



PFLAG Colorado Springs

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

June 2014

Pastors to Discuss LGBT Issues in Churches

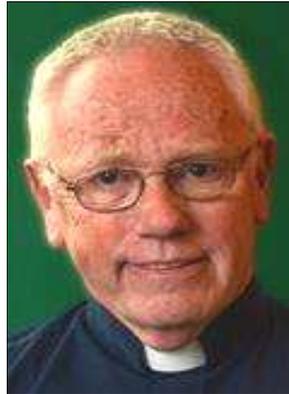
The June PFLAG meeting will feature discussion among open and affirming clergy who have seen the rejection and humiliation LGBT people have experienced in religious communities and the despair this rejection can trigger. They passionately support full inclusion of all people in spiritual and secular communities.

Our guests will be Rev. Diane Martin, Rev. James Lynch and Rev. Kim Schwartz.

Rev. Diane Martin earned her M.Div. at Iliff School of Theology in 2003 and was ordained with the United Church of Christ in 2004. In the past eleven years, Diane has served four UCC congregations, two of which are open and affirming toward the LGBT community and two of which are not. She has served as staff chaplain in both the Penrose and Memorial Hospital systems.

Diane also served as gap pastor for Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church for a few months while they waited for their current interim pastor, Rev. James Lynch. In all of these settings, Diane has ministered to individuals who are members of the LGBTQ community, both publicly and privately. She has a heart for all who struggle for acceptance and a strong belief that this is the civil rights issue of this generation.

Rev. Jim Lynch currently serves as Interim Pastor at Pikes Peak MCC in Colorado Springs. He has been active in ministry in Metropolitan Community Churches since 1987, and has watched the spiritual community wrestle with LGBT issues. As a pastor in the foremost open and affirming denomination in the world, Rev. Jim has ministered to many LGBT individuals and their families and friends who have



Reverend James Lynch

experienced rejection and exclusion from other religious communities, and has spoken on issues of full inclusion and affirmation of all people by the religious and secular communities.

Rev. Kim Schwartz grew up in western Washington. She received a B.S. from the University of Washington in Atmospheric Sciences and worked as a meteorologist for Boeing for six years. In 2003 she received a Master's of Divinity from Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry. She is the minister at Vista Grande UCC.

Save the Date: July 23 "Off the Street" Breakfast

Urban Peak, an organization that provides temporary housing and support programs for homeless youth, many of whom are LGBT, will host a fundraising breakfast on July 23, 2014, starting at 7:00 a.m.

Save the date! Plan to sit at a PFLAG table. Send an e-mail to info@cspflag.org to reserve a place. The breakfast is free, meaningful donations are requested.

JUNE PFLAG MEETING

Tuesday
June 17 2014

7:00 p.m.

Program:

**Supporting Inclusion of
All People in Religious and
Spiritual Communities**

**The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street**

Everyone is welcome.

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

Project Prom Report 2014

The Pikes Peak Safe @ School Coalition (PPS@SC) conducted "Project Prom: 2014", surveying local high schools in our community regarding their prom policies.

The PPS@SC would like to thank the local high school staff who answered all our questions and who are safe and affirming. We would also like to thank all the Coalition members who helped us conduct this year's survey by e-mailing, making phone calls and making personal visits to schools. Here are some of the questions asked and key findings:

Will students be allowed to bring a date of the same gender to prom?

(Continued on page 2)



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

Denver PFLAG Chapter Seeks Volunteers for Pridefest June 21-22



On June 21 and 22, gay pride will be in the air! Pridefest activities include exhibitor booths and performers at Civic Center Park Saturday and Sunday and a parade on Sunday.

Volunteers are needed to work the PFLAG booth both days and to march in the parade on Sunday. Please call or email Leanna at the office (303) 573-5861 if you would like to volunteer.

Project Prom (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Of the 16 reported local high schools 15 answered, "Yes." One school did not have an answer to this question.

A student asked if they would be able to wear the opposite gender's clothing. Does your school have a prom dress code and would be willing to share it with us? Could you explain if wearing opposite gender clothing would be accepted?

Of the 16 reported schools 12 answered, "Yes." Including having had transgender students attend prom before. The remaining 4 schools were unsure, and one school reported a conversation has begun, "for those kids who identify as a different gender and want to come as who they identify as."

Ed. Note: the Pikes Peak Safe@ School Coalition is a project of Inside/Out Youth Services.

Bishop Gene Robinson and Caitlin Ryan to Speak at Fall PFLAG Conference

The Pacific Northwest Regional PFLAG Conference to be held in Boise in October will feature two exceptional speakers. Episcopal Church Bishop Gene Robinson is the keynote speaker. A featured presenter will be Caitlin Ryan. Learn more about Ryan's work at <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/staff>.

For more information about attending the conference, see Bulletin Board page 4.

Summer Reading: Teaching the Cat to Sit

Michelle M. Theall is a Boulder resident whose book, *Teaching the Cat to Sit*, has just been published. The book is about growing up gay and Catholic in the Texas Bible Belt (<http://amzn.to/16xp6wP>), with a fast forward to a situation in 2010 where the priest at her son's Catholic school in Boulder decided to expel all children with gay parents, including her four-year old son.



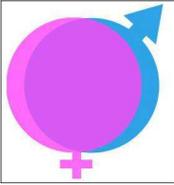
The book is recommended reading for members of PFLAG chapters, as well as therapists counseling families with LGBTQ concerns.

Theall was recently nominated for a GLAAD media award.

They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

- Andy Warhol

Project Prom: To read the full report, go to <http://www.insideoutys.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/ProjectProm2014Results.pdf>



Voices of TYES: Finding a Sanctuary in a Boulder Church; Becoming Advocates for Our Children

The following reflections come from a talk at church given by Karen Axe, founder and facilitator of Trans Youth Education and Support (TYES). A Boulder-based support group for families of gender-variant children, TYES has now become a satellite chapter of the PFLAG chapters in Colorado.

For more information on the TYES group in the Pikes Peak region, contact PFLAG at (719) 425-9567 or info@cspflag.org. The TYES website is www.TYES-colorado.org.

This column is taken from a reflection that was given recently in local church. It was followed by a panel of families of trans youth and introduced a year long focus on the experiences of transgender people of all ages.

My transgender daughter was seven when she transitioned, nine when we fled the cruel judgements of our town that had thrown her into a mental health crisis. Fortunately, we landed here, in this loving, accepting community.

The feeling of having found a sanctuary was so great, that even this building felt like an oasis. Soon after we walked through these doors, we would drive by and she would ask, "Can we go inside?" I would gently remind her that no one was here." She would say "Yes, but can we go in anyway?" It was the beginning of her new life, and I will forever be grateful for the healing that began in this sacred space.

These days she is so busy and involved with friends, school, and theater that she no longer clings to the safety of this sanctuary. But did you know that she is an exception? Did you know that the most transgender kids live secret lives, rarely disclosing their identity. Some have even attended this Fellowship. Did you know that there are hundreds of kids like my daughter all across this country that are being bullied and assaulted daily, attending schools that refuse them their basic rights?

Many of the rights of our kids have been won by determined mothers and fathers of trans youth. Courageous families have taken risks to tell their stories on television. Inevitably, hateful comments to these stories appear on the internet. We respond, hoping to counter the ignorance. We see each other there, in the comments, behind the aliases. We know each other there, because the voices speaking out against the hatred are mostly our own.

For years I have understood, nobody knows these kids like we do. Ours are the voices that must be heard to bring change, and I've seen great progress in just seven years. Schools, towns and states have passed laws that protect our children's rights to be called by their chosen name and pronoun, and to participate in activities according to their affirmed gender. I thought our ragtag band of warriors could really change the world.

But these laws have gained the attention of hate groups. One of them scoured the country for families who would file harassment charges against a transitioned child. Any child. They found their partners in Colorado and bombarded the school with hate mail and death threats. They terrified school staff. The child became suicidal.

We are worried. National hate groups have moved their resources from fighting against marriage equality to the fight against transgender civil rights.

Our families are desperately in need of a wider circle of allies. Allies who can help us combat cultural ignorance. Allies who will grant us a few hours to hear our stories, who will share them with others. Allies who will stand with us and for us as they go about their daily lives. Knowing that by speaking up they are helping to create a more supportive world that will most certainly save lives.

Could you speak for my daughter if someone was afraid to share a bathroom with her? Would you be prepared to say that, like other kids their age, trans kids just want to fit in and feel normal, so protecting their physical privacy is extremely important?

Could you talk about the amazing changes that happen for trans kids when someone finally sees them, children who go from special ed to gifted and talented, from shy to outgoing, sometimes within days?

Could you share the fact half of transgender adults have attempted suicide and that rates drop to average for youth who are supported in their affirmed gender?

Do you know enough to help us transform our world? .

My dream is that within this sacred space, this oasis, we can begin the conversation that can expand to others in our denomination. Our liberal religious community has a proud history of being on the front lines of every civil rights movement. This past year, VP Biden called trans* rights the civil rights issue of our time. Will you be marching beside me?



BULLETIN BOARD

June 5—Citizens Project -Creating Community Breakfast—The Doubletree Hotel, 1775 East Cheyenne Mountain Road. Check in 7:00 a.m. Reservations 520-9899.

June 21-22- PrideFest Denver. See p. 2 and also go to www.glbtcOLORADO.org. Parade Sunday 9:30 am

July 19-20 - Colorado Springs PrideFest 24—America the Beautiful Park.—Plan to help staff the PFLAG booth. Both days! Send an e-mail to info@cspflag.org.

July 23— Off the Street Breakfast—sponsored by Urban Peak 7:00—7:30 a.m. registration 7:30—8:30 a.m. Breakfast and Program. Breakfast is complimentary, attendees will be asked to make a meaningful donation to Urban Peak. Sit at the PFLAG table—send an e-mail to PFLAG table captain Bill Oliver: gnarlybill@hotmail.com.

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.

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

Confidentiality.

The PFLAG meeting is a safe space for people to share their stories and their feelings. Please remember that who you met and what was said is to be kept completely confidential. Thank you.

Short Takes—Provided by Bill and Carol Oberg

A Surge Forward on Marriage Equality—*New York Times Editorial Board, May 1, 2014*

In a landmark 5-to-4 ruling in June, the Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act's denial of federal benefits to lawfully married same-sex couples — but, in another case from California, declined to say whether the Constitution requires states to allow such marriages to begin with. Now, just 11 months later, the battle for marriage equality has turned an important corner, with a new round of cases beginning to reach federal appellate courts for review. This creates the potential for a speedier -than-expected return to the Supreme Court, perhaps as early as next term.

The explosion of new lawsuits in more than 30 states challenges existing state bans on same-sex marriage, as well as state refusals to recognize same-sex marriages lawfully performed elsewhere. These suits, including ones newly filed in Georgia and Ohio, rely heavily on the language and logic of the Defense of Marriage Act opinion, *United States v. Windsor*, written by Justice Anthony Kennedy — in particular its disapproving view of the harm inflicted on gay and lesbian couples and their children by relegating them to second-class citizenship for no good reason.

The judicial response so far has been remarkable: 11 straight favorable United States District Court rulings, overturning marriage bans in Utah, Oklahoma, Texas, Michigan and Virginia, and more limited victories requiring states to recognize out-of-state marriages. As yet, there have been no losses, even in deeply red states.

Definitions: The following statement in *Out Front* magazine (Denver) caught my eye: "I'm older and grew up surrounded by 1950s sensibilities. I'm a cisgender heterosexual male. I have been seeing a trans woman ..."

Cisgender: an individual's experience of their own gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth. (Wikipedia)

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.