



PFLAG Colorado Springs

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

October 2017

Panel to Share Conversion Therapy Experiences

The October PFLAG meeting will feature a panel discussion with several individuals who have experienced "conversion therapy". Their powerful stories show how damaging these experiences are and why the practice should be banned in Colorado. Years after being discredited, the therapy is still being performed.

According to Wikipedia, "Conversion therapy refers to the pseudoscientific practice of trying to change an individual's sexual orientation using psychological or spiritual interventions. There is virtually no reliable evidence that sexuality can be controlled or changed and medical bodies warn that conversion therapy practices are ineffective and potentially seriously harmful."

The American Psychiatric Association opposes psychiatric treatment "based upon the assumption that homosexuality *per se* is a mental disorder or based upon the *a priori* assumption that a patient should change his/her sexual homosexual orientation" and describes attempts to change sexual orientation by practitioners as unethical.

Conversion therapy is still used by religious and social organizations that exhort participants to "Pray Away the Gay". They promote the idea that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is a choice and therefore can be changed through talk therapy.

Religious organizations Exodus International and Focus on the Family have strongly promoted this therapy, doing great harm to many in the LGBTQ community who have been subjected to pressure and shaming as they sought to redirect their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Exodus ceased operations in 2013 after apologizing to all the gay men and women it had hurt during its 40-year history.

Conversion therapy is now against the law in New Mexico, California, Vermont, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon and the District of Columbia, but not in Colorado.

In March, 2017, for the third consecutive year, a bill that would prohibit conversion therapy from being practiced on young people was killed

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OCTOBER PFLAG MEETING

Tuesday
October 17, 2017
7:00 p.m.

Program:

Why Conversion Therapy Should be Banned

Panel discussion

The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street

Doors open at 6:30
Everyone is welcome.

Cookies.

Coming Out Day Celebration at UCCS—Oct. 11

We need a couple of volunteers to help Elaine Myers with the PFLAG information table during the National Coming Out Day Celebration at UCCS on Wednesday, October 11th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at University Center #116. Volunteers will be handing out PFLAG literature and talking with students, staff and faculty members.

The Lesbian, Gay Bi-Sexual and Transgender Resource Center welcomes everyone to join them in celebrating LGBTQ culture. This event will feature campus and community resources, connections with UCCS LGBTQ organizations, music, food, games and activities. The event is sponsored by the LGBT+ Resource Center at M.O.S.A.I.C and Spectrum.

If you can help, please call Elaine at (719) 359-1462.



Judy Shepard is Featured Speaker at Inside/Out Event

Judy Shepard, a passionate activist for LGBT rights, is the featured speaker at the Ally Up! Breakfast for Inside/Out on October 3. Judy's gay son, Matthew Shepard, was brutally murdered in a hate crime in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998. Judy subsequently embarked on a crusade to reduce the incidence of LGBT bullying and hate crimes. See the Matthew Shepard Foundation website at: www.MatthewShepard.org

We at PFLAG welcome Judy and look forward to hearing her presentation. Registration is at 7 a.m., Break-

fast at 7:30 a.m. at the Doubletree Hotel, 1775 East Cheyenne Mountain Boulevard. There will be a short program with speakers from Inside/Out. The breakfast is free, and donations to the youth group are requested.

There is still room at the PFLAG tables, but Elaine Myers must receive your phone call by noon on Wednesday, September 27th to secure your reservation.

Call her now at (719) 359-1462 to join PFLAG at the breakfast.



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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www.cspflag.org

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A Message from the Editor

I first encountered the concept of conversion therapy in college in 1962, when my roommate's cousin was dating a young man who identified himself as gay.

His family and her family were supporting the efforts of a psycho-therapist to convert him to straight.

Even then, at age 19, knowing virtually nothing at all about the world of LGBT, I felt that what they were doing was wrong. At my Episcopal girls' high school in Virginia most of us knew that the music teacher and the history teacher were a lesbian couple, and we loved them both. They were quietly accepted by the school, so far as I could tell.

I never learned what happened to the young man, but I feel confident that he is still gay, and probably bears some scars from the well-intentioned efforts of his misguided family.

Thirty-six years later, in 1998, I joined Colorado Springs PFLAG after my daughter came out. Our chapter presidents, Jeannie and Judd Lynn, arranged for a panel of men who had been damaged by conversion therapy to speak with us at a PFLAG meeting. It was powerful, and memorable. It's time to do this again. I hope that many of you who read this newsletter will come to PFLAG on October 17th to support our panel members and honor their stories by our presence.

- Karen Stith

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



The Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church will host its annual gala fundraiser "Casablanca" Bring It Bash 2017 on Saturday, October 21 at the church, 1102 South 21st Street, starting at 6 p.m. the evening will feature cocktails, an auction, a catered dinner, and...

Live performances by the United Court of the Pikes Peak Empire and the Out Loud Colorado Springs Men's Chorus!

Tickets are \$30 or two for \$55. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Inside/Out Youth Services. For more information, call (719) 634-3771 or go to www.ppmcc.org

Queer and There A Column in the *Indy*



The *Colorado Springs Independent* newspaper has been publishing a weekly opinion column under the

heading "Queer and There". Written by a variety of local journalists, the column is a window into the world of young LGBTQ individuals in the Pikes Peak Region. Recent columns include "A Life in Tension" (the challenge of being a church-going lesbian) by Mallory Everhart; "Understanding the Spectrum of 'In-Between' Sexual Orientations" by Keeley Griego; and "Educating Educators on Diversity" by Rosa Byun. Well worth reading. See them online at www.csindy.com (click on "Columns")

PFLAG meetings are safe space.

Who you meet, and what you hear ...
must remain strictly confidential.



Conversion Therapy Panel

(Continued from page 1)

in committee and never made it to the floor of the legislature for a vote.

As drafted, the bill would "prohibit a licensed physician specializing in psychiatry or a licensed or registered mental health care provider from engaging in conversion therapy with a patient under 18 years of age." The appropriate state licensing board would dole out penalties; the proposal doesn't prohibit clergy or anyone acting in a religious capacity from practicing conversion therapy.

The political action group OneColorado is now spearheading the push to elect moderate legislators who would support a new bill banning conversion therapy in 2018.

The Politics of Conversion Therapy

In March, the Colorado Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee voted down a ban on conversion therapy for LGBTQ minors. For the third consecutive year, they killed a bill that would protect LGBTQ young people by banning so-called conversion therapy.

[A Message from One Colorado](#)
March 22, 2017

"We've had it. As of today, Colorado Senate Republican Leadership chose to send the bill that would ban conversion therapy to the "kill committee." For the third year in a row, legislators have chosen politics over banning a harmful practice that attempts to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.

"This bill would have safeguarded LGBTQ minors from being subjected to harmful and abusive practices trying to change who they are or who they love. We're not sitting back. We're raising money and recruiting volunteers so we can work harder than ever up until election day in 2018, so we can FINALLY pass this ban.

"We won't forget the few senators who abused their power to stop a bill that would help so many and harm no one. That's why we'll be all over the state this year working to flip the Senate to a pro-equality majority.

Bill Nye Uses Ice Cream to Show How Ridiculous Gay Conversion Therapy Is

By Curtis M. Wong— *Huffpost*



"Vanilla is trying to convert us all again"

March 27, 2017:

On an episode of his Netflix series, "Bill Nye Saves the World", the 61-year-old science educator blasted the conservative Christian belief that LGBTQ people can be

"cured" of their sexuality by using ice cream flavors as an analogy. The hilarious clip, which can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/2wfzUhy> depicts an "ice cream conversation therapy" meeting in which a vanilla cone attempts to "convert" strawberry, chocolate and other flavors into being vanilla, too.

"As vanilla, I feel that I am the most natural of the ice creams," the cone explains, "and therefore, the rest of you should just go ahead and also be vanilla. It's the one true flavor." Fortunately, the different cones come to an understanding by the end of the clip because, as Nye explained, "there are lots of flavors to sexuality."

Kasandra Barbaugh of *Refinery 29* commented further:

"Although the video uses a light-hearted analogy, conversion therapy is a damaging, outdated, and discredited practice.

"Those who perform conversion therapy attempt to change a queer person's sexuality, sometimes using harmful methods like electroshock.

"Medical professionals discredited conversion therapy decades ago, according to the Human Rights Campaign, and most people now realize that not only does the practice not work, it can also be harmful to the queer people under conversion therapy, leading to things like homelessness, depression, anxiety, drug use, and suicide.

"It's unfortunately still necessary for people to watch videos like this, and to see how ridiculous it is to attempt to change something as inherent as someone's "flavor."

"While we love the first part of the video, and the argument against conversion therapy, the later half undermines this argument by claiming that Vanilla (the straight cone) actually could change his flavor with just a little bit of convincing.

"If we're saying that queer people should be allowed to be queer, then straight people should also be allowed to be straight — and it's not okay to pressure anyone into thinking that they shouldn't be who they are."

"We hope you're ready to fight with us.

"We are *all* One Colorado"

PFLAG hopes to have a OneColorado representative join us for our October panel.

To support the work of OneColorado, please donate online at: www.one-colorado.org

"I was learning how to internalize the shame I already felt, making me believe I am disordered at the very core of who I am,"
- Conversion therapy survivor

Amazon Smile Program

Colorado Springs PFLAG participates in the Amazon Smile program. When you make purchases on Amazon, enter the site through our portal:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/84-1281187>

and 0.5% of your purchase will be sent to our chapter. Pick up a flyer on this program at PFLAG meetings.



BULLETIN BOARD

October 3— Ally Up! Breakfast Fundraiser for Inside/Out Youth Services 7:00 a.m., Doubletree Hotel, 1775 East Cheyenne Mountain Boulevard. Guest Speaker: Judy Shepard. of the Matthew Shepard Foundation. See p. 1.

October 11— National Coming Out Day. University Center #116, 11 a.m.—2 p.m. The public is welcome. Call Elaine Myers at 359-1462 to help with PFLAG information table at UCCS. See p. 1.

October 21 — Bring it Bash 2017: Casablanca— 6:00 p.m. Annual gala fundraiser for the Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, 1102 South 21st Street. Call (719) 634-3771 for reservations. See p. 2.

November 4—Youth Documentary Academy World Premiere— The 2017 class of young filmmakers presents its work for the first time. Fine Arts Center. More information at www.youthdocumentary.org

PFLAG Thanks

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

Support PFLAG— Pick up a King Soopers/ City Market Gift Card at a PFLAG meeting.



The free card is already loaded with \$2.50 for groceries. You add money to the card using your credit card, and use the gift card to pay for purchases. King Soopers will donate 5% of your grocery, gas and pharmacy purchases to our local chapter of PFLAG. Now, that's an easy, effective fundraiser.

AARP Colorado Rocks!

Shari Wilkins recently served as a caregiver for her aunt, a closeted lesbian who married her partner three days before dying at age 89. Wilkins was left to address the issue with surprised family, friends and church members.



"I told everyone that at the end of her life, a life well lived, came the ultimate joy: She had gotten married," Wilkins recalled.

Wilkins, 70, of Denver, is a former manager for SAGE of the Rockies, a program of the GLBT Community Center of Colorado that focuses on older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. She has heard similar accounts from members of her caregiver support group. For older lesbians, "that generation just didn't tell."

While many issues are similar for all caregivers, the LGBT community sometimes faces unique challenges.

To help address caregiving issues, including those specific to LGBT people, AARP Colorado has produced a series of nine- to 12-minute podcasts on topics including advance-care planning, compassion fatigue, models of care and caregiver stress.

The 40 podcasts, titled *Care-FULL Conversations*, are being released weekly and can be accessed on iTunes and Google Play and at aarp.org/co.

One podcast discusses the importance of being proactive. "If we wait until the crisis has hit, we are not in the position to make the best decisions, because it limits our options. We all want a choice—to be in control," said Jane Barton, podcast host.

Barton, AARP Colorado's caregiving ambassador, has a professional and personal background in caregiving and writes a blog on the topic at aarp.org/co. Also see article: <http://states.aarp.org/lgbt-adults-caregiving/>

Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.

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.