



The PFLAG Link

MIDLAND—BAY CITY—SAGINAW CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 834, BAY CITY, MI 48707

• 989.941.1458 •

<http://www.pflag-mbs.org>

August 2008

Feel The Love at the State Conference in September

From Vice-President Denise Malosh

We at PFLAG Tri-Cities are excited about the upcoming PFLAG State Conference on September 20. If you have never attended a PFLAG conference you will be surprised by the energy and love in one room as we share our stories and common mission. If that's not enough, we have a great lineup of speakers you won't want to miss. **Colette Beighley**, West Michigan Field Organizer of Triangle Foundation will present how she came to her position in "Evolution of an Activist". **Charissa Urbano** will discuss current scientific theories concerning biological factors in gender development and behavior.

Elizabeth Brown of PFLAG National will help us learn how to use "Straight for Equality" materials to spread our message. She will also discuss topics to improve our chapter effectiveness in "Leadership and Membership Development" and "Media Training". **Michael Brancheau** will lead us in awareness exercises that are always enlightening. There will also be time for chapter members to share ideas and concerns. The conference agenda can be viewed at http://perceptionssv.org/PFLAG_state_conf_2008.pdf.

We know your time is precious and we hope you can see the value of sharing this day with fellow Michigan PFLAG members. The

conference runs 9am to 5pm, with breakfast at 8am at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Midland. The cost is \$25 each, \$10 student rate with breakfast and lunch included. Space is limited so plan to register soon. Register by email to malos1dm@charter.net or call 989-941-1458. If you come Friday night we have a limited number of rooms available at the **Fairview Inn** for \$79 and optional dinner with Perceptions, GLBT social/support group. If cost is prohibitive, let us know as we may have funds available to help. We also have a few members who can help with overnight accommodations in their homes to keep the cost down. See you in September! See this newsletter's final page for a registration form.

Not Just A Walk in the Park

Join us for exercise and to raise money for HIV/AIDS services in the TriCities area. On Saturday, September 27, the **AIDS Walk Bay City/Midland/Saginaw** will take place at Wenonah Park in downtown Bay City. Registration is at 9:30 a.m.. The Rally starts at 10:30 and Walk begins at 11:00. All donations benefit the HIV/AIDS Care Program at BASIS, which provides free confidential care services to nearly 140 men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS. For this year, the Care Program's 20th Anniversary, we'll be joined by **Jeanne White-Ginder**, the mother of **Ryan White**. Contact **Tom Brubaker** at 989-894-2991 or see www.aidswalkmichigan.org.

This Month's Meeting:

Sunday, August 24, 2 p.m.

Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship,
6220 Jefferson at Wackerly, Midland

Film: "For the Bible Tells Me So"

Michigan PFLAG Statewide Meeting

Saturday, Sept. 20,

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship,
Midland

AIDS Walk

Bay City/Saginaw/Midland

Sat., Sept. 27, Winona Park,

Bay City

Register 9:30, walk 11:00 a.m.

Other News & Items of Interest

Black people represent only about one in eight Americans, but one in every two people living with HIV in the United States is black, states the report, titled "Left Behind - Black America: A Neglected Priority in the Global AIDS," published by the Black AIDS Institute.

The YWCA of Kalamazoo will begin holding an LGBT Survivor's Support Group on either Monday or Tuesday nights. Anyone interested can contact **Kaitlin Martin**, Victim Advocate with the YWCA's Sexual Assault Program, by calling (269) 385-2869 ext. 246 during business hours.

It's About Time: LGBT Aging in a Changing World

sponsored by AARP and put on by SAGE, will offer resources and networking opportunities to effectively address what LGBT aging will look like in the 21st century. The event is Oct. 12-14 in New York; for more, see www.sageusa.org.

PFLAG Members Take Note

As September comes into view, plan to renew your membership at the next meeting you're able to attend. Dues are \$40.00 per year, of which \$15.00 goes to the National. Your participation is vital to keep our chapter healthy and growing!

Bay City Central High School Gay-Straight Alliance Students from Bay City Central High School have appeared as guest speakers in the past; now they announce the official formation of their own GSA, to be affiliated with the **Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network**. "The main goal of **Bay County GLSEN** will be to create safer environments within schools for all students, and to eliminate every form of bullying and discrimination." The founding members, who as students at Bay City Central will not be named here, hope within six months to elect a permanent steering committee. With college an important part of their future, the students hope to build an organization that will last, by finding "a reliable and dedicated group of people to continue our chapter after we leave the area." The Gay-Straight Alliance is a student organized club at Bay City Central started to bring awareness about hate crimes and discrimination targeted towards the gay community along with providing a social network between students, no matter what their age, race, sexual orientation, or gender expression. The group's website is www.chsgaystraightalliance.com.

LGBT Suicide Line Seeks To Educate Youth, Raise Awareness (*Excerpted from 365gay.com*) The nation's only around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for LGBT youth is launching its first social marketing campaign to increase awareness of gay teen suicide. The campaign, by the non-profit **Trevor Project**, was developed by Better World Advertising and will coincide with National Suicide Prevention Week, which is sponsored by the American Association of Suicidology. It will run Sept. 7-13, 2008. The series of

print and online advertisements feature four young people, representing those who attempted suicide because of intolerance and harassment, and expressing how glad they are that they did not complete suicide because their lives have since changed for the better. The **Trevor Helpline, 866-4-U-TREVOR**, is a free and confidential service that offers hope through trained counselors. The organization was founded by three filmmakers whose film *Trevor*, about a gay teenager who attempts suicide, received the 1994 Academy Award for Best Short Film (Live Action). Print and online ads can be downloaded free from <http://thetrevorproject.org/imgladifailed>.

Let's Get Organized You may have heard of the **Association for Michigan LGBT & Ally Organizations**, a broadly-based effort to coordinate and support pro-gay groups in Michigan. The Association is seeking help as it moves toward launching its **Board of Directors**. Holding the vision that "Michigan will lead the country in LGBT rights and inclusiveness, ensuring that every person is treated with respect, dignity and full equality, making Michigan an attractive place to live, work and visit," the organizers of the Association are seeking 5-10 individuals who can dedicate up to ten hours per week and who can bring organizational and other badly needed skills to this project. The ultimate outcome will be equality in Michigan through the coordination and support of all pro-equality groups, large and small. To apply, please contact **Crystalle Crain**, Project Manager, via email at crystallee.crain@gmail.com for information. Applications are due by **Friday, August 22, 2008**.

Remembering Rich *Remarks from Karen Kormelink* My father, **Richard Kormelink**, died on June 2, 2008. He was like the rain, generally gentle and soothing yet strong enough to wear away solid rock. It is impossible for us to exist without the rain and difficult for me to live without him. My father's support of me as his lesbian daughter was constant and strong. He was supportive and loving since the day I came out, approximately 27 years ago. He not only talked the talk, he walked the walk. He co-founded, along with **my mother**, the **Tri-Cities chapter of PFLAG** approximately 15 years ago. He wanted to provide a safe and loving place for members of the LGBT community. People whose own parents had rejected them based on their sexual orientation found a warm and loving father figure. Parents who didn't understand their child's orientation found a man who was openly proud of his lesbian daughter and a man who wanted to help them accept their child. His message was simple: love your kid. Present and past members of the Tri-Cities Chapter have called him their hero for showing them that they are loved and loveable. Before he died he wrote me a letter that I will cherish forever. Part of what he had to say was that he was overjoyed that I had found the love of my life and brought her into his life. I wish that he was going to be there in August when my partner and I go to California to get married. It is a great comfort to me to know that the people my father impacted and the lives he touched keep a piece of him alive. The change he brought about by being a role-model and reaching out to LGBT people and their families in his community is immeasurable.

Progress in Hamtramck Opposed by Well-Funded Legal Group

Repeal will be on November Ballot

A copyrighted report in the Detroit News on August 16 describes an attempt by a conservative think tank to repeal a recent pro-equality ordinance in the city of Hamtramck. "The Thomas More Law Center, whose focus is on the religious freedom of Christians and family values, wants to overturn the ordinance approved by the City Council in January," writes Darren A. Nichols. The ordinance protects individuals from discrimination in housing, employment and city contracts, including protection for sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. The city is only the 17th in the state to enumerate protection against discrimination. The Detroit News quotes Brian Rooney, spokesman for the Center, as saying such protection is "a special right for special people at the expense of religious people." Rooney went further, saying the "radical homosexual agenda" was something usually seen in "more liberal" cities. The News article states Rooney claims the ordinance "infringes on Christians and other religious groups who believe homosexuality is a sin." The group "Hamtramck Citizens Opposing Special Rights Discrimination," for which the Thomas More Law Center is acting as legal counsel, claims to have gathered more than 1,000 signatures, "more than twice the amount needed" according to the Center's website, in the city of 23,000. Rooney's efforts face opposition from the Triangle Foundation. The Foundation's deputy director, Kevin McAlpine, was quoted as saying "The majority of people in Hamtramck believe everyone should be treated with fairness and respect." The Thomas More Law Center was founded in

1999 by Domino's Pizza magnate Tom Monaghan.

More Fuel for Violence?

Thoughts on Solidarity

"The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reports a recent rash of at least 13 brutal and violent hate crimes that have occurred throughout the country on the heels of the murder of 15 year-old Lawrence King in Los Angeles and the brutal beating of Duanna Johnson, both in February of 2008. NCAVP reports that these hate crimes may indicate a frightening trend of increases in both the number and severity of anti-LGBT violence." (For more, <http://www.hatecrimesbill.org> or www.ncavp.org.) As members of TriCities PFLAG, we are always grateful for the kindness and support our chapter receives from the Midland Unitarian/Universalist congregation (with special appreciation for our member and church member RG Converse - whose cheerful work helps make sure the sanctuary is always ready for us.) So it was very hard to hear news reports of the gunman who carried out an alleged premeditated attack at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee in July. This man, in whose home police found a letter expressing hatred of "liberals and gays," faces charges for killing two and injuring seven. It is a point of sorrow that being different is so often used to justify violence; but as it is the duty of every person to strive to bring out what is noblest and wisest from each of us, PFLAG TriCities remains resolved to work for peace and justice for everyone in the human family. We recognize with dismay the revelation of the encouragement the alleged killer in Knoxville received from social commentators who wrongly blame LGBT persons for our nation's

difficulties. And we stand in solidarity with UU churches everywhere, and acknowledge from the depth of our hearts the heroism of all who are willing to speak and work against the shortsighted conventions of society for the sake of justice and safety for all. Not for the first time, nor for the last, we resolve to work to change both law and society to bring balance and compassion to the national conversation, so that conflicts between all ideologies are resolved without providing fuel for the motives of killers.

American Psychological Association Calls for Transgender Equality

On August 17, The American Psychological Association released a statement urging psychologists today to take a leading role in ending discrimination based on gender identity, calling upon the profession to provide "appropriate, nondiscriminatory treatment to all transgender and gender-variant individuals" and encouraging more research into all aspects of gender identity and expression. The action came at APA's Annual Convention when the association's governing Council of Representatives adopted a resolution supporting full equality for transgender and gender-variant people. The resolution also calls on APA to support legal and social recognition of transgender individuals consistent with their gender identity and expression; support the provision of adequate and medically necessary treatment for transgender and gender-variant people recognize the benefit and necessity of gender transition treatments for appropriately evaluated individuals call on public and private insurers to cover these treatments. More can be found at http://www.apa.org/releases/gender_C08.html.



Saturday, September 20, 2008
Michigan PFLAG State Conference
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
6220 Jefferson
Midland, MI 48640

Name _____

Address _____ email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Student? __ Yes __ No

PFLAG Member? __ Yes __ No PFLAG Chapter _____

Other GLBT Group Affiliation? _____

Please fill out the following to help us plan meals:

Dinner with Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities will be **Friday evening**, 9/19/08 at 6:00 pm.

Order off the menu. I would like to attend __ Yes __ No

Notify Denise by Thursday 9/19/08 if you need to cancel at malos1dm@charter.net or (989)941-1458.

Will you be eating breakfast with us? (no charge) __ Yes __ No

Special Dietary Needs: __ Vegetarian __ Low Fat __ Diabetic

Registration Fee: \$25.00 (\$10.00 Student) Saturday meals are included in conference price.

If you have cost concerns, please contact Denise Malosh at (989)941-1458.

Please make out check to: **PFLAG Tri-Cities**

Send registration form with payment to:

**PFLAG Tri-Cities
c/o Denise Malosh
5208 Trailridge Dr.
Midland, MI 48640**

A special rate of \$79 is offered for the conference for a limited number of rooms. Mention "PFLAG Conference" when you make your reservation.