

Portland Voice

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September, 2011

President's Message

A little over a year ago, it seemed that nearly every week we learned of another gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) youth that had taken his or her life. We posted their pictures on our PFLAG website to allow ourselves to grieve the loss of the promise of a young life and as a visual reminder of the many challenges our LGBTQ youth continue to face in our still homophobic society. The common denominator in these deaths seemed to be that each had endured bullying and harassment in school or through a social media website. A friend pointed out to me recently how it seemed that all of a sudden the media attention stopped. "But, he said, I bet the bullying hasn't". I bet he's right.

In the last two days, I noticed two reports circulating on the internet that caught my attention: First, a study was recently presented at the American Psychological Association's annual conference that showed that in schools with higher rates of bullying, *overall* standardized test scores are lower – substantially lower. As reported in the 08/16/11 *Oregonian*, "In schools that had a more intense bullying atmosphere, passing rates on standardized tests in such subjects as algebra, Earth science and world history were 3 to 6 percent lower." The researchers speculated that students who attend schools with high rates of bullying may not feel sufficiently connected to their schools academically as they are worried about their safety. It seems that in this era of intense budget scrutiny, making sure students are safe at school makes sense not only for each student, but even for the overall performance of the school.

Secondly, in Minnesota, a sixth teen has filed a lawsuit against the Anoka-Hennepin School District alleging that school officials did not do enough to prevent the bullying and harassment she endured because she is gay

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Monthly Meeting Information

Tuesday, 7-9 PM, September 13, 2011

Our PFLAG program on September 13 is dedicated to the issue of safety for LGBTQ children in school. Our speaker will be from the Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition (OSSCC), which seeks to create safe schools and communities where every family can belong, every educator can teach, and every child can learn regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.



Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition

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

PFLAG

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President's Message, continued

(newsfeed.time.com 2011/08/16). In the lawsuit, a lesbian student claims she was called slurs and punched in the stomach and that teachers did nothing to prevent the harassment. A similar lawsuit was filed on July 21, 2011 on behalf of five current or former students of the Minnesota district. Each lawsuit seeks to repeal the district's policy on sexual orientation which requires staff members to "remain neutral on matters regarding sexual orientation...". In effect, the lawsuits claim, the policy acts as a gag on teachers who would otherwise intervene in behalf of the harassed gay students. In addition to Minnesota, Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Utah have similar policies. If these legal challenges are any indication, it may be that efforts to make our schools safer may more and more take place in the court room as students and their families step forward with tales of bullying in schools.

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Basic Rights Oregon

Basic Rights Oregon is spending the summer and fall engaging Oregonians in conversations about why marriage matters! We've been to fairs and celebrations, held briefings and garden parties, and shared stories on TV and through social media. Basic Rights is also excited to launch a new series of events to engage families in the freedom to marry education campaign.

To win the hearts and minds of Oregonians on marriage equality, we need to engage parents and families of all kinds. We have created a series of events designed to be family-friendly and are encouraging parents to tell their neighbors, friends and family why marriage matters to them. If you or someone you know is a parent of a child under 18, and are interested in getting involved, email tera@basicrights.org.

Tera Pierce, Community Organizer for Parents and Schools, Basic Rights Oregon, www.basicrights.org, 503-222-6151 [facebook.com/basicrights](https://www.facebook.com/basicrights)



Basic Rights Oregon is on the march in 2011. If PFLAG members can lend a hand, please contact Tera Pierce to volunteer!

Calendar of Events

September 17 – PFLAG Portland Black Chapter – 3024 NE MLK Blvd., noon-2 pm. Our monthly meeting is a chance to meet others from the African American LGBTQ community and to find out what events are on the horizon for this very active group. Support group offered during meeting.

September 25 –Peacock After Dark – September 25 promises to be one of the most amazing shows of the year. This drag show is an invitation only performance by the most talented performers in our area! Proceeds from the show benefit the Audria M. Edwards scholarship fund which assists LGBTQ students with the cost of a college education. This show is not to be missed! Newmark Theatre, 1111 SW Broadway, Portland, OR. Tickets available through Ticketmaster or at the PCPA Box Office, 1111 SW Broadway.

October 11, PFLAG Portland East County – National Coming Out Day is October 11, 2011. Come join us for a program on the experience of coming out to oneself, to family and to friends. Support group to follow.

October 11 – PFLAG Portland explores the experiences of gay families. Come hear from a panel of gay parents raising children. What can they tell us about our schools and how we can support the increasingly diverse families in our communities?

October 15 – The Imperial Sovereign Rose Court Coronation – Come join your PFLAG friends for the most glamorous event of the year! October 15, 2011 at the Crown Plaza Hotel. Information and tickets are available at www.rosecourt.org.

November 8 – PFLAG Portland welcomes Latino Pride! David Martinez from Latino Pride will be here to begin a dialogue on how PFLAG can bring its unique brand of support to the Latino/a community.

PGMC's Gay Fair on the Square will be Sept. 18 after Race for the Cure

The Portland Gay Men's Chorus is proud to announce the Third Annual **Gay Fair on the Square!** The event takes place Sunday, September 18th at Pioneer Courthouse Square, and offers attendees a full afternoon of music, as well as the opportunity to learn about dozens of local LGBT non-profit groups and activities.

The Fair, which runs from 12:30 to 5:00, will feature performances by Portland Gay Men's Chorus, the Portland Lesbian Choir, the Portland Gay Symphonic Band, and local group Confluence.

In addition, the Fair will fill the square with tents, each hosting several area LGBT-focused non-profits with information about athletic activities, health resources, social & networking groups and much more.

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.

President's message, continued

In Oregon, the Safe Schools Act was adopted in 2009. It seeks to create a safer school environment by requiring all schools to have a specific plan and point person for dealing with complaints of bullying and harassment. However, the law is complaint driven and funds were never set aside to assure that the anti-bullying plans were implemented.

Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition (OS-SCC), in addition to other community groups and individuals, have tried to fill this oversight by offering guidance on crafting and implementing a safe schools plan. Now in 2011, the question becomes, how much safer are our schools?

Come join us on September 13 when we dedicate our PFLAG program to the issue of safety for LGBTQ children in school. Since media attention on the issue has waned, it is up to those of us with children in school – or an interest in the welfare of all of our children – to learn how we can get more involved. We hope to see you there – because the very safety of our LGBTQ youth may depend on it.

In peace,

Dawn Holt, President
PFLAG Portland

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www.pflag.org

Portland Chapter Website

www.pflagpdx.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

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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