

Where All Families Matter.



**PFLAG
Pittsburgh**

www.PFLAGPgh.org

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The Pittsburgh PFLAGer

PFLAG Pittsburgh's Monthly Newsletter

Volume 19, Number 05

Inside Our February 2017 Edition of the Pittsburgh PFLAGer:

- A Letter from Our President
- About PFLAG Academy Webinar
- Amazon Smile
- Gay Christian Network Conference
- Resource Focus: Straight for Equality
- National Geographic
- Current Events
- **AND MORE!**

Our Next Meeting:

Sunday, February 12th

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:

**The Sisters of Perpetual
Indulgence**

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:

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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

At-Large:

Allen Wolk & Elaine Cummings,

Ann Aya

Speaker's Bureau

Donni Smith

Chapter Librarian:

Steve Stewart

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,

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word struggle as: "to make strenuous or violent efforts in the face of difficulties or opposition." An example of its usage is:

"struggling with the problem."

Often times, we face struggles in our lives or we struggle with an issue whether it be political, personal, religious or many other areas.



Over the past few weeks, I have been keeping an eye on current events and have seen our nation struggle with a multitude of issues. One specific example that is in the news currently is that we have seen a struggle over immigration policies in our country, struggles over definitions of homelessness, and other serious issues.

At the family level, we hear about youth struggling with their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. We hear about parents struggling with the acceptance of their children and how to be a support.

Whatever the struggle may be, please know what PFLAG Pittsburgh is here to provide support for those who are struggling, provide a voice in advocacy efforts, and give education to an ill-informed public. We will not stop fighting for the rights of those who cannot speak for themselves. To borrow a phrase from PFLAG National: "**Let us be clear: PFLAGers will not allow the wheels of injustice to roll over anyone on our watch.**" We cannot and we will not.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Hortert".

Mitchell
President of PFLAG Pittsburgh

LGBTQ+ Stories:

From Across the Globe to Around the Corner



PFLAG Academy Online

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.](#)

Amazon Smile

Do you shop on [Amazon.com](https://www.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.

The Amazon Smile logo features the word "amazon" in black and "smile" in orange, with a curved orange arrow underneath "amazon" pointing to the right. Below the logo is the tagline "You shop. Amazon gives." in a smaller, black font.

*"The only thing they have to look forward to is hope.
And you have to give them hope. Hope for a better world,
hope for a better tomorrow...hope that all will be all right."
- Harvey Milk*

Message from PFLAG National:

Welcome to 2017.

There's no introduction that can be written that will adequately capture the mass of emotions that are bringing us into the New Year, so we aren't going to spend time discussing it.

But here's what we, as PFLAGers, want to talk about right now: Power.

The power to change the course of history is in PFLAG's DNA. PFLAG's story literally starts with a woman who may have been nervous or even a bit scared, but let courage take over and stood in the middle of a New York City street – at a time that was decidedly not favorable to her message – and took one step, holding a sign proclaiming her support for her gay son.

That is the PFLAG legacy: Overcoming fear and taking on the fight anyway, because we've got a mission to achieve.

And at this very moment, PFLAG members must carry on that legacy, stand strong and proud in the face of those who will roll back progress, take away rights, and deny the essential dignity of individuals. Because this is who we are as an organization, we have no choice but to fight.

We are the people who build safe places for the most vulnerable in our communities, often in places where it seems impossible. We are the people who faithfully appear in our elected officials' offices, acting as watchdogs for equality. We are the people educating and sharing our stories in our faith communities, our workplaces, and our schools.

We are the people who carry on the legacy of a brave woman, who took a bold step in the street carrying a sign, driven by pure love.

One of the most famous comments from openly gay, African-American civil rights pioneer Bayard Rustin is that of his concept of “angelic troublemakers” in communities. But to really understand what he was asking people to do, you've got to read the full context. It is the PFLAG call to action in dark and hostile times:

We need in every community a group of angelic troublemakers. Our power is in our ability to make things unworkable. All we have is bodies. We need to tuck them, tuck them, tuck them, in places so that the wheels don't turn.”

Let us be clear: PFLAGers will not allow the wheels of injustice to roll over anyone on our watch. This is our legacy, and together we're living up to it, no matter what comes our way.

To read more, please visit: <https://www.pflag.org/blog/welcome-fight-angelic-troublemakers-pflag>

PFLAG National's Unity and Inclusion Policy Statement Approved December 2016

From its founding in 1972 to its work today, PFLAG's membership of LGBTQ people, families, and allies have united in love, embracing each other and people whose communities are often marginalized, erased or ignored.

PFLAG reaffirms that unity and inclusion and a shared commitment to human dignity of all people are critical to fight discrimination and bigotry in any form so that all families can live free of fear. We commit to fight for fairness inclusive of people's sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic position, religion, level of mental or physical ability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other perceived or actual characteristic.

PFLAG also reaffirms its commitment to this goal which requires us to learn to be the allies that communities need. We commit to better educate ourselves, listen to others, and engage in critical conversations, ensuring that we model the inclusive behavior we wish to see in the world.

We will be more inclusive allies to create space for voices that might not otherwise be heard and amplify personal stories so that the storytellers are visible. We will listen attentively and actively, and speak out with due diligence and clear conviction, across all barriers and borders, to ensure that all people are included, respected, and treated equally.

Join the PFLAG National Rapid Response Team!

By joining the PFLAG National Rapid Response Team, you will be the immediate PFLAG boots-on-the-ground frontline in the fight for equality for LGBTQ people and other marginalized communities. You'll be among the first to know when action is needed, and will get the information and support you need to speak up and make a difference in the days and months ahead.

To join, please visit the following link:
http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51615/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=20616



Boy Scouts of America will allow transgender children to join

By Katie Zezima of *The Washington Post*

The Boy Scouts of America announced Monday that it will allow transgender children to enroll in scouting programs.

Boy Scouts chief executive Michael Surbaugh said in a video message that the organization will now accept boys based on the gender a parent puts on a child's scouting application, ending a policy of accepting boys based on the gender listed on a child's birth certificate.

"We realized that referring to birth certificates as the reference point is no longer sufficient," Surbaugh said in a video message. "Communities and state laws are now interpreting gender identity differently than society did in the past. And these new laws vary widely from state to state."

Surbaugh said the new policy goes into effect immediately.

"Our organization's local councils will help find units that can provide for the best interest of the child," he said in a written statement.

The shift is a significant one for the Boy Scouts, which [ended a ban on gay scouts in 2013](#). In 2015, the organization decided to [allow gay scout leaders](#), a decision that came months after a council in New York defied policy and hired an openly gay scout leader, the organization's president called for an end to the practice and the New York attorney general [started investigating](#) the group for discriminatory employment practices.

"This is another historic day for the Boy Scouts of America. The decision to allow transgender boys to participate in the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts is an important step forward for this American institution," Zach Wahls, the co-founder of Scouts for Equality, said in a statement.

Last year, an eight-year-old transgender Boy Scout in New Jersey was kicked out of his troop. "It made me mad," the boy, Joe Maldonado, who was born a girl, told [The Record newspaper](#) in New Jersey. "I had a sad face, but I wasn't crying. I'm way more angry than sad. My identity is a boy. If I was them, I would let every person in the world go in. It's right to do."

A Boy Scout spokeswoman told [the New York Times](#) last month that Joe did not meet eligibility requirements to participate in Boy Scouts.

Joe's mother, Kristie Maldonado, told *The Washington Post* on Monday that she filed a discrimination complaint against the Boy Scouts in New Jersey last week and believes that was the impetus for the policy change.

Boy Scouts spokeswoman Effie Delimarkos said the organization discussed the change over the past few weeks and part of that discussion included the case of the Maldonados. Delimarkos said the organization hasn't received the complaint Maldonado said she filed.

To read more, please visit: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/01/30/boy-scouts-of-america-will-allow-transgender-children-to-join/?utm_term=.d3028d7b5004



February is LGBT History Month in the United Kingdom and Scotland

By Caitlin Logan of *CommonSpace*

LGBT History Month has been recognized in Scotland and the rest of the UK every February since 2005. The program in Scotland is coordinated by LGBT Youth Scotland and delivered by a wide partnership of organizations.

Michael Richardson, LGBT History Month coordinator, told CommonSpace what this year's history month is all about: "It's an opportunity to highlight lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer lives and culture, and to reflect on the continued fight for LGBT liberation.

"2017 is the Scottish Government's year of history, heritage and archaeology, so this year we're putting the focus on LGBT heritage.

"We're asking organizations, groups and individuals to share their own milestones – a photograph, a clipping from an article, a handwritten note – using the hashtag #LGBTHeritage so we can uncover some of the hidden histories that have been part of Scotland's story."

Throughout February and a bit of March (because four weeks just isn't enough), there are events taking place in at least 11 local authorities of Scotland, with a little something for everyone.

To read more, please visit: <https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/10214/lgbt-history-month-2017-guide-month-celebration-and-reflection-across-scotland>

Trump continues Obama order protecting LGBTQ federal workers

By Eugene Scott and David Wright of CNN

An executive order protecting federal employees from anti-LGBTQ discrimination that was first signed in 2014 by President Barack Obama will continue under President Donald Trump, the White House said Tuesday.

"President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community," the White House said in a statement. "The executive order signed in 2014, which protects employees from anti-LGBTQ workplace discrimination while working for federal contractors, will remain intact."

The order extended protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and was predicated on previous executive orders under Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton that created additional protected classes but had not included the LGBTQ community.

The Log Cabin Republicans praised the decision Tuesday, calling Trump "a real friend."

"Donald Trump campaigned promising to be a '[real friend](#)' to the LGBT community, and now President Trump is delivering on that commitment," said Gregory Angelo, president of the Republican LGBT advocacy group. "Log Cabin Republicans is proud to have directly lobbied for this important preservation of LGBT equality in the federal workforce."

Hillary Clinton received the endorsement of several large LGBT organizations during the 2016 campaign, but Trump did attract attention for being the first the Republican presidential nominee to mention the gay community in his nomination acceptance speech.

To read more, please visit: <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/31/politics/lgbt-protections-trump-continues-obama-policy-federal-workers/>