



News & Views



Celebrating Real Family Values

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Help Keep the Victory

by Michael McKibban

I attended a PFLAG regional conference hosted by PFLAG Merced on Saturday, May 17th. One of the presenters was PFLAG National Executive Director, Jody Huckaby. It was a wonderful time to go to such an event since it was just three days after California's landmark Supreme Court decision upholding same-sex marriage. A major point of Jody's presentation was to take a moment to enjoy this crucial victory. He then stressed that we will need to work to keep it since there is little doubt that a petition amending the constitution to forbid same-sex marriage will qualify for the November ballot.

Mr. Huckaby's next point was that the GLBT community must activate its straight allies in order to defeat the proposed amendment. PFLAG is in a uniquely strong position to support this action. As a family-oriented, community-based, and volunteer-driven organization, PFLAG's voice is well respected. It is important that PFLAG chapters and members use this position to reach out and empower our friends to be active "straight allies". Last October, PFLAG National launched *Straight for Equality*, a program aimed to enable Allies to actively and effectively speak up against bigoted remarks and attitudes. Check out www.straightforequality.org

Straight for Equality has produced two brief, well-organized publications, *Guide to Being a Straight Ally* and *A PFLAG Field Guide*. The first is a tool designed for potential allies who are not typical PFLAGers, not family members or close friends of the GLBT community. The booklet aims to inspire and enable them to understand that actively speaking up against bigoted remarks and actions is a human and civil rights issues. It presents small, achievable steps that newly-aware allies can take to change an anti-gay climate when they encounter it. (As my Gay-Straight Alliance students say, "Stop tolerating intolerance.")

The second publication is intended as a guide to help PFLAG chapters reach out to the straight community. Both publications are available in colorful hard copy and can be ordered from http://www.pflag.org/store/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=10

June 3 - PFLAG Celebrates Father's Day

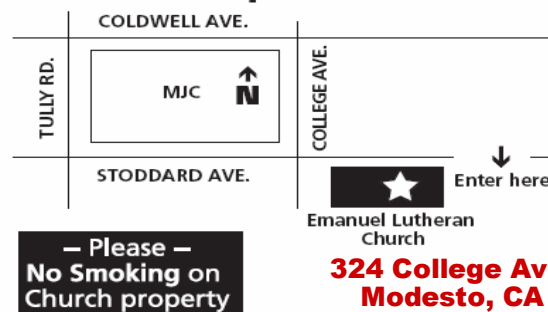
A special panel of fathers will share their unique stories of fatherhood or as partners of fathers. Some became fathers by surprise while others have worked very hard to have a child in their life.

This is sure to be an inspirational program!

PFLAG Mission Statement: PFLAG promotes the health and well being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons through: **support**, to cope with an adverse society; **education**, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and **advocacy**, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

We have a new refreshment chairperson for PFLAG Bingo! Thank you, **Donald Whalen** for volunteering to take on this duty for PFLAG and keep our Bingo players refreshed! **AND** - Our apologies to Donald for neglecting to thank him for his participation in the successful Yard Sale in April!

Location Map:



Dates to Remember

Meeting days

1st and 3rd Tuesdays

Every month

7 pm Support
8 pm Program

June 3

All kinds of Dads
WELCOME

Please come share your stories during this special Father's Day program

GLBTQ YOUTH GROUP

June 11 & 25 7-9 pm

College Avenue Congregational Church, corner of College and Orangeburg Avenues

PFLAG group in Oakdale!

June 4 & 18 7pm

Golden Oaks Conference Room
1425 West "H", Oakdale
pflagoakdale@dishmail.net

June 8

Birdcage

Is an informal, monthly social gathering for GLBTs, allies and friends. Join the group at **Bacchus**

1200 "I" Street, downtown
5-9 PM

Want to be on the Birdcage e-mail list? Contact **Patrick Pokorny** at **404-0538** or ndskills1@sbcglobal.net

June 17

Hawaiian Bingo

Wear your leis, pareos, grass skirts, and shirts. We meet in the Youth Rooms...follow the signs!

PFLAG Aims to Support Local Families

Reprinted in entirety from the Wednesday, May 7, 2008 *Oakdale Leader*,
by **Teresa Hammond**

As towns and communities grow, so too does the need for groups and organizations that appeal to a wider demographic of community members. While service clubs continue to dominate the mainstay of Oakdale's groups, others have slowly and quietly made their way into the town, which now reaches over 18,000 in population.

Beginning Wednesday, May 7 at 7 p.m. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) will meet every other week at 7 p.m. in the Golden Oaks Conference Room at the Oak Valley Medical Building. The building is at 1425 West "H" St., Oakdale.

The group will be facilitated by Oakdale High School chemistry teacher, Michael McKibban with the assistance of his wife, retired pediatric nurse, Maureen.

McKibban is currently the student advisor of the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at Oakdale High School. It's a group that was formed three years ago, when McKibban and another school instructor were approached by a group of students. Currently the on-campus group has an average of 15 members.

"Basically in working for the past three years with the students," McKibban said, "I thought the families need a venue to work through some things. PFLAG has such a good reputation of helping individuals work through things, that I thought Oakdale needs one."

Not taking this new commitment lightly, McKibban has dedicated himself to educating himself and making appropriate preparations so the group can best serve the community. In January of this year he began attending Modesto's PFLAG meetings. A branch, which he has aligned this group with, while getting the Oakdale branch off the ground.

"They have been very helpful," McKibban said of the Modesto group. "For now we will operate under Modesto's 501(c)3 status. We are a new support branch to the Modesto Chapter,

for now.

"One of the interesting things that I hadn't even focused on was for the parents to come out in their own circle of friends with their GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) child," McKibban added. "This was not an issue that had come to my mind and I realized that was important to us."

In addition to the four months of bi-weekly meetings he has attended, the two McKibbans have also been in touch with a professional counselor.

According to McKibban, the counselor will be on hand at all meetings, primarily serving to help an individual or a family that might be in crisis.

"The ultimate goal is to create a support group within this community, working through GLBT issues."

McKibban placed an emphasis on the fact that the new group is similar to the on-campus group in that it is not specifically for GLBT persons only. Likening it to the Gay Straight Alliance, with the emphasis on the word "Alliance."

"Just because someone is in the group does not mean they are gay," he said.

To that point, PFLAG was first formed in March 1973 by Jeanne Manford. Manford first had the idea for PFLAG after she marched alongside her gay son Morty in New York's Pride Parade. Throughout the parade, she was approached by other young people begging her to talk to their parents, with that PFLAG was formed. Approximately 20 people attended the first meeting. Today, there are over 500 chapters with more than 200,000 members and supporters."

The mission statement posted on the PFLAG website states: "PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity."

"Tolerance doesn't mean endorsement," McKibban said, "and I am hopeful that Oakdale will be supportive of the families through PFLAG."

There is no age limit, he said of the group they hope to attract.

"The intent will be to use the experience of the families that are there to help the student positively interact with the family," McKibban said.

For now the group will meet the first and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. Meetings will run approximately two hours. Meeting times may vary based on room availability and group needs.

"We'll see how Oakdale structures itself," McKibban said.

For questions and information regarding Oakdale's PFLAG, e-mail pflagoakdale@dishmail.net.

Some information for this article was obtained through the official PFLAG website.

Some websites of interest:

HeartStrong: heartstrong.org

Owl Empire of Stanislaus County, Inc. (OESCI): oesci.org

PFLAG National: pflag.org

Stanislaus Community Assistance Project (SCAP):

scap4.org **New location - 2209 Coffee Rd. Suite A**

Stanislaus PRIDE Center: stanpride.org

Visit a local open and accepting Spiritual Organization:

College Avenue Congregational Church - 1341 College Ave., Modesto: cacc-ucc.org/menu

Emanuel Lutheran Church - 324 College Ave, Modesto
emanuellutheran.org

First United Methodist Church - 850 16th Street, Modesto: fumcmoesto.org

Unitarian Universalist Church - 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto: stanuu.org

Unity Church of Modesto - 2467 Veneman Ave., Modesto:
unityofmodesto.com