

PFLAG BOULDER COUNTY

February 2015

Raising Confident Trans* Youth Sunday, February 8th at 3pm

We will open up our meeting to collaboration and conversation around raising a healthy, happy transgender or gender nonconforming youth. Karen Axe, leader of Trans-Youth Education & Support (TYES) of Colorado, will lead the conversation.

Please join us on Sunday, February 8th at 3pm at Cairn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 1700 Stonehenge Dr., Lafayette, CO 80026.

The Importance of Allies to the Trans* Community By Jean Hodges and Jenny Martin

PFLAG Boulder County, and indeed PFLAG nationwide, has made a conscious effort in recent years to include the transgender community in our mission of support, education and advocacy. Without question, the LGB community has made great strides in social justice and equality and while we still have a long way to go, we cannot forget the transgender community has even farther. It is with this in mind that we note how much the transgender community needs our support, our help in educating society and our advocacy on their behalf. In short, they need allies.

We have seen membership decline in recent years and dues unpaid with the belief that PFLAG doesn't need support anymore. Additionally, some in the LGB community have expressed that PFLAG Boulder County focuses too much on transgender topics and have shied away from programs and events with the sentiment, "It's not our issue."

We would suggest that the parents, friends and families of trans* kids and adults are exactly where parents, friends and families of gays and lesbians were 25 years ago - scared of public rejection, fearful for their kids in school and on the street, and needing support and to learn more about how to navigate situations to keep their kids and themselves safe. They need our support and we should provide that support in the same way it was provided to lesbians and gays - through a shared and steadfast commitment to stand together and work for progress.

Concern over trans* people and their issues has been a priority for our chapter for the past ten years. As we make progress for gays and lesbians, we cannot forget that the movement for LGBT equality and acceptance isn't over until EVERYONE is free. History has repeatedly shown us that progress on behalf of any group is rarely made without the support of allies. Please join us in a shared commitment to care for trans* issues as much as allies have cared for gay and lesbian issues over the years to make progress come to pass.

Meetings

First United Methodist Church
1421 Spruce Street, Boulder
303-444-8164

*Cairn Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)*
1700 Stonehenge Dr, Lafayette
303-442-1861

The Heart of Longmont FUMC
11th and Emery, Longmont
303-651-6125

2pm - Support & Advocacy Groups Meet

3pm - Program

At 2pm a support group, especially intended for newcomers and others dealing with personal LGBT-related issues, meets in the library as long as needed. Confidentiality is promised.

The public is always welcome to the main program at 3pm., usually on the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Our location rotates between the three above locations - see our program schedule for more info.

Contact info@pflagboulder.org with questions, concerns, or requests for support to get a personal response.

February 8th
Raising Confident Trans* Youth

TYES - A Support Organization for Families with Gender Variant Children
Meets, 2pm on second Sundays
Same Locations as PFLAG Meetings
E-mail: TYES.group@gmail.com

The National Conference on LGBT Equality
Creating Change
 February 4 – 8, 2015 • Sheraton Downtown Denver
 The largest annual gathering of activists, organizers,
 and leaders in the LGBT movement

NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE
www.CreatingChange.org

Creating Change 2015!

The 27th National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change (“Creating Change”) is coming to Denver, Colorado and the Sheraton Denver Downtown, February 4–8, 2015.

What is Creating Change?

Only the premier annual organizing and skills-building event for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and their allies!! The National LGBTQ Task Force sponsors and organizes Creating Change every year. 2015 marks the 27th gathering of this unique national conference. Creating Change is the nation's pre-eminent political, leadership and skills-building conference for the LGBT social justice movement. Since 1988, Creating Change has created the opportunity for thousands of committed people to develop and hone their skills, celebrate victories, build community, and to be inspired by visionaries of our LGBT movement and allied movements for justice and equality.

More than 3,500 people from all over the country attend every year. Presenters and participants come from all walks of life and include members of the business community, elected officials, students, faith leaders and staff and volunteers of non-profit organizations.

Over the five days of the Creating Change Conference, there will be over 18 day-long institutes, two dozen sophisticated trainings in the Academy for Leadership and Action, a special programming segment called Practice Spirit, Do Justice for faith leaders and organizers, approximately 250 workshops and caucus sessions, four keynote plenary sessions, worshipful gatherings, film screenings, meetings, receptions, social events, and a multitude of opportunities for attendees to meet and learn from each other.

They say that everything seems bigger in Denver, so you don't want to miss the 2015 Creating Change Conference!

For more information about the event, including how to register on-site, visit: <http://www.creatingchange.org/>

Peterson Unplugged: A Ridiculously Serious Look at LGBT Issues, Religion and the End of the World
*Sunday, February 8, 2015 at Community United Church of Christ,
 2650 Table Mesa Drive, Boulder CO 80305.*

PFLAG Boulder County is proud to be one of the local sponsors of this great comedy show coming to Boulder on February 8, 2015. Peterson Toscano is a theatrical performance activist using comedy and storytelling to address social justice concerns.

With flawless character transformations, gut-busting comedy sketches, and sparkling social commentary,

Toscano is one of America’s most original comics. A Bible scholar, an LGBTQ activist, and a skilled actor, Peterson will share materials excerpts from his original one-person comedies including, Doin’ Time in the Homo No Mo Halfway House, Jesus Had Two Daddies, Transfigurations—Transgressing Gender in the Bible, and Does This Apocalypse Make Me Look Fat? From the ex-gay movement to the price of coffee on a warming planet, Peterson brings heart and humor to the most important issues of our day.

You will laugh and feel glad to be alive.



Marriage Equality Returns to the Supreme Court

by Jenny Martin

On January 16, 2015, the U. S. Supreme Court announced that it would hear the appeal of four cases regarding marriage equality from the Sixth Circuit. In November, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals became the first appellate court to uphold same-sex marriage bans, thereby creating a split within the appellate courts and making it more likely for the Court to ultimately agree to hear an appeal on the issue of marriage equality.

The questions presented to the high court by the Sixth Circuit cases are as follows: (1) "Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex?" and (2) "Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state?" Thus, essentially, the Court will answer the questions of whether same-sex marriage bans are unconstitutional and separately, whether a state that bans same-sex marriages can lawfully refuse to recognize such a marriage from another state. The Court will hold oral arguments on these cases in late April. Oral arguments will last 90 minutes for the first question noted above and 60 minutes for the second. The Court is expected to issue a decision in late June.

Following the Court's January 16th announcement, PFLAG National issued the following statement: "PFLAG's values are America's values and that means recognizing that all marriages deserve equal respect and recognition no matter where they are celebrated. Since the last time the Supreme Court took up marriage equality, PFLAG has shared family stories in courts across the country, including in the Sixth Circuit, which demonstrate the harm done when marriage is denied, not just to the couples, but also to their families. PFLAGers will continue sharing their stories so that the Supreme Court will realize the law needs to protect all of our families equally."

Michelle Theall, Local Author of *Teaching the Cat to Sit: A Memoir* Sunday, March 8th at 3pm @ First United Methodist Church, Boulder

Author Michelle Theall, Boulder resident and an out gay Christian, will speak about her recent book, *Teaching the Cat To Sit: A Memoir*. The book is about growing up gay and Catholic in the Texas Bible Belt and experiencing discrimination for her family in church. She hopes her talk will inspire timely discussion about the modern issues of family, motherhood, bullying and faith. Michelle's goal is that in sharing her experiences that her audience will gain "a measure of courage to become who they are supposed to be in the world."

Michelle says she was inspired to pen the memoir in 2010, after she learned her adopted son would be expelled from Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic school in Boulder because his parents were lesbians. Interestingly, the book's title was inspired by a Siamese cat she had as a child. Since Theall had initially wanted a puppy, she spent much of her free time trying to get the cat to do a dog's tricks—a metaphor, the author says, for her own life in the closet.

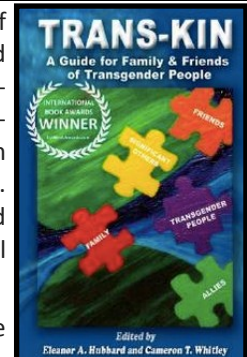


Trans-Kin: A Guide for Family and Friends of Transgender People (Now Available on Kindle)

by Dr. Eleanor A. Hubbard and Cameron T. Whitle [Boulder Press, Boulder, CO]

Trans-Kin: A Guide for Family and Friends of Transgender People was co-written by one of PFLAG Boulder County's Board members, Dr. Eleanor A. Hubbard, and originally published in 2012. Award-winner in the 'Gay and Lesbian: Non-Fiction' category of the 2013 International Book Awards, a first place winner in the Social Sciences of the EVVY awards and recipient of the Colorado Independent Publishers Award, *Trans-Kin* is a collection of stories from significant others, family members, friends and allies of transgender persons (SOFFAs). Powerful, thought-provoking and enlightening, this collection will provide for the head and the heart of anyone who has ever loved a transgender person. *Trans-Kin* is also an essential read for allies of the transgender community and anyone who wishes to become one.

Trans-Kin recently became available on Kindle so if you have not read it before now, we encourage you to download and read it soon.



Break the Silence
by Morgan Martin, age 14

Innocent mockingbird, shot from her tree,
Her wings spread wide, her body weightless,
Making no noise as she falls to the ground.
The other mockingbirds turn their heads,
Their song stretches on like silence, stretches
Like the mockingbird's wings.

We are the people who make the silence
Into a living being that will someday devour us all.
Everyone is waiting for someone else to break the silence.
Wait for what? For someone else to shout enough?

But we are all someone else to someone else
The turning of the world will not turn our heads
To the faces of the broken.

Time will not make us learn, will not open
Our ears, our eyes, our minds
To the silent cries and screams of the voiceless.

It is our job! It is our prerogative to stand
With open arms at the gates of love
For those who strive to love one another,
Are not afraid of two women holding hands.

We are the people, we are the silence,
We must shout, "Enough!"
Enough of people worshipping in secret,
Enough of men with dark skin trampled into the ground.
We are the people. And we must break the silence.



We Are All Someone Else
to Someone Else

Annual Membership Report

PFLAG Boulder County issues a big thank you to everyone who joined as a new member this year and to all of those who renewed your membership. For those among you who like numbers, here are our statistics for 2015:

We have 64 members in Boulder County PFLAG; 10 of which are new members. We also provide 48 complimentary copies of the newsletters to all of the welcoming congregations in our community. If you haven't joined yet, or renewed your membership, you can do that at any time by visiting: <http://pflagboulder.org/join-pflag/>

The Legal Landscape of Marriage Equality – Updates
by Raga Gopalakrishnan

The biggest bombshell of the new year has been, without a doubt, the U. S. Supreme Court's mid-January decision to consolidate and hear the four marriage equality appeals out of the Sixth Circuit. Jenny covers this development in detail in Page 3. As a result of this announcement, all pending lawsuits in lower courts were expected to come to a standstill until the U. S. Supreme Court decides the issue. Perhaps surprisingly, only North Dakota's and Georgia's cases have been explicitly stayed so far, and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals and the federal district court in Nebraska have explicitly refused to stay their pending cases.

January saw two more marriage bans declared unconstitutional by federal judges in South Dakota and Alabama. Those judgments are both stayed for now; however, the stay in Alabama's case is temporary and expires February 9, unless the Eleventh Circuit or the U. S. Supreme Court extends it. Both refused to do so just last December in a very similar situation with Florida; however, it is unclear whether the U. S. Supreme Court's announcement that it will hear the Sixth Circuit appeals will now favor extending the stay.

On January 9, a 3-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments concerning the marriage bans of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, by the end of which the panel appeared poised to strike them down by a vote of 2 to 1. A judgment could come down within the next few weeks, unless they wait to see how the U. S. Supreme Court rules on the issue.

Finally, on January 29, the Louisiana Supreme Court held oral argument on an appeal from a lower state court ruling striking down Louisiana's marriage ban, during which both sides urged the Court to hand down a ruling without waiting for the U. S. Supreme Court to rule on the issue.