

News & Views



Celebrating Real Family Values

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Stop Bullies Now!

**A community roundtable discussion to
SPREAD RESPECT and STOP BULLIES**

Featuring

...stories of schoolyard bullying because of **race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity...**

...solutions for all of us to **STOP BULLIES NOW...**

...and **legal advice** for students who are being **bullied** (and their parents)!

Saturday 9 APRIL 2011

College Avenue

Congregational Church

1341 College Avenue

9:30 am to 3 pm

June 7 - Learn About Coming Transgender Services

ADVANCE NOTICE: As we seek ways to better support and care for the Transgender community in greater Stanislaus County, we're pleased to announce the launch of a new program—beginning with our June 7th support meeting.

Samuel Merritt University professor and nurse practitioner **Cecily Cosby, PhD** will be our featured guest. In addition to providing health care and a support group for Transgender persons in the Bay Area, Dr. Cosby instructs nursing students for careers in providing specialized medical care to the Transgender community, including hormone adjustments. She and PFLAG Modesto want to establish a partnership that will provide specialized health care and support to Transgender people in the Central Valley on a regular basis—depending on the level of interest from the Trans community.

If you are Transgender, in transition, considering transition, or know someone who would benefit from this kind of program, please attend our June 7 support meeting. The meeting will be at 7pm; the location will be announced in the *May News & Views* and our website.

PFLAG Modesto Awarded Grant

During the months of December and January, board president Bill Dotinga wrote a grant proposal, applying for the 2011 Diversity Outreach Grant from PFLAG National. The purpose of this grant is to encourage diversity and partnerships between PFLAG chapters, other minority action groups, and the community.

We are pleased to announce that on March 16th, PFLAG Modesto received the news that we have been awarded a **\$1000 grant from PFLAG to encourage diversity and build bridges here in Stanislaus County—the maximum award possible!**

We're honored and excited about the possibilities that this award brings to our chapter. Our first focus is the April 9 community roundtable **STOP BULLIES NOW!** (see the accompanying article in this issue), where we bring diverse elements of this community together for a brainstorming and planning session to end schoolyard bullying and create a more civil educational experience. Future events will include a larger anti-bullying forum, currently planned for October.

Keep reading future issues of *News & Views* for more information about how this grant is being used. Thank you, PFLAG National!

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.

Have news to share or an item of interest? Want to receive the PFLAG Modesto newsletter electronically? Contact Marilyn Mettler at sec@pflagmodesto.org, leave a message on the helpline at 527-0776 or drop a line to P.O. Box 4311, Modesto, 95352

Location Map:



Dates to Remember

Meeting days

1st & 3rd Tuesdays every month, 7-9 pm

1st Tuesday Meeting

April 5, 7 - 9 pm

- We offer our usual, traditional PFLAG **support**, led by members who have been on both sides of the coming-out process.
- For those who don't need support, join us for a discussion of our exciting plans for the future.

April 10

Birdcage

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

Jax

1016 "H" St. 5-9 PM

Contact Patrick Pokorny at 404-0538 or ndskills1@sbcglobal.net

GLBTQ YOUTH GROUP

"the PLACE" ages 14-19

April 14 & 28 7-9 pm

1341 College Ave

Ed 683-8203 Elizabeth 818-2378

PFLAG in OAKDALE!

April 20 7-8:30

Golden Oaks Conference Room

1425 West "H", Oakdale

pflagoakdale@dishmail.net

3rd Tuesday Meeting, 7-9 pm

Panda Express Night

PFLAG Bingo

April 19



I'm about to let out a dirty little secret about myself. Prepare yourself: If you know me even a little, this is going to shock you:

I love the comic strip *Family Circus*.

Maybe it's because the family it depicts mirrored aspects of my own family when I was a child. Or because the values the strip espouses reflect my own in many ways. Whatever the reason, it always resonates with me. I read it daily while growing up and I still seek it out now, whenever I pick up a newspaper.

In addition to the family—Bill, Thel, Billy, Dolly, Jeffy, and PJ—two other characters inhabit the “Family Circus” home. Two invisible gremlins, responsible for the mishaps, mischief, and every bad thing that happen there.

They have names, too: Not Me and Ida Know.

“Who broke this vase?” the father would ask. “Not me!” answer the four children, as the naughty and invisible Not Me stands over the shards, a look of defiant triumph on his transparent face. “Who ate the cookies?” the mother would demand of her offspring. “Ida know!” all four sing in unison, while Ida Know slinks from the kitchen, a trail of cookie crumbs in her wake and a smear of chocolate chip marking her translucent chin.

This month's CHOOSE CIVILITY focus is **Don't Shift Responsibility and Blame**. In other words, a civil society is no place for Not Mes and Ida Knows.

Yet, these little gremlins are everywhere. In the office and at school (both in on the playground AND in the administrative offices). They're in our churches and synagogues. They live in our homes and, yes, even inhabit our friendly local not-for-profits. Everywhere we go, we can find people that not only refuse to accept blame and take responsibility, they SHIFT it onto someone else— or feign ignorance about the matter entirely.

I watched a video last week on the ACLU's YouTube channel of Wendy Walsh, the mother of the boy from Tehachapi who committed suicide because he was tormented at school for being gay, recounting a meeting she had with the principal of her son's school. The bullying of thirteen year old Seth Walsh had become more than he could bear, and she wanted school administrators and teachers to step up and put a stop to it.

The principal's response to Ms Walsh's request for action? “Remind me about this next year, and we'll try to take care of it then.”

Blame not the bullies, the perpetrators of hate and intolerance, nor the teachers and administrators, for ignoring and turning a blind eye to what goes on in the halls...but the victims, for daring to come out. For being too flamboyant. For fighting back.

Shift responsibility—into next year. For Seth Walsh, next year was too late.

And lest you think we don't have any of these shenanigans happening around here, think again. I can't talk about them, because we have confidentiality clauses in our by-laws, but trust me: The same things, the same inaction and blame- and responsibility-shifting take place in schools and districts all around us.

If we are to be a community of civil, *civilized* people, this has to stop. We must not only take responsibility and accept blame; we have to demand the same from others. Our elected leaders, our school administrators, the people who teach our children, the children themselves, their parents—everyone has to take responsibility for the climate of intolerance and incivility that infects our society. We must all hold ourselves and each other accountable for what happens here, in Modesto, in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties, right under our noses.

I hope that many people will join us on April 9th at **STOP BULLIES NOW!**, the community roundtable we're hosting for the entire community. We'll spend a day brainstorming and developing an action plan to not only ensure safe schools for all students, but to also better equip educators and administrators to effectively and resolutely deal with bullies. This isn't “their” problem—it's ours. And we've allowed this problem to go on, without a word or any action from us, long enough.

Time to take responsibility and accept blame. Join us on April 9th.

And let's leave Not Me and Ida Know at home, shall we?

Bill Dotinga also loves Calvin & Hobbes and The Far Side. And they still let him answer the emails sent to pres@pflagmodesto.org!

STOP BULLIES NOW! ROUNDTABLE APRIL 9

At our October 2010 support meeting, when so many supporters and allies came together worried about the rash of youth suicides because of schoolyard bullying, we vowed as a group to do something about it, to change Modesto and Stanislaus County for good, to end bullying and make going to school safe for everyone. We spent the autumn and winter months meeting with school officials, placing posters with messages of help and hope in classrooms and school hallways, and deciding on a course of action that would involve and help not just the LGBTQ community, but other bullied groups and minorities as well.

STOP BULLIES NOW!

A community roundtable to
SPREAD RESPECT and STOP BULLIES

Saturday April 9th 2011

College Avenue Congregational Church

9:30am—Registration

10-3pm—Forum

A luncheon will be served—**THIS IS A FREE EVENT**

*Please reserve a space by 4/6 by visiting
pflagmodesto.org/events/stopbulliesnow.html*

On April 9th 2011, those months of planning come to fruition. **STOP BULLIES NOW!—a community roundtable to SPREAD RESPECT and STOP BULLIES** will be held at College Avenue Congregational Church. The precursor to a larger event to be held in October 2011, **STOP BULLIES NOW!** is our way of involving the entire community in developing and implementing future action.

We will hear firsthand stories of schoolyard bullying from a diverse group of people, and together we will brainstorm solutions that will make our communities stronger, and develop an action plan that can be implemented over the summer months for the next school year. We will also have a

presentation from Northern California ACLU about bullying, the law, and what parents and students can do to protect themselves.

STOP BULLIES NOW! is a call to community action, whether you have a child in school or not, whether you're L,G,B,T,Q, Straight, or a little bit of everything. It is all of us making a difference in Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties. It is all of us spreading respect to stop bullies. And making sure that what so many of us (and those we love) have experienced never happens to another child again.

BRING YOUR PANDA EXPRESS DINNER TO BINGO APRIL 19

For the folks with black thumbs, and those with no space to plant flowers purchased from our Flower Power Spring Fund Drive—we've got another way you can help us raise much-needed funds for PFLAG Modesto. All you need is a few dollars, and a mouth to enjoy Chinese food!

On April 19th, from 11am to 2pm and then again from 5-9pm, the Panda Express on Briggsmore and Orangeburg (FoodMaxx Center) will be hosting us for a special fundraiser. Print up the flyer that accompanies this newsletter and head to that Panda location (only the Briggsmore/Orangeburg location!) for lunch or dinner. Order, enjoy, and **20% of your order will be given back to PFLAG Modesto!**

Panda Express Fundraiser

When: April 19th, 11a-2p and 5-9p

Where: Briggsmore/Orangeburg location **ONLY** (FoodMaxx Center)

How: Print a flyer, bring it in, order lots!

We encourage everyone to participate in this fundraiser. PFLAG Modesto needs this help to continue to provide the services we offer in Stanislaus County. In addition to the April 9th **STOP BULLIES NOW!** community roundtable and the all-area GSA Rainbow Prom on April 15, we're in the planning stages for a much larger community event in October to combat schoolyard bullying, making sure there are "Safe Schools" kits on every campus, anti-bullying message posters county-wide...the list of things we need funds for seems endless.

So print a flyer (we won't get credit without it), head to the Panda Express location, place a big order—**for added fun, bring your dinner to BINGO, and we'll all eat together!** PFLAG Modesto appreciates your help in making all of our fundraisers a success!

Tri-Valley Lesbian Social Activities

The **Tri-Valley Lesbian Social Activities** group, with which PFLAG Modesto is proud to be affiliated, is planning a range of springtime activities that will appeal to a variety of tastes and interests. Here is what's planned for April and into May:

- 4/9, Card night
- 4/15, Bowling
- 4/23, Poker/rummy night
- 4/30, Whale watching in Monterey
- 5/7, Powwow in Mariposa

For information on these activities and joining the group, please visit <http://www.meetup.com/tri-valley-lesbian-social-activities/>.

Check out our website!

We're pleased to announce a brand new website for PFLAG Modesto!

In an effort to be more 21st century in both look and content, we've completely redesigned pflagmodesto.org. Among the cool additions you'll find (as well as sleek, stylish design):

- Our Facebook feed, right on the homepage;
- A full, interactive calendar with all of our events and meetings;
- Lots more photos and videos;
- Ability to pay for dues and make a donation online, with your credit or debit card;
- A blog, board agendas and minutes, and email addresses for every member of the board,

And so much more! Check it out at www.pflagmodesto.org and let us know what you think!

Open and Affirming Area Churches and Religious Institutions

- **College Avenue Congregational Church**, 1341 College Ave., Modesto, www.cacc-ucc.org/
- **First United Methodist Church**, 850 16th St., Modesto, www.firstumcmodesto.org
- **Unitarian Universalist Church**, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, www.stanuu.org
- **Unity Church of Modesto**, 2467 Veneman Ave., Modesto, www.unitychurchofmodesto.com
- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church**, 1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto www.stpaulsmodesto.diosanjoaquin.org
- **First Congregational Church**, 100 North Acacia Ave., Ripon, www.riponcongregational.org



POTLUCK NEWS

Close to sixty friends and allies gathered on March 15th for our Spring Potluck.

In addition to a wide sampling of entrees, salads, and desserts, our friends at Buddy's/Appetize in Roseburg Square provided a delicious array of foods, and the Starbucks at 10th Street Place generously gave coffee for the event. Many thanks to these partners for their giving spirit—a great time was had by all!

Our next potluck will be OUTDOORS! Our Summer Potluck is on Tuesday, June 19th at Graceada Park. Details will be published here in *News & Views*, on our Facebook page, and on our brand new website in the coming months.

Thanks to everyone who attended, brought food, helped set up and clean up, picked up donations, pitched in, and brought the lovely birthday cake! These events are always made easier by the willingness of many to help. Special thanks to Cathy and Marilyn who, as always, keep the train on the tracks!

Flower Power Spring Fund Drive

Our two-months-long **Spring Fund Drive** concluded on March 27. Despite unrelenting stormy weather and a seeming return to winter, we're very happy that **we raised \$468 of our \$3000 goal.**

Our thanks go to the several who ordered bulbs and plants from the folks at Flower Power Fundraising. By now, you've received emails notifying you that your orders begin shipping on April 4th. Hopefully the ground will be dry enough to work!

Your generosity will help fund many projects and services this year. All of us on the board are very grateful for the giving spirits so many of our allies and members have shown during this drive.

If you missed the chance to participate—don't worry. We'll do it again. Stay tuned to *News & Views*, and your email box, for details!

For those who ordered—let's get planting!