



Where All Families Matter.



www.PFLAGPgh.org

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The Pittsburgh PFLAGer

PFLAG Pittsburgh's Monthly Newsletter

Volume 19, Number 03

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- **AND MORE!**

Our Next Meeting:

Sunday, December 11th

Meeting Information:

2:00PM Meeting Begins
2:15-3:30PM Small Group Sessions
3:45-4:30PM Educational Program

Third Presbyterian Church
5701 Fifth Ave.
Fifth & Negley Aves. 15232

Educational Program:

Arlene Baratz,
*Local Advocate Speaking
on Intersex*

PFLAG VISION:

PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

PFLAG MISSION:

By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through:

- Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ
- Education for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ
- Advocacy in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ

Contact Info:

Website:

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Chapter Officials:

President:

Mitchell Hortert

Treasurer:

Kelley Moten

Secretary

Jason Lucarelli

Advocacy Chairperson:

Moira Myers

Support Chairperson:

Norman Brown

Education Chairperson:

Brandon Harper

Speaker's Bureau

Donni Smith

Chapter Librarian:

Pam Richards

At-Large:

Allen Wolk & Elaine Cummings,
Ann Aya

Snacks

One simple way to help out at PFLAG Pgh is to bring a snack! It doesn't have to be a four-course dinner, just a snack that you'd like to share with the group! Any contributions are greatly appreciated.

Contributions?

Have a suggestion for the newsletter? Please respond to one of our emails with your ideas! We are always looking to provide the latest information to our chapter members and look forward to serving your needs in the future!

A Minute with Mitch:
A Letter from the President...

Dear PFLAG Pittsburgh Friends,

I had the wonderful opportunity to be the representative for PFLAG Pittsburgh at the Barack Obama Academy of International Studies' Community and Career Day earlier this month and I met many of the students, staff and faculty members while present. Some of the children stated they had never met a gay person before while one student said with enthusiasm, "my favorite aunt is a lesbian!" There were students who stated proudly that they were an out member of the LGBTQ+ community while others quickly walked passed our booth.



There were two things that I found to be very profound during that day. The first was the level of respect that I received as a representative for an organization that services families, friends, parents, and members of the LGBTQ+ community from students and staff. Even if students didn't like, weren't comfortable, or weren't interested, they were respectful, politely declined information, and moved on to the next booth.

The second thing that I found profound and inspiring was the hope that students gave me for our future. Many of the students said that they weren't gay, but that they had friends of whom they supported 110% and were happy that they were out. One student said, "If anyone messes with her (referring to a friend next to her) then they have to mess with me."

The last few weeks have been stressful for many inside and outside of the LGBTQ+ community. I have heard tragic stories about how our recent presidential election has personally affected our members, friends, and allies of PFLAG Pittsburgh. When I think of that, I am disheartened and feel a sense of negativity towards the next several years; however, after meeting the children at the Barack Obama Academy of International Studies, I am very hopeful of tomorrow. As Whitney Houston sang in her hit song, *The Greatest Love of All*, "I believe that children are our future." There are many more children who feel the same way as these students and we should be hopeful because one day, our sons and daughters will be the leaders of this great nation.

As we approach the holiday season, I encourage you to think of the hope and promise of tomorrow being a brighter day. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." The road may be long and difficult, but we are in this together.

On behalf of PFLAG Pittsburgh, Happy Holidays!

Mitchell
President of PFLAG Pittsburgh

LGBTQ+ Stories:

From Across the Globe to Around the Corner



About PFLAG Academy Online:

PFLAG Academy Online brings free, monthly, PFLAG members-only training opportunities with core educational programs right to your computer screen. Benefit from PFLAG's great learning options, informed staff, and input from other participants without leaving home. All you'll need is a computer (or mobile device) and the drive to move equality forward!

In the coming months, be on the lookout for brand new sessions, including one on conflict resolution as well as core-skill building sessions on creating a thriving chapter, support group facilitation, and more! You may also email info@pflag.org or your [Field Manager](#) for more details about how to access past sessions on-demand so you can use PFLAG Academy Online as a resource for developing the leadership pipeline for your chapter.

Additional Information:

- [ReadyTalk Registration Information](#)
- [How do I know that my computer will be able to connect?](#)
- [Other Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) about webinars.](#)

21 Companies that have Supported LGBT Rights

By James Michael Nichols of *The Huffington Post*

It's that time of year again -- we're all feeling the pressure to go out and spend! Spend! Spend! During the *massive* post-Thanksgiving Black Friday sales and beyond. But are you sure that your hard earned paycheck will be going to companies and organizations that support the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans?

It can be tough to tell. However, over the past several years **many, many companies have** revealed themselves to be vocal allies of the queer community -- and some are even run by queer people themselves.

So, we thought Black Friday was a great time to look at 21 companies and brands that have done right by the queer community in the past, either by creating pro-queer ads or supporting pro-queer legislation or both (and some have even faced boycotts for doing so). This obviously isn't an exhaustive list -- just a few that instantly came to mind. After clicking the link below, feel free to share your favorite pro-queer companies and brands in the comments section at the bottom of the website.

To view the list, please visit: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/21-companies-that-have-supported-lgbt-rights_5654bdece4b0879a5b0cbf7b?utm_hp_ref=gay-voices

Let the
\$hopping
Begin!



World
AIDS
Day

World AIDS Day is held on December 1st of each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day and the first one was held in 1988. The U.S Federal government's theme for 2016's World AIDS Day is "Leadership. Commitment. Impact."

Today, many scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment. Also, there are laws to protect people living with HIV and we understand so much more about the condition more today than ever before. But despite this, people do not know the facts about how to protect themselves and others from HIV, and stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with HIV. World AIDS Day is an opportunity for you to learn the facts about HIV and put your knowledge into action. If you understand how HIV is transmitted, how it can be prevented, and the reality of living with HIV today - you can use this knowledge to take care of your own health and the health of others, and ensure you treat everyone living with HIV fairly, and with respect and understanding

For additional information, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.patf.org/world-aids-day-0>
- <http://www.worldaidsday.org/>
- <http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/>
- <http://www.aids.gov/>
- <http://www.avert.org/world-aids-day.htm>

Pittsburgh City Council introduces city ban on conversion therapy

By Ryan Deto of *The Pittsburgh City Paper*

When Pittsburgh City Council President Bruce Kraus, the city's first openly gay politician, was in third grade he says his parents were "struggling to understand who and what I was," in terms of his sexual identity.

"Even I didn't know, I only knew that I was different," says Kraus. "I do remember my parents seeking medical attention to help them understand who and what I was, and help me understand who and what I was."

Kraus says it never went as far as his parents sending him to "conversion therapy," the practice of using therapy or spiritual healing to change a person's sexual orientation from gay or bisexual to straight, but he fears that people and families are vulnerable to this practice.

So, today Kraus and City Councilor Dan Gilman introduced an ordinance to ban conversion therapy on minors within Pittsburgh city limits.

"The City of Pittsburgh bears the responsibility to protect all of its residents and this legislation defends LGBTQIA+ youth against the destructive psychological and physical impact of forced conversion therapy," said Gilman in a press release. "By passing this legislation, the City is standing up for equality and ensuring that Pittsburgh is a welcoming city for all."

To read more, please visit: <http://m.pghcitypaper.com/KeepingUpWiththeCouncil/archives/2016/11/29/pittsburgh-city-council-introduces-city-ban-on-conversion-therapy>

Amazon Smile

Do you shop on Amazon.com? PFLAG Pgh is registered with AmazonSmile where they donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to PFLAG Pgh. AmazonSmile is the **same** Amazon you know. You can get the **same** products, **same** prices, **same** service, **same** Amazon everything. The only difference is that Amazon will donate to PFLAG Pgh each time you shop! Visit smile.amazon.com for more details and search PFLAG Pittsburgh.



Being a LGBT person during the Holidays.

The holidays can be a stressful time for LGBT people or families with LGBT members, but there are several strategies that you can use to help reduce stress and create a happy holiday this year.

If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender...

- Don't assume you know how somebody will react to news of your sexual orientation or gender identity — you may be surprised.
- Realize that your family's reaction to you may not be because you are LGBT. The hectic holiday pace may cause family members to act differently than they would under less stressful conditions.
- Remember that "coming out" is a continuous process. You may have to "come out" many times.
- Don't wait for your family's attitude to change to have a special holiday. Recognize that your parents need time to acknowledge and accept that they have a LGBT child. It took you time to come to terms with who you are; now it is your family's turn.
- Let your family's judgments be theirs to work on, as long as they are kind to you.
- If it is too difficult to be with your family, create your own holiday gathering with friends and loved ones.
- If you are transgender, be gentle with your family's pronoun "slips." Let them know you know how difficult it is.

Before the visit...

- Make a decision about being "out" to each family member before you visit.
- If you are partnered, discuss in advance how you will talk about your relationship, or show affection with one another, if you plan to make the visit together.
- If you bring your partner home, don't wait until late into the holiday evening to raise the issue of sleeping arrangements. Make plans in advance.
- Have alternate plans if the situation becomes difficult at home.
- Find out about local LGBT resources.
- If you do plan to "come out" to your family over the holidays, have support available, including [PFLAG publications](#) and [the number of a local PFLAG chapter](#).

During the visit...

- Focus on common interests.
- Reassure family members that you are still the same person they have always known.
- If you are partnered, be sensitive to their needs as well as your own.
- Be wary of the possible desire to shock your family.
- Remember to affirm yourself.
- Realize that you don't need your family's approval.
- Connect with someone else who is LGBT—by phone or in person—who understands what you are going through and will affirm you along the way.



Being an Ally during the Holidays.

If you are the friend or family member of someone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender...

- Get support for yourself. It is important to realize you are not alone. [Find the phone number of the nearest Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\) chapter.](#)
- Take your time. Acceptance may not come instantly, but be honest about your feelings.
- Don't be nervous about using the "correct" language. Honesty and openness creates warmth, sincerity and a deeper bond in a relationship. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask for help.
- Realize that the situation may be as difficult and awkward for your LGBT loved one as it is for you.

Before the visit...

- Practice in advance if you are going to be discussing your family member's sexual orientation or gender identity with family and friends. If you are comfortable talking about it, your family and friends will probably be more comfortable too.
- Anticipate potential problems, but do not assume the reactions will always be what you expected.
- Consult with your LGBT loved one when coordinating sleeping arrangements if they are bringing home a partner.
- If your family member is transgender, practice using the correct pronouns.

During the visit...

- Treat an LGBT person like you would treat anyone else in your family.
- Take interest in your family member's life. They are still the same person.
- Don't ask your LGBT family member to act a certain way. Let them be their natural selves.
- If your LGBT family member is bringing a partner, acknowledge them as you would any other family member's partner.
- If your LGBT family member is bringing a partner, include them in your family traditions. Ask your LGBT family member about their partner if you know they have one.



The Gay Christian Network Annual Conference

Forty-eight states and several countries were represented at last year's conference in Houston, TX. Nearly 200 parents attended, along with a number of pastors seeking a more loving approach to LGBT people than the church has historically demonstrated. The conference moves around the country. It will be in Pittsburgh January 5-8, 2017. It is a unique opportunity for people in our geographic area to participate, by offering financial support, promoting the conference in our church and community, and/or attending the conference. This year's theme is: "Stories Inspire!"

Keynote speakers include: Retired Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson, Paula Williams (national trans advocate and former megachurch pastor), and Jane Clementi (mother of Tyler Clementi and founder of Tyler Clementi Foundation).

In addition to the daily keynotes, each day's schedule includes a variety of breakout workshops from which to choose, with suggested "tracks" for parents, side B participants, pastors, allies, etc. to help guide workshop choices. There are also optional opportunities to connect (a parent lunch on Friday, a service project, and a women's retreat prior to conference). There will also be live performances by Everyday Sunday and Bobby Jo Valentine. Sunday worship concludes the conference.



Costs: Registration fees range from \$145 (early bird) to \$185 (on site). There are reduced rates for college students (\$85) and groups of 5 or more. First time attendees can register for half price if they register with someone who has previously attended. The conference rate for the hotel (Westin Convention Center) is \$129/night. Meals are on your own, but bringing food along can reduce the cost. ***SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE TO DEFER REGISTRATION AND HOTEL COSTS FOR FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES.***

More Information: You can register on line or get more information at <https://www.gcnconf.com>

Renaissance City Choir Holiday Concert

Who: Renaissance City Choir

What: Holiday Concern

When: December 10, 2016, 7:30 pm

Where: East Liberty Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

Info: Come hear the Renaissance City Choir perform holiday music that celebrates the season but also brings a message of hope to those who need it most during this time of year. Hear selections performed by RCC and the stunning Edgewood Symphony Orchestra from the brilliant Magnificat by J.S. Bach that tells the story of the divine bringing a revolution of spirit, honoring the humble and meek. Listen to the story of Hanukkah through music, a story of the triumph of hope and cultural identity. This is a concert for all ages. For tickets, call 1-800-838-3006, or visit the [RCC Tickets Page](#). To get involved, contact rcc@rccpittsburgh.com.

Happy
Holidays!

Mayor William Peduto Names LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council

PITTSBURGH, PA (November 28, 2016) In August, Mayor William Peduto announced the launch of Pittsburgh's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is charged with taking a comprehensive approach to meet the needs of the entire LGBTQIA+ community.

The Advisory Council, whose members are being announced today, is a 15 member body with a diverse makeup of members from within the community.

In addition to the 15 members, the Advisory Council will have one representative serving from the Commission on Human Relations. Advisory Council members will meet monthly and provide quarterly status updates to the Mayor, striving towards a goal of inclusivity and progress within the LGBTQIA+ community.

The Advisory Council will report to the Mayor and City Council, as well as give recommendations for internal and legislative policy. Annual progress reports will be made public on the Advisory Council's website. It is the goal of the council to provide an outlet for the community to add input towards the council's recommendations. This will be accomplished by facilitating public forums and by welcoming suggestions to the sub-committees.

To read more, please visit: <http://pittsburghpa.gov/mayor/release?id=6752>

