



PFLAG Colorado Springs

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

February 2014

Loving Our LGBT Children—a PFLAG Panel

On February 18th the PFLAG meeting will feature a panel of PFLAG parents discussing the road they have traveled after their sons and daughters came out. Family support is the single most significant factor in the well being of our LGBT children.

The following is an excerpt from a column by a parent who calls herself "Mystery Ally" in the January issue of the Denver PFLAG newsletter.

The Perfect Response.

[During a holiday visit to my home town,] I was a little surprised to realize that my three best friends each have a gay son. One of the three sons has come out to his mother and they have a beautiful relationship. The other two have not officially come out and I realized that I am in a perfect position to help my friends if their sons decide to share their truth.

I proceeded to inform my friends that if the moment comes, it would probably be the bravest moment of their sons' lives and should be treated accord-

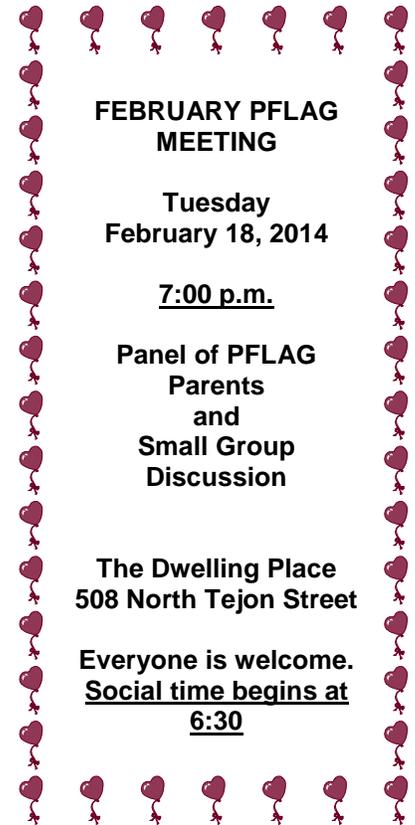


Jan Sanders at Pridefest 2002

ingly. I also said that their children would most likely remember every word of their response verbatim, every voice inflection, and every non-verbal communication shared.

I asked several of my gay friends, if they were to live in a perfect world, what the ideal response would be to

(Continued on page 4)



FEBRUARY PFLAG MEETING

**Tuesday
February 18, 2014**

7:00 p.m.

**Panel of PFLAG
Parents
and
Small Group
Discussion**

**The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street**

**Everyone is welcome.
Social time begins at
6:30**

13th Annual Pride Awards

If you are planning to come to the 13th annual Pride Awards dinner at the Antlers Hilton Hotel on February 15th, please go to www.cospride.org or call 471-4429 to purchase your tickets immediately.

PFLAG Colorado Springs has been nominated for the Organization of the Year award at this event. The Pride Awards celebrate individuals and organizations that deserve special recognition for their support of the LGBT community. Thank you to the Pride Center for organizing the awards evening. (See Bulletin Board, p. 4)

The Gold Rush Conference—Gender Identity Issues

The 16th annual Gold Rush Conference, organized by the Gender Identity Center in Denver, will be held February 21-22, 2014 at the Renaissance Denver Hotel, 3801 Quebec Street in Denver.

This year, general conference registration is free to all attendees.

The members of the Colorado Gold Rush Committee have had the pleasure of witnessing the vast changes in society's understanding and acceptance of the trans* community. The committee was inspired to re-define the nature of this conference and expand its intended audience. The committee believes this "Renaissance" will encourage society's continued embrace of the trans* community.

The Committee has broadened the spectrum of workshop topics to include: Gender Queer, Significant Others, Families, Friends, and Allies (SOFFA), Trans* Activism, and professional training.

Medical, gender education, and gender role and presentation workshops will continue to be a conference-mainstay as their purpose will always be beneficial to members of the trans* community.

Dara Hoffman-Fox, LPC, a Colorado Springs therapist and PFLAG member, will be presenting a workshop at the conference. To see the complete schedule and register for the conference, go to: www.coloradogoldrush.org



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: karenfstith@gmail.com

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

Would Gramma's Love for Grandson Change if She Learned He is Gay?

By Sherry Harrold, PFLAG Omaha

Our family had the sad task this summer of saying goodbye to Jojo, my mother-in-law, who left us after a short battle with cancer. As we have been going through the holidays now without her, we continue to grieve and to miss the woman that showed us all unconditional love.

Jojo was able to attend our PFLAG 25th Anniversary GAYLA this past spring. That was the only PFLAG event she ever attended, but as a PFLAG Gramma she was loving and accepting, and she wanted to learn more. The GAYLA was the perfect place for her to hear about the changes in my life since our son Jordan came out. I looked out at her as I spoke and could see the tears in her eyes. She loved Jordan as much as I do.

I share these things about my 82-year-old mother-in-law with you because of a preconceived notion we had that anyone that age, that conservative and that religious would find it very difficult to accept having a gay grandson. We were so very reluctant to tell Jojo that we didn't tell her for years.

It was not that difficult to keep hidden because we lived out of state. We didn't want her to be heartbroken or troubled, or to treat Jordan any differently than she ever had. We know how difficult it was for us to accept at first. We didn't want her to go through that pain.

How very mistaken we were! Three years ago, when Jordan decided to join us in a move to Omaha, we all knew that Jojo would need to be told the truth...that Jordan was gay. Jordan would be living in the same city and would be around her frequently. Also, Zach, Jordan's boyfriend, would be visiting and Jordan wanted Gramma Jo to get to know him.

We all realized it was a conversation that was long overdue. Jordan went to Jojo's house alone one evening,

sat and talked with her and told her he was gay and always had been. Jordan remembers her facial expression being so full of love and acceptance. Because they were so close, Jordan felt she already might have known. She told him that her love for him would NEVER change. She would not and could not judge him for who he loved.

She wanted to meet Zach, his partner. She treated them both with abundant love and acceptance. She was proud to go out with the two of them...one on each arm. I feel confident that if she had lived another year, we would be pushing her in her wheelchair, with rainbow balloons attached, in the PRIDE Parade!

I truly believe that in order to change minds and hearts, we have to share our stories. We cannot be afraid to tell people that we stand for equality. I stood by quietly for years, agreeing, but not speaking up. Those days are over. I will not just stand by and let others assume they know what I believe. Positive changes toward equality are being made constantly in this country. I want to be part of that change. My voice may quiver, but with firm conviction and love in my heart, I will speak up.
Reprinted from the January 2014 PFLAG Omaha Newsletter

One Colorado's newest report, ***Becoming Visible: Working with Colorado Physicians to Improve LGBT Health***, follows up on the findings and recommendations of a previous report (*Invisible: The State of LGBT Health in Colorado*), with a focus on empowering LGBT patients to seek and receive care that fits all of their needs as well as working with Colorado healthcare providers to better understand and care for LGBT Coloradans. One Colorado, with the help of the Colorado Medical Society and Denver Medical Society, surveyed roughly 380 Colorado physicians, asking them how they see, include, and treat LGBT Coloradans. Visit www.one-colorado.org to read the full report.



BULLETIN BOARD

February 13-14—Inside/Out Performances: “Love Curses All” (13th) and “Love Cures All” (14th) at Ivywild School. See p. 3.

February 15—13th Annual Pride Awards—Black Tie event, Antlers Hilton Hotel, 4 South Cascade Avenue, 6-11 p.m. Tickets \$75 each or \$125 per couple. For more information go to www.cospride.org or call 471-4429.

February 21-22—Gold Rush Conference, Renaissance Denver Hotel. Organized by the Gender Identity Center. See p. 1.

March 14-15 - TRANSforming Gender Symposium. University of Colorado at Boulder. See January newsletter, p. 3. For more information, call (303) 202-6466.

April 5— Coalition of PFLAG Chapters Meeting and conference. See p. 3.

The Perfect Response (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

come from parents whose child had just come out to them. They shared the following:

- Is that all?
- This is something that we will face together.
- Thank you for telling me. That is great. Congratulations.
- Good – I am glad you know yourself.
- Anything but silence – silence is the worst response possible.
- What can I help you with? What support do you need?
- Great – we can watch RuPaul's Drag Race together.
- It does not matter, we love you unconditionally.

- There is nothing you can do to make me stop loving you.
- Just be genuine with your response and understand that your child has thought about this for a very long time.
- I love you.
- I still want to be part of your life.
- It is OK to say that you may need some time.
- Let them know that they have your support and that your love will never go away.
- Thank you for sharing.
- I love you and I support you entirely. Whatever you need, I will provide it.
- It does not make any difference to me – you are still the same person.
- Right on.
- We understand that sexual orientation is not a choice so it does not matter.

The above came from people with very different ages and backgrounds. Some obviously shared with a bit of humor.

My understanding is that it is important to know that this was not a choice, state that their coming out changed nothing regarding your feelings toward them, tell them that you love them (and leave off the “regardless” or “no matter what”) and let them know that they have your support. It is also my understanding that if the news is difficult for you, it is best to work through it with someone else at a later time.

While talking to my gay friends I was pleasantly surprised to learn that I might have misguided my friends in advising that their sons would probably remember every word they said in response to their coming out. One of my gay friends informed me that he could not really remember what it was his mother had said when he came out. He said it was probably because it was not a traumatic moment and she had responded positively.

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, 2013 to September 30, 2014.

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 contributions are tax deductible. All information will remain confidential. PFLAG is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization.