



THE PFLAG NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

PFLAG pole

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PFLAG Gives Back

REBUILDING PUERTO RICO
WITH #RECONSTRUYEQ

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2018 PFLAG National Scholarship Winners

Supporting the Next Generation of LGBTQ Advocates

PFLAG National is proud to announce its 2018 scholarship winners. More than \$50,000 will go to young advocates across the country who have worked tirelessly on programs, projects, and activities aimed at making schools and communities safe and welcoming for all. This marks the 17th year of the program, which supports the next generation of leaders and provides opportunities for secondary learning through generous funding for such scholarships as the Manassero/Wright/McQueen Scholarship.



Josie Manucha graduated from Riverhead High School in Manorville, NY in the top 10 of her class, and will attend Ithaca College for International Politics in September. As an attendee of the ACLU Summer Advocacy Institute, she takes social activism very seriously and plans to use her drive to become an immigration attorney. Josie is excited to start the next chapter of her life and start making her mark.



Tena Gordon is an activist who empowers fellow queer people of color. Zhe founded Me=You: Sexual Violence Awareness, a teen-lead organization that fosters an open discussion among all sexes and genders in order to educate on and ultimately prevent sexual violence. Zhe is a co-founder and former council member of the Everyone Acceptance League, the Genders and Sexualities Alliance at West Shore Jr./Sr. High School in Palm Bay, Florida. Tena is an active participant in Out & About, the young adult group of Space Coast PFLAG. Zhe was dual enrolled at Eastern Florida State College and is graduating with an Associate of Arts degree. Zhe will be attending Florida International University.

Vincent Phan will attend the University of Houston this Fall 2018, where he plans on pursuing a major in Biology. One of his dreams is to see the deep sea with his very own eyes. Says Vincent, "There is no sun that shines, no light that radiates, but somehow, in someway there is something flourishing here. I guess I want to flourish too. I want to thank PFLAG National for bringing me a little closer to my dream. More importantly, I want to thank them for

bringing me a little closer to the LGBTQ community. It really does feel like an extended family."



Luis Alvarez attended Energy Institute High School, an engineering school with a project-based learning curriculum and energy industry emphasis in Houston, TX. He participates in the Peer Support Club, Gay-Straight Alliance, and Energy Converters. While remaining actively engaged in class, he maintained a presence on campus through volunteer efforts offered by Travis Manion, Junior Achievement, and other external opportunities. Ultimately, his high school experience and life taught him that he wants a career that gives him the opportunity to help people. He will pursue medicine as he works to receive a Bachelor of Science, majoring in biochemistry and minoring in psychology at Carleton College.

Austin Muscott is very happy to receive this scholarship. Austin says, "As a gay individual living in the south it can be tough, however I hope by opening a dialogue and showing the rest of the world I am just an average teenager we can make it easier for the next LGBTQ+ community member."



Bailey VandeKamp is an out lesbian who is attending Grinnell College to major in Computer Science and Economics. She has participated in band, choir, theater, 4H, Academic Teams, Student Senate, and Jr. Optimist club during her time in high school, as well as worked at her local public library, a performing arts center, and a racetrack. During her senior year, Bailey organized a 5K, which raised enough money to buy over 7,000 pounds of food to support the hungry in her community. She's also helped younger students start a GSA. In the future, Bailey plans to continue dedicating her time to helping underserved and underprivileged communities in her hometown of Knoxville, IA.

Sarah Grube is a senior in high school in Cleveland, OH. Sarah is the president of the Genders and Sexualities Association at her high school and a member of the Superintendent Student Advisory Committee for her district. She was also selected as a Bank of America Student Leader to intern at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, and participates in other volunteer and advocacy programs for sexual health awareness and community service.



Patrick Babb is from Virginia Beach, VA and will attend The George Washington University this fall to study International Affairs. He is a member of the LGBTQ+ community, identifying as a gay man, and has great interests in helping oppressed groups of people around the world. During his sophomore year, he founded the Gay Straight Alliance at his high school. In his free time, he enjoys listening to music "for the art" and staying up to date on the current events of the world. One day, Patrick plans to either work for the government or a nonprofit organization to work with international diplomacy and development.



Helena Marlowe currently lives in Bangkok, Thailand but is originally from Houston, TX. She has spent the majority of her life overseas in five different countries. Her parents are both educators and have taught in the international

schools she's attended. In Bangkok, she is co-president of her school's Gay Straight Alliance and Gender Equality Club and the Arts Council. Outside of school she worked with other international students and OUT BKK, a local gay organization, to start a queer youth community for high school-aged students called yOUTH. She looks forward to being involved in a new community in university next year.



Maxwell "Max" Plata is a graduating senior from Surprise, Arizona. Throughout his high school career, Max has been involved in his school's theatre program and thespian troupe, maintaining the position of stage manager while also serving as club secretary. Through his work in theatre, Max found his voice as a transgender individual and works to provide opportunities for other LGBT youth in his school to find their own voices through the arts. This fall, Max will attend Arizona State University's Barrett, the Honors College to pursue a degree in Theatre Design & Production, with a minor in Gender Studies. Max is incredibly grateful to PFLAG National for awarding him the greatest gift of all: The chance to further his education and his impact on the community he cares about most.

PFLAG Gives Back

Rebuilding Puerto Rico with #ReconstruyeQ

In September 2017, Hurricane Irma (a Category 5 storm) attacked the island of Puerto Rico, leaving most of the island without power or clean water, destroying an estimated 70,000 homes, and damaging about 250,000 more. The death toll from the storm and its aftermath has been estimated at nearly 5,000 (as opposed to the official government report of 64 individuals). Eight months later—and just weeks before the hurricane season starts again—it is estimated that at least 14,500 people on the island still lack any consistent power, with thousands still existing on generators.

In January, after attending a workshop hosted by Puerto Rico-based organization

Waves Ahead—which detailed how the storm had left many people in the LGBTQ community on the island devastated—PFLAG National staff decided to step up and be part of the recovery effort.

“This started with a group of friends who happen to work together talking about a group trip to assist with rebuilding. By the time the evening was over, we’d connected with colleagues from other LGBTQ organizations, and we knew we were at the start of something big,” said Jean-Marie Navetta, PFLAG National’s Director of Learning and Inclusion and one of the founders and steering committee members for what became the #ReconstruyeQ (ReconstructingQ, in English) project.

When PFLAG National staff requested that they be allowed to use five days of work time to travel to Puerto Rico to join construction crews on the island, the PFLAG National Board of Directors stepped up to support the effort, offering to cover travel expenses for five PFLAG staffers to bring the ongoing PFLAG Gives Back effort to the island.

“We feel energized by these rebuilding efforts and for the support of organizations like PFLAG. For months, Waves Ahead was doing it alone, but these efforts show that by uniting we can make the difference,” said Wilfred Labiosa,



Ricky's home, before #ReconstruyeQ. Ricky is a hairdresser who supports his family and cares for his elderly parents. His apartment and the top level of his parents' home was destroyed in the storm.

Team PFLAG masters the art of cement. ▼



Photo of Ricky's bedroom after the work by #ReconstruyeQ. ▼



executive director of Waves Ahead. “Although we still need financial contributions for the work, we know that the commitment to advancing equality for our LGBT Puerto Rican community exists. SI SE PUEDE! We are not forgotten. Gracias!”

For more than three weeks, volunteers from the US mainland were part of the #ReconstruyeQ project, including not only PFLAG National staffers, but also leaders from Advocates for Youth and the Human Rights Campaign (both founders of the project and steering committee members) as well as staff from CenterLink, The Task Force, and The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. Teams traveled to homes in multiple sites across the island, cleaning out, rebuilding, and re-furnishing.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to help my fellow LGBTQ Boricuas regain dignity and shelter—and to be able to offer hands-on support to the rebuilding by joining forces with my fellow LGBTQ organizations who also volunteer. We are particularly proud of our collaboration with PFLAG and the amazing women who came this year,” said Lisbeth Melendez Rivera, HRC Director of Faith Outreach and Training and chair of the #ReconstruyeQ steering committee.



Team PFLAG National and colleagues on the job at Ricky's house. ▲



Photo from the top of the mountain, Candelero Arriba. You can still see the damage to trees from the storm.

Aimee Thorne-Thomsen, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships at Advocates for Youth and one of the founding steering committee members for the project commented, “We cannot underestimate the power of the work of #ReconstruyeQ and the multiple LGBTQ and allied organizations that came together to help Puerto Rico in its time of need. We did more than rebuild homes for 10 families, we reminded those on the island that we haven’t forgotten them. Their struggle is our struggle, and we will keep coming back to rebuild until all of our people are made whole.”

“Being able to be on the ground in Puerto Rico was very meaningful. While it was shocking to see the conditions that many people are still living in, it was amazing to see the progress made in the homes during the short time we were there. I know that for those of us that went we will not soon forget the people that we met,” said PFLAG’s Jamie Curtis, Director of Chapter Engagement and one of the volunteers.

The PFLAG National delegation—made up of Curtis, Jean-Marie Navetta, Jamie Henkel, Brooke Smith (and her partner), and Joellen Shiffman, didn’t just make PFLAG part of rebuilding homes, but helped reconstruct the lives of LGBTQ people, their families, and allies.

Team PFLAG with Waleska, a widow in Candelero, whose home was rebuilt as part of #ReconstruyeQ.



Interested in learning more about Puerto Rico recovery and revitalization efforts happening through Waves Ahead? Visit them online at facebook.com/wavesahead to get started. And to see more photos of PFLAG giving back in Puerto Rico, visit the PFLAG National blog at pflag.org/blog/PFLAG-Puerto-Rico.



PFLAG Celebrates 45 Years of Saving LGBTQ Lives, One Family at a Time

A night honoring families, allies, and Champions of Justice

PFLAG commemorated its 45th anniversary on May 9th at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. Attendees—including chapter members and leaders, Regional Directors, members of the Board of Directors, and PFLAG National staff—gathered and celebrated in style, in an evening that included the

Seasons of Love Ensemble of Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC, honorees from Dow Chemical Company, and the PFLAG National Champion of Justice Award winners—Rep. John Lewis (GA), Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI), Rep. Jared Polis (CO), and Rep. Barney Frank (MA-Ret.).



\$10,000 for Native PFLAG

Major support given for this Phoenix-based chapter's much-needed efforts!

In May, Phoenix Pride announced that the Phoenix-based Native PFLAG chapter—the only chapter of its kind in the PFLAG network—would receive a \$10,000 Community Grant to support the chapter's critical work with area families.

and network in an alcohol and drug-free environment. It will be a social platform for celebration, ceremony, discussion, and focus on Native LGBTQ history, and traditional Two-Spirit culture. This gathering will be in association with Two-Spirit Societies from the US and Canada."

By supporting Native PFLAG's efforts to bring together and embolden Native LGBTQ/Two-Spirit individuals from the 22 tribes in Arizona and across the country, Phoenix Pride hopes to live up to our mission of uniting, educating, and engaging people to support and empower the LGBTQ community."

The Phoenix Pride Community Grants Program is a charitable program which provides project-based financial grants to nonprofit organizations serving Maricopa County's LGBTQ community. Since its inception in 2010, the Phoenix Pride Community Grants Program has awarded \$90,000 in project-based grants.

Phoenix Pride Interim Executive Director Mike Fornelli emphasized the critical role that the Native PFLAG chapter plays in the community. "The proposal put forth for the Native PFLAG Two-Spirit Gathering set for March of 2019 embodies the essence of everything that Phoenix Pride seeks to support through a community grant, by providing a safe space, a cultural and spiritual touch point, and a sense of belonging and validation for a community that is too frequently underserved, despite being deeply rooted in our local history as well as our modern day struggles for equality and equity.

"Native PFLAG is honored and thrilled to receive the Phoenix Pride grant," said Shelia Lopez, founder and president of Native PFLAG. "We will use the funds to hold a Two-Spirit Gathering in Phoenix, Arizona. We will come together for ceremony and reclaim a once sacred space. This will be a traditional gathering where individuals will be able to share

To learn more about Native PFLAG, visit their website at nativepflag.org. And find out more about the great community efforts supported by Phoenix Pride by visiting phoenixpride.org.



Top row, left: PFLAG National Board member Catherine Hyde hosted the event, here presenting honors to Rep. John Lewis. Top row, middle: HRC's Paul Lisbon with PFLAG National Director of Learning & Inclusion Jean-Marie Navetta. Bottom row: The Seasons of Love ensemble of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington DC gathers for a photo before entertaining the guests.

Top row: Special guest Kelly Brooks-Hailey (R), who works with PFLAG Howard County as a diversity and inclusion speaker and trainer, celebrates with her wife Ivy Brooks-Hailey.

Middle row: Guests (including friends from frequent coalition partner HRC) enjoy a moment of photographic fun.

Bottom row: Arielle Gingold of Bend the Arc congratulates Rep. Lewis on his PFLAG honors.

Jessica Halem (L), LGBT Program Director for Harvard Medical School and volunteer auctioneer for the evening, with her partner Jen Manion, an Associate Professor of History at Amherst College. ▶



Supported with Love, #ConnectedByPride

A new partnership between Verizon and PFLAG launched in June with a beautiful ad, which debuted during the MTV Movie Awards. This montage of YouTube spots of LGBTQ youth coming out to their parents via phone is a tear jerker, and to date has been viewed over 770,000 times on Twitter alone.

The partnership continues with #ConnectedByPride, a fun digital Pride “march” which will help the LGBTQ community and its allies connect digitally with Pride marches from wherever they are, via the power of Verizon’s network. It might be 2018, but there are still so many LGBTQ people outside of the largest U.S. cities who feel disconnected and left

out of Pride celebrations. Whether you march, roll, dance, or stroll, take time to join the digital Pride march...and then invite others to join you on social media.

Finally, Verizon has made a very generous gift to PFLAG National to support the chapter network through enhanced communication, outreach, and infrastructure. As a result, LGBTQ

people, their families and allies will have greater access to information, resources and support in their local communities.

Thanks to Verizon’s support, PFLAG’s collective efforts as the nation’s first and largest organization for LGBTQ people, their families and allies will be strengthened, as will PFLAG’s network of chapters, 400 strong and growing!

Join the Pride Parade at connectedbypride.com.

See the ad at verizonwireless.com/featured/pride/ and the full-length 60-second version at pflagnation.al/verizonpride.

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