain, USAF, BSC, PhD, who spoke at the July PFLAG meeting about OutServe, the support group for GLBT individuals in the military services, has invited PFLAG to participate in Diversity Day at Schriever Air Force Base. Capt. Simonson is Chief of Mental Health Services at the base.

Diversity Day consists of booths led by community leaders representing various aspects of diversity, including ethnic foods, vendors displaying cultural items, and speakers.

This year, for the first time, a Pride booth will be included. Representatives from the local LGBT community have been invited to staff the booth. Doug Kirkpatrick will represent PFLAG, and he would be happy to have additional PFLAG members join him. If you can help him with this outreach effort, please call him at 963-9638.

**From the Inside/Out July Newsletter —**

This month we took a handful of our youth to the Connect 2 Ignite Youth Summit. They met with various queer youth from all over the state of Colorado, built life long connections and gained insight on how to be community leaders.

Every youth from outside our city was "shocked" to see such a strong queer youth presence thriving in Colorado Springs, known for having highly conservative values.

It's a Colorado Springs thing.

Eric Pizana  
Executive Director, Inside Out Youth Services

**PFLAG Thanks** The Saponas Foundation and First Congregational United Church of Christ for their significant, ongoing support of the Colorado Springs PFLAG Chapter.

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

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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