



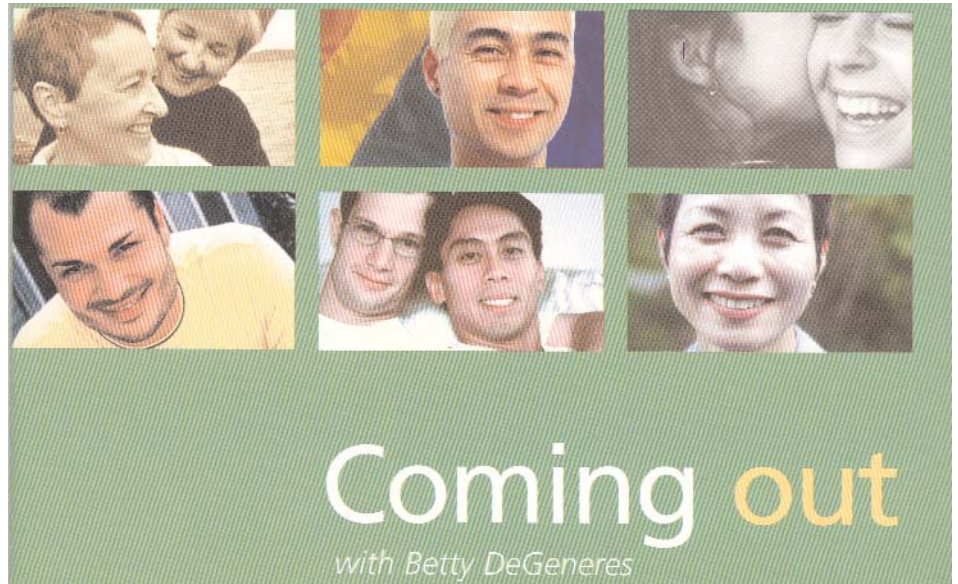
PFLAG Works: Taking Our Message to Corporate America

PFLAG is building productive relationships with the corporate community and helping business leaders address the issue of GLBT diversity in the workplace. As the grassroots family voice on GLBT issues across the country, with over 500 chapters and affiliates in every state, PFLAG is well-positioned to help corporations change hearts and minds about our GLBT loved ones. From grocery stores to drug companies to professional sports, PFLAG is guiding corporations as they create working environments that include, accept and truly value their GLBT employees.

Last year board member Eric Watson, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion of Food Lion, introduced PFLAG to the Conference Board, an organization consisting of some 2,000 companies in over 60 countries. This spring Deputy Executive Director Ron Schlittler developed a workshop on GLBT diversity specifically tailored to the Conference Board and presented the workshop at their conferences in New York City and Chicago. The workshops were attended by diversity executives from many corporations who are facing the challenges of creating and implementing solid workplace diversity programs, not only here in the United States, but across the globe.

Executive Director Jody Huckaby participated in two corporate Pride events in New York City in June. Jody gave a presentation to employees of Pfizer Corporation at their international headquarters. At Pfizer, Jody was accompanied by NYC PFLAGer Alice Wong, her daughter and her daughter's partner. Together they shared the PFLAG story, discussed the importance of diversity and PFLAG's program work and congratulated Pfizer for their strong GLBT diversity initiatives.

Jody also joined National Football League Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, his wife Chandler and their son, Drew, for a presen-



Above: The cover of "Coming Out", a new audio CD resource in the campaign for corporate diversity. PFLAG consulted with IBM, Texas Instruments, and PricewaterhouseCoopers to develop and produce "Coming Out."

tation to NFL employees. As part of the NFL's Diversity Council focusing on support for their diverse workforce, Commissioner Tagliabue and his wife, Chandler, shared their family's personal journey of loving and fully embracing their gay son Drew and their experiences with PFLAG. Drew talked about the Stay Close campaign. PFLAG is particularly proud of the Tagliabue family's courage in demonstrating for the NFL why GLBT diversity is essential for all corporate communities.

"Corporate leaders know GLBT diversity programs are good for business and they know it's the right thing to do."

Over the last year, PFLAG National partnered with IBM, Texas Instruments, and PricewaterhouseCoopers on the development and production of an audio CD as part of these three corporations' GLBT diversity initiatives. PFLAG National worked with the Human Rights Campaign to bring Betty DeGeneres to the project as the narrator, and we consulted with Betty throughout the taping of the production. In her narration, Betty references PFLAG as an important resource for corporations struggling with GLBT diversity issues.

As we continue to solidify existing relationships with our corporate partners and create new relationships, we hope to develop a corporate advisory board to work with us on becoming a more effective resource for those who want to strengthen their

PFLAG Launches New State-by-State Organizing Initiative

In these increasingly challenging times, PFLAG continues to experience steady growth with an ever-expanding number of chapters and affiliates all around the country. PFLAG's widely respected voice and work to support, educate and advocate is more important than ever. While it is natural for some chapters and affiliates to come and go over time and attracting and retaining membership and leadership always requires our attention, it is important to keep in mind that PFLAG presently enjoys the most extensive and expanding organized grassroots presence of any of GLBT advocacy organization with more than 540 chapters and affiliates throughout the country.

Two years of discussions among our Regional Directors (RDs) and PFLAG staff in the Field & Policy (F&P) Department about this very exciting challenge have resulted in Our House to the Statehouse, a state-by-state organizing strategy. The response to Our House to the Statehouse has already been huge. It began with a rousing launch at the national PFLAG conference in Salt Lake City, Utah in October of 2004. The unveiling occurred at a Saturday evening dinner, at which PFLAGers stepped up with incredible generosity to help fund the project. The following day was a workshop titled "State-by-State Organizing" at which the program was explained in more detail and key organizing of state leadership teams began. F&P coordinators in at the national office

A Letter from the Executive Director

I am very pleased to be writing my first letter for the *PFLAGpole*. It's a real honor to be a part of the PFLAG family as your national Executive Director. I have had a very exciting five months here on the job as I hope many of you know already by reading my *Weekly Alert* messages. If you have not done so already, please go to our website at www.pflag.org and look for the icon that says "Sign Up for PFLAG's Weekly Alert." It's the best way to learn about what PFLAG National is working on every week, what tremendous work our chapters are doing across the country, and what important issues we are all dealing with that may need your attention and action.

I continue to be amazed at all of the good PFLAG work that takes place both here in the PFLAG National office and throughout the country in all of our chapters and affiliates. In this edition of the *PFLAGpole*, you will read about the PFLAG National Scholarship Program. Our program continues to expand with more applications from very talented GLBT youth and GLBT allies from high schools across the country. I hope that you will be as inspired as I am in reading excerpts from our National Scholar biographies!

You will also read about the progress we have made since the launch of *Our House to the Statehouse*, our state-by-state organizing strategy. We are very enthusiastic about what is taking place in many states, particularly with the creation of State Coordinators and state leadership teams. Of course, how *Our House* is implemented in each state will vary depending on the unique characteristics of the state. As a grassroots organization, PFLAG recognizes that the real work of PFLAG takes place in local communities. And with ever increasing legislative battles being waged at the state level, PFLAG National is placing more of our energy and resources into organizing chapters across each state so that they have stronger,

more unified statewide family voices to help address the issues that our GLBT loved ones face. We think this model of organizing is the most effective way to ensure that PFLAG's family voice plays a critical role in each state's legislative challenges.

I've had the pleasure of traveling out to meet many PFLAGers hard at work in their communities. Nashville, New York, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Charlotte are among my destinations thus far, and it's clear that the warm welcome of the PFLAG family reaches far and wide. I particularly enjoyed my trips to Nashville and Charlotte where PFLAGers from Tennessee and Kentucky and North Carolina and South Carolina gathered for their respective bi-state conferences. I was able to hear first hand about some of the challenges our chapters face and how they rise to the occasion every day to meet them. Their passion is infectious and the commitment they have for their GLBT loved ones and for those in their communities is an inspiration. I hope to get to more state and regional conferences soon.

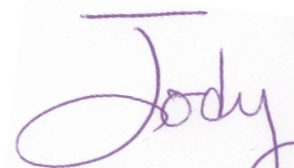
I hope you have seen the results of PFLAG National's tremendous media work in the last four months. We have been quoted numerous times on a wide variety of issues ranging from the judicial nominee process and the "nuclear option", faith communities, Safe Schools work and the attempted interventions of PFOX, reparative therapy, the National Parent Teacher Association, and most recently the announcement of US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's resignation, just to name a few. And we have had television appearances on a variety of national television news shows. We are working hard to increase the general public's awareness of PFLAG and the important resource that PFLAG is in communities across the country. Also, PFLAGers in New York and Washington have been



Photo: Rudy K. Lawdijin

hard at work launching the remarkable "Stay Close" media campaign whose message of building stronger GLBT family relationships is beginning to spread across the country through *Time*, *People Espanol* and *Entertainment Weekly* magazines.

It is clear that the work of PFLAG is critical to the ultimate goal of securing equality at every level for our GLBT loved ones and our families. The challenges are great as the attacks by the radical right continue to mount. The PFLAG voice is unique in the battle for equality – we are grassroots, we are community-based, we are volunteers in every state, in 540 cities and towns across America. Our one common thread is the power of love that we have for our GLBT loved ones. And nothing can change hearts and minds quite like the power of love. So I pledge to you all that I will work hard on behalf of PFLAG to help harness that power into an even stronger voice. And with all of us working together, there is no doubt that love will prevail!


- Jody Huckaby

PFLAG's Vision

We, the parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. PFLAG welcomes the participation and support of all who share in, and hope to realize, this vision.

PFLAG's Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered 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 to 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 WORKS

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GLBT diversity programs. Corporate leaders know it's good for business and they know it's the right thing to do. PFLAG stands ready and willing to advocate for equality in the workplace and welcomes businesses around the country to join us in this effort.

STATE-BY-STATE ORGANIZING

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have since facilitated numerous conference calls with PFLAG leaders all over the country and the plan is taking hold. To learn about exciting ways *Our House to the Statehouse* is implemented, please see reports in Regional News on page 8.

The essence of *Our House to the Statehouse* is for RDs and national F&P staff to facilitate state level leadership team building. An important aim of the program is to take the traditional role of the RD and translate it into work done through our RDs in partnership with a growing cadre of State Coordinators and state based leadership teams.

While the name of the program implies a policy focus, it is, in fact, more about improving existing chapters, assisting newly emerging chapters and enhancing all aspects of their efforts. This kind of state level capacity building and coalition building results not only in helping families stay together and saving lives, but strengthens the PFLAG voice and impact on public perceptions regarding GLBT issues and related policy issues. This is a program that builds on some important organizing trends that are already occurring quite naturally among our affiliate base. It also takes into account the reality that with our growth, our limited number of RDs (13 positions, usually with several vacancies) and limited national F&P staff, we must take steps to cultivate, empower and support our volunteer leaders state-by-state.

This will all play out somewhat differently in every state depending on the particular needs, opportunities and challenges. In some states, in fact, there are only one or two PFLAG chapters or affiliates, so that affects how relevant this model works for now. Some states have strong GLBT organizations in place; some have such organizations that are just getting started. And in some states, PFLAG is the strongest GLBT advocacy presence. This model can be tailored as best suits each state.

Correction: In 2004 Annual Report listing of the PFLAG Family Circle, we inadvertently omitted the Jerry Miller Family from the Circle of Support. Our apologies to the Miller family and our thanks for their support.

Our House to the Statehouse in Action!

On March 12, more than 30 Texan PFLAGers from 10 different chapters stormed into the state capitol of Austin for three days of training, lobbying and marching on behalf of their GLBT loved ones. These photos by Regional Director Jim Null tell the story.

Right: Policy professionals provided training on how to conduct a legislative visit. **Below:** PFLAG National staffer Judy Hoff prepares to train PFLAGers on safe schools and transgender issues.



Right: For Monday's lobby day, PFLAGers split into groups of five or six, including Jim and Sue Null, a lesbian couple and their children and parents. PFLAG families visited every single member of the Texas Legislature with personal stories and policy positions.



Counterclockwise from below: PFLAG chapters march toward the Texas statehouse. Flags of many colors wave at a rally for GLBT families at the statehouse. PFLAGers know how to leave their mark!



PFLAG

Scholars 2005

On behalf of Nancy McDonald, chair of the Scholarship Advisory Committee (SAC), and the thirteen SAC members, I am pleased to present to you the 2005 PFLAG National Scholars. This year there are 30 PFLAG National Scholars; some are featured below and others opted to avoid publicity around their awards. These students were chosen from the 255 scholarship applications that we received. Please join with us in congratulating them.

The 2005 PFLAG National Scholarships Program was made possible by several generous donations. The Palmer B. Carson Trust, which established the scholarships program with a substantial bequest from Mr. Carson's estate, provided the funding for 18 of this year's scholarships. We received additional funding for another seven scholarships from the Dow Chemical Company employee group Gays, Lesbians and Allies at Dow (GLAD); two of these scholarships were named in honor of Kathleen Bader. Five additional scholarships were funded by individual donors.

We used a bi-level selection process. The initial cut was made by the members of the SAC. The finalists were then reviewed by nine college professors. We are grateful to each of the SAC members and the college professors for their time and expertise.

In December 2005, we will announce the details of the 2006 PFLAG National Scholarship Program. If you belong to an employees' group, union, or any other group, and think that your group or company might be interested in donating to our scholarship fund, please contact Timothy Sheehan in our Development Department at tseehan@pflag.org, or 202.467.8180 ext. 229. Individual donations to support PFLAG's general programming including the scholarships program, our safe schools work, or other PFLAG work may be mailed in the enclosed envelope.

-Dr. Roy Gilbert-Higginson, Scholarships Program Administrator



Bryce McHibben

Hometown: Sammamish, WA
College: University of Washington

Bryce entered high school as a stereotypical all-American kid with good grades, athletic honors, a girlfriend and membership in the Air Force cadet program. In the middle of his sophomore year, Bryce came out and things changed. "For me," Bryce writes, "that meant weird hallway glances, awkward silences, fights, hate mail, Bible debates and unanswered

phone calls." So Bryce started SMASH (Students Making A Safe Haven), his school's first GSA, to "make high school a welcoming place and teach the value of acceptance."

Grace Nichols

Hometown: Heidelberg, Germany
College: St. Louis University, Madrid Campus

Grace lives in a military community that is also heavily evangelical Christian – not the ideal circumstances for a coming out party! Grace, a devout Christian herself, struggled when she began to have same-sex attractions and heard other Christians say gays were a "disgrace to God." So Grace did lots of research on "sexual orientation, social stigmas and scriptural interpretation." She writes that the bigotry she faced, "gave me a personal platform and inspiration to stand up to discrimination."

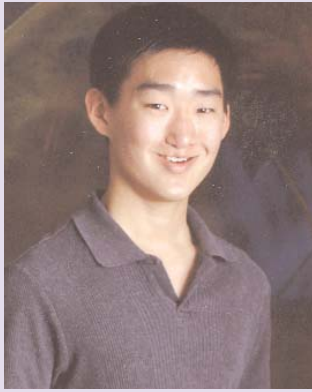


Anna Wijffler

Hometown: Menlo Park, CA
College: Yale University

Anna, the president of her school's GSA, writes, "I know men and women aren't the same, but does everything really need to be divided along gender lines? We are told what to wear, what toys to play with, what bathroom to go into, what teams to join and finally what people to fall in love with. In school, I've tried to help question division and erase boundaries. As one of many who fall outside traditional categories (and into the colorful spectrum between the extremes), I've seen how unnecessary, and even discriminatory, such categories are. In all aspects of my presence on campus, I lead people away from conventional categorization, toward openness and understanding. As I traverse the campus, holding hands with my girlfriend, I wonder what people around us are thinking? Are they seeing us as the dynamic, thoughtful individuals we are or do they see just the lesbian couple on campus? It's a strange sort of leadership role we've come to fill. We're haphazardly making the political into the personal and that's when change can happen. Change happens slowly, but it happens because of people who have the courage to be different."

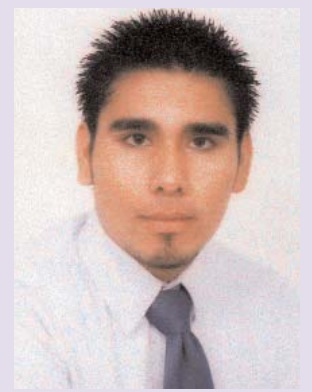




Nicholas Alt

Hometown: Iowa City, IA
College: Wesleyan University

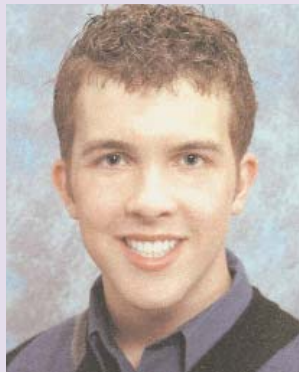
Nicholas' mom came into his room one Saturday afternoon and asked a simple question, "Nick, are you gay?" This student, ranked first in his high school class and an accomplished orator, began to cry before she even finished the question. "I had no clue how my mom would react and I panicked when I saw tears in her eyes as well. Reports about gay teens being homeless, depressed, harrassed and suicidal flooded my mind. A fear of who and what I was engulfed me. I wondered what my mom was thinking. The answer came in a hug. We sat on the carpet, holding each other and my mom whispered in my ear, 'Nick, I love you so much.'



Esteban Cortez

Hometown: Parlier, CA
College: Reedley College

Esteban writes that he comes from a "highly traditional Hispanic family in a town with 99% Hispanic inhabitants." Esteban knew he was gay "for as long as I have felt human emotions" but did not "admit it to myself until age 17." Coming out to his friends was hard, but Esteban was more worried about his mother, "the most important person in my life." With an impending divorce, a mortgage, the lengthy process of applying for legal residency in the US and two kids to support, Esteban was worried that his mom had too much to deal with already. Eventually, though, he couldn't keep his secret from his mom. He told her and she cried and left the room without saying anything. The next morning Esteban lay awake in his bed, afraid to face his mother. But then there was a knock on the door and his mom came in, hugged him and said, "I will always love you son, no matter what." Of his relationship with his mom now, Esteban writes, "My mother is the most supportive and loving person I know. My mother endured hardships as a factory worker and wants me to take advantage of the many educational opportunities this country has to offer. I have dreams and goals and potential, no matter what my sexual orientation is."



Phillip Setran

Hometown: Burien, WA
College: University of Washington

Phillip knows first-hand the importance of safe schools. "Even as young as 11 years old, I remember children calling me 'gay', 'queer' and 'fag'," he writes. "Through the compassion of my friends and my pride and love of myself, I have become a strong individual, ready to face the world unafraid of those who hate me."

Sarah Shane

Hometown: Santa Cruz, CA
College: University of San Francisco

Sarah received the Katherine Bader Scholarship for Allies of the GLBT Community, provided by Gays, Lesbians and Allies at Dow, an employee group. When asked why she is so involved in GLBT activism as an ally, Sarah responds, "Along with having a gay aunt and many gay friends, my church also had a big influence. I attend a very open and affirming Christian church and one of our ministers is a lesbian. I am very frustrated when I hear people talking about 'those homophobic Christians' and I want to spread the word that not all Christians hate gay people."



Brent Caldwell

Hometown: Ocean Springs, MS
College: University of Mississippi

As an ally of GLBT students, Brent faced a lot of criticism from his fellow students in Mississippi. When he was elected senior class president, Brent appointed his friend Tim as head of minority affairs. He writes, "I felt it fitting because Tim is gay, black and liberal, all rare things at my school. I have received some strong criticism for my choice, but I stand behind it. I think it is very important to be an active and open supporter of GLBT individuals. I know people will see how I treat others and hope they will follow my lead."



Michael Bass

Hometown: Beckley, WV
College: Concord University

Michael had come out to a few friends before his junior year. But that year he decided to let his entire West Virginia school know that he was gay. He wrote an essay on finding the love of your life and wanting to get married and the excitement that comes along with having a "beautiful wife or a wonderful husband." Then he asked the class to imagine how they would feel if everyone labeled that relationship "wrong" and told you to stop seeing the love of your life forever. "Now you have to start all over, find someone else, because you fell in love with the wrong person...now you know how a homosexual feels." While some of the students continued to label gays as "an abomination", others apologized and offered support to Michael, including two straight "popular" guys who taunted Michael in junior high. "The gratification of being open and relaxed with myself around my peers is a wonderful feeling that I have fought for and get to enjoy everyday."



Cassie Warren

Hometown: Stephens Point, WI
College: Macalester College

Cassie was forced off of her high school's basketball team when she came out. When she was asked why she couldn't have just waited to come out, Cassie responded, "Waited until when? Until after high school? Then I'd have to deal with my college basketball team. Until after college? Then I'd have to deal with my colleagues. It had to happen when it did. It's just who I am. It's what I do. It's who I love. And I really love being a lesbian."



Samuel Shoemaker

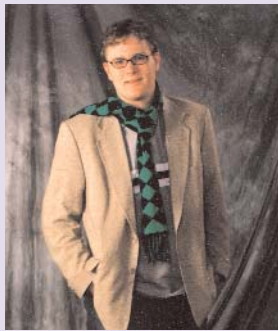
Hometown: Columbia, SC
College: University of South Carolina

"I froze absolutely still. Jeff, the cutest guy in my group of friends had just dropped the 'F-Bomb' of homophobic slang: faggot. I tried to remain calm as I stood up and left the cafeteria. When I was gone, someone told Jeff he 'missed the memo where Sam told everyone he was gay.' So Jeff and I stayed at opposite ends of the social table until May. At a pool party, Jeff quite frankly asked me what I thought of him. The conversation quickly turned into Jeff asking me any and every question he had about homosexuality. I answered from my own experiences. Jeff finally started to get the idea: I was gay, but I was still Sam. I still liked going to football games and playing ultimate frisbee every Thursday. Sure, I also liked shopping and had a thing for musicals, but overall I was still the guy he had known since fifth grade. Jeff and I became fast friends and he even became protective of me and my boyfriend, Glenn, defending us against slurs when we show up to football games.



The moral of my tale is that homosexual rights and respect have to grow in this country, but on a personal level. Large national organizations can do a lot of good fighting the anti-gay forces in this country. But the largest difference to be made is on an individual level. The best thing one person can do to further gay rights is simply be open. You cannot gain equality by simply arguing with people who oppose you. You cannot gain respect by dancing the night away in trendy bars. You cannot heighten visibility by hiding away in 'gayborhoods' that only serve the needs of your one community. You must find a way – be it in your life or through an organization such as PFLAG with which you can volunteer, to touch the life of another person.

One person at a time, you must tell the world that you are gay, but that is not all you are. Often you will find that through your courage and honesty, people will see you for who you are and want to show you part of themselves too. I cannot ascribe this theory to my best friend Christina for saying she loved me when I first uttered the words, 'I'm gay.' I cannot say it was my parents because they have accepted me through all my struggles and opened their hearts and homes to Glenn. I cannot thank Glenn, for he was wise enough to see that I had to figure this one out on my own. Though these people have helped me along the way, I can only thank one. That person is Jeff – through his ever more accepting eyes, I see a bright future for gays in America."



Mackenzie Ingram

Hometown: Maysville, KY
College: Webster University

Mac took GLBT activism to every part of his school life from the Kentucky Youth Assembly to the drama club. But he feels his day-to-day interactions with fellow students were the most important part of influencing his peers. "I have always tried to live my life as openly as possible and not let stereotypes, hate-mongers or geographic location get in my way. I think I have opened minds."



Joel Innes

Hometown: Chester, WV
College: College of Fine Arts at Marshall University

Joel had more than the usual pressures of growing up as a gay teen. In eighth grade, he was forced out of his home when his father re-married and sent to live in West Virginia with an uncle he had never met. During high school, his uncle moved into an elder care facility leaving Joel literally homeless. Despite these hardships, Joel has become an accomplished artist and hopes to use his art to "open minds to what gays truly are: ordinary people."

Katy Hill

Hometown: Arlington, TX
College: Tulane University

"When I first came out to my mother, among the first words out of her mouth were, 'this will make life so much more difficult for you.' I will never deny that this is true, however, I can't imagine living my life any other way. I love myself for who I have become and I always will – bisexual and proud."



Anna Min

Hometown: Minneapolis, MN
College: Macalester College

Anna receives PFLAG's 2005 Esera Tualo scholarship for Athletic Achievement. A local sports star, Anna has been named Homecoming Queen, Best All-Around in Track and Field and captain of her soccer team. She also has great grades and serves as Vice President of her school's National Honor Society. Anna, however, is not resting on her past achievements. "I want to pursue a business/finance degree in order to understand how to spend money wisely in a non-profit. Having a vibrant personality, the ability to pursue a degree with academic rigor, along with a conservative financial background, I believe managing a GLBT non-profit would be ideal for me."





National Update on Safe Schools Work

Since PFLAG established the position of Safe Schools Coordinator, service to our chapters around the country, and thus to the GLBT youth in our schools, has broadened considerably in the area of safe schools work. We've been able to:

- Provide workshops for regional and state-wide conferences
- Coach chapters faced with specific school-related incidents
- Produce and distribute a Safe Schools Manual on CD
- Monitor national, state and local legislative issues related to school safety for GLBT youth
- Work in coalition with other like-minded national organizations to continue our advocacy for GLBT youth in the schools
- Collaborate with and distribute materials to our allies

Most recently, PFLAG staff, Roy Gilbert-Higginson and Judy Hoff,

attended the National PTA conference in June to present a workshop on school safety for GLBT youth and to provide PFLAG information to conference participants in the exhibition hall. In spite of the presence in the adjoining hotel of some PFOX (Parents and Families of Ex-Gays) representatives, upset with being declined booth space by the PTA, PFLAG maintained a presence as the conference's provider of resources for educators and parents to combat the harassment and bullying experienced by our GLBT youth in the schools. The PFLAG workshop was attended by over 70 participants, while PFOX spoke to a sparsely attended press conference and then didn't even to present the workshops they had planned because no one came. Several state PTA leaders expressed an interest in having PFLAG representation at their state conferences. For PFLAG's press statement on the PTA, go to www.pflag.org.

Regional Update on Safe Schools Work

- Northern Iowa PFLAG chapter helped to host a Safe Schools forum attended by 90 educators, parents, pastors and community members.
- Lincoln, NE PFLAG chapter signed onto a letter to the Nebraska Legislature asking them to support an anti-bullying bill and seven members of the chapter lobbied the Education Committee.
- PFLAG Atlanta and Gainesville, GA testified and sent letters to the state Board of Education and successfully defeated a proposed policy to require parent notification and permission for students to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- PFLAG Gainesville, with the support of chapters across the state and country, successfully established a Gay/Straight Alliance in the White County High School. They continue the battle as the school principal has proposed they discontinue all non-curricular clubs in the next school year. At a recent School Board meeting where the issue was discussed, a few individuals spoke in favor of the proposal, while about 200 were there to protest it, including many straight community allies. In spite of this input, a board-appointed committee has recommended that clubs be re-formed based on parent participation. Of course, the PFLAG moms & dads will be happy to step forward! The ACLU has now been involved with regard to the First Amendment Rights of several of the GLBT youth who have been harassed and bullied without effective administrative

intervention. Stay tuned. The story is by no means over for this quiet community.

- PFLAG chapters in North Carolina, Colorado and California have worked together to put up displays and information tables at their Statewide PTA Conferences.
- The Texas PFLAG chapters attended a state-wide conference where much of the material presented related to safe schools. Chapters shared the work they have been doing, some challenges they face and some ideas for more effectively addressing safe schools issues in their communities.
- Metro DC Chapter members have participated over the last several years on a Montgomery County Board of Education commission to develop comprehensive sex education curriculum at the request of educators who felt the material presented was out-dated. The rest of the story? The curriculum was developed, approved, adopted unanimously by the School Board and scheduled for pilots this spring. Just as the teachers were ready to launch the material, the Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum (CRC) and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX) filed suit against the School Board, citing objections to several of the teacher resources provided and an unbalanced presentation of the "opinions" about homosexuality. PFLAG continues to be involved, both on the local chapter level and on the national level, with these developments. **For more Regional News, go to page 8.**

Notice of Change in PFLAG By-laws

The PFLAG Board of Directors is crafting language for three amendments to our national by-laws to be voted on at the PFLAG Annual Meeting set for October, 2005, in Washington DC. As required by our by-laws, what follows is notification in the form of a general description of the proposed amendments. The PFLAG national Board of Directors recommends adoption of the proposed amendments.

Amendment to clarify language concerning terms of service on the National PFLAG Board of Directors – article affected: Article IX (G)

Amendments to lift one-year restriction on Regional Director term of office to Board of Directors – articles affected: Article VII (C) (2); Article IX (G)

Amendment to lift requirement that Regional Director elected Board members be current actively serving members of the Regional Director's Council and permit the Regional Directors to look beyond themselves for suitable candidates who are active in affiliate leadership to elect to the national Board – article affected: Article XIV (3) (C)

Regional News

Spotlight: Our House to the Statehouse

Our regional news this issue will focus on *Our House to the Statehouse* organizing objectives. Keep reading below to find out what chapters across the country are doing to accomplish PFLAG's goals.

Lobbying

PFLAGers in **Texas** marched and lobbied the Capitol in March for a variety of issues that would affect the GLBT community in Texas (see page 3). Soon after PFLAG's lobbying day, an amendment was attached onto a Child Protective Services bill that would have banned GLB people from fostering children in Texas. PFLAGers all over the state got on the phone with legislators to discourage them from voting for this hurtful amendment. In May, the amendment was removed from the Child Protective Services Bill!

PFLAGers in **Oklahoma** held a Lobby Day on their capitol in April. About 50 people showed up to lobby all of the state legislators, specifically about safe schools issues affecting GLBT youth.

In April, PFLAG National was proud to announce the launch of the Capitol Hill Ambassadors. The team consists of individuals in the **D.C. metropolitan area** who are willing to lobby on Capitol Hill. PFLAG National is often contacted by other organizations in Washington, D.C. that are looking for grassroots representatives from the field to join them in visits on the Hill. Representatives from the field have a much stronger impact than professional lobbyists or paid staff members.

Chapters from across **California** met May 14-16 for a statewide meeting and lobby day in Sacramento. The lobby day started with a pep talk about current GLBT state legislation by Equality California staff. Then for the rest of the day chapter members all actively engaged in letting the state legislators know their feelings. Assemblymember Mark Leno and the Equality California staff praised the outstanding support PFLAG provided for the event and were particularly impressed by the number of PFLAGers that traveled up from Southern California for the day (some of whom spent 9 hours driving to be there).

Members of several **Indiana** chapters met with staff from Senator Lugar's office on June 22nd to discuss issues of concern to PFLAG families including the Senator's

stance on marriage equality. The PFLAGers are following up with a thank you card that includes pictures of their family members and hope to receive back a completed employment non-discrimination form from the Senator's office.

Michigan State Coordinator Mary Scholl hand-delivered individually signed welcome back cards to each member of both the house and the senate of Michigan asking them to remember our GLBT loved ones as they go about the business of enacting laws this year.

Diversity

Nila Marrone, former president of the **New York City** chapter, will soon be taking a more active role in working with PFLAG Families of Color including developing a comprehensive website with more Spanish resources. Nila should also be recognized for her amazing work in helping to put together Encuentro, an international conference of South and Central American PFLAG-like groups in Buenos Aires, Argentina in April!

Throughout the country we consistently have interest in establishing Families of Color chapters. The Families of Color Network (FOCN), sponsored by the National Office, has been working on an upcoming *Tips & Tactics* that will include information on how to start a FOCN chapter, as well as how to become more inclusive of communities of color in all of our chapters. Contact us through our new email address, focn@pflag.org.

Coalition Building

In **Indiana** the chapters in Seymour, Indianapolis and Fort Wayne (among others) are working with state GLBT groups on the "Rock Indiana with \$2 Bills" campaign. Chapter members are showing their support for equal rights and opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment that would ban marriage equality by using \$2 bills for their purchases. Why \$2 Bills? \$2 bills are "different" like those who are being discriminated against – yet the bills are legal and universally accepted – as all citizens should be. Visit <http://www.2dollarbillcampaign.org>.

PFLAGers from chapters in **Delaware, New York, South Dakota and Nebraska** are representing PFLAG in statewide

coalitions working to prevent confirmation on extremist judicial nominees. These coalitions have produced sign-on letters, lobbied their Senators at in-district meetings, held press conferences, handed out flyers at community events and educated PFLAG chapter members on the importance of a fair and impartial judiciary.

In **California**, PFLAGers from both Northern and Southern California gathered in Sacramento on May 16 to join with Equality California, COLAGE and other GLBT groups to spend a day lobbying in the State House in favor of several pieces of GLBT legislation including the Religious Freedom and Marriage Equality Bill introduced by Assemblymember Mark Leno.

PFLAG chapters all over **Washington** state (with PFLAG Bellevue and PFLAG Seattle taking the lead) have been working hard in coalition with Evangelicals Concerned Western Region, Religious Coalition for Equality, Pacific Northwest Reconciling Ministries and United Methodists on preparing for their Love Welcomes All Conference (www.lovelcomesall-wa.org). Love Welcomes All is a response to Love Won Out, a traveling conference put on by Focus on the Family that provides harmful information and advocates for reparative therapy for GLBT people. Love Welcomes All, held on July 9, taught inclusion and acceptance as the best way to react to one's GLBT friends and family members.

Faith Communities

Mary Scholl of the Flint/Genesee County, MI chapter is working hard to build a coalition between PFLAG and the Faith Action Network (FAN). FAN is a inter-faith, multiracial, multi-generational alliance of Michigan people of faith. FAN works secure positive outcomes on GLBT policy issues, to shape public opinion in key Michigan areas, and to organize and mobilize progressive clergy, lay people and faith communities to take a firm and proactive stand for justice. Mary has brought information about the group to the state coordinators monthly calls and many PFLAGers are expected to attend the FAN conference in August. For more information on the FAN visit <http://www.afsc-fan.org/FAN.htm>.

Reparative Therapy — What's Broken?

By Kate Jackson

This article is excerpted and reprinted with the permission of Social Work Today magazine. The article features PFLAG staff members and appeared as the cover story in the May/June 2005 issue.

While science suggests that nothing is broken, this therapy seeks to “repair” homosexuals.

It's been three decades since homosexuality was declassified as a mental disorder, removed as such from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1973 by the American Psychiatric Association, a step that was two years later lauded and echoed by the American Psychological Association and two years after that by the National Association of Social Workers. Since then, those organizations, as well as the American Medical Association and a host of other professional bodies, have publicly and consistently rejected the notion that sexual orientation is a characteristic that's determined by personal choice and have worked to destigmatize homosexuality. The American Psychological Association's position is stated bluntly on its Web site: “The reality is that homosexuality is not an illness. It does not require treatment and is not changeable.”

Nevertheless, while that prestigious institution, like most respected organizations, boasts an “if it ain't broke, don't fix it” attitude, there remains a vocal movement insisting that homosexuality is a disorder that requires repair or eradication. It's a fire fueled to a large degree by religious and political agendas and fanned by the recent social debate over same-sex marriage and the “values” preoccupation in the recent political contests.

Explains Daphne Stevens, PhD, LCSW, an adjunct faculty member at Valdosta State University School of Social Work, “The current interest in ‘converting’ homosexuals appears to be a reflection of the current political and social mores that support homophobia.”

Proponents of this movement support a brand of therapy variously known as reparative or conversion therapy, which seeks to alter sexual orientation. They commonly trace homosexuality to developmental disorders or attachment anomalies. A strong proponent of reparative therapy and one of only several mental health professional organizations to support the practice is the National

Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), a nonprofit educational organization founded in 1992 and describing itself as “dedicated to the research, therapy, and prevention of homosexuality.” NARTH's 1,000 members are therapists who believe homosexuality is a condition that can be treated.

The organization, president, Joseph Nicolosi, PhD explains, “sees the male homosexual condition as rooted in a failure to bond with the father, and the homosexual attraction a conflict between the desire to connect with the masculine.”

“What I find particularly telling is that the people who believe that you can change are the ones who think you should change,” says Ron Schlitter, deputy executive director of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). “The science is not there to support reparative therapy, and when you dig a little deeper, you realize that there's a lot of ideology and politics involved with this idea that change not only is possible, but that sexual orientation or homosexual orientation in particular is some kind of choice. It's a damaging lie that is wrong on so many levels, yet it's continually repeated as if somehow that's going to make it true.”

There's an extraordinarily high rate of failure of these therapies, explains Stevens, and, she says, there's a significant risk of suicidal behavior or suicide among individuals who've gone through such attempts at conversion. Because they often are blame-oriented, she adds—blaming the client for their “choice” or the parents for behavior resulting in homosexuality, “they can be very damaging not only to clients but their families as well, as any kind of therapy that's blaming and moralistic can be.”

The concepts behind conversion therapy, she says, spring from a conservative religious standpoint that sees homosexuality as a choice and suggests that there's something wrong in individuals who make that choice. Stevens, who insists that homosexuality isn't a matter of morals or mental illness, says she's never seen a gay or lesbian person “converted” to a heterosexual orientation and rejects the notion that sexual orientation is a matter of choice.

Social workers, suggests Schlitter, should take steps to be as informed as possible on this issue. “People have legitimate questions as they sort through what's real and what is not, and there are resources out there for self-education. Social workers are going to be dealing with people whose lives are the wreckage of this kind of thing,” he explains.

While some maintain that social workers can and should perform reparative thera-



py, Roy Gilbert-Higginson, PhD, MSW, deputy director of field and policy at PFLAG, says, “My take as a social worker is that the social work code of ethics prohibits me from getting involved in reparative therapy. The code puts you in the position of starting where your client is and of not doing anything that is going to harm the client. It would be a transgression on the part of a social worker to practice such therapy.”

Schlitter, Gilbert-Higginson, and Stevens believe the role of social workers is to help people who've been damaged by such therapy. “We have people come to us who are ashamed, embarrassed, and they're trying to put back the pieces of what was a very tortured life in some ways that's now perhaps in even worse shape because of what they've gone through.”

According to Gilbert-Higginson, “Anybody that's in counseling who's ever come into contact with someone who's been in reparative therapy deals with the wreckage of reparative therapy.” The therapy, he insists, isn't reparative, but rather is destructive. “It doesn't do anything to resolve the person's basic problem—it papers over the cracks. A person who's going to a psychologist or any other kind of counseling and saying they're unhappy about their homosexuality needs guidance on what is the root of their unhappiness, not to be converted. And that's the basic problem with reparative therapy.”

Adds Gilbert-Higginson, “The social worker's role is to help clients get to a place where they're comfortable with themselves, and for the client coming into therapy because of a problem with their sexual orientation, that could be that they're comfortable with being a homosexual or comfortable being a heterosexual. The question must be open going into therapy. If you're going into reparative therapy with the declared intent of ‘curing’ your homosexuality, the openness is missing and the element of choice is gone.”

PFLAG's Guardians

Stories of Giving

If you ask PFLAG's Guardians why they donate to PFLAG each month, you will find that behind each Guardian membership is a personal story of commitment to the GLBT community and their families.

PFLAGers know that sharing our stories is one of the best ways to educate others. Please read these stories and consider joining Carole and Bruce as a PFLAG Guardian.

Carole Benowitz

"I want to do what I can to help PFLAG help others."

PFLAG Guardian since 2005



My love is PFLAG and I want to give as much support as I can. Sometimes people see the local support PFLAG provides but forget the dollars needed for us to do our essential education and advocacy work at a national level. I want to do what I can to help PFLAG help others.

Setting aside a certain amount each month works better for me than making a yearly donation. I might be giving up going out for lunch or dinner a couple times a month but when I see my gift reflected on my credit card I feel genuinely good!

I like being able to tell people how I participate in the PFLAG Guardian program. I feel I am a role model – not in the amount I give but in the consistency of my giving.

I love PFLAG and I love this convenient way of giving to PFLAG. And, hey, you can even get frequent flyer miles when using your credit cards to give – everybody wins! My monthly gift is a commitment, not a promise that might be forgotten.

Bruce Kriete

"I lost my son to AIDS and my wife to cancer. I give to sustain their memory."

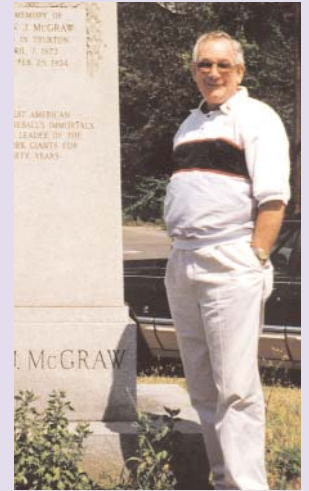
PFLAG Guardian since 2000

I give each month to PFLAG because of my wife and my son. I lost my son to AIDS and my wife to cancer. When my wife died in 1996, part of her bequest went to PFLAG. She wanted PFLAG to continue its good work after she was gone.

I get out of PFLAG far more than I contribute. I've been a PFLAG Dad since 1982 and in those 23 years I have seen over and over, the miracle of loving acceptance of GLBT offspring, beginning with my own family. While programs may change, the need for ongoing support remains steady month by month. The Guardian program provides that dependable income.

It's easy to give through the Guardian program because the donations are automatically deducted and become part of my monthly living expenses. You can pick an amount you can afford to give each month. And you will do a great service to PFLAG.

I am so grateful to PFLAG for all it has done to enrich my life and for all the support they have given to families across this land. It has been a real privilege to sustain the memory of my son and my wife through the Guardian program.



PFLAG invites you to become part of our Guardian program of monthly giving. As a PFLAG Guardian, you can choose a monthly donation that fits your budget. Our Guardians have a special role in PFLAG and their monthly donations provide a dependable, consistent source of funding for PFLAG's programs all year long.

Your donations will be automatically charged to your credit card and your PFLAG membership automatically renewed every year – which means fewer mailings for you, and saved costs for PFLAG! A Guardian membership is an easy way to support the PFLAG programs that you believe in.

Please consider joining the PFLAG Guardian program today. To do so, please check the Guardian option on the enclosed envelope, go to our website at www.pflag.org or call 202.467.8180 ext. 234.

*Thank you to Carole, Bruce
and all our Guardians!*

Board of Directors Ballot

Note: You may vote for two candidates to fill the two open seats on the Board.

BOARD AND REGIONAL DIRECTORS ELECTION

In accordance with election procedures approved by PFLAG's National Board of Directors, two board members will be elected for 2005-2008 by the written ballot which appears on this page. The ballot includes two Board nominees screened and recommended by PFLAG's Nominating Committee pursuant to the organization's bylaws. Regional Directors' seats for the two-year term of October 2005 - September 2007 will be elected using the same ballot.

Ballots must be postmarked no later than October 3, 2005 to be counted. In order to cast a ballot, members in good standing shall mark the ballot printed in the PFLAGpole and mail it to the PFLAG National office. Members in good standing include all individuals of a household whose dues are current. If more than one eligible household member wishes to vote, make copies of the ballot, and submit it with an original ballot. The name of the voting household member must be written on each ballot to verify eligibility. If you have any questions, please contact PFLAG at info@pflag.org or 202-467-8180, ext. 227.

Results will be posted to PFLAG's website in November.

PFLAG's Mailing Address:
PFLAG National Office
1726 M Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

Remember:
Ballots must be
postmarked by
October 3!

Peggy Moore

Peggy Moore is Senior Vice President of Human Resources of PepsiCo. Peggy and her husband, Bob, have three children including a lesbian daughter. Peggy has worked with the GLBT community for many years and developed PepsiCo's excellent GLBT diversity policies. She has also served as Chair of the United Way of Greenwich, on the Board of Trustees of Greenwich Hospital, Choir Guild of Christ Church and is a leader of a troop of Girl Scout Cadettes. Peggy is an at-large member of PFLAG.

Write In Candidate: _____

Samuel Thoron

Current National President Sam Thoron and wife Julia are the parents of two straight sons and a lesbian daughter. Sam's leadership in PFLAG began in 1990 on the steering committee for the San Francisco chapter. In 1992 Sam began serving as Regional Director for the Mid-Pacific Region. Thoron continued to serve on the National Board for an additional 5 years. He re-joined the National Board in October 2002 and has served as National President since then.

Write In Candidate: _____

Regional Directors Ballot

Note: You may only vote for one candidate. Candidate must represent the region in which you reside.

Mountain West - UT, CO, AZ, NM

Candidate - Jean Hodges

Candidate - Katherine Palmer

Jean was a co-founder of the PFLAG Boulder chapter in 1993 and has been president or co-president since 1996. She and her husband, Jack, have three children, one of whom is gay, and three grandchildren. In 1999 Jean was given the Equality Colorado Pride Award. In 2003 she was awarded the Colorado HRC Paul Hunter Award. Also in 2003, Boulder Pride created the "Jean and Jack Hodges Big Hearts Award" with Jack and Jean as the first recipients as two of Boulder's "Big Hearts."

Katherine's previous positions include chairperson and president of Gender Identity Center of Colorado, co-chair of GenderPac, executive director of Lambda Community Center in Ft. Collins, CO, board member of Fort Collins/Northern Colorado PFLAG and member of PFLAG Colorado Coalition. She is PFLAG New Mexico State coordinator and PFLAG Albuquerque chapter president. Katherine retired from IBM Corporation with over 30 years of experience.

Southern Pacific - Southern CA, HI

Candidate - Dennis Spargo

Dennis has been a member of PFLAG for 7 years and has served as the Chapter President of the South Orange County, CA chapter for 4 consecutive terms. Dennis has been involved in civil rights since the 1960s when he advocated for fair housing. He retired from the Boeing Corporation in June 2004.

Write In Candidate: _____

Great Lakes - IL, IN, OH, MI

Candidate - Mike Neubecker

Mike has served as the Great Lakes Regional Director for one two-year term. During his tenure he served on the Executive Director Search Committee and chaired the Chapter Awards committee. Mike and his wife Janice are proud parents of a gay son, Lee, and son-in-love David. Mike and Jan started the Detroit-Downriver chapter nine years ago and have made many trips across the region to visit chapters. Mike served as the Michigan coordinator before becoming an RD in 2003. He also serves on the PFLAG National Board of Directors. Mike is a self-employed Field Engineer.

Write In Candidate: _____

Southern - TX, LA, OK, AR

Candidate - Jim Null

Jim and his wife Sue have three daughters, one of whom is lesbian. A Korean man, who lived with us while he was studying English, concluded he was gay, which is totally forbidden in Korea. He has attempted suicide 4 or 5 times. It was because of him that Jim became an activist in PFLAG. Jim has presented workshops at the last three PFLAG national conventions and is currently President of PFLAG Houston. Jim recently retired as self-employed owner of a computer graphics firm.

Write In Candidate: _____

Central - IA, NE, KS, MO

Write In Candidate: _____

North Atlantic - NY, NJ, PA

Write In Candidate: _____

What You Can Find On PFLAG's New Website:

- updated chapter directory
- archived Weekly Alerts
- electronic copies of PFLAG's educational resources and brochures, like *Our Daughters and Sons*, *Be Yourself*, *Faith in Our Families* and more
- family stories from around the country
- up-to-date information on GLBT issues like marriage and adoption, courts, employment, hate crimes, reparative therapy and more
- GLBT news updates and PFLAG's press releases

...and much more!

Please visit PFLAG's website today
at www.pflag.org.



Many thanks to PFLAG's Sponsors:

