



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Our Voices Heard

Congratulations to all of you, Moms & Dads, Aunts & Uncles, Brothers & Sisters and all straight allies, on the Supreme Court's two historic decisions in support of marriage equality: DOMA has been struck down and LGBT persons are again free to marry the ones they love in California. Congratulations to the LGBT couples recently married, and those who are celebrating engagements and planning weddings. Congratulations to LGBT youth—we told you it gets better and here's proof.

In this spirit of celebration, we hosted a luncheon on August 18, to honor the members of our Speakers Bureau, who have—school by school, class by class—changed the minds and hearts of young people throughout the greater Los Angeles area. In particular, we honored Ron Elecciri and Andy Birnbaum, who have led, guided, fostered, trained and scheduled our speakers for more than 13 years, and served on the board of directors for 10 years. They have passed the torch to Liz Mullen, who is doing a terrific job that she considers “an honor.”

Even as we celebrate, we know there is more work to do. In California there are still too many individuals and religious and ethnic communities that oppose the civil rights of our LGBT families and friends. We've increased

outreach to the Latino community and, as a result, a new bilingual satellite chapter led by Rudy Perez has joined the family: PFLAG LA at Bell. His mother Lucy Perez has joyfully taken on the job of providing support through our Spanish language helpline.

Thanks to a generous donation and a grant by the Bloomingdale's Fund of the Macy's Foundation, we have just published Spanish language versions of our “First Step” brochures—one for parents, one for youth, and one for transgender persons and their families. These high quality, low cost pieces will reach thousands of Spanish speakers. Check them out at our Spanish language website: [www.pflagLA.org/espanol](http://www.pflagLA.org/espanol). The next step is to translate our entire website into Spanish.

We are also looking forward to Models of Pride 21 on October 19. PFLAG LA and PFLAG Pasadena are organizing an expanded conference for Parents and Adult Allies, such as the moderators of GSAs. New offerings will include more sessions on issues related to transgender youth, and workshops devoted to professionals working with LGBT kids. As always there will be sessions for new parents, persons struggling with issues of faith, persons seeking opportunities for advocacy, issues of emotional and physical health for LGBT youth, to name a few. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact me at [President@pflagLA.org](mailto:President@pflagLA.org). Check our website for a link to the registration page if you would like to attend the Parents/Straight Allies Track of MOP 21.

Finally, we are sad to announce the passing of long-time PFLAG Los Angeles supporter and board member David Bregman, who worked tirelessly for marriage equality. See his obituary at [www.pflagLA.org/in-memory](http://www.pflagLA.org/in-memory). - Mariette

## Wedding Bliss

A straight line on Marriage Equality:

The alarm sounded at 7:00AM playing smooth jazz to awaken me to watch MSNBC, live from the steps of the Supreme Court of the United States of America. It was 10:00AM, Eastern time, of the last day that decisions would be heard. I held my breath as the first decision was announced. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) had been repealed! Next came the California ruling. Proposition 8 had been sent back to the California Supreme Court for “lack of standing.” June 26, 2013 became a new day of celebration for my family and friends. That evening I attended the rally in West Hollywood with two gay couples who also received full marriage rights from their unions in 2008!

The first phone call I made that morning was to my daughter, Lisa, who was getting ready for her drive to her medical office and had not heard the news. She expressed relief. The morning of May 16, 2008, I had called to inform her that the California State Supreme Court had declared same-sex marriage to be constitutional and valid. On that day I suggested that she and her partner of 12 years, Robin, get married before the next Election Day, November 4, 2008, and I would give her X dollars to do it! She was surprised at my offer. I explained that we had no guarantees that the voters in California would not overturn this ruling as Proposition 8 was a distinct possibility.

When I first realized that Lisa was a lesbian my thoughts went to my concerns for her safety and wellbeing. I also prepared myself for the loss of the expectation that she would ever be able to marry or provide me with grandchildren. My worries were for naught for on September 14, 2008, Lisa and Robin were married at the University of California, Berkeley, Faculty Club, before 150 guests. The girls had asked Rabbi Sanford Ragins to officiate, and he happily agreed. After the ceremony he candidly told me that he had performed gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies, *Continued inside*



P.O. Box 24565  
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**1.888.PFLAG 88**  
**(1.888.735.2488)**  
**www.pflagLA.org**

PFLAG Los Angeles is an all volunteer, non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization run by parents, family members, LGBT persons and their friends. Each of us came for help, found support, and joined the organization to assist others on their journey to acceptance. Our chapter, together with a group in New York City, founded the national PFLAG organization, which provides assistance to over 350 independent chapters nationwide.

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## **Wow!** From the editor

Life is full of surprises. Life is full of WOW moments. I had one of my major WOW moments after reading "Prayers for Bobby". The book tells the story of Bobby Griffith, a gay kid growing up in a conservative anti-gay family and environment that is driven by the religious belief that gay is evil and can be prayed away or cured through reparative therapy. It took Bobby's death to set his mom free – she turned around and became a relentless fighter for gay/lesbian youth. WOW!

Let me share with you a few recent happenings that I think fall into the WOW category:

### **Matrimonios Gay En Uruguay**

Another country expanded the institution of marriage when Uruguay became the second country in South America to allow same-sex couples to get married. The law was passed in May and became effective on August 5. Congratulations to Sergio Miranda and Rodrigo Borda, a couple for 14 years, who were the first to get legally married in Uruguay. (The first South American country to legalize same-sex marriage was Argentina back in summer 2010. Be reminded that the U.S. as a whole, a country that prides itself for equality and human rights, still doesn't allow same-sex couples to legally marry in all 50 states.)

### **The Pope said what?!**

For the first time, a Pope used the word "gay" in a public statement: "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?" said Pope Francis. Let me paraphrase Neil Armstrong's famous quote to emphasize what this means: That's one small word for man; one giant leap for the Catholic Church.

### **Boy Scouts News!**

Boy Scouts of America hit the headlines when it announced on its website on May 23, 2013, that "1,232 voting members of the Boy Scouts of America voted on a resolution that maintains its current membership policy for all adult leaders and states that youth may not be denied membership in the BSA on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone. The resolution passed with 757 votes, a 61% majority." Is this enough? No. But it is definitely a step in the right direction.

### **Good-bye DOMA! Welcome back, buddy!**

With DOMA gone, I know that one of my buddies, a U.S. citizen, might be able to come back to the U.S. after living for more than 18 years in China. Back then he had to choose between his country and his same-sex Chinese partner, the love of his life. He chose his partner. After a visit to Los Angeles, I remember his last words at LAX before boarding the plane: "Chris, I know I'll die in China once my health deteriorates. There's no way I would be able to come back to the U.S. for medical treatment without my life partner by my side." His words hit me. He had tears in his eyes and so did I. I know we'll have tears in our eyes next time at LAX. But those will be tears of joy. There will be many more binational same-sex couples coming back to the U.S. and families will be reunited. Let's welcome them with open arms.

### **Exodus exits!**

Exodus International, known for their propaganda that they can convert gays and lesbians into straights by use of reparative therapy, announced on its website in June the following under the header Exodus International to Shut Down Thirty-seven-year-old ministry for those with same-sex attraction marks its last national conference: Exodus International, the oldest and largest Christian ministry dealing with faith and homosexuality announced tonight that it's closing its doors after three-plus decades of ministry. The Board of Directors reached a decision after a year of dialogue and prayer about the organization's place in a changing culture.

Earlier, Exodus released a statement apologizing to the gay community for years of undue judgment by the organization and the Christian Church as a whole. "Exodus is an institution in the conservative Christian world, but we've ceased to be a living, breathing organism," said Alan Chambers, President of Exodus. "For quite some time we've been imprisoned in a worldview that's neither honoring toward our fellow human beings, nor biblical."

*[FYI – California's SB 1172, the ban on reparative therapy for minors, signed into law by Gov. Brown, is currently under review by the 9th Circuit Court to determine whether or not this ban "violates the civil rights of practitioners and parents."]*

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK.**  
**Renew your membership, make a special gift,**  
**or join us for the first time TODAY!**

As an all-volunteer organization, our work is made possible only with the generous contributions of our members and donors. Your contributions support our monthly meetings, website, helplines, Speakers Bureau, and outreach to ethnic and faith communities. PFLAG Los Angeles is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and 100% of your donation supports our programs.

Please Note: When you pay dues to PFLAG Los Angeles, a portion of your dues (\$15) goes to PFLAG National and makes you a member of both PFLAG Los Angeles and PFLAG National. However, if you pay dues or make donations directly to PFLAG National, 100% of your dues/donation stays with PFLAG National making you only a PFLAG National member.

Use the envelope provided or donate on-line at [www.pflagLA.org/Join-Donate](http://www.pflagLA.org/Join-Donate).

## OUR Stories are YOUR Stories!

We all have a PFLAG story to share. Some are a testimony of growth and understanding, others are painful and heart-breaking. These stories of real peoples' lives can be major teaching moments to some and life-savers to others.

We encourage you to share YOUR story with us. There will be at least one person out there who will benefit from what you have to share.

The focus should be on your personal story as it relates to the coming-out of an LGBT family member/loved one. Maximum number of characters with spaces is 4,300.

All stories are welcome and submissions are subject to editing. By submitting your story you give PFLAG permission to publish it in our newsletter, on our website or other media to promote PFLAG. If requested, your name will not be published.

Please e-mail your story to [NewsletterEditor@pflagLA.org](mailto:NewsletterEditor@pflagLA.org).

## Spreading the Word in the community

through our Speakers Bureau engagements/education, activism & advocacy

Maurie Davidson, Amy Ehrlichman, Stuart Huggins, and Steve Krantz spoke at a staff development day for teachers at Cleveland High School.

Betsy Hanger, Tim Ky, and Chris Murphy were invited to come to USC's School of Social Work to talk about PFLAG and share their stories.

Chris Coleman, Gizella Czene, Lisa Kimsey, and Liz Mullen were guest speakers at Alliance Academy Charter School.

Maurie Davidson, Lisa Kimsey, and Liz Mullen talked to OUTLaw members, the community of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI) law students at UCLA School of Law.

Mikali Bender, Gizella Czene, and Chris Murphy were guest speakers at Temple Avahat.

Mikali Bender, Gizella Czene, Laurie Davidson, Amy Ehrlichman, Stuart Huggins, Steve Krantz, Liz Mullen, and Chris Murphy were invited to speak at Cleveland HS Humanities Magnet LGBTQIA Day.

Gizella Czene, Stuart Huggins, Barry Mason, Jan McFarlane, Liz Mullen, Cara O'Donnell, Jessica Sackman, and Sylvia Weisenberg shared their stories with 9th graders at East Valley High School.

Lisa Kimsey, Steve Krantz, Tim Ky, Liz Mullen, Chris Murphy, Cara O'Donnell, Rudy Perez, Ulandsey Peterson, and Lucy Benji Terrell were guest speakers at Pepperdine University's MFT Program.

## Wedding Bliss Continued from cover

but this was his first legal marriage! During the luncheon my toast to the girls was, "I am thankful for my only child, Lisa, who 12 years ago brought Robin into our lives. For 12 years I have called Robin my daughter-out-law, and today I can call her my daughter-in-law!"

The second phone call I made was to my long-time friend Peggy Waters, whose son and son-in-law were also married in 2008. I refer to this marital time period as "the window of sanity!" Our children were among the 18,000 legally married couples in California. However, none of these couples had the 1,138 Federal Marriage Rights of heterosexual couples. There were still many restrictions and inequities in the tax laws, hospital visitation policies, and inheritance laws, to name a few. With the repeal of DOMA these marriages are no longer "skim milk."

Two of the beneficiaries to these changes in the law are my two grandchildren, who will grow up in a family with full equality, as long as they stay in California or one of the other states or federal jurisdictions with legal reciprocity. As can be seen, we all still have more work to do to bring full legal marriage to the rest of our country. Organizations such as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) tirelessly advocate for full equality: in marriage, the work place, schools and communities. We have made a significant difference in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender rights; and we still must support, educate and advocate for all of our families throughout the country and the world!

- *Maurie C. Davidson,*  
*MSW, BCD, FNAP and PFLAG Mom*

## Quote - Unquote

"I am happy the gay community keeps a lively tradition and allows people like myself to join their festivities. It was one big colorful party. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and made good use of my happy stick!"

-*Maria Luisa, 85, Grandmother & PFLAG Supporter, at LGBT Pride in West Hollywood*

# SUPPORT

MEETINGS CONTACTS ORGANIZATIONS

## PFLAG LOS ANGELES MEETINGS

### WESTWOOD\*

Westwood United Methodist Church  
10497 Wilshire Bl. LA 90024

3rd Wednesday of each month  
7:30 - 10:00 pm / Free Parking

\*Visit our website for upcoming speakers

### SILVER LAKE

Metropolitan Community Church  
4607 Prospect Avenue, LA 90027

2nd Thursday of each month  
7:30 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

### BELL\*

Call 1.888.735.2488 x2  
for up-to-date information on this  
months meeting place

4th Tuesday of each month  
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

\*Conducted in Spanish and English  
[Bell@pflagSoCalEspanol.org](mailto:Bell@pflagSoCalEspanol.org)

## CONTACTS

PFLAG Los Angeles Speakers Bureau  
Contact Liz Mullen at  
[SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org](mailto:SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org)

Asian Pacific Islander  
[www.sgvapipflag.tumblr.com](http://www.sgvapipflag.tumblr.com)

## HELPLINES

PFLAG Los Angeles & Pasadena  
1.888.PFLAG 88 (1.888.735.2488)  
English and Spanish

Transgender Support  
818.985.9319 (Chris)

The TREVOR PROJECT  
24-hour suicide prevention line  
866.488.7386  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

## ORGANIZATIONS

PFLAG National  
202.467.8180  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

REMEMBER

When you no  
longer need PFLAG  
that's when PFLAG  
NEEDS YOU!

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P.O. Box 24565  
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Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well-being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender 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 opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

## TransAction

### Thank you for your service, Kristin Beck!

Christopher Beck, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL, made headlines this summer by coming out to the world as Kristin. Kristin shares her fascinating story in the book "Warrior Princess - A U.S. Navy Seal's Journey to Coming Out Transgender". The book covers everything from growing up to serving our country for twenty years on thirteen deployments, and ultimately earning a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

### Major victory for trans students in Arcadia Unified!

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division announced a resolution to a complaint filed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) on behalf of a transgender student in California's Arcadia Unified School District. The resolution requires the school district to treat the student as male in all respects and keep his transgen-

der status private. Furthermore, the school district agreed to revise its policies to ensure that all students who do not conform to sex stereotypes, including transgender students, have equal access and opportunity to participate in all of the district's activities and programs. Those policy changes will be complemented by district-wide training for personnel and students. The implementation of this agreement will be overseen by a qualified expert agreed upon by the district and federal government. Said NCLR Staff Attorney Asaf Orr: "We commend the federal government for taking this necessary step to ensure that schools are safe and supportive environments where all students can thrive, including transgender students. Federal law obligates school districts to affirm and respect a transgender student's gender identity in all of their programs, activities, and facilities. Treating transgender students based on their assigned sex at birth is psychologically harmful and interferes with their healthy social development. Hopefully, school districts will take this opportunity to proactively address the needs of transgender youth through district-wide policies and training." [From: [www.NCLRrights.org](http://www.NCLRrights.org)]

### Historic Bill Signed Into Law!

Gov. Jerry Brown signed the historic School Success and Opportunity Act (AB 1266) into law, ensuring transgender youth have the opportunity to fully participate and succeed in schools across the state. Assembly Bill 1266 - which goes into effect on January 1, 2014 - was authored by Assemblymember Tom Ammiano and passed the California State Senate and Assembly earlier this summer. The law is the first of its kind in the country, and requires that California public schools respect students' gender identity and makes sure that students can fully participate in all school activities, sports teams, programs, and facilities that match their gender identity. Co-authored by Senators Mark Leno and Ricardo Lara and Assemblymember Toni Atkins, the bill is backed by a coalition of leading organizations, including Transgender Law Center, Gay-Straight Alliance Network, Gender Spectrum, Equality California, ACLU of California, National Center for Lesbian Rights, statewide teacher and parent organizations, and dozens of other organizations. [From: <http://transgenderlawcenter.org>]