

# INTERWEAVE CONNECT



DECEMBER 2012

**THEN & NOW...40 YEARS OF FAMILY AND ALLY VOICES**

Dear Interweave Members and Friends,  
Let me speak a little about PFLAG, the focus of this newsletter. At Georgia Health Sciences University (GHSU), Medical College of Georgia, where I am on faculty, we are starting to activate a GHSU Equality group. During Pride week, we sponsored a panel of members of the BLGTQ community who each told a part of their story to students and faculty brave enough to attend – remember, this is Georgia. We staffed a booth in the student center with handouts about our plans, providing brochures with useful information and resources. We are also helping to provide medical students and faculty with insights into how to provide effective medical care to BLGTQ persons.

While I was staffing the booth in the student center, an adult came to the booth and quietly mentioned that she had a gay child. As she sought support and insight into her approach as a parent, we learned that she had not yet heard about PFLAG. Our board member, Nisco, through her newsletter work, has also learned that few of our UU congregations have any connection with PFLAG.

We hope, by focusing on PFLAG in this issue, Interweave members and chapters will be reminded of the importance of PFLAG to our families and will consider starting a PFLAG chapter or offering their church as a meeting place to an existing chapter. The person just coming out lives in the context of family members who deserve the support of peers who have already traveled the road they are starting on. Insights gained from persons who have gone before us can be invaluable to our own growth. See the story, "PFLAG Needs You!" in this newsletter to hear from a PFLAG mom who invested many years of her life to PFLAG after being given a membership to PFLAG by her son shortly after he came out to her.

May the members of your family who 'don't yet get it' be guided to attend a PFLAG meeting and have a whole new

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world of understanding begin to open to them. Is that asking too much? I hope not.

The Interweave Continental board members have worked hard this year, starting several brand new ventures: two youth awards, a new youth service project, a reception at GA for BLGTQ ministers and seminarians, and a newly expanded and improved newsletter!! These projects were in addition to our regular ones: Sermon contest, Mark DeWolfe Award, Interweave banquet at GA, annual board retreat, participation in Creating Change, the annual meeting of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Starting this month (November), we will send monthly renewal reminders to those who paid dues during a given month. Please continue your much-appreciated support by renewing your Interweave membership and by helping us to expand to new members! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

As always, let us hear from you if you have comments or suggestions.

Our best wishes to all for many good times during the holiday season ahead!

Maryka Bhattacharyya  
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# Interweave National Youth Advisory Board

In order better to engage and meet the needs of BGLTQ youth both within Unitarian Universalist congregations and in the wider community, Interweave Continental is in the process of forming a National Youth Advisory Board.

This new board, which will consist of BGLTQ and Allied youth from across the country, will develop and coordinate outreach projects, will engage in public advocacy on behalf of BGLTQ youth, and will assist Interweave Continental's Board of Directors, as well as our local chapters in responding to the challenges and opportunities that arise in our rapidly changing social and political environment.

The Board of Directors of Interweave Continental looks forward to receiving your thoughts, comments, and suggestions about the shape the Youth Advisory Board should take, about possible members for the Advisory Board, and about issues that the Advisory Board should address. Please feel free to contact Board of Directors Secretary J. David Macey (j davidmacey@msn.com) or any of the members of the Board of Directors listed on the cover of this issue of Interweave Connect with your ideas and suggestions.



Interweave Continental Board: Nisco Junkins, David Macey, Valerie White, Maryka Bhattacharyya, Tova Vitiello and Rev. Michelle LaGrave

## Interweave Continental

With your support, Interweave Continental continues to actively work toward ending oppression based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Interweave Continental is involved in the following:

- Our annual conference and business meeting, "Convo," to be held next year in conjunction with the Interweave banquet at 2013 UUA General Assembly in Louisville
- Events and workshops at the UUA General Assembly, including our Annual Banquet
- The Mark deWolfe Award, which is presented annually for lifetime devotion to Unitarian Universalist LGBTQ advocacy
- The Interweave Continental Sermon Award, presented annually for the best sermon in support of LGBTQ issues
- Interweave Connect, our monthly newsletter, which is emailed to over 1100 Unitarian Universalist Congregations and many LGBTQ organizations within those congregations
- Statements to the public on LGBTQ issues and concerns

### **Our goals include:**

- Effect positive change within UUA through our connections and collaborations with UUA leaders and members
- Represent a welcoming, liberal religious voice within local, regional and national LGBTQ communities
- Contribute to trans-formative grassroots movements that celebrate LGBT people and work to end all forms of oppression
- Support of LGBTQ ministers
- To establish a Service Project in conjunction with and support of LGBTQ Youth

## The Unitarian Society of Hartford, CT Establishes New PFLAG Group

The Unitarian Society of Hartford has had a long history of providing a home for GLBTQ members, friends and visitors. We are a designated Welcoming Congregation, and we officially became an Interweave chapter in 2008.

Members of our congregation are dedicated to creating a church society as well as a larger community that respects diverse sexual orientations and individual gender identities. Our Small Group Ministry program has included GLBTQ focused sessions, and some of our participants have invited straight members to join in the discussions.

Until recently we have never had a PFLAG organization in USH. But now we do! At the suggestion of our Interweave chapter, a small group came together to create a brand new USH PFLAG sub-group. Our first act was to create a new PFLAG label that members of our congregation can add to their name tags, if they want. We are planning to expand the size of our group by inviting other members of our church to join us. We know it will grow substantially, reflecting the congregation's broad support and enthusiasm for Interweave. Presently, we are making plans to coordinate our programs and activities with the USH Interweave sub-council and PFLAG Hartford.

For starters, the members of the new PFLAG group met with the Chair of USH Interweave and offered. The two groups decided to work together and present an Interweave worship service on January 27, 2013. Our offer was gratefully accepted and we are really excited about this wonderful opportunity

to share our passion and support for GLBTQ people. The service will certainly include some very personal statements and there will be a "talk-back" after the service.

So we are off and running. Our vision matches the vision of PFLAG Hartford:

We, the parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (sic) persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. PFLAG welcomes the participation and support of all who share in, and hope to realize this vision.

Rich Charbonneau, Chair,  
USH Interweave

Rich Charbonneau and Bill LaPorte-Bryan



sub-council  
Bill LaPorte-Bryan, Chair,  
USH Interweave  
PFLAG sub-group

## The Dr. Oz Show's Irresponsible Decision to Air a "Debate" on So-Called Reparative Therapy

Today, despite the work of PFLAG National and GLAAD behind the scenes, the Dr. Oz show aired a program regarding so-called reparative therapy. This harmful practice--which has been denounced by every major mainstream medical, psychological, psychiatric, and child welfare association--was recently banned in California, and just this morning, Rep. Jackie Speier introduced a resolution in Congress to elevate this ban to the national level. More disturbing? The open platform given to "experts" on ex-gay therapy, unchallenged by Dr. Oz, and then those same "experts" given an opportunity to challenge the experts on the RIGHT side of science and medicine.

[Read a joint statement here from PFLAG National, GLAAD, and GLSEN.](#)

## PFLAG NEEDS YOU!!

“Got good news and bad news. The bad news is, I’m gay; the good news is, I’m HIV negative!” This short, concise statement launched my husband and me on a journey that we could never, in our wildest imaginings, have anticipated. But, our reaction was non-emotional and simple; much as if our son had just confided in us what he had for breakfast!

His siblings reacted in much the same way, as did extended family members. We felt no discomfort in passing the newly-acquired information along to friends and acquaintances. But, still concerned, our son gifted us with a membership to PFLAG the next Christmas. It wasn’t long before we realized why we were being “handled” with such sensitivity during the coming-out process.

We became aware of so many heart-wrenching stories. These stories, filled with total despair, came from parents feeling every emotion on the charts: betrayal, fear, anger, guilt, rejection of their child and alienation from their faith community. In addition, there were those (GLBT) suffering the anguish of separation from family, friends and society in general. They were seeking reassurance of their self-worth from the parents who had been through the experience of their child’s coming out. Hugs were and continue to be plentiful.

The main areas of need for all persons confronted with this reality, whatever form it takes, are support and education. First, they need the proverbial sympathetic shoulder and then we can be of support by giving them the knowledge that is vital to understanding. We can also be of support by empathizing with family members and friends.

As is often the case, many folks are motivated to direct their energy toward advocating, at all levels,

### **S.F. Health Care to Cover Sex Reassignment Surgery**

A panel has voted to cover the cost and provide sexual reassignment surgery for transgendered people as part of San Francisco’s universal health care plan.

[read the full story](#)



PFLAG Parents

for reforms in discriminatory laws. My husband and I unknowingly shook hands with a young candidate for the Illinois State Senate on a bus trip to Springfield with GLBT advocates. It was arranged by a gay right’s advocacy group in Chicago as participants in Lobby Day. In a later trip, we were introduced to him once again as a Senator, and we were very pleased with his views. Hugs were shared. He was later elected President of the United States.

We are still very involved with PFLAG. A statement of purpose is read at the beginning of each meeting. It gives assurance of confidentiality and ends with a prophetic suggestion: “When you no longer feel the need for PFLAG, that’s when PFLAG needs you the most.”

This article was written by a PFLAG mother

## **PFLAG Chapter Information and Resources**



[Find a PFLAG near you](#)



Sue Null, carried a sign that read: "My gay children deserve equal rights." She says of her actions, "I wanted to carry it last year and was cautioned not to, because I might arouse dissension. This year I said I didn't care, I was carrying it anyway, and so far, no nasty letters to the newspaper."

## **P-FLAG Gave Us The Tools**

Will he be alive or dead when I get home today?  
or needing an immediate ride to the emergency  
room?

Not a normal thought for a host parent, but one that passed through my mind several times 17 years ago when I worried about the emotional instability of a young man from another country who was living in my American home and who was severely disturbed about realizing that yes, he was gay. That the differences he had long felt about himself in comparison with other guys meant that he was gay. And that those differences were considered abhorrent, intolerable, and unacceptable to him, to God, his family, and his culture.

XXX became so severely depressed at age 25 when he came to grips with the fact that he was gay that he ended up trying to commit suicide four times in seven months. I, who had never been depressed in my life, realized that I, too, was becoming depressed and filled with despair because I didn't know how to help this charming young man deal with his unwanted anguish. I told him that we had a lesbian

daughter whom we completely loved and that it was a good thing he had landed in our house. I took him to talk with our UU minister who was gay. But it wasn't enough to assuage the pain. He would try to go to sleep at night with his head full of thoughts of why had God cursed him so? What had he done to deserve this curse? Why had God forsaken him? If his parents found out their only son was gay, they might feel they had been inadequate and blame themselves...and become suicidal.

In desperation, I took him to a P-FLAG meeting, a place I had never gone when I learned about our daughter because I didn't feel it necessary. I felt it was our good fortune to be members of a UU church with a gay minister and we were comfortable with our daughter. P-FLAG was meeting at that time in an Episcopalian church. My young man's reaction when we walked into the sanctuary was "Wow! All these people are here to support their gay children!?"

A combination of time, P-FLAG, counseling, anti-depression medication, and our family support eventually helped XXX stay alive, investigate a new field of study, and become content with himself as he was. He has stayed in the U.S., is contributing to society, and has a loving partner. His mother still has no idea that she has a gay son.

The agony that XXX suffered prompted my husband and me to become active with P-FLAG as we met other young people who were similarly distressed at the lack of parental support. I felt it was inhumane for young people to suffer through no fault of their own, simply because of who they were. As a result, I became outspoken and willing to talk to anybody if I felt I could have any impact. I refuse to be silent. I lobbied state legislators in my state and in Washington D.C. I marched in Washington and in local Pride Parades. I wrote letters to every newspaper possible. I have fought through two state anti-gay marriage amendments, in Texas and North Carolina, and I don't want any more. I am weary of people telling me, "But the Bible says...." or "I am a Christian....," as if that's the end of the discussion. Too many intelligent people refuse to open their heart and mind and think.

P-FLAG gave us the tools and support necessary to continue to fight for equality for our children. We are immensely grateful that P-FLAG exists and is there for us parents and for the BGLT community when it is needed.

Sue Null, a member of  
UU Church of Brevard, NC

## PFLAG History Snapshot

The idea for PFLAG began in 1972 when Jeanne Manford marched with her son, Morty, in New York's Christopher Street Liberation Day March, the precursor to today's Pride parade. After many gay and lesbian people ran up to Jeanne during the parade and begged her to talk to their parents, she decided to begin a support group. The first formal meeting took place in 1973 at a local church. Approximately 20 people attended.

In the next years, through word of mouth and community need, similar groups sprang up around the country, offering "safe havens" and mutual support for parents with gay and lesbian children. Following the 1979 National March for Gay and Lesbian Rights, representatives from these groups met for the first time in Washington, DC.

By 1980, PFLAG, then known as Parents FLAG, began to distribute information to educational institutions and communities of faith nationwide, establishing itself as a source of information for the general public. When "Dear Abby" mentioned PFLAG in one of her advice columns, we received more than 7,000 letters requesting information. In 1981, members decided to launch a national organization. The first PFLAG office was established in Los Angeles under founding president Adele Starr.

In 1982, the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc., then representing some 20 groups, was incorporated in California and granted non-profit, tax-exempt status. In 1987, PFLAG relocated to Denver, under President Elinor Lewallen. Also in the 1980s, PFLAG became involved in opposing Anita Bryant's anti-gay crusade and worked to end the U.S. military's efforts to discharge lesbians—more than a decade before military issues came to the forefront of the GLBT movement. And by the late 1980s, PFLAG began to have notable success in organizing chapters in rural communities.

In 1990, following a period of significant growth, PFLAG employed an Executive Director, expanded its staff, and moved to Washington, DC. Also in 1990, PFLAG President Paulette Goodman sent a letter to Barbara Bush asking for Mrs. Bush's support. The first lady's personal reply stated, "I firmly believe that we cannot tolerate discrimination against any individuals or groups in our country. Such treatment always



1972 when Jeanne Manford marched with her son, Morty, in New York's Christopher Street Liberation Day March,

brings with it pain and perpetuates intolerance." Inadvertently given to the Associated Press, her comments caused a political maelstrom and were perhaps the first gay-positive comments to come from the White House.

In the early 1990s, PFLAG chapters in Massachusetts helped pass the first Safe Schools legislation in the country. In 1993, PFLAG added the word "Families" to the name, and added bisexual people to its mission and work. By the mid-1990s a PFLAG family was responsible for the Department of Education's ruling that Title 9 also protected gay and lesbian students from harassment based on sexual orientation. PFLAG put the Religious Right on the defensive, when Pat Robertson threatened to sue any station that carried the Project Open Mind advertisements. The resulting media coverage drew national attention to PFLAG's message linking hate speech with hate crimes and LGBT teen suicide. In 1998, PFLAG added transgender people to its mission.

At the turn of the century, PFLAG began to develop nationally coordinated programs in order to better focus the grassroots network. Programs like Cultivating Respect: Safe Schools for All, Straight for Equality, the National Scholarship Program, Bringing the Message Home, and Welcoming Faith Communities are already showing results.

This article is from PFLAG's website

# Rural Oregon PFLAG and Welcoming Churches Work Together

Five years ago another gay teen committed suicide in our small rural community on the central Oregon coast. He was out to his friends and had some support at school. But his mother was horrified because she believed her church pastor who said he would burn in hell forever. She could not encourage or support his “lifestyle” and made him feel guilty for his very existence—which he ended all too soon.

A team of LGBT education and mental health professionals vowed to engage the community and create more support for LGBT young people. The first priority was to establish a PFLAG chapter. Monthly meetings began in the summer of 2008 and PFLAG’s mission of Support, Education and Advocacy was underway on the Oregon Coast. While urban PFLAG chapters can focus on the needs of parents and family members, rural PFLAGs are often an umbrella for all LGBT services and resources and include many gay members—teens to elders. Among this new chapter’s top priorities were to establish GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance) clubs in all the area high schools, educate the community about their LGBT friends and neighbors, and encourage local churches to be openly welcoming.

Because fundamentalist churches often predominate in rural areas, negative attitudes toward the gay community were strong, even in this relatively liberal and arts-oriented area. There was only one Welcoming Congregation on the Oregon Coast in 2008. PFLAG set out to recruit more support from mainstream churches.

PFLAG leaders (a.k.a. “The Gay Church Ladies”) spoke at adult forums and study groups to provide basic information about the LGBT community and to offer suggestions about how churches can be more effective in their welcoming efforts. Among the suggestions were:

- Display Safe Space rainbow stickers at all church entrances
- Welcoming statement in weekly bulletins & newsletters as well as on the cover page of the church website and the street sign
- Announce and celebrate or bless the anniversaries of LGBT couples

- Include in LGBT in couples groups at church or social events
- Pastoral counseling appropriate to gays with training for pastors
- Special prayers or services for Matthew Shepherd Day, World AIDS Day, Day of Silence, Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Talk about your LGBT family or friends and their struggles & joys
- Be comfortable talking to and about gays as couples. “How’s your partner—(or your sweetie)?”
- Become more aware of the issues faced by gay teens and adults in the community—bullying, discrimination in housing, employment, etc.
- Acknowledge the deep damage done to gays by many churches
- Initiate the process for the church to be listed as a Welcoming or Reconciling Congregation and interfaith Believe Out Loud parish
- Church membership & active participation in PFLAG with regular reports to Church Councils
- Church Council makes PFLAG or a local LGBT program one of its local ministries or missions
- Urge denomination leadership and local members to condemn Ugandan legislation for gay death penalty
- Coordinate with other LGBT-friendly churches, i.e. Gays & Churches Seminar, shared Gay Pride Table, Welcoming Churches events
- Host PFLAG and GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance) events without charge

Over the last five years several other churches undertook the study, discussion, and congregational vote necessary to become officially Welcoming or Reconciling congregations. Now seven congregations collaborate with PFLAG to make Lincoln County safer and more welcoming: Congregational (UCC) and St. James Episcopal in Lincoln City; Atonement Lutheran (ELCA), Central Coast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and St. Stephen’s Episcopal in Newport; United Methodist in Toledo; and St. Luke’s Episcopal in Waldport.

Welcoming churches have hosted or participated in many community events in the last few years. These include:



- **Showing of “Out in the Silence”** and discussion with the film’s directors, Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer. Over 150 community members attended this event sponsored by PFLAG and hosted by Atonement Lutheran Church.



- **Annual Love is Love Valentine Parties** began in 2010 when PFLAG planned the first-ever Valentine Party for “gay and straight, young and old.” Talented local musicians and writers ranging in age from teens to 80’s provided the entertainment. All the Welcoming churches loaded the refreshment tables with beautiful and tasty Valentine treats. Toledo Methodist members decorated the room and hosted a Valentine-making table. This party was featured in the national PFLAG publication as a first in the country.



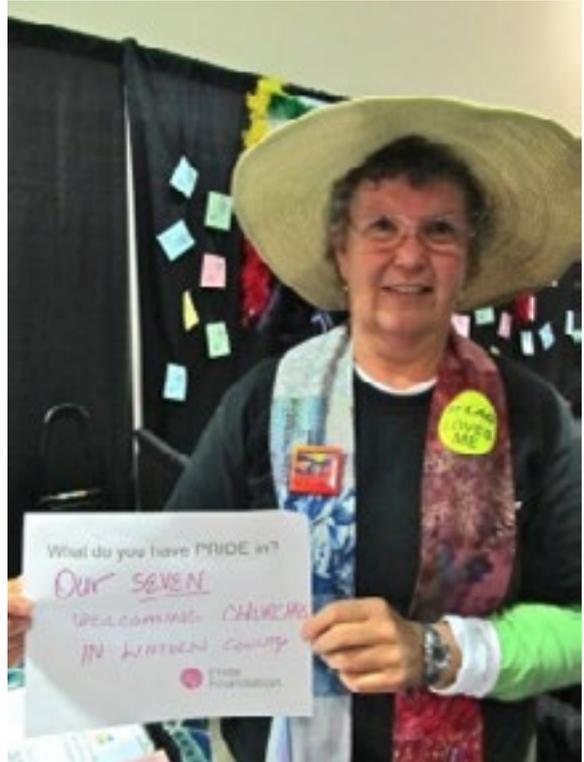
- Welcoming Churches share a space with PFLAG at Newport’s **Saturday Markets** from May through October each year. Church members volunteer to staff the Welcoming Churches table and provide information to the public about these churches. This has been a very effective way to counter the belief that all churches are hostile and judgmental.



PFLAG leaders Kae Bates & Jeanne St. John

- Lincoln County's Welcoming Churches have joined PFLAG and their denominations in local and statewide **Gay Pride events**. Bishops of the Lutheran and Episcopal Churches have marched in the Portland Gay Pride parade and local churches have carried banners there. Welcoming Churches have shared a table at the Oregon Coast Pride events in recent years.
- Local Welcoming Churches have hosted Marriage Equality events and helped gather signatures in support of full civil marriage rights for LGBT people. A full-page newspaper ad included signatures of over 400 local supporters.
- Recently a fundamentalist pastor responded to growing support for marriage equality with a hate-filled, vitriolic opinion piece in a local newspaper. He raged about the sinfulness of gays and quoted at length from the "Seven Deadly Passages" which some churches use to condemn homosexuality. Welcoming Churches joined PFLAG in an immediate and very effective response. A powerful letter signed by 15 clergy (and accompanied by the names of over 200 local church members) assured the community that many churches offered God's love and welcome to LGBT people. A meeting with the newspaper's publisher was hosted by a church and included PFLAG parents, LGBT families, and several clergy and church members. The meeting resulted in a change of policy by the newspaper and the assurance that such a virulent opinion piece could never again be published.

PFLAG's collaboration and support for Welcoming Churches has played a major role in making the Central Oregon Coast safer and more welcoming for the LGBT community. This partnership was made in heaven!



Methodist Pastor Brenda Willis

Jeanne St. John, Ph.D, Co-Chair  
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**Poll finds fresh increase in US racism**  
**Associated Press poll says anti-black sentiment has grown since Barack Obama's historic election victory in 2008.** [read the whole story](#)

# Make it Better Now

## Professional Development Opportunity for Unitarian Universalist Leaders



Join us for a day of workshops and discussions on how to better welcome and minister to LGBTQ youth within our Unitarian Universalist congregations. This professional development opportunity is available for Ministers, Seminarians, Directors of Religious Education, Youth Group Leaders, and all other UU leaders interested in exploring the pastoral care needs of LGBTQ youth, reflecting on church policies, and sharing best practices.

**Date:** Saturday, January 26, 2013 Time: 9:30am-3:00pm

**Location:** First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, 353 Great Road, Stow, MA 01775

**Cost:** \$15 per person includes refreshments and lunch

### Schedule:

9:30-10:00 Registration/ Gathering

10:00-10:45 Welcome/ Goal Setting

10:45-11:45 Workshop Block #1

11:45-12:45 Lunch Conversation- Church Policies and LGBTQ Youth

12:45-1:45 Workshop Block #2

1:45-2:30 Youth Panel

2:30-3:00 Closing Conversation

Registration: [www.tinyurl.com/makeitbetter2013](http://www.tinyurl.com/makeitbetter2013)

### Sponsors:

- Clara Barton and Massachusetts Bay Districts of Unitarian Universalist Congregations [www.cbd-mbd-uaa.org](http://www.cbd-mbd-uaa.org)
- North Atlantic Regional Chapter- Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA)
- Renewal House- Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry [www.uuum.org](http://www.uuum.org)
- Unitarian Universalist Association [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)
- West Suburban Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth (WAGLY) [www.WAGLY.org](http://www.WAGLY.org)

### Workshops:

#### Church Policies and LGBTQ Youth-

Has your congregation ever reflected on what assumptions about gender and sexuality are including in its Safe Congregation and Youth Group policies? Over lunch we will be examining a few sample policies and reflecting on assumptions made about sexuality and gender identity contained within them.

Presenters- Rev. Jack Patrick Lewis, Assistant Minister at UU Society of Wellesley Hills and Executive Director of WAGLY & Michelle Cote, Director of Religious Education at the First Parish of Stow & Acton

#### Creating a Culture of Safety, Acceptance, and Exploration

- This facilitated discussion will give us a chance to explore our successes and struggles with welcoming and integrating LGBTQ youth into our communities. How do we create a youth group culture that is truly open and accepting? And what does it really mean to be an ally?

Presenters- Cindy Beal, Director of Religious Education at UU Society of Northampton and Florence and LREDA Board Member & Roberta Altamari, Director of Lifespan Religious Education at First Parish of Sudbury

## Make it Better Now (continued)

### Pastoral Care to Support LGBTQ Youth-

This workshop will provide the fundamentals of pastoral care to support LGBTQ youth. Some of the topics that will be covered are sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Sexual orientation assessment tools will be discussed and processed.

Presenters- Rev. Dr. Monica L. Cummings, UUA Director of Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color

### The Power of Questions in Engaging with LGBTQ Youth-

In any group, there are the possibilities of conflict, of avoidance or silence, or of "just being polite," which may not promote the deep engagement and trust you want in your youth group or congregation. This workshop is an opportunity to experience something else: genuine curiosity and inquiry, the power of questions to open up conversation and connection.

Presenters- Alison Streit Baron and Chloe Kanas, Public Conversations Project

#### Contact

[More information and registration](#)

Rev. Jack Lewis  
jlewis@uuwellesley.org  
781.235.7423 x-112



### Youth at Risk: Understanding Disproportionate Violence, Suicide, and Homelessness among LGBTQ Youth

- As suicide and homelessness rates for queer and trans youth skyrocket, it is more important than ever for liberal religious people to understand the disproportionate risks queer and trans youth face, and which youth may need the greatest support. Not only will this workshop inform pastoral care toward youth, but it will also speak to the need to ground our social justice efforts in the experiences of those who are most marginalized and in need. Presenters- Rev. Dr. Monica L. Cummings, UUA Director of Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color & Zr. Alex Kapitan, UUA LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Administrator



Click here to purchase Interweave Membership

Looking for the perfect gift for that special queer person or ally? Look no further! A membership in Interweave connects them to BGLTQ UU's in a nationwide network of ministry and activism and supports a valuable effort too. Maybe your special person is already a member? Then make a donation in their honor, and we'll list them in the January newsletter if you like.



## You Brought This on Yourself

This poem is dedicated to everyone in the LGBTQ community, especially those who have been brutalized, like my

daughter, who was hospitalized after being brutalized at Abu Ghraib High School in America's most livable city, Naperville, IL. They found her. They found her at the bottom of the stairs. And she had blood on her face and tears on cheeks. And three football players. Anointed, appointed, and baptized by the Church of Latter Day Hate. Pushed her down a flight of stairs because she was gay. The teachers in their glass closets counted their pay and looked and looked and looked— The other way. The old principal told my daughter: "We can't be of any help: you brought this on yourself." So, my daughter came home later that evening and slit her wrist with a plastic knife, Ran out into the middle of the street looking for oncoming headlights so that she could throw herself into darkness forever.

I didn't know what to do.  
I'm a meek man, I'm a mild man, I have problems asking

my server at Bob Evans for extra cream in my coffee. But I was engaged, I was enraged, I was paged by my conscience and I told my daughter: "You push me in front of the next car because I would rather die than see you suffer." And she cried and we hugged, and she knew that I was by her side, on her side, on her side, and she did not have to commit suicide. And I became obsessed, an angel, a demon, as obnoxious as Tony Little selling his exercise equipment or Matthew Lesko his books on government grants, because it's wrong, it's wrong for the weight of the world to be on the shoulders of a fifteen-year-old girl. I mean she ain't Atlas: she can't shrug the world off her shoulders. But I can help push—push—the world off her shoulders because I'm her father. I mean, sir, if she were your daughter, what would you do? And, sir, if she were your daughter, what would you do? And Dick Cheney and Alan Keyes, if she were your daughter, what would you do— Well, we'd know what you do, and that would be the wrong thing.

So, the next day I went to the principal's office, and I was armed: Armed with ideals of justice, goodness, and decency. And I had fire in my eyes—and they looked at me pleadingly. But the only thing I could tell them was this: "I can't be any help: you brought this on yourself."

Slam poem by George David Miller  
Bolingbrook Illinois

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## WAGLY Spends Grant on Resource Library

The West Suburban Alliance of GLBTQ Youth (WAGLY) has expanded their Resource Library with a grant from Interweave Continental. Rev. Jack Lewis, Executive Director of WAGLY, says "this grant has allowed us to provide additional resources to our youth, affirming and supportive resources about being safe and healthy GLBTQ youth." This expansion of the Resource Library is not only available to WAGLY youth but also parents and family members through WAGLY's partnership with their PFLAG chapter.





## Transgender Day of Remembrance held in Maryville, TN

On November 18th, Foothills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, together with Maryville College GSA, and PFLAG Maryville, helped mark the Transgender Day of Remembrance. This was the third annual event to be held in Maryville, TN. Twenty-one people came together from these three local organizations to celebrate the lives and witness to the loss of those who had been victims of hate and fear. As in the past, both a roadside sign campaign and a candlelit vigil marked the date. Laura Bogle, consulting minister at FUUF provided open and closing words. After the last name was read aloud, she reminded those gathered that the people remembered also experienced joy and hope in life and that our witness to the world was to bring this hope forward in honor of their lives.



Representatives from Foothills UU Fellowship

