

Where All Families Matter.



www.PFLAGPgh.org

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The Pittsburgh PFLAGer

PFLAG Pittsburgh's Monthly Newsletter

Volume 19, Number 04

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Our Next Meeting:

Sunday, January 8th

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:

Dr. Rev. Paula Williams
*International
Trans Advocate*

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

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,

If any of you are like me, we will be correcting ourselves often when we write the date on a piece of paper for the next few weeks. Many of us will also be writing or pledging New Year's Resolutions.

I personally take part in the pledging and writing of New Year's Resolutions every year—sometimes successful and

sometimes not. One researcher found that 18% of us will actually keep our resolutions in the New Year. Some of my resolutions this year include being more attentive to my neighbors, complimenting at least three people a day and becoming more involved with the community.

If you haven't made a resolution yet, I do have one request: become more active in your local PFLAG chapter. PFLAG Pittsburgh has been advocating for the families, friends and members of the LGBTQ+ community for over 25 years. We are a non-profit that runs completely on volunteers. We have a core of dedicated members who are very committed to our cause. I cannot thank them enough for their efforts and work in 2016 and look forward to working together in 2017. As with any other non-profit: we could always use more volunteers! Over the next few weeks and months, there will be several opportunities for you to become involved. We hope that you will join us.

I view the New Year with excitement, opportunities, and enthusiasm. I am certain that there will be obstacles that we will have to overcome, but we will overcome them together. It is when we work together and through a united front that we are stronger. I hope you will join us in the New Year.

With Warm Regards to a Happy New Year!



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.](#)

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>

About Our January Speaker:

Rev. Dr. Paula Williams

For 35 years, Rev. Dr. Paula Williams has worked with the Orchard Group, a church planting ministry in New York. For most of that time she was Chairman and CEO. For 12 years, Paula served as a weekly columnist and Editor-At-Large for Christian Standard magazine. She was also a teaching pastor for two megachurches. Those responsibilities ended when she transitioned to live as Paula.

Rev. Dr. Williams currently serves with RLT Pathways, Inc. <http://rltpathways.com> as a pastoral counselor, church and non-profit consultant, writer and speaker. She is also actively involved with OPEN, a ministry of progressive Evangelicals, and the Center for Progressive Renewal, a ministry of Convergence. Paula is also an active member at Highlands Church in Denver, Colorado.

She is a runner, hiker, and avid mountain biker. The first two are relatively safe. The third, not so much. Still, she pedals. She states that she has been blessed with three children and five granddaughters. Cathy and Paula were together for over 40 years, and we still enjoy a close relationship. If you'd like to contact Rev. Dr. Paula Williams, please email her at paula@rltpathways.com.



To read more about our speaker, please visit: <https://paulastonewilliams.com/>

PFLAG National's Straight for Equality Trans Resources!

When PFLAG National launched the Straight for Equality project in 2007, the mission was—if you'll excuse our *nearly* inexcusable pun—pretty straightforward. They wanted to create a resource and community for people who are not lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) to understand why their voices are critical to achieving equality for all, and provide them with the information and tools to effectively raise their voices. In other words, a way to take us straight for equality for all.

Welcome to the newest step in the ally journey: becoming a trans ally.

For many allies, familiarity with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people—and the issues that they face—is increasingly common. And yet, when we discuss inclusion of our transgender friends, that level of familiarity is very different. Continuing your ally journey to become an educated, out, and proud trans ally takes specific resources and support...and this is where you can start.

This newest installment in the Straight for Equality project aims to provide you with key learning tools, like the [guide to being a trans ally](#), opportunities to learn even more through the [great resources and organizations](#) doing this work, and [a chance to start coming out as a trans ally](#).

Allies have been changing the world and expanding inclusion in phenomenal ways. So whether you're a straight ally looking to expand your efforts, or you identify as someone from the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community and you want to send the message that equality means equality for everyone, we're thrilled that you're here.

Navigate the information here with the menu to your right, but know that if you need more help or have questions, we're just an e-mail away. Send PFLAG National a note at info@straightforequality.org.

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.



Seasons of Change: Embracing Your College Student's Sexual Orientation

By Marcia Morris, M.D. of *Psychology Today*

Your daughter, home from college for winter break, normally helps you hang the Christmas lights and decorate the tree, but she seems disinterested and down. You know she just broke up with her boyfriend, so you ask if she is missing him.

"That's not it, Mom. I'm not sad about the break up. I've just been questioning who I am lately. I never really felt close to my boyfriend, and lately I've been feeling attracted to my best friend. I'm wondering if I'm bisexual or gay."

We notice physical changes when our children come home from college - longer hair, a butterfly tattoo on the ankle, another piercing in the ear. But we can be less aware of the internal transformation taking place. As their awareness and acceptance of their [sexuality](#) grows, big changes can occur.

While a [survey](#) of college students showed that the majority - 80.4 percent - identified as heterosexual, the other 19.6 percent revealed a wide diversity in sexual orientation. 6 percent identified as asexual, 5.5 percent as bisexual, 1.8 percent as gay, 1.1 percent as lesbian, and 1.5 percent as pansexual. The rest (3.7 percent) described themselves as queer, same [gender](#) loving, questioning, or another [identity](#). The spectrum of [sexual orientation](#) may be wider than we previously understood.

How would you react if your daughter reveals she is bisexual or your son says he is gay? Your [love](#), support, and acceptance are essential to their wellness. A [study](#) of 21 to 25 year olds who were gay, lesbian or bisexual showed that those who experienced little or no rejection from [parents](#) regarding their sexual orientation were much less likely to become depressed, attempt [suicide](#), use [drugs](#), and have unprotected sex compared with those who experienced higher levels of rejection. In my work with college students who have diverse sexual orientations, I see the benefits of parent acceptance as well as the harm of rejection.

If your college student says he is gay, bisexual, or questioning his sexual orientation, here are some tips for how you can be helpful. Remember, he is closely watching your response.

1. Listen carefully to what your child says and respond in a nonjudgmental tone. Ask questions if you don't understand something. Tell your son you're glad he feels comfortable opening up to you.
2. Learn your child's preferred language for describing sexual orientation. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual are pretty standard terms, but the language around sexuality continues to evolve. Pansexual, for example, describes an attraction to anyone regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, including a [transgender](#) person. [GLAAD](#), an advocacy organization, offers a glossary of various terms.
3. Show support and acceptance of your child even if you are struggling with your feelings. You may have questions. Will your lesbian daughter have children? Will she be discriminated against or shunned by others? You can join your local chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays ([PFLAG](#)) to find groups and activities that support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their families.
4. Promote safe sex, just as you would if your child were heterosexual. Gay and bisexual men are at increased risk for HIV infection, so encourage condom use. If your son or daughter is in a monogamous relationship, recommend testing for HIV before unprotected sex occurs.
5. Encourage your child to get support from campus resources if he is feeling alone or facing rejection from his peers. While most college communities are very diverse and accepting, some students can still feel like they don't fit in. Joining a campus support group for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students can lead to a greater sense of social belonging.
6. Encourage your child to get help with a therapist or psychiatrist if he is dealing with [depression](#) or anxiety. LGB students face higher rates of [bullying](#), putting them at increased risk for depression and [post-traumatic stress disorder](#). College students are remarkably [resilient](#), and timely treatment will accelerate their recovery.

Now is the season of celebration. Celebrate the uniqueness of your child. Embrace her growing discovery of who she truly is. Sexual orientation is just one of the many parts of her identity she is trying to explore, understand and accept. With your love and acceptance, she can complete her journey more joyfully and defeat obstacles with greater ease.

*"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*

National Geographic Makes History With Transgender Cover Girl

By Curtis M. Wong of *The Huffington Post*

In what's being touted as a first for the magazine, [National Geographic](#) will kick off 2017 by featuring a transgender person on its cover.

A stunning photo of 9-year-old [Avery Jackson](#) will appear on the subscriber's edition of the magazine, which can be found below. "The best thing about being a girl is, now I don't have to pretend to be a boy," Jackson says in a caption accompanying the cover image, shot by [Robin Hammond](#).

The "Gender Revolution" issue, which hits newsstands nationwide on Dec. 27, examines the "cultural, social, biological and personal" aspects of gender identity, according to a press release. Features include "Dangerous Lives of Girls," which follows the lives of young women in [Sierra Leone](#), and "Rethinking Gender," which examines how science can help "navigate the shifting landscape of gender identity."

National Geographic's Editor-in-Chief Susan Goldberg [told NBC Out](#) that the magazine's staff was inspired by gender's omnipresence in the national conversation in creating the issue.

"We wanted to look at how traditional gender roles play out all over the world, but also look into gender as a spectrum," Goldberg said. "There's lots of coverage on celebrities, but there wasn't an understanding on real people and the issues we face every day in classrooms or workplaces in regards to gender."

The issue comes just ahead of the release of a two-hour documentary, "Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric," which will cover "everything you wanted to know about gender but were afraid to ask," [according to Couric](#). That documentary will debut on National Geographic on Feb. 6.

Given the challenges facing the LGBTQ community in the years ahead, the timing of this issue couldn't feel more appropriate. Bravo, NatGeo!

To read more, please visit: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/national-geographic-transgender-cover_us_5852d77de4b054eeaea229c0?utm_hp_ref=transgender



The Biggest LGBT Advances Of 2016

By Matt Baume of *The Huffington Post*

Do we have to do a [year in review for 2016](#)? This was a rough one, but what if I told you there were some really great milestones for LGBTs this year? Amidst all the bad news, 2016 had some real bright spots. And 2017 could have even more — but only if we work for it.

Some of my favorite milestones were small, like marriage equality finally being legalized in Antarctica — great news for gay penguins. And other advances were huge, like the entire country of Malta banning pray-away-the-gay camps.

And it wasn't all political — there was more visibility for LGBTs last year than ever before. In March, Israel hosted its first trans beauty pageant. In July, the Navy announced they'll name a ship after Harvey Milk. Sulu's openly queer now, as is Tracer and Wonder Woman. Sarah McBride became the first openly trans person to speak at the Democratic National Convention. For the first time ever, the Small Business of the Year award went to an LGBT-owned business. Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel became the first EU leader to marry a same-sex partner. The Oscars announced they'll consider gender fluid people in both male and female categories. And we got a ton of amazing queer films: *Moonlight*, *Other People*, *Love is Strange*, *Carol*, *Women who Kill*.

Now, compared to overturning unjust laws or winning new rights, visibility might seem kind of minor and frivolous. But the first step to overturning laws and winning rights is simply to be seen. Change starts when queer people speak up and demonstrate that we are everywhere: on stage, in business, in politics, in the Navy.

And once queers are visible, we can organize against unfair treatment.

That organizing is how, this year, Australians stopped a harmful referendum on equal rights. The Canadian Conservative Party removed language hostile to queers from their platform. After Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore told county clerks to defy the Supreme Court and not issue marriage licenses to gay couples, citizens organized complaints and got him suspended. North Carolinians voted out the governor who signed a terrible bathroom bill, and Salt Lake voters elected their first openly queer mayor.

To read more, please visit: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-biggest-lgbt-advances-of-2016_us_5866ac8ce4b04d7df167d467?section=us_queer-voices