



PFLAG Triangle

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

- SUPPORT—to cope with and adverse society;
- EDUCATION—to enlighten an ill informed public; and
- ADVOCACY—to end discrimination and secure equal rights.

EVENTS OF INTEREST:

- **8-7-08**
Support Group
- **8-14-08**
Deadline for Indy Ad Donation & Application
- **11-15-08**
Save The Date
2nd Annual Equality Conference and Gala—
Duke University

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from Communications	1
Membership Information	1
Gay Unions Shed Light	2
Support Group Guidelines	2
Court Denies Parental Status of Ex-Partners	3
Transgendered in New York Jail	4
Website Update	5
Current Events	6

CHANGING MINDS ONE VISION AT A TIME

PFLAG Triangle:

*What does it mean?
Why does it exist?
The world is better now than what it used to be, why PFLAG?
I didn't know PFLAG existed here?*

The more I hear these statements the sadder I become. I find myself on a daily basis answering these questions. But the real question is this: Do we as PFLAG Members understand the answers to these questions? Can we answer them for someone in the real world? Have we paid our membership dues? Do we support the fundraising abilities of the chapter? While PFLAG Triangle has been an important part of a lot of people's lives there are still those that have no clue we exist. Are we not here for all LGBT individuals, families and friends?

Before I dwell into answering these questions, I feel compelled to take a moment to thank the individuals

who consistently give their undivided attention to the operation of this chapter. Most of these parents, families, and friends of LGBT people have devoted their lives to their children and other families.

Margaret Antle
Founding Member 1995
Membership Coordinator

Burt and Renee Rauch
2000
President, Treasurer,
Secretary

Dr. Ted and Lisa Mayer -
2005
President, Vice-President

Jon Haebig 1995
Treasurer

Georgia Springer 2000
Transgender Families

When you see these individuals give them a hug and a welcomed thank you for their service.

Now to dwell deeper into the future. PFLAG Triangle mission is to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian and transgender person, their families and friends, through Support: to cope with an adverse society; Education: to enlighten and ill-informed public; Advocacy: to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

We are to provide Support, Education, and Advocacy. If you look closely we provide the Support through our Meetings, and Educa-

PFLAG TRIANGLE MEMBERSHIP

It is that time again to re-new your membership to PFLAG Triangle and PFLAG National. Dues are \$35.00 for Household Membership and \$15.00 for Student Membership. \$15.00 of those dues are allocated to

PFLAG National. Your dues and financial donations help continue the work that PFLAG Triangle does each year. Please fill out your application today. You may fill out a paper application or visit our Online Store to

submit your application and dues online. A original application is attached to the last page of this newsletter. See the web update section for additional information about the Online Application process.



GAY UNIONS SHED LIGHT ON GENDER IN MARRIAGE

For insights into healthy marriages, social scientists are looking in an unexpected place.

A growing body of evidence shows that same-sex couples have a great deal to teach everyone else about marriage and relationships. Most studies show surprisingly few differences between committed gay couples and committed straight couples, but the differences that do emerge have shed light on the kinds of conflicts that can endanger heterosexual relationships.

The findings offer hope that some of the most vexing problems are not

“That means there is a lot more hope that you can do something about it.”

necessarily entrenched in deep-rooted biological differences between men and women. And that, in turn, offers hope that the problems can be solved.

Next week, California will begin issuing marriage licenses to same-

sex couples, reigniting the national debate over gay marriage. But relationship researchers say it also presents an opportunity to study the effects of marriage on the quality of all relationships.

“When I look at what’s happening in California, I think there’s a lot to be learned to explore how human beings relate to one another,” said Sondra E. Solomon, an associate professor of [psychology](#) at the [University of Vermont](#). “How people care for each other, how they share responsibility, power and authority — those are the key issues in relationships.”

The stereotype for same-sex relationships is that they do not last. But that may be due, in large part, to the lack of legal and social recognition given to same-sex couples. Studies of dissolution rates vary widely.

After Vermont legalized same-sex civil unions in 2000, researchers surveyed nearly 1,000 couples, including same-sex couples and their heterosexual married siblings. The focus was on how the relationships were affected by common causes of marital strife like housework, sex and money.

Notably, same-sex relationships, whether between men or women, were far more egalitarian than heterosexual ones. In heterosexual couples, women did far more of the housework; men were more likely to have the financial responsibility; and men were more likely to initiate sex, while women were more likely to refuse it or to start a conversation about problems in the relationship. With same-sex couples, of course, none of these dichotomies were possible, and the partners tended to share the burdens far more equally.

While the gay and lesbian couples had about the same rate of conflict as the heterosexual ones, they appeared to have more relation-

ship satisfaction, suggesting that the inequality of opposite-sex relationships can take a toll.

“Heterosexual married women live with a lot of anger about having to do the tasks not only in the house but in the relationship,” said Esther D. Rothblum, a professor of women’s studies at San Diego State University. “That’s very different than what same-sex couples and heterosexual men live with.”

Other studies show that what couples argue about is far less important than *how* they argue. The egalitarian nature of same-sex relationships appears to spill over into how those couples resolve conflict.

One well-known study used mathematical modeling to decipher the interactions between committed gay couples. The results, published in two 2003 articles in *The Journal of Homosexuality*, showed that when same-sex couples argued, they tended to fight more fairly than heterosexual couples, making fewer verbal attacks and more of an effort to defuse the confrontation.



Page 3—Gay Union

SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES

PFLAG offers a confidential support group to share pain, joy, and concerns around same-sex orientation of one-self or a loved one. This is an opportunity to share time with other caring people in an ongoing movement toward justice of LGBT persons.

Please come whether you need help, can give help, or like most of us, fall into both categories.

All PFLAG meetings are confidential and are held in a supportive comfortable, environment. Members may share as much or as little as they like of

just listen. One-on-one time can be provided for new members either during the meeting or at a prearranged time outside of the regular meeting. If you need further assistance, please call the Support Group Number for your area.



PAGE 2 GAY UNION

Controlling and hostile emotional tactics, like belligerence and domineering, were less common among gay couples.

Same-sex couples were also less likely to develop an elevated heartbeat and adrenaline surges during arguments. And straight couples were more likely to stay physically agitated after a conflict.

"When they got into these really negative interactions, gay and lesbian couples were able to do things like use humor and affection that enabled them to step back from the ledge and continue to talk about the problem instead of just exploding," said Robert W. Levenson, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley.

The findings suggest that heterosexual couples need to work harder to seek perspective. The ability to see the other person's point of view appears to be more automatic in same-sex couples, but research shows that heterosexuals who can relate to their partner's concerns and who are skilled at defusing arguments also have stronger relationships.

One of the most common stereotypes in heterosexual marriages is the "demand-withdraw" interaction, in which the woman tends to be unhappy and to make demands for change, while the man reacts by withdrawing from the conflict. But some surprising new research shows that same-sex couples also exhibit the pattern, contradicting the notion that the behavior is rooted in gender, according to an abstract presented at the 2006 meeting of the Association for Psychological Science by Sarah R. Holley, a psychology researcher at Berkeley.

Dr. Levenson says this is good news for all couples.

"Like everybody else, I thought this was male behavior and female behavior, but it's not," he said. "That means there is a lot more hope that you can do something about it."

COURT DENIES PARENTAL STATUS OF EX-PARTNERS

Maryland's highest court ruled yesterday that someone who lives with and helps raise a child before a relationship with the child's legal parent dissolves has virtually no rights to custody or visitation, in a decision that disappointed advocates for same-sex couples.

By reversing two lower courts that ruled in favor of a [Baltimore County](#) woman who sought custody or visitation rights with a girl adopted by her ex-partner, the Court of Appeals held that Maryland does not recognize de facto parenthood. Instead, the court ruled, the person claiming to be a de facto parent must prove "exceptional circumstances" to gain visitation rights over a legal parent's objection.

"Even if we were to recognize some form of de facto parenthood," the majority in the 6 to 1 decision wrote, "the real question in the case . . . will remain, whether . . . a third party, non-biological, non-adoptive parent . . . should be treated differently from other third parties. We have not been persuaded that they should be."

The court returned the case to the Baltimore County Circuit Court to decide, using the new standard, whether the woman who brought the case, referred to in court papers as Margaret K., should have visitation rights with the girl, Maya. The ruling disappointed gay rights activists, who were also rebuffed by the high court last year in their effort to overturn Maryland's ban on same-sex marriage. "This child had two mothers," said Nancy Polikoff, author of the book "Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage" and a law professor at [American University](#). "The court should not be in the business of denying the reality of a child's family."

In her dissent, Judge Irma S. Raker wrote that visitation decisions for de facto parents should be guided solely by the child's best interest. She noted that several states, including Massachusetts and Colorado, have established legal parity for de facto parents.

In recent years, gay rights and civil liberties groups have pushed for more legal rights for partners who take on parental

roles, as more gay and unmarried heterosexual couples raise children. The [D.C. Council](#) last year created a status for de facto parents, who can file for custody and visitation rights if they had lived with and cared for the child, the legal parent had consented to the relationship and a parent-child bond had developed. Virginia law does not address the subject. The case of Margaret, a teacher at [Howard Community College](#), and Janice M., an administrator there, began in 2004, when the couple's 18-year relationship ended and Margaret moved out. Five years earlier, Janice had adopted on her own a baby girl from India, which does not allow same-sex couples to adopt.

According to court papers, Margaret continued to see Maya after she and Janice separated, although the visits gradually became restricted at Janice's request. Margaret sued for visitation and custody in Baltimore County Circuit Court in 2006. The court found that Margaret was a de facto parent, a right first recognized in Maryland in 2000 in another case. She won visitation rights, but not custody, on the grounds that it was in Maya's best interest.

To keep or expand her visitation, Margaret must not only show that contact with Maya is in the child's best interest but also demonstrate other reasons, such as parental unfitness on the part of Janice.

Margaret's attorney, Jennifer Fairfax, said her client is "devastated" by the court's ruling but predicted that the trial court will strongly weigh what she described as her client's close bond with Maya.

Janice's attorney, Cynthia Young, said the bond between Maya and Margaret might no longer exist. "The child is expressing that she doesn't want to visit with this person," Young said. Even if there is a bond, Young said, Margaret will have a high bar to jump to retain visitation rights.

TRANSGENDERED IN NY JAIL GET NEW POLICY

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Transgender youth in New York's juvenile detention centers can now wear whatever uniform they choose, be called by whatever name they want and ask for special housing under a new anti-discrimination policy that advocacy groups say is among the nation's most progressive.

"New York is way ahead of the curve," said Roberta Sklar, a spokeswoman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"When you have a system like the New York Office of Children and Family Services putting out a clear nondiscrimination policy, it should be seen as a model for similar kinds of agencies all over the country," she said.

The policy went into effect March 17, the same day Gov. David Paterson was sworn into office to replace the disgraced Eliot Spitzer. Last month, Paterson directed all state agencies to immediately recognize same-sex marriages legally performed elsewhere as valid in New York.

Paterson spokesman Errol Cockfield said the policy reflects the state's intention to be "tolerant, responsive and respectful" of gender identity and gender expression issues.

Hawaii and California are among the handful of states that have taken

steps to afford specific civil rights protection to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth in foster care and juvenile detention, said Susan Hazeldean, director of the Peter Cicchino Youth Project for the New York City-based Urban Justice Center.

In a 2001 report, the center found that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth routinely experienced discrimination, harassment and violence in New York's juvenile justice system. The state runs 30 juvenile centers with a total of about 1,200 residents. OCFS officials estimate that there are between 20-30 transgender youth in its system.

"What we were concerned about is that LGBT young people are entering these programs facing a lot of hostility and violence, and coming out more traumatized and more damaged than when they went in," Hazeldean said.

"We think this policy is going to make a real difference," she said.

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS:

[Kennedy braves controversy over LGBT bill](#)

Ross Levi, public policy director at Empire State Pride Agenda, the state's largest gay rights organization, also said the OCFS policy was among the most far-reaching in the country.

"OCFS has wisely said these students need an environment that is safe and that helps them reach their full potential," Levi said. "It's absolutely needed. Transgender youth talk about how they were at wits end just trying to survive in these facilities."

The OCFS policy prohibits staff from asking residents about their sexual orientation or gender identity and provides that any disclosure must be voluntary. The policy also directs staff to talk to youth when they decide to reveal themselves.

"Staff should never just move on; talk about what it means for this youth to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning," the 14-page policy states.

Under the policy, a transgender youth can request placement based on gender identity. Those requests will be heard by a special LGBTQ Decision-making Committee, which will include behavioral health and medical services experts as well as administrators. OCFS spokesman Ed Borges said the OCFS center in Red Hook has housed a number of transgender youth in the

past because staff there has earned a reputation for tolerance.

Transgender youth will be provided private sleeping quarters and be allowed to shower privately. They also will be able to shave body parts, use makeup or grow their hair long.

The policy directs staff to learn and use the words gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender in an appropriate context when talking with youth.

While all residents can ask to be called by a preferred first name rather than their legal one, the policy provides that males who believe they are female must be called "she," and females who believe themselves male must be referred to as "he." Staff also must use the preferred name and pronoun in any documents they file.

All residents wear a male or female uniform, but the policy allows a transgender person to wear an opposite sex uniform. They also may receive underwear of their choice, the policy states. The policy requires each facility to stock a small supply of bras and panties in case they are requested; girl's centers must stock men's underwear. Borges said OCFS spent about \$4,500 to stock its facilities.

Like housing requests, most clothing requests will be referred to the

TRANSGENDERED PAGE 4

decision-making committee to ensure their legitimacy, Borges said.

To date, there has just been one housing request made, but it didn't go through because the youth ended up being sent to an adult jail, Borges said. The policy shift was spurred, in part, by a 2006 lawsuit brought by a 15-year-old born a male but who dressed and identified herself as a girl. She had been taking prescribed feminizing hormones for nearly three years when she was arrested and placed in an OCFS facility.

In a civil complaint alleging sex and disability discrimination, the girl said OCFS staff took away her hormones and would call her by her male name only. The state paid \$25,000 to settle the case and agreed to change its policies.

The state developed some initial guidelines but found them wanting, said Mishi Faruqee, who co-chaired the working group that created the new guidelines. After Gladys Carrion was appointed OCFS commissioner last year, the guidelines were revised with more substantive rules, said Faruqee.

Borges said OCFS is beginning to train its staff about the new guidelines this month and will hold sessions at each of its 30 facilities

tion through our partner organizations. What about Advocacy? Can we not do more?

Do we reach out to our communities at large? Do we actively recruit new volunteers? Do we want to even step out into these communities?

I hope your answer is the same as mine and that is YES. The vision of PFLAG Triangle is to not have to answer those questions in the beginning but to be a lighthouse for those seeking help and affirmation of their choice of lifestyle.

I hope you will join with me and

the Board of Directors and let's step out into the community and start changing hearts, minds, and souls. We have a big task ahead and a task that will not change overnight. There are numerous opportunities for you to be a part of this change so step up and get involved. Each person has a skill or talent that we need to keep operating and running.

For Change,

Eric Hendricks
Communication
Web Development



WEBSITE UPDATE

Good News!

The PFLAG Triangle website <http://www.pflagtriangle.org> is now completed. The initial design phases scheduled for 6 months completion is now done.

This process provided a new look to PFLAG Triangle, gave Board of Directors individual email addresses,

mapped email addresses for external contact, and includes informational pages, news pages, newsletters, event calendars, online store to purchase membership and additional items.

The Board of Directors and myself are pleased to finally have all these capabilities functioning and we now look to

the future growth of our chapter and website.

The website will undergo a new design concept with a new marketing strategy aimed toward the LGBT community and their families, increased volunteer and sponsor activity.

We currently use a wide array of spon-

sors for our website to function correctly. Google provides our E-Commerce Solution, WestHost provides our server and hosting platforms, Volunteer Match provides our volunteer solicitation, and GuideStar provides our non-profit registration.

So if you haven't visited our website lately we invite you to take a few moments to stroll around and see what you are missing.

continued—Website—Page 7

CURRENT EVENTS

- 1) - An Israeli lesbian couple has sued for the right of both to be named biological parents of their baby boy.
- 2) - The 2008 edition of the North Carolina State Personnel Manual included a prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- 3) - In Singapore, a cable operator was fined for showing an ad featuring two women kissing.
- 4) - Salt Lake City has begun registering domestic partners, including same-sex couples.
- 5) - The former assistant Defense secretary under President Reagan has called for repeal of "don't ask, don't tell".
- 6) - In Italy, a mob attacked Rome's Gay and Lesbian Center.
- 7) - Uruguay became the first Latin American country to allow gay marriage.
- 8) - Under a new North Carolina provision, hospital patients may designate people other than immediate relatives as allowed visitors, which permits visits from gay partners.
- 9) - A public high school principal in Tennessee was accused of outing two male students as gays.
- 10) - Residents of the Greek island of Lesbos are trying to bar a Lesbian group from using the word Lesbian in their name.
- 11) - Florida will soon pass legislation requiring school districts to prohibit bullying.
- 12) - Nepal elected its first openly gay member to parliament.
- 13) - In Israel, the Tel Aviv city council has agreed to build a monument honoring gays persecuted during the Holocaust.
- 14) - Officials in Moscow, Russia have once again refused permission for gay pride parades.
- 15) - In Berlin, Germany, two tributes were unveiled for gay victims of the Holocaust.
- 16) - Richard Lalle will become Yale's first gay master. Yale once expelled gay students.
- 17) - A proposal to amend Pennsylvania's constitution to ban same-sex marriage has been tabled.
- 18) - Michigan's Supreme Court ruled that local governments and state universities cannot offer health insurance to same-sex partners.
- 19) - In a monumental victory, the California Supreme Court overturned a voter ban on same-sex marriage. Gay marriage in the state can start June 17.
- 20) - Maryland has passed an anti-bullying law including harassment based on sexual orientation.
- 21) - The University of Toledo has fired an administrator who wrote an article attacking gay civil rights.

WEBSITE UPDATE—PAGE 6

Read what's happening in the LGBT community—Local—State—National.

Renew your membership online this year and take advantage of using your Credit Card.

Know what events are going on in the community with the Event Calendar.

Take a peek at some of the information that we have out there to assist in life's struggles with being gay.

them. PFLAG needs your help to continue the daily work we are doing to provide for the LGBT Families in the Triangle area.

Please invite people to your website and as always if you have any issues don't hesitate to contact me.

See you in cyberspace!

Eric Hendricks

We encourage everyone to checkout Volunteer Match at <http://volunteermatch.org> to see our Volunteer Opportunities and apply for one of



PFLAG Triangle
PO BOX 51776
Durham, NC 27717

info@pflagtriangle.org
<http://www.pflagtriangle.org>

Support Phone #'s

Durham (919) 929-0192
 Raleigh (919) 434-3080
 Rocky Mount (252) 442-7423
 Transgender (919) 781-3316

CONTACT INFORMATION

2008—2009 Board of Directors

Ted Mayer	President
Lisa Mayer	Co-President
Burt Rauch	Treasurer
Renee Rauch	Secretary
Eric Hendricks	At-Large <i>Communications, Web Development</i>
Martha Beach	At Large
Margaret Chesson	At Large
Vacant	Human Resources Director
Vacant	Marketing Director
Vacant	Event Planning Director
Margaret Antle	Membership Coordinator
Vacant	Safe Schools Coordinator
Georgia Springer	Transgender Coordinator



PFLAG MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PO Box 51776
Durham, NC 27717
<http://www.pflagtriangle.org>
info@pflagtriangle.org

Sign up for:

- | | Price |
|---|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household Membership | \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership | \$15.00 |

Subtotal: _____

Total: _____

Method of Payment

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check | <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Me | <input type="checkbox"/> American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online Pay | <input type="checkbox"/> Visa |

Name

Address

Phone

Credit Card #

CVC Code

Exp. date

Signature