



Where All Families Matter.



www.PFLAGPgh.org

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The Pittsburgh PFLAGer

PFLAG Pittsburgh's Monthly Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 12

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Our Next Meeting:

Sunday, September 11, 2016

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:

Deborah L. Acklin

*President and Chief
Executive Officer, WQED
Multimedia*

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:

www.PFLAGPgh.org

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Chapter Officials:

President:

Kelley Moten

Past President:

Liz de Jesus

Treasurer:

Jim Tomson

Secretary, Newsletter and Web:

Mitch Hortert

Advocacy Chairpersons:

Mardie and Pat

Support Chairperson:

Allen Wolk

Education Chairperson:

Brandon Harper

Speaker's Bureau

Dianne Tomson

Chapter Librarian:

Kathy Paschke

At-Large:

Norman Brown and Donni Smith

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 Letter from the President....

Dear Fellow PFLAGers,

As my term as president comes to a close, I'm reflecting on the past two years. I have been lucky enough to meet some of the most amazing, courageous and big-hearted people I've ever known. For an all-volunteer organization, I am truly proud of the work we've done. I'm also excited about the future of our organization, which I believe will be in great hands!

One of the great things about PFLAG Pittsburgh is its ability to adapt to the needs of the community. I used to naively believe that with the world growing more enlightened, PFLAG would become obsolete. While that is still my hope, I now see that we are more relevant than ever. As with every non-profit service organization, many people come and go. We still have new folks coming to our meetings every month. We also have some long-term members who form the backbone of our organization by continuing to share their experiences with newcomers.

I want to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to lead this organization. I want to thank the newcomers for finding us and I hope you have found PFLAG to be helpful. I want to thank the members who show up nearly every month to give of their time, wisdom and support.

And I especially want to thank my fellow board members: Liz, Allen, Jim, Dianne, Donni, Norman, Mitch, Brandon, Kathy, Mardie and Pat for their dedication, hard work and giving hearts. I am truly blessed to know you!

Thank you!
Kelley Moten



PFLAG Pittsburgh NEWS



PFLAG Board Membership/Officers

Although PFLAG Pittsburgh's board officer elections are approximately one month away, it's never too early to think about serving on the board of PFLAG Pittsburgh. There are numerous opportunities and we're always looking for new faces and different perspectives! Every two years, PFLAG Pittsburgh membership elects a President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary as well as members-at-large.



Below are several other positions on our board. If you are interested in more information about a particular position, please ask one of the current board members. Their names can be found on page 2 of this newsletter

- Advocacy Chairperson
- Support Chairperson
- Education Chairperson
- Chapter Librarian
- At-Large Board Members



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.](#)

Western Pennsylvania PFLAG Chapters

The Western Pennsylvania PFLAG chapters met for the first in three years to discuss a variety of topics and plan to meet again in October 2016! Representatives from Butler, Greensburg, Meadville, and Pittsburgh PFLAG Chapters were present for the two-hour long meeting.

Since the last meeting in 2013, Western Pennsylvania has seen two chapters close (Erie, New Castle) and there is a group working to start a chapter (Meadville). It is important to note that you do not have to be a chapter leader to attend these meetings. If you would like to be involved, please email our chapter secretary, Mitch at MRHortert@gmail.com.



ADVOCACY ALERT: **PFLAG Butler County NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!**

Rights Debated Again

By the Butler Eagle

LGBTQA rights were debated Thursday night for the third straight month at a city council meeting. LGBTQA stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and allied. Once again, so many people showed up that the meeting was moved from the city building to the Butler Fire Department's fire hall for part of the meeting. People on both sides of the issue debated an antidiscrimination ordinance that was initially rejected by the council in 2011, and revived in June after the mass shooting at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla. Seventeen people spoke on the proposed ordinance this time.

While last time, the majority spoke against it, this meeting found nine people speaking out in favor of it, and nine speaking out against it. The ordinance, initially created by Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) in part, states:



"To ensure that all persons regardless of actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, age, mental or physical disability, use of guide or support animals and/or mechanical aids, enjoy the full benefits of citizenship and are afforded equal opportunities for employment, housing and the use of public accommodations, and to have equal access to post-secondary educational institutions, it is necessary that appropriate legislation be enacted."

Heidi Artman, executive director of Victim Outreach Intervention Center in Butler, spoke first. "We're in the year 2016," she said. "It's beyond time that there is fair and equal treatment to all people in the city of Butler." The next several people who spoke after her also were in favor of the ordinance, including Jodi Ann Solito. She argued that the ordinance would help the economy.

"Having an inclusive workplace helps attract and retain quality employees," she said. "Nondiscrimination protection also attracts new investment to local economies, which generates new jobs and long-term sustainable growth." City treasurer John Greci spoke about men who identify as women being able to use women's bathrooms.

"In their quest for comfort to be able to use the bathroom of their choice, it directly interferes with the comfort of many, I would say most women in the bathroom," he said. "Why does nobody mention that? Do they even realize it is an issue?" Barbara Davidson shared his concern. She cited Target's decision to allow transgender men to use women's bathrooms. "I would ask the city council the same question that the attorney general of Texas asked of all the Target stores in his state," she said. "What safety features are you going to enact for unisex bathrooms?" Art Greathead spoke on the bathroom issue from a different perspective.

"As for all the LGBT paranoia, they have been around and using bathrooms since the time of Christ without social catastrophe," he said. Jeremy Samek spoke representing pastors Jeff and Bev Harris of Crossroad Community. He spoke about religious liberty.

"There is a difference between discriminating against somebody because of their orientation versus saying I can't participate in a message or a ceremony or event that conflicts with my conscience," he said.

Bonnie Humphrey spoke about religion from a different point of view. "Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself," she said. "How do you do that? Jesus set the example. Who are the people he hung out with? Look around you. These are your neighbors."

"I will publicly say that I am not going to ever vote for this because I feel that it's bad for the community."

-Mayor Tom Donaldson

Pastor Todd Wentworth, of First Baptist Church, was against the ordinance, and asked the council to do more research. "Please become so very educated about this," he said. "We see it in our country with politicians who say we just got to pass' things and say then we'll find out what's in it. How foolish." The council reacted to the debate. Councilman Michael Walter was glad to hear both sides out. "I'm all in favor of anybody coming if they have anything for the good of the community to say," he said.

Councilwoman Kathy Kline also commented. "I'm trying to understand both sides of it," she said. "I still am where I am, which is on the fence, because I still have a couple of folks that I want to speak with but I'm doing my homework."

Mayor Tom Donaldson spoke against the ordinance. "Butler is a welcoming community; everybody's welcome here," he said. "I don't care what they say, I don't know of any cases of discrimination that have been verified by any public record. "This has not been brought up for a vote. It's my understanding that some of the people that are in favor of it have said on social media that they intend to wear us down. I will publicly say that I am not going to ever vote for this because I feel that it's bad for the community."

Councilman Kenny Bonus, in his first official meeting as a councilman, said he needed to do more research on the topic before commenting. Councilman Corey Roche was absent from the meeting. The anti-discrimination ordinance is currently not on the agenda for September.

Editorial Note from PFLAG Butler County:

The mayor is actively trying to stop us from speaking at the meeting. He is going to stop letting people talk unless they are city resident or city taxpayers. So, we NEED city residents and taxes payers to register to speak at the meeting Also, it will be VERY helpful if people will E-mail the Mayor and council people showing your support.

Here are their E-mails:

- Mayor Thomas P. Donaldson citymayor@Cityofbutler.org
- Michael E. Walter michaelwalter@cityofbutler.org
- Kathy Kline writerbug@zoominternet.net
- Corey D. Roche coreyroche@cityofbutler.org
- Kenny Bonus kbonus@cityofbutler.org

Also, if anyone can write a letter to the editor in support of the ordinance, it would be very helpful. letters@butlereagle.com

If this ordinance gets voted down, we will have to wait, at a minimum, 2 years. It will more likely longer than that. There will be NO political will to revisit this topic. Worse than that, the other township in the area will be reluctant to give it any consideration either since they will see what happen with the city.

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WWW.PFLAGPGH.ORG

Have you visited the PFLAG Pittsburgh website lately? Our website is updated on a regular basis and provides a large number of resources that can be downloaded and printed right from the comfort of your own home. We have resources that answer basic questions about our meetings, how to be an ally, and has frequently used terminology to help provide insight into the vernacular of the LGBTQ+ community. We also have a spiritual directory that has a listing of LGBTQ supportive churches, synagogues, and meetings. Please visit our website today at: www.pflagpgh.org to take advantage of these great resources. If you have any suggestions, please send us an email at info@pflagpgh.org. We are always looking for new ideas and resources!

A Message from our Current Chair of Support:

It is time for a change in the chair of support!

Dear PFLAG Pittsburgh friends,

I have been the "chair of support" for about 9 years and it is time for a rest! September is the month in which all PFLAG chapters nationwide elect new officers, and our chapter follows suit.

I hope that someone out there would be interested in taking over this position - possibly two persons as co-chairs. I will be happy to assist the new chair for several months, so you will not enter the position "cold"!



The bylaws of PFLAG Pittsburgh call out the responsibilities of the Chair of Support verbatim as follows:

"Chair of Support, who shall oversee:

- a) *Chapter support groups, which shall include the recruiting, training, support, and assignment of the small group Facilitators;*
- b) *a follow-up system to contact newcomers and those who stop attending meetings;*
- c) *a "buddy system" to assign current members to contact newcomers;*
- d) *the formation and operation of any special interest groups that may arise, such as:*
 - 1). *50+ issues;*
 - 2). *Women's issues;*
 - 3). *Transgender issues;*
 - 4). *Straight Spouse issues;*
 - 5). *Youth issues;*
 - 6). *Other special interest groups.*
- e). *the physical arrangements for Chapter Meetings including, but not limited to:*
 - 1). *preparing forms and supervising the sign-in procedure of attendees;*
 - 2). *compiling attendance statistics;*
 - 3). *assuring availability of meeting rooms, setting-up of meeting spaces, and assuring the presence of snacks for the hospitality table;*
- f). *the Chapter's efforts to recruit new members."*

We have not followed all of the items listed above, and not all sharing groups mentioned there presently meet. However, the responsibilities, in overview, currently involve the following:

1. Making certain that the chapter meetings run smoothly;
2. Assuring that facilitators are present to steer the sharing groups;
3. Assuring that the physical arrangement of chairs, tables, refreshment tables, etc. is carried out for chapter meetings;
4. Providing sign-in sheets, comment cards, and other materiel, etc. for the attendees at chapter meetings;
5. Keeping electronic records of attendance, of facilitators, of comment cards;
6. Submitting an electronic report of each chapter meeting to the board of directors.



The responsibilities in more detail will be available at the chapter meeting.

Sincerely,
Allen

About Our September Educational Speaker:

Deborah L. Acklin

President and Chief Executive Officer, WQED Multimedia

Deborah Acklin is president and chief executive officer of WQED Multimedia, the nation's first community-owned public media company, also known worldwide as "Mister Rogers' station".

Ms. Acklin has served in multiple executive roles in public broadcasting, the cable television industry, and commercial broadcasting. At WQED Multimedia, she manages or has managed the operations, strategies, and fundraising to create original multi-platform content distributed across three television channels, three radio signals, an interactive Web-based learning channel, an interactive global media distribution portal, an education department, a publishing division, and PBS, NPR and their member stations.

Her tenure includes many achievements, including two consecutive Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards for Station Excellence, given by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences to a general manager of a commercial or public television station in Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia and New Jersey. She also helped launch the first public television channel in Bermuda (CTV).

Ms. Acklin's own work has been honored with many awards including: a national Emmy award nomination for a documentary about the legendary Mister Rogers; seven Emmy awards (Mid-Atlantic); a CINE Golden Eagle; The Gabriel Award from the Catholic Communicators Conference; the Pearl Award from the descendants of the Warner Brothers; a film award from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR); Associated Press honors for Best Newscast; the YWCA Tribute to Women Award in Arts and Culture; and an Outstanding Women in Science Award from the Women & Girls' Foundation.

Ms. Acklin is a sought-after speaker and frequent guest on radio and television programs, including Charlie Rose. She is active in the community on a variety of board and advisory boards including: The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust; The Three Rivers Arts Festival; Carlow University; The Steeltown Entertainment Project; The Winchester-Thurston School; and The University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics. She holds a B.A. from Duquesne University and attended Harvard Business School where she completed the prestigious Advanced Management Program.

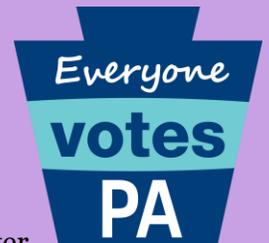


To read more about our speaker, please visit: <http://www.wqed.org/about/management.php>

Registered to Vote?

As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, PFLAG Pittsburgh does not endorse specific candidates for any public office. However, we do endorse policies, positions, and pieces of legislation. For example, PFLAG Pittsburgh supports the non-discrimination law known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), but we will not endorse a candidate for governor. PFLAG Pittsburgh also supports the Pennsylvania Safe Schools (PASS) Act which is proposed legislation to make our commonwealth's schools safer for all students.

As a 501(c)3, we also advocate for our members and readers to register to vote. The Pennsylvania deadline to vote in the general election on November 8, 2016 is quickly approaching. **The deadline is Tuesday, October 11, 2016.** That means if you do not register prior to the end of that day, you are ineligible to vote in the November 8th election.



Below is a link to register in Pennsylvania:

<https://www.pavoterservices.state.pa.us/pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>

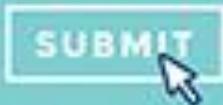
To read more about PFLAG National's position on certain policies, please visit the following link for more information: <https://www.pflag.org/wherewestand>

Details on how to Register:



How to **register to vote** online in Pennsylvania.

1 Go to *register.votesPA.com*.



Fill out the form and
submit your application. **2**

3 Use the application number
to track your submission.



Get your voter registration
card in the mail. **4**



Register now at *register.votesPA.com*

Tips for Supporting Your LGBTQ Student as School Nears

Whether you are a member of the LGBTQ community or an ally, there are multiple ways you can get involved with creating a safer space for students that range from being an active listener to working with local organizations to provide trainings to schools on LGBTQ related information. Below is an article that comes from the White House Conference on Bullying from 2015.

Question: Are There Examples of Strategies, Services, And/or Programs That Are Effective for Preventing and Intervening in Bullying for LGBT Students?

Russell, Kosciw, Horn, and Saewyc (2010) in their “Social Policy Report: Safe Schools Policy for LGBTQ Students” highlight four practices that have shown to promote safety and well-being for LGBTQ youth in schools. These are elaborated here:

- **Practice #1:** School nondiscrimination and anti-bullying policies that specifically include actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression (Russell & McGuire, 2008).
 - LGBTQ students in states with comprehensive, enumerated safe school laws reported hearing fewer homophobic remarks in school, experienced lower levels of harassment and assault based on sexual orientation or gender expression than students in states with no law or in states with a non-enumerated anti-bullying law and fewer suicidal attempts (Goodenow et al., 2006; Kosciw et al., 2008).
- **Practice #2:** Teachers receive training and ongoing professional development on how to intervene when homophobic teasing occurs.
 - Students feel safer when they report that their teachers intervene to stop harassment (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004).
 - Two recent evaluations showed that teacher training around LGBT issues and creating safer school environments for LGBTQ students (Greytak & Kosciw, 2010; Horn & Gregory, 2005).
- **Practice #3:** Presence of school-based support groups or clubs (e.g., gay-straight alliances (GSAs)).
 - Students in schools with GSAs reported fewer homophobic remarks, less harassment and bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity, were less likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe, and were more likely to feel a positive school sense of belonging (Kosciw et al., 2008).
 - Szalacha (2003) found in a Massachusetts statewide study found that the presence of a GSA was the most predictive factor in perceived school safety amongst LGB and heterosexual students.
 - LGBTQ students who attend schools with Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and other support groups report greater perceptions of safety and lower levels of victimization (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Goodenow et al., 2006; Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009).
 - A recent study showed that among heterosexual youth, those who had at least one LG friend were less likely to tolerate unfair treatment toward LG peers (Heinze & Horn, 2009).
 - Dialogue groups also can provide opportunities for positive intergroup interactions among peers at school (Candelario & Huber, 2002; Portman & Portman, 2002).
- **Practice #4:** Inclusion of LGBTQ role models or issues in school curricula, including bullying-prevention programming, and access to information and resources through the library, school based health centers, and other avenues.
 - When students know where to get information and resources for LGBTQ issues and if they have someone to talk to at their school then they feel safer (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004).
 - School-based programs that focus on a range of issues such as raising cultural awareness or facilitating individual identity development, building connections between students and their cultural community, or promoting social action to counter prejudice and discrimination are likely to reduce bullying directed toward LGBTQ students (Espelage & Horne, 2008).
 - In a study of 23 comprehensive anti-bullying programs aimed at middle and high school students, none of them covered issues of sexual orientation, homophobia, sexual harassment, and sexual violence sufficiently enough to warrant any efficacy (Birkett, Espelage, & Stein, 2008).

To read the complete article, please [click here!](#)

LGBTQ+ Stories:

From Across the Globe to Around the Corner

NJ priest suspended for supporting gay groups

By David Gibson of [Religious News Service](#)

The Catholic archbishop in New Jersey has barred a gay priest from ministry because the cleric supports gay advocacy groups and has backed a Catholic high school counselor who was fired when church officials discovered the woman was in a same-sex marriage.

The Rev. Warren Hall said he was notified by phone on Wednesday (Aug. 31) that Newark Archbishop John Myers, an outspoken conservative who has submitted his retirement papers to Pope Francis, says Hall's actions are "confusing the faithful."

As a result, Hall will no longer be able to celebrate Mass in public, present himself as a priest or work in the New Jersey parishes where he has been ministering.

"The problem is that we have an archbishop who doesn't believe you can be gay and Catholic," Hall, who is on vacation, wrote in an email.

He also tweeted about the move Wednesday afternoon:



Warren Hall
@Warrmeister

Sadly, my differences with my bishop continue. Today he has suspended me from priestly ministry. @Pontifex's Reform are taking too long.

7:58 PM - 31 Aug 2016

↩️ ↻️ 19 ❤️ 50

Myers' issues with Hall go back to May of last year, when the archbishop fired Hall from his job as chaplain at Seton Hall University for a Facebook post in which Hall showed support for the anti-bullying "NOH8" campaign that encourages respect for gay people and gay rights.

Hall, who said he remains committed to his vocation as a priest and to his vow of celibacy, a few weeks later [acknowledged that he is gay](#).

The Newark Archdiocese said that was also a problem because "someone who labels himself or another in terms of sexual orientation or attraction contradicts what the (Catholic) Church teaches."

The tensions seemed to have eased two months later when Myers assigned Hall to assist at two parishes in northern New Jersey across the Hudson River from Lower Manhattan.

But Hall has continued to publicly back several gay groups and gay Catholics in particular.

He is set to speak next week to a New Jersey chapter of [PFLAG](#), founded as a support group for parents and friends of gay people, and he has expressed support for the gun control group [Gays Against Guns](#), the LGBT Community Center in New York and [New Ways Ministry](#), a Catholic LGBT organization.

Hall said that in the phone call informing him of the suspension, Monsignor Thomas Nydegger, Myers' second-in-command, also cited Hall's support for [an unofficial gay and lesbian ministry](#) at the church's World Youth Day in Poland in July and his support for a guidance counselor who has sued the archdiocese for firing her over her same-sex marriage.

To read more, please visit: <http://religionnews.com/2016/09/01/nj-priest-suspended-for-supporting-gay-groups/>

Resources scarce for Beaver County's LGBTQ youth

By Katherine Schaeffer of [The Beaver County Times](#)

Growing up in Aliquippa, visible gay role models were starkly absent from Cory Roma's experience. When Roma, who is gay, started his freshman year at Aliquippa High School, he said he only knew a handful of other people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer, often referred to as LGBTQ individuals. "None of them were as open as I was. Most were still in the closet fearing being disowned by their families or being tormented in school," said Roma, now a junior at Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School. "I felt like I was alone, that there was no one else out there who was like me."

Roma's outlook changed about two years ago when he discovered the Sewickley Library's Gender and Sexuality Alliance, a student-run support and social group for LGBTQ teens. With some encouragement from his mother, Roma began attending the group's weekly meetings and formed friendships with other LGBTQ teens who he now describes as "family."

"I went from being a sad and depressed lonely gay kid who felt like no one else in the world was like him and no one could understand him, to being proud and confident in who I am," Roma said.

Roma's experience isn't uncommon among Beaver County's LGBTQ youth, who are often forced to cross county lines in search of support and education networks.

Only two of the county's 14 school districts offer students the option of joining a school-sponsored Gay-Straight Alliance, a student-run club designed to create a safe space for LGBTQ students, promote understanding of the issues they face and eliminate homophobic attitudes.

Beyond those two groups, teens and their parents find themselves staring into a vacuum when it comes to local resources and support. These families often travel to neighboring Allegheny County or the city of Pittsburgh -- a drive that can take up to an hour for those in the county's northern municipalities.

A lack of support

Liz de Jesus first became an advocate for the LGBTQ community about nine years ago when her son came out after his graduation from Blackhawk High School. De Jesus, of Enon Valley, said her son intentionally waited to come out, later explaining that he was worried about the family losing friends, or worse, becoming the victims of a hate crime.

De Jesus began attending meetings at the Pittsburgh chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, or PFLAG, a national support, education and advocacy group dedicated to supporting LGBTQ people and their parents, family and friends. The group has local chapters in Pittsburgh and Westmoreland, Butler and Indiana counties, and de Jesus, who served as PFLAG Pittsburgh's chapter president for three years, said she hasn't found anything comparable in Beaver.

"As a (gay) kid is growing up, they're feeling very much alone," she said, adding that Beaver County residents involved with PFLAG unanimously lamented the lack of resources in the county.

Beaver's climate is a sharp contrast with bordering Allegheny and Butler counties and nearby Westmoreland, said Mitchell Hortert, western Pennsylvania coordinator and Pittsburgh chapter board secretary for PFLAG. Each county has its own PFLAG chapter in addition to other resources. While the city of Pittsburgh is brimming with nonprofits offering support, education and medical care, rural Butler and Westmoreland have seen initiatives, like Westmoreland's LGBTQ Interfaith Network, sprout up over the last 10 years or so, Hortert said.

In general, communities in rural areas like Beaver County often lack LGBTQ resources and role models, compounding the anxiety some young people already feel about coming out, Hortert said. As these individuals grow up, they usually choose to move to an area where there is an established support network, such as Pittsburgh, he said.

"The struggle is because there is a lack of support and because there's a lot of issues, especially (because) western Pennsylvania is very conservative, it's a struggle for gay people to function and exist," he said.

Pittsburgh-based organizations such as PFLAG and the Persad Center have made a handful of efforts to educate Beaver County residents about LGBTQ issues with programs such as Persad's 2010 Community Safe Zone initiative. PFLAG has also visited Ambridge Area High School for faculty training sessions, de Jesus said.

To read more, please visit: http://www.timesonline.com/community/news/resources-scarce-for-beaver-county-s-lgbtq-youth/article_c7cf67do-4e9a-11e6-8963-6fcc8498b609.html

