



PFLAG Colorado Springs

December 2014

What's Your Pronoun? TYES Flash Fundraiser!

The Colorado Springs TYES group is having a short fundraiser just in time for holiday giving. TYES tee shirts can be ordered online only between November 26 and December 10. They will be delivered by Christmas.

The \$20 shirt was designed by Keria Shaw, head of the local TYES program. It opens a conversation about the amazing vocabulary that is evolving around our changing perceptions of gender. (He, Zi, Xem, They, Ey...)

To see the shirt online and place an order, go to: www.teespring.com/TYESPFLAG. All of the proceeds from this fundraiser go directly to the TYES program in Colorado Springs.



This is a great way to give a unique holiday gift and also support our new TYES group. If you want to help TYES without ordering a tee shirt, send your check payable to PFLAG Colorado Springs (PO Box 49131, CSP 80949) with a notation ("for TYES") on the check.

TYES (Trans Youth Education and Support) is a program of PFLAG Colorado Springs. (See TYES, p. 2)

Out Loud Men's Chorus Holiday Concert Coming Up December 5-6



A little song, a little dance, and a whole lot of holiday cheer! The concert includes a visit to the annual Holiday party at Miss Twinkleton's School for Sensitive Boys. Be sure to put this special event on your calendar to support our own Colorado Springs Men's Chorus.

Tickets for the Out Loud holiday concert are available online at <http://www.rmarts.org/outloud.php#> or at the door before the concert. Adult tickets are \$30; Military, Student and Senior tickets are \$27.

The chorus will sing Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 20 East St. Vrain Street.

Because of the annual Parade of Lights downtown, the Saturday evening performance at 7:30 will be at the Broadmoor Community Church, 315 Lake Avenue.

PFLAG members will usher at all three concerts.



DECEMBER PFLAG MEETING

Tuesday
December 17, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Holiday Dessert Party and Conversation

About Family Relationships

The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street

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

Bringing Home That Special Someone

The December PFLAG meeting will be a social/ sharing discussion of our experiences when a new person is drawn into the family.

We'll go over some long-standing PFLAG advice for both the family and the visitor, and also discuss experiences we have had in subsequent years, as openness and acceptance have grown on the part of everyone involved in the relationships.

Membership Now!

NOW is the time to renew your PFLAG membership, or become a new member if you have not already done so. PFLAG membership donations are tax deductible, and they keep our chapter strong and active in this community.

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Editor's Column: The Gift of Time — and Gratitude

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

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

Christmas, 1997. Our daughter called to ask if she could bring her girl friend, Janine, home for Christmas. Liz was then a senior at St. Olaf College in Minnesota, and had come out to us a few months earlier, when she invited Janine to come to Colorado for a summer visit. Janine had come out to her family the previous Christmas and the upsets that ensued had made her reluctant to go home for the holidays.

Janine spent a week with us, and we accepted, learned and grew. Janine was a butch lesbian, and the two girls were in love. For no reason I understood at the time, I got caught up in reading Stone Butch Blues that week, a harrowing tale written by Leslie Feinberg whose transgender journey took place in the harsher era of the 1950s-70s.

Fast forward to 2014 — 17 years later. Liz and Janine remain friends, but have different partners now. Liz married her college sweetheart, Brian, has a young son, and sings in the wonderful One Voice Chorus (GLBT and straight) in Minneapolis. Janine is now Ian, a highly successful high school chemistry teacher, loved by his students. He completed his transition this summer with surgery, has a loving partner, and is the same ebullient and affectionate person we met in 1997.

And here's the inspiration for writing this column. Ian and I are friends on

Facebook. I have been touched by the messages he has posted in recent months, together with photos of him with his mom. Ian has kindly allowed me to share his messages with you, in the hope that those who may be struggling with family relationships this holiday season may find that caring and the gift of time will bring them closer.

- Karen

August 7 — Transition surgery

I'm so grateful for my mom and her support. Grateful to have the chance at a relationship with her as an adult, especially at this important moment in my life. Love you, Mom.

October 26 — Have been Engaged to Michael for One Month

I feel like the luckiest guy on the planet today. My mom embraced me, my fiancé, and our relationship...and will be attending our upcoming wedding! I'm overwhelmed with gratitude.

November 27 — Thanksgiving

I am so grateful. I'm grateful for a wonderful home, fiancé, 4-legged fur-furs and amazing, supportive friends. I'm grateful to have been able to reunite with my mother, who has shown me more love and support than I ever expected.

Thank you to the universe, and thank you to everyone in my life who has in the past and continues now to add love, joy, meaningful lessons, and humor to my life!

Thank you.

Thank you.

Ian

Trans Youth Education and Support (TYES)

TYES is a satellite program of PFLAG offering education and support to families with gender non-conforming children. TYES information is available at PFLAG meetings.

The TYES program headquarters is in Boulder, Colorado. To contact the Colorado Springs TYES volunteers, call PFLAG at (719) 425-9567 or send an e-mail to info@cspflag.org. The national TYES website is www.TYES-Colorado.org

Always Remember

That our PFLAG meetings are a safe space. Who you meet, and what you hear —

Keep it confidential.



TYES News

The TYES support group in Colorado Springs has established a monthly meeting for its families so that the parents can talk and the children can play together. Keria Shaw, the leader of this group, is now a board member of PFLAG Colorado Springs.

TYES volunteers are reaching out to locate parents of gender-variant children to offer information and support.

TYES operates on a separate budget within PFLAG. Keria has organized the short fundraiser described on page 1 of this newsletter.

If you would like to help, please extend the reach of this fundraiser by posting it on your [Facebook](#) page or sending the ordering information to a friend.

Some PFLAG members are purchasing TYES t-shirts and donating them to Keria to be passed on to the youth at Out Loud. Lori Vollmar gets credit for this great idea.

Keria has recommended an article that appeared on the *Huffington Post* by an elementary school teacher who had a gender variant child in her classroom: *"It's OK to be Neither: Teaching that Supports Gender-Variant Children"*.

First-grade teacher Melissa Bollow Tempel wrote:

"I have just begun to empathize with the challenges that gender-variant children deal with. For some it may seem inappropriate to address these issues in the classroom. My job is not to answer the questions "Why?" or "How?" (although asking those questions and doing some research in order to better understand was definitely part of my process). Allie is the way she is. My job is not to judge but to teach, and I can't teach if the students in my class are distracted or uncomfortable. My job is also about preparing students to be a part of our society, ready to work and play with all kinds of people. I found that teaching about gender stereotypes is another social justice issue that needs to be addressed, like racism or protecting the environment."

The story of her effort to help six year old Allie can be found at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/melissa-bollow-tempel/teaching-gender-variant-children_b_1163459.html

Creating Change 2015 Seeks Volunteers

Volunteers and Denver host families are needed for the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change Conference February 4-8. More than 4,000 LGBTQ people will attend the conference. For more information, go to <http://www.creatingchange.org/volunteer.php>



The Family Acceptance Project is the work of Caitlin Ryan, Ph.D., ASCW, of San Francisco State University.

Dr. Ryan directs the Project, which uses a research-based, culturally grounded approach to help ethnically, socially and religiously diverse families to support their LGBT children. Her goal is to meet these families within the context of cultural and religious beliefs that could move them to reject their LGBT family members and create a very human dialogue that can move them toward empathy and acceptance. She calls it the language of the heart.

Dr. Ryan is a powerful and well-informed advocate who has spoken at Conferences in Colorado. She has encouraged PFLAG chapters to reach out to those in their community whose ethnicity or religious affiliation might be a barrier to acceptance of an LGBT family member.

The new newsletter and reprinted articles on the Project's website make very interesting reading. See <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids — PFLAG Library

There is a new book in the PFLAG library titled: [This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids](#). It was published in 2014 by Dannielle Owens-Reid and Kristin Russo, who have been dialoguing with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, and supportive families and friends for more than four years through their award-winning website, Everyone is Gay. It can be found online at www.everyoneisgay.com.

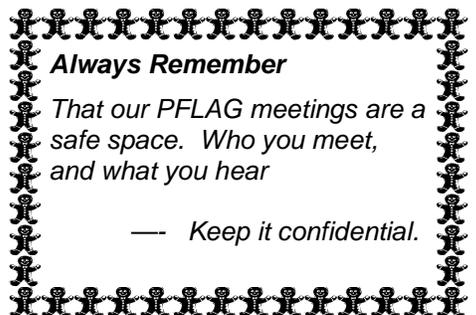
Chapter titles include: "How do I Talk to My child About Safe Sex?" My Child is Being Bullied at School. What do I do?" and "My Child is Dressing Differently. Does this Mean He/She is Transgender?"

PFLAG Executive Director Jody Huckaby warmly endorsed the book, saying: "This book, focused mainly on sexual orientation, is a great companion to PFLAG's work, providing parents information on how to best support a loved one in a manner that is sometimes funny, often frank, and always easy to access."

Borrow it from our PFLAG library, or purchase a copy (\$18.95).

Our chapter needs volunteers to set out library materials for monthly meetings, and/or to write an occasional review of a book for the newsletter. Call Elaine Myers 598-7265.

[Anyone is welcome](#) to get on the PFLAG newsletter mailing list. Send your name and e-mail address to info@cspflag.org. Getting the newsletter by e-mail saves us postage, lets you see it in color — and the website links in the articles will work!



Always Remember

That our PFLAG meetings are a safe space. Who you meet, and what you hear

— *Keep it confidential.*



BULLETIN BOARD

Dec. 5-6 — “Haul Out the Jolly” — Out Loud Holiday concert. Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Broadmoor Community Church. (See p. 1.)

Dec. 12-18 — “Making Spirits Bright” — Denver Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concert. Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., Griffin Concert Hall, CSU, Ft. Collins; Dec. 14, 2:00 p.m., St. Andrew UMC, Highlands Ranch; Dec. 17 and 18, 7:30 p.m., Gates Concert Hall, DU, Denver. Ticket information is at www.rmarts.org.

Feb . 4-8—Creating Change Conference—This powerful national conference is coming to the Sheraton Denver Downtown. For more information and early registration, go to www.creatingchange.org

Membership Now! (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Not long ago, Will Perkins, author of Amendment 2 back in the 1990s, said on the right-wing TV show *Pray in Jesus Name* that he was disappointed that Amendment 2 did not endure. He went on to say:

Perkins: “Homosexuality does not reproduce, it recruits.”
Interviewer: “So the only way they can propagate their own kind is to recruit the children of heterosexuals?”
Perkins: “Correct. And that’s why they’re so interested in marriage, for the access to children.”

Ignorance and Homophobia are still alive and confident in our community. Please support PFLAG and TYES.

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

PFLAG Tips for a Happy Holiday

If you are gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender:

Don't assume you know how somebody will react to news of your sexual orientation – you may be surprised.

Realize that your family's reaction to you may **not** be because you are gay. The hectic holiday pace may cause family members to act differently than they would under less stressful conditions.

Realize that your parents need time to acknowledge and accept that they have a gay child. It took you time to come to terms with your sexual orientation, now it's the family's turn.

Let your family's judgments be theirs to work on, as long as they are kind to you.

Discuss in advance with your partner how you will talk about your relationship, or show affection with one another, if you plan to make the visit together.

If you are a friend or family member:

Get support for yourself. It is important to realize you are not alone. Find the phone number of the nearest PFLAG chapter.

Take your time. Acceptance may not come instantly, but be honest about your feelings.

Don't be nervous about using the “correct” language. Honesty and openness creates warmth, sincerity and a deeper bond in a relationship. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask for help.

Realize that the situation may be as difficult and awkward for your LGBT loved one as it is for you..

If your family member is transgender, practice using the correct pronouns.

Treat an LGBT person like you would treat anyone else in your family.

Goto www.pflag.org and choose “Support” for more holiday tips.

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: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail _____

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

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.