

Portland Voice

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P.O. Box 8944, Portland, OR 9720

February, 2012

President's Message

Like many PFLAG chapters across the country, each PFLAG Portland meeting starts with a recitation of our mission statement:

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

It's a powerful statement that gets at the heart of our work. Reading it at our monthly meetings has become a highlight for me. It sets the tone of unconditional love and a firm commitment to equality.

I particularly appreciate how the statement has evolved in recent years to include more of our PFLAG participants. When I became PFLAG Portland's president, I inherited a mission statement signboard that didn't include the phrase "gender identity" in the last sentence. One of our previous leaders added a sticky tag to it so we were sure to include "gender identity" as the statement was read. It wasn't too long before we purchased a new mission statement signboard with updated language. And none too soon – we have a wonderful group of transgender folks who attend our PFLAG meetings monthly and their service to our new parents of transgender children and to people just beginning their own transition is invaluable.

I believe a good mission statement is never static. It continues to evolve with changing language and ideas. Now is the time for another change - to replace the

(continued on page 2)

Monthly Meeting Information

Join us on **February 14, 2012** – Valentine's Day! – PFLAG Portland welcomes Molly Franks, MPH, Multnomah County Health Department. Molly has long been an educator and advocate in the LGBTQ community, especially with our youth. Come hear Molly talk about inclusive sex education and healthy relationship in addition to the new sex education law. We will participate in "5 Circles of Sexuality" about conceptualizing sexuality more holistically, including gender and sexual orientation. Special Valentine's Day treats and support groups to follow.

First United Methodist Church, 1838 SW Jefferson St., Portland. Look for the PFLAG signs.

WANTED: 30 Queer Heroes

Portland's Q Center and GLAPN (Gay & Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest) need help identifying 30 heroes in our LGBTQ community.

That's a hero for every day of June – PRIDE month. Heroes will be introduced one-per-day via Internet link, and featured in a photo display in Q Center's gallery.

Nominations are open – *wide open* – now. We want to hear about anybody, living or dead, queer or straight ally, any color, gender, or ethnicity, urban or rural, who was important in the life of a queer person in Oregon.

Teachers? Counselors? Neighbors? Clergymen? Cops? Lawyers? Historical figures? Legislators? Activists? ***If they ever, ever, helped you deal with being queer, then please nominate them.***

We're asking queer organizations to spread the word via email, so hopefully everybody in Oregon will see this link, and use it, more than once. We're also listing it here: Go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/queerheroesnw> and be prepared to say who you are, where you are, who you're nominating, and why. Vote early and often!

PFLAG

Inside: ♦ President's Message

♦ 30 Queer Heroes!

♦ Calendar of Events

President's Message, continued

phrase "civil rights" with "human rights."

Khalil Edwards and other leaders from our PFLAG Portland Black Chapter challenged my thinking on this one word edit. As he explains (bracketed comments mine):

"Being an LGBT Person of Color I am in full support of LGBT equality and human rights. By stating in our mission statement that we seek to "end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights" we are creating a wedge between folks (those who identify as LGBT and people of color). Oppression based on sexual orientation and oppression based on gender identity are historically embedded in institutions, but that oppression is not the same as the institutional oppression that's visited upon generation after generation of communities of color. That's part of the reason why applying the Civil Rights movement to the LGBT movement is so problematic. By using the term civil rights, we inherently appropriate another movement—we steal somebody else's work! It (the term civil rights) addresses a fundamentally different kind of oppression and frames the Civil Rights movement as something that's "completed," implying that racism is "over." It ignores and makes invisible the unique struggle communities of color have faced and continue to face.

One way to recognize the unique struggles of all LGBT people while not minimizing or appropriating (the civil rights movement) - and yet still recognizing other struggles - is to change the language in our mission statement to read "equal human rights" instead of "equal civil rights"."

It is a problem when people may not feel welcomed at PFLAG because of the language we use – even when it's completely unintentional. Creating unique PFLAG chapters within communities of color sheds light on areas where we are well intentioned yet not well educated. If we are to continue to grow our PFLAG chapters in a country and a state that is increasingly racially diverse, we must evolve our own thinking and the language we use.

Khalil and I have presented our concerns to PFLAG National. They have acknowledged the problem and plan to issue a statement soon on the ever expanding racial diversity that makes up PFLAG. That's a good start. But from now on PFLAG Portland will always say "human rights" instead of "civil rights." It's the right thing to do.

In peace,

Dawn Holt, President PFLAG Portland

Calendar of Events

February 4, 7:30pm – (Saturday) The Portland Lesbian Choir is thrilled to present "Seasons of Love" on Saturday, February 4th, 2012 at 7:30pm, the first of two concerts in 2012, our 25th anniversary season! Visit www.plchoir.org for more information and tickets.

Coming up at PFLAG: **March, 13 2012** – Understanding the Native American concept of "Two Spirit" and what it means for defining our gender identity.

April 10, 2012 – Reid Vanderburgh will read from the revised edition of his book, "Transition and Beyond: Observations on Gender Identity"

Apply for Safe Schools Advocacy Summit (SSAS)

Do you want to help create safe schools across the nation? Do you want to learn how to be an effective advocate for the issues you care about? Then you should apply for the Safe Schools Advocacy Summit (SSAS) today!

For selected participants, SSAS is a completely free annual four-day conference focused on bullying and harassment in Washington, D.C. for students and non-students alike. This year, SSAS will be held March 24th – 27th. Participants learn about issues surrounding bullying and harassment as well as current efforts to address the problem. Participants also learn about effective advocacy strategy. After learning how to advocate, attendees spend the final day of the program visiting with their Members of Congress to share their stories and press for key pieces of federal legislation to address bullying and harassment. GLSEN will continue to engage SSAS participants beyond the conference by keeping participants informed about legislative achievements, as well as working with participants on long-term outreach and advocacy efforts.

SSAS Participants are chosen from a nationwide pool of applicants with increased consideration given to applicants from key legislative districts or states; however, regardless of where you live, anyone interested in the conference is encouraged to apply. GLSEN covers the entire cost of the conference, including participants' travel, accommodation, and meals. For more info, go to action.glsen.org.

GSA connects at U of O!

University of Oregon invites queer students to Eugene on March 2, from 9:00AM-4:00PM for the 2012 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Campus Visit.

It's a comfortable way to explore the LGBTQ college experience, no matter where you might want to go.

For more information or to RSVP, email us at uoutreach@uoregon.edu.

Yes! I support the mission of PFLAG Portland

Enclosed is my membership fee. (Your membership includes National PFLAG membership.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Family (\$45)

Individual (\$35)

Student/Limited Income (\$15)

Donation (\$ ____)

Make check payable to PFLAG Portland. PFLAG is a 501c(3) tax-exempt organization.

Mail to: PFLAG, P.O. Box 8944, Portland, OR 97207

The Mission of PFLAG Portland

We, the parents, families, and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. PFLAG promotes the health and well being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families and their friends through support, education, and advocacy. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and strives to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity. Contact PFLAG Portland at 503 232-7676 or visit our website at www.PFLAGPDX.org.

Youth Action Grant Applications Due February 8!!

Ten grants of \$1,000 each are available for community-based projects initiated, designed and run by individuals 21 years of age and younger.

The grants are sponsored by the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Portland Community College, and Global Citizen Corps of Mercy Corps International.

Applications are due by February 8, 2011, and applicants must attend at least one Youth Action Grant Workshop before applying.

The workshops are free, and are offered at a variety of times and locations. They will help YOUTH and THEIR ADULT PARTNERS answer grant-related questions.

Applications and all supporting materials must be submitted to Pam Phan, Youth Planning Program c/o Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 7100, Portland, OR 97201 by 8PM on Tuesday, February 8th.

Please contact Pam Phan at (503) 823-9912 or pam.phan@portlandoregon.gov with any questions about the YOUTH ACTION GRANTS Program or to RSVP for a YOUTH grant workshop.

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PFLAG National Website

www.pflag.org

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The Portland Voice is published monthly. Readers are welcome and encouraged to submit articles, editorials, poetry, news items, and photography for consideration to be included in our newsletter. Email our editor at pflagpdxnews@gmail.com or send information to P.O. Box 8944, Portland, Oregon 97207. Submissions are published at the discretion of the editor and may be edited for length or content. The deadline for content submissions to this newsletter is the 20th of the month prior to publication.

To get this newsletter via email, send an email to pflagpdxnews@gmail.com.

PFLAG

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