

THE PFLAG NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

PFLAG pole

SPRING
2016



“We will keep trying to bring these voices and elevate these stories in whatever spaces of the world we can. And I promise you that we will continue... to be family, to be citizens, to be co-workers in the work of equality, now and forever.”

- DR. MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY
HONOREE, STRAIGHT
FOR EQUALITY IN MEDIA

A Night for Allies!

THE 8TH ANNUAL STRAIGHT FOR EQUALITY GALA (P. 06)

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Notes from National: Networking for Diversity and Inclusion

Dear PFLAGers:

The issue of diversity and inclusion (D&I) is a top priority for your PFLAG National Board of Directors. Our collective challenge—from the National office to our 400 local chapters—is to increase inclusion of all types of diversity to permeate every level of PFLAG.

When I became National President in 2014, I realized that from its beginning, PFLAG, like many organizations in the LGBTQ movement, has struggled with ways to become more inclusive of all communities, particularly communities of color.

Our efforts around this aren't about just being reflective of our community: They are about ensuring that PFLAG is welcoming and able to serve all people when they need us.

We're hard at work creating paths towards becoming more inclusive at every level, from establishing a National Board D&I Task Force, led by board member Robert Marchman, to focus on issues related to race and ethnicity, to boosting the diversity (beyond race and ethnicity) of our National Board, to determining specific methods to help all chapters discover ways to be inclusive of their own community's diversity.

At our quarterly board meeting in March, internationally known educator Tonya Odom helped us understand these challenges, taught us about the role of unconscious bias, and suggested accessible first steps chapters can use in their journey. Some included:

- **Educate Yourself**
Use programs like PFLAG Academy Online (check out the session, "But I'm Not Racist! Reframing Diversity Efforts in PFLAG Chapters") to initiate chapter discussions on strategies to be more inclusive.
- **Leverage Leaders**
Identify leaders of inclusion in your community, and seek out support from National staff and regional directors to learn about strategies and resources to build partnerships.
- **Seek to Understand**
We all can be limited in our knowledge of the issues, joys, and



struggles of other cultures and communities; it is on us to learn about them.

- **Find Partners**
After you have learned more, identified leaders, and gained a better understanding of the issues, build mutually beneficial relationships with groups representing marginalized communities.
- **Send a Signal:**
Upgrade your website and social media accounts to send a welcoming message that includes images of diverse people

I challenge you all to incorporate these ideas into your efforts. Together we are stronger!

Jean Hodges
President,
PFLAG National Board of Directors

Fighting for Fairness in Our States

The backlash to successful movement forward for equality continues to grow, week by week, with state legislatures looking to erase existing protections and enact bills harmful to LGBTQ people.

Yet, no matter what state or community you're in, you will find PFLAGers mounting battles, counting victories, and providing education about why these attempts are so harmful and how they run counter to American values—and PFLAG's values—in 2016. Not only are PFLAG voices and stories read and heard in letters to the editor, rallies, lobby and advocacy days, meetings, and testimony, the impact can be seen and felt when someone speaks up and says, "I have a neighbor and their child is transgender."

Nowhere can the battle for basic dignity and fairness be seen more clearly than in North Carolina where the dangerous and discriminatory HB2 is now in effect. While local legislators have reduced that law down to a "bathroom bill," it is more far-reaching than that: HB2 overrides

local anti-discrimination ordinances, prevents new anti-discrimination ordinances from being enacted, and prevents people from seeking appropriate legal recourse if they are discriminated against. With support from the national office and more than 10,000 palm cards in hand, fifteen PFLAG chapters in North Carolina and their members are reminding their fellow Carolinians #WEARENOTTHIS.

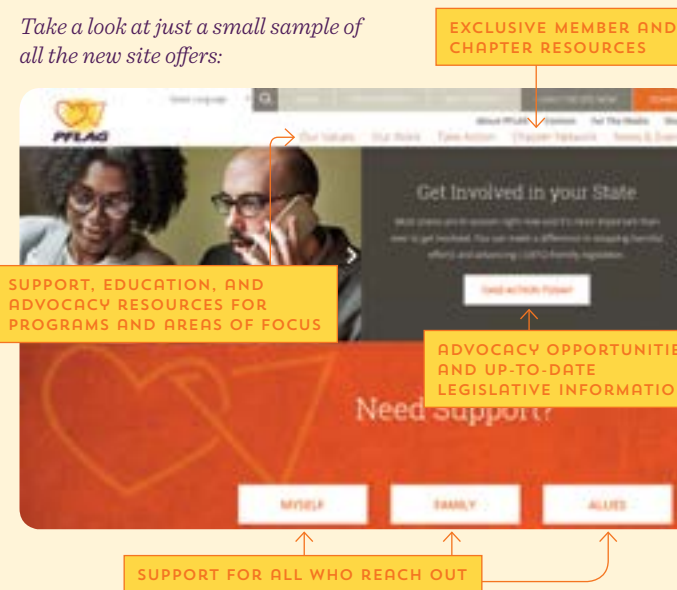
PFLAG is elevating the family and ally voice to speak out not only in favor of fairness, but in favor of basic dignity and respect. The outcry has been powerful across the country, and reached its peak when Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch and Vanita Gupta, head of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice spoke with such simple eloquence



when announcing the federal lawsuit against the state.

PFLAG National is here to support all members in their on-the-ground efforts to make states safe and affirming for people who are LGBTQ and the people who love them, and we echo Attorney General Lynch's sentiment when in her comments she directed this to the transgender community:

We see you; we stand with you; and we will do everything we can to protect you going forward. Please know that history is on your side. This country was founded on a promise of equal rights for all, and we have always managed to move closer to that promise, little by little, one day at a time. It may not be easy—but we'll get there together.



Welcome to the new pflag.org, the hub for up-to-date information on all things PFLAG!

The site has a fresh new look and is teeming with valuable and vital information for all people looking to PFLAG for support and education—and to help in PFLAG's important advocacy work. PFLAG members can gain exclusive access to chapter and member resources to aid in on-the-ground work providing support, education, and advocacy to people who are LGBTQ, their families, friends, and allies.

Want to see the site in action? Visit pflag.org and start clicking today!

An Inclusive Pride

Jeanne Manford didn't know it then but in 1972, by walking with her son and carrying her sign during Pride, she was already living PFLAG's mission: She was supporting her son, educating the community about the issues, advocating for other parents to do the same...and sending the first PFLAG message to **unite for inclusion**.

Even now, decades later, PFLAGers are met with cheers and tears for sending a message of love and support during Pride

celebrations. It's a time when PFLAGers are treated like the rock stars they are, and members of the LGBTQ community

are reminded that PFLAG will always be their extended family, whether by blood, by marriage, or by choice.



Whether you celebrate Pride in June or elsewhere on the calendar, community events are a key place to let people know what you do, the services you provide, your commitment to supporting all people, and how they can connect with you. It's an opportunity—and a responsibility—to ensure that everyone in the crowd sees PFLAG as a source of support, education, and advocacy.

Take action on improving your chapter's external appearances by trying out these four strategies:

Make sure people see PFLAG! Ensure that your event materials—like banners, flyers, and handouts—all have the PFLAG logo in a highly visible place. And if you have the resources, do not use the former spelled out version, just PFLAG, to send the message that we are inclusive of the entire LGBTQ community.

Don't forget allies. A significant number of attendees at Pride aren't LGBTQ, but allies to the community. Be sure that you've got resources and materials to attract and engage them, too. Check out PFLAG's Straight for Equality website (straightforequality.org) to download or order.

Demonstrate your inclusion. Assess your materials—do you have images and examples of diverse communities? Are people of color represented? Different generations? People with different abilities? Attendees at events often respond when they see themselves, do your best to use inclusive imagery... and to have diverse representation at your booth or table, if you can!

Invite people to come back! Be ready with an invitation to your next program, event, or meeting, and make the information easily sharable. Printing a flyer or postcard with the details provides people an easy take-away and increases the chance you'll see them again.

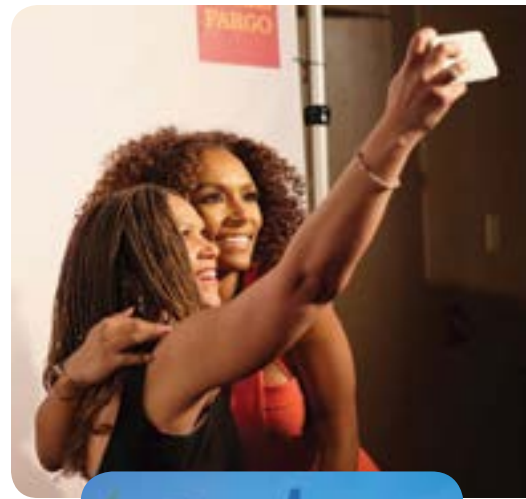
And remember: While Pride is a perfect time to elevate PFLAG's message to the many who need to hear it, the other 364 days a year offer opportunities—big and small—to move everyone closer to the PFLAG vision of a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected and valued.

Happy Pride 2016!

The Eighth Annual Straight for Equality Gala

April 4, 2016
New York, NY

(L-R) Honoree Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry and presenter Janet Mock take a selfie from the red carpet.



(L-R) Presenter Rosie O'Donnell with son Blake, honoree Kristin Chenoweth and emcee Alec Mapa



(L-R) Johnson & Johnson's Martin Fitchet with PFLAG National President Jean Hodges, FINRA CEO Rick Ketchum, PFLAG National Board Member Dale Bernstein, Marriott VP (and gala co-chair) Apoorva Gandhi, and PFLAG ED Jody Huckaby.



(L-R) PFLAG National Board Member Stephanie Battalino with fiancée Mari Rosenberger, and transgender activist Melissa Skarz.

Lauren Patten performs a number from Broadway's 2015 Tony Award-winning Best Musical FUN HOME.



All images by
D. Dipasupil/
Getty Images

Learning On Demand

The word “classroom” conjures up very specific memories and feelings. For some, it reminds them of the smell of freshly sharpened pencils, crisp notebooks, and getting lost in books. For others, it might mean homework, tests, and the stress of being put on the spot to produce answers.

No matter what images appear in one’s head when they think about classrooms, PFLAG Academy Online has added a feature to help PFLAG members re-envision learning (and even classrooms!) altogether.

PFLAGers can log on to the PFLAG National website and access a special members-only area that gives them on-demand access to PFLAG Academy Online learning sessions, enabling them to pursue their interests and needs and, literally, make the classroom appear wherever works best for them.

The learning options offered in PFLAG Academy Online on-demand sessions not only help PFLAGers build the skills they need to be engaged chapter members and masterful chapter leaders, but also help chapters become more inclusive of the diverse and changing needs of the communities PFLAG serves...all thanks to a wide array of educational offerings.

On-demand sessions currently include:

- **Inclusion:** Cultural diversity in chapters, understanding bias, building coalitions, being a trans ally, advanced ally skills
- **Skill-Building:** Fundraising, lobbying, facilitation skills, chapter treasury skills
- **Chapter Performance:** Conflict resolution, creating thriving chapters, safe schools

The on-demand feature offers members multiple opportunities to participate in sessions to expand their understanding of LGBTQ issues as well as improve a chapter’s ability to respond to community needs. They can choose to register to participate in the monthly live session to take advantage of live interaction with presenters and facilitators and get answers to questions in real time, or access the recording of the session (generally available within 48 hours of each live session) later.

And with PFLAG Academy Online, learning doesn’t have to be done solo! The on-demand feature offers a great way for PFLAG members to access one of the broader learning sessions (like safe schools or inclusion) to incorporate into a chapter meeting, and for PFLAG leaders to jump start important discussions around operations.

New sessions are being added each month, and can be found at pflag.org/onlineacademy.

straight
FOR
equalitySM

Help Wanted!

Share your personal healthcare story with Straight for Equality™!

Are you a healthcare/medical professional? Do you identify as LGBTQ? Are you the parent of an LGBTQ person?

Then the Straight for Equality team wants to hear from you! Work is starting on a revision to the 2009 publication, *read this before you put your metatarsals between your mandible and maxilla: straight for equality in healthcare*. The book was designed to help healthcare providers understand why their open support and understanding of key health issues is important, and it offers ways for them to achieve those goals.

But we need your stories to make the publication personal and relevant. Want to find out if you have a story that can help? Visit straightforequality.org/healthcarequestions for additional details and help in sharing your experiences.

Please share this call for responses with your networks—we’re looking for multiple perspectives and your efforts help!

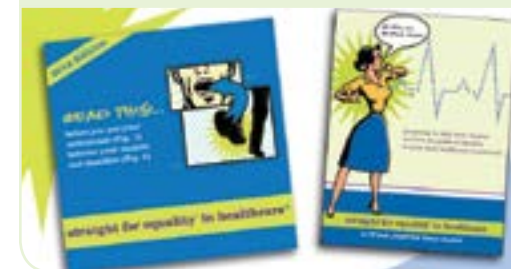
Introducing OUR CHILDREN: OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS Gets an Update!



OUR CHILDREN is a fresh and modern update of one of PFLAG National’s most enduring and popular publications, OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS. The refreshed edition still focuses primarily on people who are lesbian, gay, and bisexual (with information for the loved ones of those who are gender-expansive and queer), but does so in a way that expands its audience, from gender-inclusive language, to reaching out not only to parents and families, but caregivers as well. (And here’s a reminder about our publication just for those with a transgender or gender-expansive loved one, OUR TRANS LOVED ONES, released in Spring 2015).

The updated publication offers support and education to those wrestling with the challenging and sometimes conflicting emotions upon learning that a loved one is LGBTQ, and also makes space for parents, caregivers, and family members who come to PFLAG already supportive and wanting to know how to support their LGBTQ loved ones.

With first-person stories and short essays from experts, this is a publication all will be proud to share with anyone who seeks out PFLAG, whether in person or online. OUR CHILDREN will soon be available in the PFLAG National bookstore and online for free download!



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