



Oregon Central Coast Chapter

June 2011

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Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons, their families, and their friends through

SUPPORT to cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION to enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights.

Two More Gone

We mourn the loss of Haylee Fentress and Paige Moravetz, two more young people lost to suicide because of bullying. Last year Haylee moved from Indiana to a small Minnesota town where she and 14-year-old Paige became close friends seen by others as “the one.” They hanged themselves during a sleepover at Haylee’s home. Bullied because of her weight and her red hair, Haylee had been expelled from school for breaking up a fight that involved Paige. Her suicide note asked people to pray for the two of them. Her last Facebook post, in which she hyphenated her last name with that of Paige, said, “I just want this to be over. I love you, Paige.”



“How many more gay people does God have to create before we ask ourselves whether or not God actually wants them around?”

MN State Rep. Steve Simon

Local PFLAG Group Awarded Equity Grant

Thanks to the hard work of volunteer grant-writer Lisa Bonacci, (see Page 6) OCC PFLAG has been granted funds from the Equity Foundation to further its activities to prevent bullying of LGBTQ teens, following Equity's mission to "build communities that advance the dignity and worth of all people."

The local PFLAG chapter was reformed under the name PFLAG of the Oregon Central Coast two years ago because there was a pressing need for education, awareness, and understanding of LGBT issues in the county. In the preceding year a gay teen in Newport had committed suicide and a Waldport teen had been almost killed. These events led members of the LGBT Task Force, the Coastal AIDS Network, social service professionals, and other concerned citizens to re-establish the local PFLAG chapter.

PFLAG events have mostly been met with support and progress. However, deep community problems cannot be fixed overnight. For example, during the last school year at Isaac Newton Middle School (Newport) the son of lesbian parents was severely bullied because of anti-gay sentiment among older students. PFLAG helped the couple work with the district to resolve the bullying and identify the need for training for students, staff, and parents about LGBT and other diversity issues. PFLAG OCC also sponsored a No Name-Calling Week in January supported by the Lincoln County of Board of Commissioners.

The topic of bullying has become part of a nationwide dialogue this year. Several cases of suicide among harassed LBGT teens have been in the news, and it is clear that schools must become involved in dealing with this problem. It is well established that bullying contributed to these suicides. It has also been found that students who are bullied for any reason often experience both physical and mental health problems.

To make life more bearable for LGBT teens in Lincoln County and prevent suicides and suffering, funds will support the anti-bullying program in the Newport middle school and continue its support of the GSAs at all Lincoln County high schools. These activities can help educate county citizens to avoid (or minimize) the harassment and misunderstanding of persons of whatever sexual orientation and gender identity they may be.

Students from schools with an inclusive anti-bullying policy (such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program chosen by Lincoln County schools) report that there is often less harassment because of sexual orientation or gender expression and that all students are more likely to feel very safe at school.

The GSA at Newport High School, established prior to the start of this program, is valuable not only on its own merits but also as a complement to the anti-bullying program. LGBT students need a place where they feel safe and supported. This GSA provides that place and has improved the quality of life for its members. PFLAG OCC believes supporting this group a high priority as well.

Students need to learn not only that they should not be bullies but also that they should be accountable for intervening when they see bullying occurring. This practice creates better citizens who can go out into the world and help stop the cycling of bullying in the future wherever their lives may take them.

Funds will be used for materials to support the anti-bullying policy including posters, fliers, and banners for events, books, and refreshments for events. The grant will also provide lunch for GSA weekly support group discussions when trained LGBT facilitators meet at Newport High School each week with LGBT youth and their families.

Politics on Our Side

U.S. District Judge James Gwin has ruled that a Cuyahoga County worker **can claim constitutional protection in her job discrimination lawsuit**. Shari Hutchinson, a lesbian who works for the county child support enforcement agency, sued in 2008, claiming she was denied promotions based on her sexual orientation and that administrators retaliated against her after she complained. Gwin stated that her claim comes under the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. Hutchinson's lawyer described the decision as far-reaching and unprecedented, perhaps affecting millions of LGBT workers. The case will go to trial.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, has announced support for an executive order from President Barack Obama mandating that the U.S. government contract only with companies that have policies barring job discrimination against their LGBT workers and continue his **support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act** that would prevent job bias against LGBT workers.

Nevada's Senate and Assembly have **passed two bills that outlaw discrimination against transgender people** in housing and public accommodations. The bills are awaiting Gov. Brian Sandoval's signature.

Attorney General Eric Holder has **set aside the Board of Immigration Appeals ruling requiring the deportation of Paul Wilson Dorman, a gay man** illegally in the U.S., because of his New Jersey civil union with another man. Judges had decided to deport Dorman based on the Defense of Marriage Act. Holder has requested that the immigration judges reconsider the case before the couple takes the case to a federal appeals court.

Dharun Ravi, a 19-year-old roommate of the Rutgers University freshman, has been **indicted on 15 counts** because his actions allegedly led to Tyler Clementi's suicide. Ravi broadcast a video of Clementi's intimate account with another man.

Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.) has **introduced the Every Child Deserves a Family Act** that would "ban discrimination in adoption or foster care placement based on the sexual orientation, marital status, or gender identity of the potential parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child." If passed, that law would stop the series of state laws currently discriminating against same-sex foster/adoptive parents. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) plans to introduce a similar bill.

Despite the fact that **Brazil** has the world's largest number of Roman Catholics, that country's Federal Supreme Court has legally **granted same-sex couples the same rights and benefits** under the country's laws that heterosexual couples have.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam has signed the bill reversing Nashville's new nondiscrimination ordinance barring discrimination against gay, lesbian and transgendered people. **BUT the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce is opposing Haslam's law** because the organization supports "diversity and inclusiveness principles."

NOT ON OUR SIDE! Gov. Scott Walker (WI) is supporting members of the conservative group Wisconsin Family Action in their lawsuit arguing the state domestic partnership registry violates the state's constitutional ban on gay marriage. Walker is using a two-year-old legal opinion from Republican Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen to declare the registry unconstitutional.

The Presbyterian Church USA has become the fourth mainline Protestant church to **permit gay ordination**, following the Episcopal and Evangelical Lutheran churches and the United Church of Christ.

Conservative Christian Wheaton College (IL) now has an **LGBT group on campus** formed by alumni members.

Unprotected Texts: The Bible's Surprising Contradictions about Sex and Desire by Jennifer Wright Knust (HarperOne) **refutes much of the conservative "common wisdom"** about the Bible's orders and definitions surrounding the subject of homosexuality.

"As for stoning on a father's doorstep, that is the fate not of lesbians but of non-virgin brides (Deuteronomy 22:13).

"Sodomy' as a term for gay male sex began to be commonly used only in the 11th century and would have surprised early religious commentators. . . . Sodomites . . . did not aid the poor and needy."

For Nicholas Kristof's take on the book, go to http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/22/opinion/22kristof.html?_r=1

Check out this great series about coming out! <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/23/us/20110523-coming-out.html?hp>

Growing Support for Same-Sex Marriage May Influence Court Legal Outcomes

A majority of Americans support same-sex marriages according to several recent polls. This popular support may also have something to do with legal disputes, including California's Proposition 8. Courts may not use opinion polls in deciding cases, but their positions may shift as interpretations of civil rights evolve.

A current Gallup poll reports that young voters and men have the most significant changes in their opinions: the 70% of people between 18 and 34 in favor of same-sex marriage shows a gain of 16 percentage points in the past year, and the 61% of men 18 to 49 who support same-sex marriage has a gain of 13 percentage points.

California and the West indicate a sharper rise than the national average. Last month CNN showed a 61-percent approval for same-sex marriage in that region. <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-gay-marriage-support-20110523,0,5241801.story>

Benefits Board Takes a Step toward Equality

After Karen McCrae wrote a letter to the Oregon Educators Benefit Board (see the April newsletter for the Oregon Central Coast chapter of PFLAG), the organization made "some small revisions to the Dependent Eligibility communication" that requires everyone, both legally unmarried and married, to complete the same form to verify dependents.

Good for you, Karen!

Adams Speaks at Local PFLAG Meeting

Marc Adams, speaker for the June OCC PFLAG meeting, represents HeartStrong, an organization that sponsors the Youth Empowerment Project. Its goal is to distribute educational kits to all school counselors providing information to school counselor's and other public/private school educators to help students deal with LGBT coming-out issues.

The project's educator/counselor digikit will include an educator/counselor's guide, a copy of the modern coming out guide, "It's Not About You: Understanding Coming Out & Self-Acceptance," and access to other materials regarding issues surrounding gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth. People can get the information through discs or via email. www.heartstrong.org

People Who Make a Difference

San Francisco Giants fan **Sean Chapin** created a petition on change.org asking the Giants to make an "It Gets Better" video—and succeeded. After 6,000 change.org members signed Sean's petition, the Giants committed to becoming the very first team in professional sports to make an "It Gets Better" video. You can start your own petition by going to www.change.org. At the bottom of the page under "Our Tools" is the heading for starting a petition.



Don Lemon, CNN anchor, has declared himself gay in a *New York Times* interview and in his new book *Transparent*. "I do have to say that the more people who come out, the better it is for everyone, certainly for the Tyler Clementis of the world." (Rutgers student University Tyler Clementi killed himself after fellow students taped his sexual encounter with another male in his dorm room and then broadcast the video on the Internet.) "I think if I had seen more people like me who are out and proud, it wouldn't have taken me 45 years to say it, to walk in the truth," Lemon said.

Rick Welts, the president and chief executive of the Phoenix Suns who has spent 40 years in sports from ball boy to N.B.A. executive to team president, has declared himself gay. "This is one of the last industries where the subject is off limits," Welts said about his prominent employment in professional men's team sports. Two years ago, his 14-year relationship ended partly because his partner finally refused the hidden life that Welts demanded for his job. According to Phoenix Suns player Steve Nash, "Anyone who's not ready for this needs to catch up. He's doing anyone who's not ready for this a favor."



In a settlement with the military, **Maj. Margaret Witt** (right) is retiring with full benefits, and her unlawful discharge will be removed from her service records. The 18-year decorated flight nurse won her lawsuit against the Pentagon in her fight, but the military appealed the decision. Witt plans to work toward a doctorate in physical therapy and continue her life with her partner (left), Laurie McChesney. Under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy Witt never "told": Air Force Reserve commanders began an investigation after a complaint that she was in a relationship with a married co-worker at her civilian job.

Daly Stops Fight against Gays

Some Companies Pay Gay's Health Tax

In an interview with *World Magazine's* Marvin Olasky, Focus on the Family president Jim Daly said that they probably could not stop same-sex marriage.

"We're losing on that one, especially among the 20- and 30-somethings: 65 to 70 percent of them favor same-sex marriage," he said. "I

don't know if that's going to change with a little more age—demographers would say probably not.

He continued, "I think we need to start calculating where we are in the culture. God might be telling Christians, "OK, there's no no-fault divorce in our church"?

Google, Apple, Facebook—these are a few of the major companies that are now paying for their gay employees' extra tax that they owe on their partners' health insurance, a tax that their married heterosexual co-workers don't pay because the government sees them as an economic unit.

Minnesota Starts 18-Months Fight over Same-Sex Marriage Rights

One of the nastiest fights to keep same-sex couples from legally marrying is shaping up in the state of Minnesota after the state house recently passed a bill, 70-62, to put a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage onto the 2012 ballot. The state had previously passed a law against same-sex marriage in 1997.

Four brave Republicans voted against the bill: Rep. John Kriesel was the most passionate in his response to the legislators supporting the bill. A wounded Iraq veteran who lost his legs in the war, he talked about the death of the gay soldier in his unit. "I cannot . . . say 'You know what, corporal, you were good enough to fight for your country and give your life, but you were not good enough to marry the person you love.'"

Protesters chanted outside the House chamber while the controversial pastor Bradley Dean gave the prayer for the day. Dean is well-known for his approval of the death penalty for gays. Although he did not reference same-sex marriage in his prayer, he did state that President Obama is not a Christian.

A coalition of organization supporting same-sex marriage called Minnesotans United for All Families has already formed to begin the opposition to the amendment. More information at <http://nelsnewday.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/minnesotas-anti-gay-marriage-bill/>

From Lisa Bonacci: I have been a volunteer grant writer for OCC PFLAG since it became active again a couple of years ago. I first learned about PFLAG in 2002 when I visited my sister in Portland and saw a PFLAG group march in the gay pride parade. It was a really moving experience for me to see the group marching, holding signs of support and love for their LGBT family members and friends. I knew this was a group I wanted to be a part of.

When I got back to Massachusetts, I joined PFLAG national. A few years later I moved to Newport to work at the Hatfield Marine Science Center where I work for NOAA, Fisheries. When I saw a listing for a PFLAG meeting in Newport, I was excited to see a chapter starting here, and I knew I wanted to help. It has been an honor to be part of such an active and vibrant chapter and to see the increase in visibility of LGBT issues in Lincoln County and the improvement in support for LGBT youth. I am happy to work with an organization that does so much to make the world a better, safer place for LGBT people and that fights for them to have the equal rights that they deserve.

And heck yes, I love my gay sister!

PFLAG Table, Newport Sat. Market

PFLAG is back for its third year at Newport's Saturday Market. Our table will have its bright rainbow colors, free balloons and stickers for kids, and lots of LGBT info for adults. We'll be selling Safe Space stickers and Marriage Equality pins and bumper stickers as well as collecting signatures for the Marriage Equality newspaper ad. Sign up to staff a shift on the second Saturday of each month—and stop by to say hi and cheer us on when you're at the market. See you there!

Marriage Equality Campaign

After our April Marriage Matters Potluck Dessert, dozens of PFLAG members continue to gather signatures for the Marriage Equality ad to be run in the *News-Times* in late June, selected because it's traditional wedding month. We expect over 300 signatures from area residents who support Marriage Equality. This campaign is part of Basic Rights Oregon's statewide effort to sway public opinion for a successful 2012 ballot initiative allowing all Oregonians to marry those they love.

Triangle Club at OCCC

PFLAG is supporting and mentoring the new Triangle Club at our Oregon Coast Community College. We hope to see that group working together with area GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance) clubs from high schools.

Annual Family Picnic, August 21

PFLAG's Third Annual Family Picnic will be at Beaver Creek Park in Newport where we'll gather for food and fun in the sun—and shade! We hope to continue our great turnout from toddlers to seniors, representing the whole range of PFLAG!

OCC PFLAG Calendar:

June 8, 7:00 pm: PFLAG—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport [Marc Adams of HeartStrong]

June 11: PFLAG Table at Saturday Market (Newport)

July 9: PFLAG Table at Saturday Market (Newport)

July 13, 7:00 pm: PFLAG—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport [A Beginning to Understanding Transgender Issues]

August 21: Third Annual PFLAG Family Picnic, Beaver Creek Park, Newport

The Coastal AIDS Network* has the following monthly activities:

Second Tuesday, 7:00 pm: "Movie Night," St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 NE Hwy 101, Lincoln City

Third Tuesday, 7:00 pm: "Pizza Night," Newport (only)

Fourth Tuesday, 7:00 pm: "Men's Pot Luck and Game Night," St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 NE Hwy 101, Lincoln City

We also try to have pizza in Tillamook or Pacific City. For more information email Dan, coastalaid-network@gmail.com or leave a message for him at (541)994-5597.

*CAN activities are open to everyone, regardless of HIV status or sexual orientation. The only event limited to men is the potluck night, but occasionally we bend that rule for special events.

CLASS Women's Potlucks: Call Jeannette at 867-6993.

OCC PFLAG Website Accepts Paypal!

You can now pay your PFLAG dues or make a one time or recurring donation to keep our PFLAG group supplied with handouts, booklets, and other necessities. A gift of only \$5/month means a lot to our little band of hard-working PFLAGers—check out our new website at www.occpflag.org and use this handy opportunity to help out!

Join PFLAG!

YES! I support the mission of PFLAG. Enclosed is my membership fee.*

_____ Individual or Household (\$30)
_____ Student/Limited Income (\$20)
_____ Contribution \$ _____

*Includes membership in National PFLAG with affiliates in over 365 worldwide communities.

Make check payable and mail to:

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