

President's Message

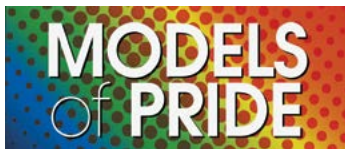
Marriage Equality—the Law of the Land

How did you feel when you heard the news on June 26? Joyful? Proud? Exhilarated? I felt all of that—and grateful, too. Grateful for the courage and the commitment of everyone who brought about the change in hearts and minds that lead to the Supreme Court decision. Of course that means the founders of PFLAG and PFLAG Los Angeles and past presidents of the chapter: Adele Starr (supported by her husband Larry), Peggy Olson, Larry and Lynette Sperber, George Unger and Joel Hendler, and Steve Krantz, and Karen Mason. I'm also grateful for each and every one of you: those who had the courage to come out, those who publicly supported their LGBTQ children, those who lobbied in Sacramento and Washington D.C., those who went door to door canvassing against Proposition 8, those who wrote letters, sent donations, marched in the Gay Pride Parade, and volunteered at Models of Pride. I am especially grateful for all who volunteer so generously of their time to make the chapter a strong voice for equality: members of the Speakers Bureau, officers and board members, and all of you who come to our meetings.



There is still a lot of work to be done. Without laws in place in all 50 states to protect LGBTQ persons from discrimination in housing and employment, members of our community may exercise their right to marry only to lose their jobs. Transgender acceptance still lags far behind that given to LGB persons and we must still work to close the gap. But, for a moment, let us take a breath, celebrate, and be grateful for how far we have come.

Models of Pride



Circle Saturday, October 10th, on your calendar for the 23rd Annual Models of Pride (MOP) conference held on the USC campus. Models of Pride, one of the largest, free conferences for LGBTQ youth in the world is sponsored by LifeWorks of the Los Angeles LGBT Center. MOP also includes a program for parents, guardians, foster parents, and professionals who work with LGBTQ youth which is organized by volunteers predominantly from local PFLAG Chapters including PFLAG Los Angeles.

The program, called the Parent & Professional Institute, will offer over 20 workshops in sessions tailored for diverse groups. Sessions include "Bullying: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know," "Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Issues," "Transitioning Teens and Adolescent Experience," "Keeping Faith: Believe and Support Your LGBTQ Child," and many more. There are workshops for "novice parents" just beginning to get information about LGBTQ youth and how to parent them; parents seeking specific information about resources and the rights of LGBTQ youth; parents of transgender and gender non-conforming youth; and professionals such as GSA advisors, school counselors and administrators, therapists, and other professionals working with LGBTQ youth.

We hope you'll come yourself—as a participant or a volunteer—and invite others. Both LGBTQ youth and their parents and guardians get a boost in confidence from the workshops and the camaraderie at Models of Pride.

Up-to-date information about registration and the program will be posted at pflagLA.org and pflagEspaSoCal.org.

Our Stories Polly Kim, PFLAG Mom

I remember the day our then 15-year-old daughter Shelby came out to us with a letter. She gave it to me as she left to go babysitting with her twin brother, and she asked us to read it while they were gone. My husband and I were watching the 2011 Emmy Awards, and we read it during a commercial. It was a full page handwritten note, with a doodle of a heart, smiley face, and star. It was so well-written, I'd like to quote it here:

Dear Mom + Dad,

There's something I've been meaning to tell you - and I've been giving it a lot of thought lately. I hope it's not too much of a shock, though yes it will probably change your lives. So here goes, 3 words: I am gay! It's part of me, who I am, and I thought you guys should know. Of course, just articulating this really doesn't change anything about me; it was there all along! I know you'll both accept and support me no matter what! I love you so much!

*Yours truly,
Shelby Ann Kim*

PS - Stay calm - it's all cool.

PPS - I'd promised myself I'd tell you today, because I'd feel guilty telling other people before you, and I want to join GSA.

As soon as we got to the "I am gay!" part, my husband and I looked at each other. I was totally surprised, he said he wasn't. We texted Shelby, just saying that we loved her. (We found out two years later that she never got the text and was wondering about our lack of reaction until she got home.)

The way she said that it really didn't change anything about her, it was there all along, helped me realize this really wouldn't change our relationship. She was the same as before we read the letter, the only difference was that now we knew more about her. I was happy that she had written she knew we would accept and support her no matter what, and we do.

One of my first thoughts was that some friends and their parents might not be as totally accepting as we *(continued inside)*



P.O. Box 24565
Los Angeles, CA 90024

info@pflagLA.org

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, LGBTQ 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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Legislative Corner

From the editor: Can you believe it? – The archconservative nation of Ireland opened civil marriage to same-sex couples before we did! Wow! The majority voted in favor of marriage equality. Here, the majority of our Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality and immediately thereafter some politicians have started to push for a Constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. And to those who now want to marry their tree or enter into polygamy I say this: Once straight people are allowed to marry their trees or enter into polygamy, gays and lesbians should have the right too. But this is neither about marrying your tree, your pet, your car, nor entering into a polygamous marriage. This is about equal rights and the Supreme Court has ruled.

Let's now look at our own state. Here are the first eight bills on Equality California's legislative agenda:

AB 959, Assemblymember (AM) David Chiu: Would require government agencies to collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity whenever additional demographic data is collected to help indicate the extent to which LGBT people are experiencing disparities in health and well-being.

AB 827, AM Patrick O'Donnell: Would create a teacher training program that would aid teachers in identifying and assisting LGBT students who may need particular support in the coming out process or dealing with bias-based bullying.

SB 703, Senator Mark Leno: Prohibits state agencies from doing business with companies that fail to offer transgender employees the same healthcare coverage and benefits they offer all other workers.

AB 329, AM Shirley Weber: Would update and strengthen existing law to ensure that students receive sex education that is comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate and inclusive.

AB 87, AM Mark Stone: Would prohibit discrimination against transgender jurors in the jury selection process in California courts.

AB 960, AM David Chiu: Would modernize California's assisted reproduction laws to protect families using

assisted reproduction. Current law puts intended parents using this method of reproduction and their children at risk due to discrepancies in parental rights.

AB 1050, AM Evan Low: Would require that all charities eligible for donations through a state employee giving program are screened to ensure that they do not discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

SB 731, Senator Mark Leno: Would require child welfare workers placing youth in foster homes to take a young person's gender identity into account. The bill is designed to ensure that all foster youth, including those who identify as transgender, are placed in appropriate homes where they feel safe and accepted.

[Info provided by www.eqca.org]

Spreading the Word in the community through our Speakers Bureau engagements/ education, activism & advocacy

Carolyn Conrad, Mike/Michelle Dennis, Shervin Khorramian, Liz Mullen, and Sarah Vitorino spoke to staff at Covenant House, an outreach agency to at-risk homeless youth.

Mike/Michelle Dennis, Tim Ky, Liz Mullen, and Cara O'Donnell were invited to talk to Freshman students at Polytechnic High School in Sun Valley.

Liz Mullen was invited by the Brandeis Women's Group in Westlake Village to talk about PFLAG.

Jehanne Eily, Betsy Hanger, Chris Angel Murphy, Rudy Perez, and Lucy Benji Terrell were invited by Covenant House to talk to their residents.

Christie Carney, Liz Mullen, and Chris Angel Murphy were invited by The Country School in Valley Village to talk about PFLAG.

Shervin Khorramian, Cara O'Donnell, Mel Schwartz, and Sarah Vitorino were invited by the Los Angeles Southwest College LGBT-IMPAQ Equity & Equality Student Organization to make a presentation to their student body.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK! Renew your annual donation or make a special gift today!

As an all-volunteer organization, our work is made possible only with the generous contributions of our 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 make a donation of \$35 or more to PFLAG Los Angeles, a portion of your donation (\$15) goes to PFLAG National and makes you a member of both PFLAG Los Angeles and PFLAG National. However, make donations directly to PFLAG National, 100% of your donation stays with PFLAG National.

Use the envelope provided or donate online at
www.pflagLA.org/Join-Donate.

Shop at AmazonSmile
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PFLAG Los Angeles

Get started

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Smile, you're supporting PFLAG Los Angeles
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mission of support, education, and advocacy.

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-3707419>

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 Need YOUR Stories!

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. If you prefer, we can interview you over the phone and write the story for you!

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 or request to be interviewed to NewsletterEditor@pflagLA.org.

Gizella Czene, Maurie Davidson, Terri Duba, Jehanne Eily, Shervin Khorramian, Steve Krantz, Mel Schwartz, and Sylvia Weisenberg were invited to talk to all 11th graders at Cleveland Humanities Magnet High School.

Gizella Czene, Shervin Khorramian, Liz Mullen, Chris Angel Murphy, and Sarah Vitorino were invited to talk to students at Polytechnic High School in Sun Valley.

Soon after Shelby came out to us, I did some research on support organizations for parents, and I found PFLAG Los Angeles. Shelby and I attended our first Pride Parade in June 2012, and we watched the PFLAG marchers pass by, including Betty DeGeneres, whose books I had been reading while Shelby read all of Ellen's books.

I went to my first PFLAG meeting later that month and have been to almost all the monthly meetings since then. I have made so many friends and heard so many inspiring speakers and learned so much. I like hearing everyone's stories and sharing my own, and I hope Shelby's positive story can help parents new to PFLAG feel more optimistic about their own children's future.

One of my favorite times of year is marching with PFLAG in the Pride Parade. The reaction of the crowd is exhilarating - cheering and clapping, and shouts of "We love you, PFLAG!" as we call back that we love them.

I also had the opportunity to be on a parent panel for youth at Models of Pride. Hearing from the youth about parents who don't accept them was heartbreaking, and I was glad to be able to give hugs and support. I wish we could reach all parents of LGBTQ kids and help them not only accept, but celebrate their precious children.

Our Stories *(continued from cover)*

were, and they might have a negative reaction, possibly even breaking up the friendship. My husband was also concerned about possible negative reactions. But it hasn't turned out that way - Shelby made even more friends, and seemed happier and more outgoing during that sophomore year, and in the years that followed. Shelby joined her school GSA, which she helped change to "Pride Project" to be more inclusive. There were not many openly LGBTQ people at her high school, but she got involved with other GSAs, and LifeWorks and other community organizations. Junior year she helped organize a "Gayla" dance open to everyone, and senior year a Queer Prom at The Church in Ocean Park. She chose a college that has many LGBTQ students and is so happy there.

Quote - Unquote

"No, transgender individuals are not "confused;" but they are exposed to OPD - Other People's Disorder. Once Other People unconfuse - we can all go on."

— Christine Milrod, PhD, LMFT, AASECT-CST, Psychotherapist

RESOURCES

MEETINGS - CONTACTS - ORGANIZATIONS

SUPPORT MEETINGS SPONSORED BY PFLAG LOS ANGELES

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
www.pflagLA.org

Gender Focus

Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Avenue, LA 90027
2nd Thursday of each month
7:30 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

East LA *(Sólo Español)*

Bienestar East LA

5326 East Beverly Blvd, Los Angeles 90022
3rd Thursday of each month
7:30 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

San Fernando Valley *(Sólo Español)*

Bienestar Centro del Valle de San Fernando
8134 Van Nuys Blvd., #200, Panorama City 91402
4th Friday of each month
7:30 - 9:00 pm / Free Parking

South LA

La Tijera United Methodist Church
7400 Osage Avenue, LA 90045
2nd Thursday of each month
7:30 - 9:00 pm / Free Parking

CONTACTS

PFLAG Los Angeles Speakers Bureau
Contact Liz Mullen at
SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org

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

ORGANIZATIONS

PFLAG National
202.467.8180
www.pflag.org

REMEMBER

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

www.pflagLA.org



P.O. Box 24565
Los Angeles, CA 90024

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OUR VISION: 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.

OUR MISSION: 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.

SUMMER 2015

TransAction

Caitlyn Jenner Receives ESPY Award

One year after the NFL's first openly gay player Michael Sam won his ESPY, Caitlyn Jenner was presented with the Arthur Ashe Courage Award. Presenting the award was soccer player Abby Wambach. Caitlyn Jenner is the first transgender athlete to receive this award. Excerpt from her acceptance speech:

"You know, it is an honor to have the word 'courage' associated with my life. But tonight another word comes to mind and that is fortunate. I owe a lot to sports. It has shown me the world, it has given me an identity. If someone wanted to bully me, well, you know what? I was the MVP of the football team. That wasn't going to be a problem. And the same thing goes tonight. If you want to call me names, make jokes, doubt my intentions, go ahead, because the reality is I can take it. But for the thousands of kids out there who are coming to terms with being true to who they are, they shouldn't have to take it. So for the people out there wondering what all this is

about — whether it's about courage or controversy or publicity — well, I'll tell you what it's all about. It's about what happens from here. It's not just about one person. It's about thousands of people. It's not just about me. It's about all of us accepting one another. We are all different. That's not a bad thing, that's a good thing and while it may not be easy to get past the things you do not understand, I want to prove that it is absolutely possible if we only do it together."

Read more about Caitlyn at <http://caitlynjenner.com>

Shannon Minter Appointed To White House Commission

On June 8, 2015, President Obama appointed Shannon Price Minter, Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

"I am deeply honored to serve on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, which provide a unique opportunity for new leaders to gain a firsthand experience of our nation's government," said Minter. "As a transgender man,

I am especially grateful to President Obama for his commitment to building a government that reflects the full diversity of our country and for supporting equal opportunity for all people."

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on DOD Transgender Policy

On July 13, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter issued two directives to deal with the Department of Defense's outdated policy regarding transgender servicemembers: A workgroup will be created to study over the next six months the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly. And decision authority in all administrative discharges for those diagnosed with gender dysphoria or who identify themselves as transgender is elevated to Under Secretary Carson, who will make determinations on all potential separations. "We must ensure that everyone who's able and willing to serve has the full and equal opportunity to do so, and we must treat all our people with the dignity and respect they deserve. Going forward, the Department of Defense must and will continue to improve how we do both. Our military's future strength depends on it."