



PFLAG Colorado Springs

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

February 2016

Edie & Thea— A Very Long Engagement — Inside the Love Story that Brought Down DOMA

With Valentine's Day in mind, the February PFLAG meeting will feature a showing of the film, *Edie & Thea — A Very Long Engagement* (2009).

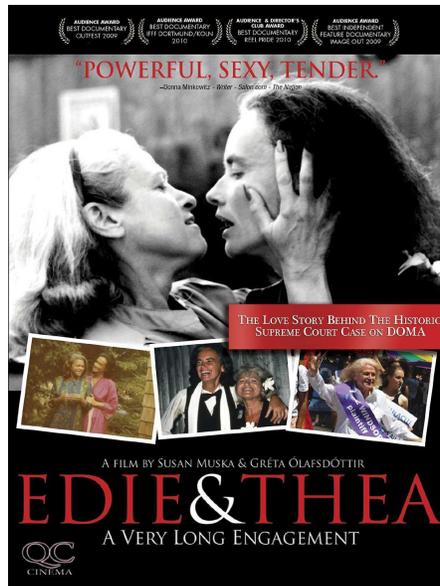
The first that many Americans heard of Edie Windsor is when the 83-year-old spitfire's discrimination case, *Windsor vs. United States* succeeded in striking down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). But she was no stranger to film lovers and LGBT activists: this film—which chronicles her 40-year engagement to her wife, the late Thea Spyer — won 21 audience and jury awards.

The following excerpt is from a 2014 story in *The Atlantic*.

In 2007, New Yorkers Edie Windsor, 77, and Thea Spyer, 75, made plans to travel to Toronto, Canada, so they could be legally married after four decades together. When one of the wedding organizers introduced them to renowned documentarians and longtime partners Susan Muska and Gréta Ólafsdóttir, the filmmaking duo quickly realized that they'd found their next project.

Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement premiered in 2009 at San Francisco's Frameline Film Festival, four months after Spyer passed away. "It got a standing ovation," Ólafsdóttir remembers, sitting in the Manhattan apartment she shares with Muska. "It was a beautiful gift to Edie."

It soon became something even more. After Windsor was forced to pay \$363,053 in estate taxes, she sued the federal government to recognize her exemption as Spyer's surviving spouse. The Supreme Court ulti-



mately ruled in her favor—and struck down the Defense of Marriage Act in the process. The couple's love story, captured so compellingly in *Edie & Thea*, played a huge role in the outcome. As Muska puts it, "Edie will say the film was the evidence for her case that she had a relationship that could be called a marriage."

The film documents Windsor and Spyer's remarkable romance and their struggle to thrive in a homophobic world. Despite their ever-present fear of being outed, the two women managed to hold onto their hard-won careers—Windsor was a computer consultant at I.B.M and Spyer a clinical psychologist. The cosmopolitan beauties lived large, drinking and dancing at the hottest underground queer clubs, sunning at the Hamptons in the summer, traveling from Suriname to Venice,

(Continued on p. 3)

FEBRUARY PFLAG MEETING

Tuesday
February 16, 2016
7:00 p.m.

MOVIE NIGHT
(WITH POPCORN)
And Discussion

The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street
Everyone is welcome.

Social time begins at 6:30 p.m.

March Program: Update on HIV/AIDS Prevention

In March our speaker will be Ernest Bilinski from the Southern Colorado AIDS Project (S-CAP). He will bring us the latest information about preventing infection with HIV (PrEP).

PrEP is an acronym for pre-exposure prophylaxis, which means the use of prescription drugs by HIV-negative people who are at high risk of becoming infected. Interest in this subject has been growing since the CDC's 2014 endorsement of Truvada.

DarkMatter #ItGetsBitter Event

QueerCC presents a special Valentine's Day performance by DarkMatter, a trans south asian performance art duo comprised of Alok Vaid-Menon (they/them) and Janani Balasubramanian (they/them). Based in New York City, DarkMatter regularly performs to sold-out houses. Known for their quirky aesthetic and political panache, DarkMatter has been invited to perform at stages and universities across the world. This poetry event is free and open to the public. Cornerstone Arts Center, Colorado College, Sunday, February 14th, 7:00p.m.



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.

To join the local 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

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PFLAG Volunteers Support the On-Air Launch of a New Community Radio Station

At the KCMJ Community Radio's "Flippin' Launch Party" at Stargazers Theatre on January 29th, PFLAG volunteers Elaine Myers, Eric Evans, and Cindy Lou and Steve Waldmann talked to participants and handed out PFLAG information. KCMJ is a new volunteer-run community radio station in Colorado Springs.

For the past two years, while gathering funding to commence on-air broadcasting, the station has been streaming community-based talk radio programs and music online through its website, www.kcmj.org.

The large crowd at Stargazers cheered as the switch was flipped and the station launched its first live program from a transmitter on the roof of the Stargazers building.

KCMJ can be heard at 93.9 FM or through its website: <http://kcmj.org/> The station is broadcasting syndicated programs like Amy Goodman's *Democracy Now!* and local shows like *Grass Roots Revival*, both for-

merly heard on KRCC, as well as Colin Trusedell's *Jazz Jam*.

Station manager Dave Gardner explained that an FM signal follows a "line-of-sight" path, so the broadcast area reaches from Manitou Springs east to Peterson Air Force Base.

In an interview with *Colorado Springs Independent* reporter Bill Forman, Gardner admitted that KCMJ's political offerings lean to the left, and he's comfortable with that. "That viewpoint was absent from the airwaves here, so we definitely see one of our jobs as filling that void", he said.

Gardner also believes that a community radio station should not lose sight of its community. He continued, "We're well aware that fully half of the town are not on the left end of the political spectrum, and we're doing our best not to avoid those viewpoints.

"I want to make sure that this is a station where — regardless of where you see yourself on the political spectrum — you feel like you can walk in the door and say 'I've got an idea for a show,' or 'I want to be a guest on a show,' or 'I've got something to share.' and we definitely will have the mic for that."

The station will broadcast public service announcements. Anyone will an idea for a PFLAG interview or program on the station is invited to contact the PFLAG board.

Welcome, KCMJ. Our volunteers enjoyed the launch and look forward to working with you.

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

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

- C.S. Lewis



Local Support Group for Christian Families

By Bill Oliver

About twelve years ago a small group of parents at First Presbyterian Church in downtown Colorado Springs started meeting and sharing the sto-

ries of their beloved gay kids.

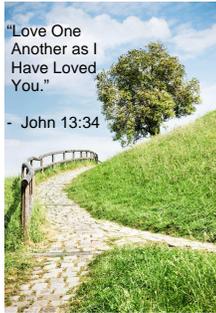
Although *First Pres* is not an "affirming" church, as the group grew it was allowed to promote its monthly meetings on the campus with the support of the clergy leadership. A few years ago *First Pres* broke from the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) largely over the issue of partnered clergy, which the national church now supports.

The group, which calls itself "*An Open and Affirming Christian Support Group for Families of Gays & Lesbians*," now meets the first Tuesday of each month, 6:30 pm, at The Colorado Springs Conservatory (415 Sawatch St, 80903; just north of Cimarron).

It is open to struggling parents of any denomination. As noted in its brochure, "we are a Christian voice in our community, affirming God's love and acceptance of those who are gay and lesbian."

Our meetings are confidential and similar to a PFLAG monthly meeting, a major difference being that we begin and end in prayer. We don't often have a special presentation, but sometimes we do have special guests. Mary Malia, the new executive director at *Inside/Out Youth Services* spoke at our January meeting about this amazing resource and safe haven for our LGBT youth.

A new person often comes somewhat bewildered by a child coming out as gay, and often feeling very alone in this struggle and not necessarily feel-



ing supported by their church.

I recall one dad who was totally surprised when his son, then a senior in high school, came out as gay. He mourned "the death" of the son he thought he knew. Now, less than two years later, he feels "blessed" to have a son who happens to be gay. This feeling is shared in common by most of our group.

For more information, one can call our group phone number and leave a message – 719-362-0117, or feel free to contact me – gnarlybill@hotmail.com.

Edie & Thea (cont.)

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and loving one another with passion and devotion.

Muska and Ólafsdottir have been making socially conscious films for the past 20 years, beginning with their Emmy-nominated first effort, *The Brandon Teena Story*.

The filmmakers say the documentary has "become an international emissary for marriage equality," and it's been shown in many places to increase awareness, such as Bosnia, Slovakia, Lithuania, and more.

"On a more personal level," says Muska, "people often write to us and tell us that their mother, father, aunt or siblings have watched the film and it changed their view on gay marriage. One guy told us at a screening that 'I didn't know lesbians could be like this.' A friend's teenage son told us, 'I hope I find love like this one day.'

"And we even cut in Italian subtitles for an Italian woman's future mother-in-law, who ended up writing to us praising the film and the insight it offered her about her daughter's marriage."

February 7th—National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



"I Am My Brother's and Sister's Keeper — Fight HIV/AIDS!"

— 2016 NBAAD Theme

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBAAD) was founded in 1999 in response to the growing HIV AIDS epidemic in the African-American community. Under the leadership of the Strategic Leadership Council, the initiative seeks to mobilize the African-American community to Get Educated—Get Tested—Get Involved—Get Treated! More information: <http://nationalblackaidsday.org/>

The NBHAAD initiative leverages a national platform to educate, bring awareness, and mobilize the African American community. The importance of this observance is punctuated by the fact that the African-American community is the most-affected by HIV, and statistics at the following CDC (Centers for Disease Control) link show why this matters so much today. In 2012 HIV/AIDS was the 5th leading cause of death for African-American men and women ages 35–44. See <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/raciaethnic/africanamericans/>

Always Remember —

That our PFLAG meetings are a safe space.

Who you meet, and what you hear—

Must remain strictly confidential.



BULLETIN BOARD

March 10-12—TRANSforming Gender Conference— Gender and Sexuality Center, University of Colorado, Boulder. This powerful event is free and open to the public! For more information, go to: <http://www.colorado.edu/gsc/transforming-gender-conference-2016>

April 23— Red Ribbon Ball—“The Fabulous 50s” This elegant annual event supports The Southern Colorado Aids Project (S-CAP) Dinner, dancing. The Antlers Hotel, 6:00 p.m. For more information, tickets call (719) 578-9092 or go to <http://www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/event-app/red-ribbon-ball>

May 20-21— Out Loud Colorado Springs Men’s Chorus— Spring Concert. Friday evening, Saturday matinee, and Saturday evening. Reserve your slot as a PFLAG usher by contacting Cindy Waldmann 488-9887.

June 18— Out Loud Colorado Springs Men’s Chorus - Pre- GALA Festival Event. Save the date—details to be announced.

July 2-6 Gala Choruses Festival in Denver—Colorado is hosting its second GALA Festival in a row! Details at <http://galachoruses.org>

Thank you to gender therapists Dara Hoffman and Jessica Hildebran for an intense discussion of transgender experience at the PFLAG meeting in January. Dara’s video “A Peek at My Own Gender Journey” can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pYL6PmqYK0&feature=youtu.be>

Thank you
To the Saponas Foundation and First Congregational United Church of Christ for their significant, ongoing support of Colorado Springs PFLAG.

PFLAG Action Alert! Please Contact Your Senators and Representative

Eliminate discrimination against those living with HIV/AIDS!

Urge your two Senators and one Representative to cosponsor the REPEAL HIV Discrimination Act ([S. 2336](#) and [H.R. 1586](#)). Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE) on December 1st, World AIDS Day, introduced in the U.S. Senate the companion bill to Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s (CA-13) REPEAL HIV Discrimination Act of 2015.

The bill, similar to that introduced in the last Congress which PFLAG National supported, modernizes laws and eliminates discrimination with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS. The bill requires a review of laws by federal, state, and local stakeholders that impose criminal liability on people with HIV. The bill also provides states with guidance on best practices for revising HIV criminalization laws which disproportionately affect people of color, especially African-American men who have sex with men.

With February being National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Month, it’s a perfect opportunity to speak out!

Please [reach out to your two US Senators and one Representative](#) and use this PFLAG message:

As your constituent and as a member of PFLAG, I urge you to cosponsor the REPEAL HIV Discrimination Act (S. 2336 and H.R. 1586), introduced in the Senate by Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and House by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-13), which would modernize laws and eliminate discrimination with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS. PFLAG’s values are America’s values and that includes ensuring that people living with HIV or AIDS are not discriminated against based on their HIV status. If you are already a co-sponsor of this bill I thank you. If not, I urge you to please consider signing on.

Note: Remember to specify your name and full address and to include your zip code.

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: _____

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.