



# PFLAG Colorado Springs

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

2019 is Our 25th Anniversary Year!

September 2019

## PFLAG Anniversary Dinner—September 21

Please join Colorado Springs PFLAG in celebrating its 25th Anniversary with a festive dinner in the private room at Red Gravy restaurant in downtown Colorado Springs on Saturday, September 21, starting at 6:00 p.m. Red Gravy is an Italian restaurant located at 23 South Tejon Street in Colorado Springs.

Current PFLAG folks and the wonderful people who started the chapter and kept it vibrant for so many years are invited to come together to honor this milestone.

Reservations are required and the private room has limited seating, so please make your reservation by September 15th. Go to the PFLAG website [www.cspflag.org](http://www.cspflag.org) and click on the “25th Anniversary” button on the home page.

The dinner, including a pasta buffet, salad, rosemary focaccia, non-alcoholic beverage and dessert (including the tip) is \$27.00. There will be a cash bar. Please make your reservation online and pay by credit card. We want you to join us!

PFLAG participants are invited to share anecdotes, stories and memories by sending messages by U.S. mail or e-mail to our chapter. What do you remember about the early years (1994-2000) of our chapter?



Colorado Springs PFLAG was formed in 1994 in response to the November 1992 statewide voter approval of Amendment 2 to the Colorado Constitution, prohibiting the passage of any law that would protect LGBTQ rights.

Amendment 2 was subsequently overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1996 in Romer v. Evans, a landmark decision for gay rights. This history is described on Wikipedia: <https://bit.ly/2X3Qa2z>

For 25 years, Colorado Springs has provided monthly meetings, programs and support to the LGBT community, families and friends.

**SEPTEMBER PFLAG MEETING**

**Tuesday  
September 17, 2019  
7:00 p.m.**

**Conversation and Small Group Discussion**

**The Dwelling Place  
508 North Tejon Street**

**Light Refreshments  
Social Time starts 6:30 p.m.**

**Everyone is welcome.**

## An LGBTQ+ Teaching Toolkit

This resource is recommended by PFLAG. PBS Learning Media and the New York City Department of Education have provided a well chosen set of materials to help educators. Go to: <http://bit.ly/2WKaOso>.

The *Understanding LGBTQ+ Identity: A Toolkit for Educators Collection* offers a series of digital media resources to help administrators, guidance counselors, and educators understand and effectively address the complex and difficult issues faced by LGBTQ students. The collection features short segments of video content from WNET’s groundbreaking LGBTQ series *First Person* a digital series that delivers candid personal narratives illustrating larger conversations about gender, sexuality, social norms, and identity development. See First Person videos at <https://bit.ly/1RIAYoI>

The video content is scaffolded by a suite of materials (informational text, conversation guides, discussion questions, and teaching tips) to facilitate their use in professional development settings. When used in tandem, the videos and accompanying educational resources will help promote understanding, awareness, and self-esteem.

## It’s Time to Ally Up! For LGBTQ Youth—October 3

For over twenty-nine years, non-profit Inside/Out Youth Services



has supported youth ages 13-22 in our community. You are invited to come to its important annual breakfast fundraiser, “Ally Up: You Belong!”

Plan to sit at a PFLAG table at the breakfast on October 3 at the Antlers Hotel, 4 South Cascade Avenue in Colorado Springs. Meet Inside/Out Executive Director Jessie Pocock and Inside/Out youth and volunteers.

The keynote speaker will be Roz Keith, the founder and Executive Direc-

tor of Stand With Trans. For more information about this support group for trans individuals and their families, go to: <https://standwithtrans.org/>

Registration and networking 7:00 – 7:30 a.m., Breakfast 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. The breakfast is free, and guests will be asked to make a donation to Inside/Out.

More information is online at [www.insideoutys.org/ally-up](http://www.insideoutys.org/ally-up). To sign up and reserve your place at the PFLAG table, please call PFLAG board member Cheryl Prichard at 719-332-5740 or send Cheryl an e-mail at: [cheryl.prichard@comcast.net](mailto:cheryl.prichard@comcast.net).



## Mama Dragons— A Support Group for Mormon Mothers

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.

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To join the local chapter and receive this 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](mailto:info@cspflag.org)

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PFLAG Colorado Springs on Facebook:  
PFLAG - Colorado Springs  
<https://www.facebook.com/PFLAGCS/>

PFLAG National Office website:  
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*Lori Vollmar sent us a copy of a story about Mama Dragons titled "Truth be Told – Mothers helping mothers of LGBTQ kids" by Zoe Donaldson, from the June 2019 issue of Oprah Magazine. It details the passionate journey of Mormon mothers of LGBTQ children, who formed their own support organization.*

*Excerpts:*

Wendy VonSosen, a lifelong Mormon, grew up believing homosexuality was a sin. "I also believed that if I followed all the rules, none of my kids would choose that lifestyle," says VonSosen, a mother of four.

When her 13 year old son, Erik, tearfully came out five years ago, her world crumbled. "Eric was my rule follower, so I knew he wasn't making a choice," she says. Being gay was as natural to him as having ten fingers and ten toes. But anyone who's LGBTQ can't participate in certain temple ordinances that allow you to get to the highest kingdom of heaven. I thought Erik would be cut off from me for eternity."

VonSosen knew her son was scared and needed support—but reaching out to religious friends for counsel and comfort simply wasn't an option. After nearly a year of stumbling and struggling, she found Mama Dragons.

A Facebook community since 2014, with 2,950 members and count-

### MAMA DRAGONS



ing, Mama Dragons is a lifeline for mothers of LGBTQ kids struggling to comprehend their children's sexuality.

Some parents arrive eager to advocate for their sons and daughters but fear less-than-tolerant neighbors; others show up believing that being gay goes against God's plan but also that their LGBTQ kids need to be themselves.

Regardless of a mother's initial acceptance or hesitation, the group offers a nonjudgmental resource to anyone seeking answers to thorny questions. It has a website and Facebook page, and hosts retreats and subgroups for Mama Dragons with trans kids or whose first language is Spanish (a.k.a. the Madres Dragonas). Members of Mama Dragons also participate in Pride events.

Says vice president Lisa Dame, "I've had men in their 50s embrace me and confess, 'I haven't talked to my mom in years – it feels so good to hug you.'"

Mama Dragons hatched as a safe haven for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose leaders maintain that same-sex attraction isn't a sin but acting on that desire is.

*To read personal stories and for more information, go to:*

<https://mamadragons.org/>

This is Important!

You don't always know where other people are on their journey.

THEREFORE, PFLAG meetings are always a safe space.

Who you meet, and what you hear

Must remain strictly confidential.

- Thank you.

### TransParent Group

The TransParent group at Inside/Out for parents of gender variant and transgender youth usually meets on the third Thursday of the month from 6:00—7:30 p.m. at Inside/Out Youth Services, 223 North Wahsatch Ave. For more information, send an e-mail to [transparenting@insideoutys.org](mailto:transparenting@insideoutys.org) or call Inside/Out at 328-1056.

### Thank You

To the Saponas Foundation, First Congregational United Church of Christ and the Ruskey/Bianchi Family for their significant, ongoing support of Colorado Springs PFLAG.



## TED Talks: Why Kids Need to Learn About Gender and Sexuality

From the TEDTalks website:

Lindsay Amer is the creator of "Queer Kid Stuff," an educational video series that breaks down complex ideas around gender and sexuality through songs and metaphors. By giving kids and their families a vocabulary to express themselves, Amer is helping to create more empathetic adults -- and spreading a message of radical acceptance in a world where it's sometimes dangerous to just be yourself.

Excerpts from her TED Talk:

(Singing) It's OK to be gay. We are different in many ways. Doesn't matter if you're a boy, girl or somewhere in between, we all are part of one big family. Gay means "happy." Queer Kid Stuff. You are enough here at Queer Kid Stuff.

(Applause)

Opening a performance with lyrics like "It's OK to be gay" for a roomful of adults is one thing, but it's entirely different for a roomful of kindergarteners. What you've just heard is the theme song for my web series "Queer Kid Stuff," where I make LGBTQ+ and social justice videos for all ages.

And when I say all ages, I mean literally from babies to your great-great-grandma.

Now, I know what you're thinking: "Whoa, they're talking about gay stuff with kids." But talking to kids about gay stuff is actually crucial. The American Academy of Pediatrics has found that children have a solid understanding of their gender identity by the age of four. This is when children are developing their sense of self. They're observing the world around them, absorbing that information and internalizing it.

Now, most parents want their children to become kind, empathetic, self-confident adults, and exposure to diversity is an important part of that social and emotional development. And -- gender nonconforming kids and trans kids and kids with trans and nonbinary and queer parents are everywhere.

In the series, my stuffed bear cohost and I talk about the LGBT community, activism, gender and pronouns, consent and body positivity. We tackle these topics through songs, not unlike the one you just heard, simple definitions and metaphors.

We approach these ideas, to steal a phrase from an old professor of mine,



Lindsay Amer

from "under the doorknob" -- getting down to toddler height and looking up at the great big world through their tiny little eyes, taking these seemingly complex ideas and simplifying them -- not dumbing them down, but homing in on the core concept. Gender is about how we feel and how we express ourselves. Sexuality is about love and gender and family, not about sex. And these are all ideas children can grasp.

I get emails from viewers in their 20s who use my videos to explain nonbinary gender to their grandparents.

But, I get one comment over and over again: "Let kids be kids."

Well, that's a nice sentiment and all, but only if it actually includes all kids. Just a few weeks ago, a 15-year-old in Huntsville, Alabama died by suicide after being bullied for being gay. In 2018, it was a seven-year-old in Denver, Colorado. There have been and will be many more. Lesbian, gay and bisexual teens are more than three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers, and transgender teens are almost six times more likely.

So, talk to a kid about gender. Talk to a kid about sexuality. Teach them about consent. Tell them it is OK for boys to wear dresses and for girls to speak up. Let's spread radical queer joy.

Watch: Lindsay Amer's TED Talk video at <https://bit.ly/2Ldz2DU>

Explore: Lindsay Amer's Queer Kid Stuff website and YouTube videos at <http://queerkidstuff.com/>

## "Love Calls Back"

*Editor's Note: We put this into the August newsletter, but here it is again, for those who might have missed it.*

Verizon and PFLAG have teamed up to make a beautiful three-minute video. We hope everyone will watch it.

If you haven't already found out about it on our PFLAG chapter's website and/or Facebook page, then you can click on it right here and watch it:

<https://vimeo.com/340500513>

Many of us who have been with PFLAG for a while have had the heart-warming experience of seeing a parent reach out to an LGBT family member from whom they have been estranged, sometimes for many years.

Watching this, I cried. My daughter's lesbian girlfriend had a hard time finding common ground with her mom, who was strongly religious. Many years later, as the daughter was transitioning (F to M) they were finally able to reconcile, with joy and relief. Mom has passed away now, but her son feels complete because of their reconciliation.

If you know someone who might be trying to figure out how to reconnect with a relative, please share this little video with them. It's never too late for love to call back.

## The Confusing World of Pronouns

Sophie Thunberg, who has worked as the Outreach Educator at Inside Out, introduced us to a great resource:

<https://www.mypronouns.org/>

*Excerpts:*

In English, whether we realize it or not, people frequently refer to us using pronouns when speaking about us. Often, when speaking of a singular human in the third person, these pronouns have a gender implied -- such as "he" to refer to a man/boy or "she" to refer to a woman/girl. These associations are not always accurate or helpful.

Often, people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on the person's appearance or name. These assumptions aren't always correct, and the act of making an assumption (even if correct) sends a potentially harmful message -- that people have to look a certain way to demonstrate the gender that they are/are not.

Using someone's correct personal pronouns is a way to respect them and create an inclusive environment, just as using a person's name can be a way to

*(Continued on page 4)*



**BULLETIN BOARD**

**Sept. 21— Colorado Springs PFLAG 25th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration at Red Gravy Restaurant.** Everyone is invited to come and celebrate this milestone. See article p. 1.

**Oct. 3 — Ally Up! Annual Fundraising Breakfast for Inside Out Youth Services.** Antlers Hotel, Cascade and Pikes Peak Avenues. Call now to reserve a spot at the PFLAG table(s) See article p. 1..

**Oct. 25-27—PFLAG National Convention —** Kansas City, MO. Several members of Colorado Springs PFLAG will attend. If you are interested in joining them, send an e-mail to [info@cspflag.org](mailto:info@cspflag.org). Early registration costs less. More information is on the national website: <https://pflag.org/>

**Nov. 3 — Night Out —** Urban Peak challenges the community to gather pledges and sleep outside overnight near the Urban Peak Shelter, to raise funds to support homeless youth. More details will be in the October PFLAG newsletter.

**Urban Peak Breakfast Under the Bridge**

Twelve PFLAGers enjoyed the annual Urban Peak Off the Street Breakfast under the Colorado Avenue Bridge on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to PFLAG’s table captain, Elaine Myers, for keeping track of reservations. Urban Peak Executive Director Shawna Kemppainen made a passionate case for supporting the work of this fine organization, stopping regularly in her talk as passing coal trains drowned out her words. The trains reminded her audience of what nights can be like for youth who sleep outside at night. Shawna has announced that the group of over 1,000 supporters at the breakfast donated \$169,467.00.

**Amazon Smile Program**

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

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

When you do this, Amazon will send 0.5% of the value of your purchase to our chapter. Pick up a flyer on this program at PFLAG meetings.

**The Confusing World of Pronouns (cont.)**

respect them. Just as it can be offensive or even harassing to make up a nickname for someone and call them that nickname against their will, it can be offensive or harassing to guess at someone’s pronouns and refer to them using those pronouns if that is not how that person wants to be known. Or, worse, actively choosing to ignore the pronouns someone has stated that they go by could imply the oppressive notion that intersex, transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people do not or should not exist.

Usually, the “they/them” pronouns set is acceptable to use when you don’t yet know if a person goes by another set or sets of pronouns. You can learn more about the centuries of history behind the singular “they” pronoun to refer to an individual in the “Resources” section of the “My Pronouns” website.

Just because a person goes by a certain set or sets of pronouns is not indicative of that person’s gender. A person could be transgender or not transgender (also called “cisgender” - the vast majority of the population is cisgender) and might share the pronouns they go by. A person could be a man or a woman or both or neither and share any number of these sets of pronouns as the correct ones to use for them, but which set they go by is not necessarily indicative of their gender, even though for most people there is an association between the pronouns they go by and the gender they are.

*She/Her:* “**She** is a writer and wrote that book **herself**. Those ideas are **hers**. I like both **her** and **her** ideas.”

*He/Him:* “**He** is a writer and wrote that book **himself**. Those ideas are **his**. I like both **him** and **his** ideas.”

*They/Them:* “**They** are a writer and wrote that book **themselves**. Those ideas are **theirs**. I like both **them** and **their** ideas.” Please note that although “they” pronouns here are singular and refer to an individual, the verbs are conjugated the same as with the plural “they” (e.g. “they are”). Also note that in this singular pronoun set many use “themselves” rather than “themselves,” although both are typically acceptable.

*Ze/Hir:* “**Ze** is a writer and wrote that book **hirsself**. Those ideas are **hirs**. I like both **hir** and **hir** ideas.” Please note that “ze” is usually pronounced with a long “e” and that “hir” and its forms are usually pronounced like the English word “here.” Some people instead go by “ze/zir” pronouns because of the more consistent pronunciation and spelling. More sets of pronouns and advice about using gender-neutral language are listed in “Resources” on the website.

**Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member**

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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