



PFLAG Colorado Springs

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

December, 2015

*Holiday Help
Has Arrived!*

Read PFLAG's
Tips for a
Happy Holiday
today.



Tips for a Happy Holiday

It's that time of year again: the holidays, when so many people gather together with family and friends and remember the things and people for which and whom they are thankful. And this year, there is so much for which to be grateful, especially for people who are LGBTQ. How many will be bringing home their newly-wed spouses for the first time? This is a real reminder of how far we've come.

That said, sitting through a family meal can still be incredibly challenging, so allow us to offer some tips to help you and your family enjoy being together:

If you are gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender:

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

Don't wait for your family's attitude to change to have a special holiday. Recognize that your parents and family may need time to acknowledge and accept that they have an LGBTQ family member. It took you time to come to terms with who you are; now it's your family's turn;

If you are transgender, be gentle with your family's adjustment to new pronouns. Let them know that you understand how difficult this may be for them.

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

(Continued on page 2)

PFLAG Holiday Party

The December PFLAG meeting will be a social/sharing time with holiday refreshments, some healthy, some sweet.

We'll have time to discuss the upcoming holidays, our LGBTQ advances in 2015 and our recent experiences, as well as our plans for the new year. We can review the new PFLAG brand, explained at the PFLAG National Conference in October. Do you think openness and acceptance have grown in Colorado Springs this year? What else is on your mind?

Everyone is encouraged to bring food items to support the Inside/Out pantry. A list of suggestions is on p. 3 under the Inside/Out logo.

In Support of Planned Parenthood

November 28, 2015.

We hold in our hearts today Taryn Bailey, the Responsible Sex Education Coordinator for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains (PPRM), who spoke at our September PFLAG meeting, and all of her colleagues. We are sorry that they were the focus of the shooting nightmare that erupted on the day after Thanksgiving in our community.

Every day, those who work for PPRM face the fear of being targeted for the work they do. This attack is a strong reminder that preaching hate begets violence. Violent words lead to violent deeds. They are the match that triggers unstable or violent people to pick up guns and start shooting. Guns in the hands of violent people have tragic consequences. Violence spreads fear among us. We at Colorado Springs PFLAG deplore the

DECEMBER PFLAG MEETING

**Tuesday
December 15, 2015**

7:00 p.m.

**Holiday Celebration
Social, Sharing
Year Review
Holiday Strategies**

**The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street**

Everyone is welcome.

Social time begins at 6:30 p.m.

statements and the actions of those who would paint a target on the doors of Planned Parenthood.

We are profoundly grateful to the supporters of Planned Parenthood and to its brave employees for the skilled services and educational outreach they generously provide, without discrimination, to our LGBTQ community and all others who seek their help.

PFLAG Membership

Thank you to everyone who recently initiated or renewed memberships and donated to the Colorado Springs Chapter of PFLAG!

If you haven't yet done so, there is still time to renew/donate before the year end and take credit for it on your 2015 income tax return.



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; and

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 a complimentary subscription to the newsletter, please just contact us and it will be sent to you.

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

Holiday Tips—continued

Create your own holiday gathering with friends and loved ones, if it is too difficult to be with your family.

Before the visit:

Make a decision about which family members you intend to be “out” to, and how you will do so.

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 plan to come out to your family over the holidays, have support available, including , including [PFLAG publications](#) and [the number of a local PFLAG chapter](#). (Click to follow links)

During the Visit:

Reassure family members that you are still the same person they have always known.

Remember to affirm yourself.

Connect with someone else who is LGBTQ — by phone or in person — who understands what you are going through and will affirm you along the way.

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

If you are a friend or family member of someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer:

Get support for yourself. It is important to realize you are not alone. Locate [the number of a local PFLAG chapter](#).

Before the Visit:

Practice in advance if you are going to be discussing your family member’s sexual orientation or gender identity with family and friends. If you are comfortable talking about it, your family and friends will probably be more comfortable too.

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

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

During the Visit:

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

Don’t ask your LGBTQ family member to act a certain way. Let them be their natural self.

If your LGBTQ family member is bringing a partner, include him or her in your family traditions.

If you are uncertain about how to address an LGBTQ family member or their partner, respectfully ask in private.

Go to www.pflag.org and choose “Support” for more help put together by those who have walked this road before you.

Always remember

That our PFLAG meetings are a safe space.

Who you meet, and what you hear —

Please keep it all confidential.



Managing Those Difficult Interactions

Holiday time can be incredible--seeing family and friends, parties, gift exchanges. At the same time, they can be stressful when we find ourselves sharing space with people whose opinions on LGBTQ equality are... well, not exactly where we'd hope they'd be.

When this happens, some shy away from talking about LGBTQ issues altogether. Others may find themselves getting angry...or even confrontational. Jamie Henkel, PFLAG National's Equality & Diversity Partnerships Manager, shared her story to illustrate how true this can be:

"I have an uncle that I only see around the holidays or at weddings and funerals. Every time I see him he asks me if I still work for 'that homosexual activist organization' which really bothers me. Even though I live and breathe my allyship at PFLAG, when it comes to him, I mostly just let it slide. I don't want to disrupt the holidays for everyone else. But last year on Thanksgiving I sort of went off and caused a scene after he made some really disparaging comments about Michael Sam. We didn't speak for the rest of the visit."

Find yourself relating to this story? Lots of us do. But Jamie's situation didn't have to turn into a confrontation. Instead of shutting down year after year and not saying anything at all about how her uncle's language upset her, she could have changed the way she approached that language slip up to create a learning experience. If you find that, like Jamie, you feel like backing down (or like those claws are coming out) why not try changing up your strategy a bit?

- **Take a deep breath:** If you're extremely upset step back and give yourself a moment to calm down. Imagine your happy place. Go grab an awesomely decorated cookie or freshen up your wine. But commit to making your way back and having the conversation, one on one.

- **Assume nothing:** For example, Jamie's uncle may not have realized that his language was bothering her,

that his remarks about Sam were so hurtful, or may even have thought he would get a good laugh. Let people know *why* what they said bothered you and give people room to explain.

- **Address the behavior:** Be sure to explain what you're referring to—and then keep the conversation about that specific behavior. Calling someone a bigot or a homophobe may not have been exceptionally helpful but talking through the language they was using may lead them to think more about his behavior in the future.

- **Listen, offer support, and say thank you:** Listen to the other person to hear what they've got to say. Let them know that you're a resource if they ever want to talk. And remember, you've just done something big, and engaged someone else in the process. No matter how it goes, thank people for their time.

So this holiday season, be out and open about your commitment to LGBTQ equality. Check out resources on the PFLAG website such as new editions of [guide to being a straight ally](#) and [guide to being a trans ally](#). If you have questions or are looking for ideas on how to create conversations, send an email to the PFLAG team at:

info@straightforequality.org.

"Transparent" creator Jill Soloway has a short and to-the-point response for the harsh, transphobic treatment of Caitlyn Jenner, who most recently received [negative reactions](#) for being honored with a [Woman of the Year](#) award by Glamour magazine:

"People really disdain femininity — unless it's perfect."

THANK YOU TO:

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



Youth Services

The Inside/Out Food Pantry needs a constant supply of comfort food, especially in the wintertime. Please bring suggested items to PFLAG meetings for volunteers to deliver.

Tuna/cracker packets; Individual size ravioli, chili, noodles, ramen, any kind of comfort food that can be microwaved; Canned meat or tuna; Small containers of peanut butter; Nutrition bars; Trail mix; Cookies; Gatorade and bottled water.

Michaelangelo Signorile at PFLAG National Convention

Michaelangelo Signorile was a keynote speaker at the PFLAG National Convention in November. Notes from Bob Murray of Denver PFLAG:

Michelangelo Signorile is the well known author of [Queer in America](#), host of the [Michelangelo Signorile Show](#) on SiriusXM, and editor at large on the Huffington Post's [Gay Voices](#). His newest book is [It's Not Over, Getting Beyond Tolerance, Defeating Homophobia and Winning True Equality](#). He reviewed the many successes of the past few years, not the least being marriage equality.

Signorile cautioned: "Yet it was, and is, a dangerous moment. It's a moment in which all of us, LGBTQ and straight, who support equality risk falling prey to what I've come to call 'Victory Blindness.' We're overcome by the heady whirl of a narrative of victory, a kind of bedtime story that tells us we've reached the promised land, that can make everything else seem like a blur. Even with the enormously positive developments and, as this book will show, sometimes as a reaction to them -- homophobia rages on in America... Maybe it's time to get rid of the bedtime story and wake from the dream."

Read Murray's full review in the Denver PFLAG December newsletter at www.pflagdenver.org



BULLETIN BOARD

A Culture Shift: "It's No Longer the Exception, It's Just How We Work" -Boulder Valley Schools

Nov. 20, 2015—By Jennifer Brown —*The Denver Post* — *This article is part of a Denver Post series—"Transgender in Colorado".*

One Colorado school district has become a model in instilling acceptance and understanding for transgender youth. Boulder's approach attracted 15-year-old Boulder High School freshman Shannon Axe and her parents, and word is spreading.

Shannon's mom, Karen Axe, the founder of Trans Youth Education and Support of Colorado (TYES) and her family share their story. Click on the following link to read the article: <http://extras.denverpost.com/transgender/culture.html>

After reading the article, click on the picture of Shannon and her friends at the top of the article for the amazing accompanying video.

The school district has revamped its policies — from bathrooms to curriculum to its computer system — in the last few years, and, as a result, families with transgender children have quit jobs and sold homes to move there.

Shannon and her family were among the pioneers.

In middle school, administrators set up a panel discussion so Shannon could tell classmates she was trans. "I'm transgender. I'm proud to be transgender. And I just want to be who I am," she said in front of the school.

Among the most progressive school reforms in Boulder Valley is the ability for students to enter their preferred name and gender — not the one on a birth certificate — in the district's computer system.

Birth certificate information, required by the federal government for annual student counts, is kept in confidence at the superintendent's office, meaning the principal and teachers of a transgender child might never know.

December 3-5 — Denver Gay Mens Chorus — "Tinsel & Treasure" — Santa, cowboys and priates in DGMC's signature style. For more information about this concert or to purchase tickets, visit www.rmarts.org or call (303) 325-3959.

December 11-12—Out Loud Holiday Concert—"Hol-i-day: North Pole Nonsense" First Congregational Church, 20 East St. Vrain St., Colorado Springs, Friday Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m.; Sat. Dec. 12 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Visit www.rmarts.org for tickets or call (303) 325-3959.

January 23 — Denver Women's Chorus — "Classically Reconstructed" — You'll get a fresh look at some familiar songs by Brahms, Bach and Beethoven along with drinking songs, U-Haul madrigals, and a nod to some famous dancing hippos. For more information about this concert or to purchase tickets, visit www.rmarts.org or call (303) 325-3959.

Don't Miss the Out Loud Holiday Concert



The men of the Out Loud Chorus will kick off the holiday season with three performances of their delightful holiday concert at First Congregational Church on December 11-12. See details and ticket information in the Calendar, above.

PFLAG has had a special relationship with the chorus since its earliest concerts. If you would like to be

a PFLAG usher for one of the concerts, please call Cindy Lou Waldmann at 488-9887 right away to secure your slot. Some ushers make a donation to support the chorus.

In the spirit of the season, Out Loud invites you to help our neighbors in need. Please bring non-perishable food items or donations to the concerts for the benefit of the Food Pantry at Ecumenical Social Ministries.

Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

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.