



INDY PFLAG NEWS

JANUARY 2009

PFLAG meets the 2nd Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be Sun., Jan. 11 from 2 to 4 pm at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in the Youth Wing (North door), just west of Meridian on 86th St.

JANUARY 11 MEETING

Our first 2009 meeting will feature 2 support groups. "Making Choices with Risky Business" - This group presentation will be Lisa Terry of the Damien Center and her client, Kathleen Weatherby. Kathleen will share her personal story as a 50 plus year old African American woman who contracted HIV from her now deceased husband. She almost died when her weight got down to 70 lbs., she had been disengaged from her family and was homeless for a time. With help from the Damien Center staff, Kathleen has turned her life around, has wonderful support and a great story to tell about risky behavior and how life's choices can affect one's life.

Our second support group is for anyone who is 18 or younger and either is LGBT or has a loved one (a sibling, friend or relative), who is LGBT. This group is for young people who would like to come together with others to talk about support, education and advocacy.

Both support groups will follow our confidential sharing time.

U.S. refuses to sign UN gay support law

UNITED NATIONS -- Alone among major Western nations, the United States has refused to sign a declaration presented Thursday at the United Nations calling for worldwide decriminalization of homosexuality.

In all, 66 of the U.N.'s 192 member countries signed the nonbinding declaration - which backers called a historic step to push the General Assembly to deal more forthrightly with any-gay discrimination. More than 70 U.N. members outlaw homosexuality, and in several of them homosexual acts can be punished by execution.

Co-sponsored by France and the Netherlands, the declaration was signed by all 27 European Union members, as well as Japan, Australia, Mexico and three dozen other countries. There was broad opposition from Muslim nations, and the United States refused to sign, indicating that some parts of the declaration raised legal questions that needed further review.

"It's disappointing," said Rama Yade, France's human rights minister, of the U.S. position - which she described as in contradiction with America's long tradition as a defender of human rights. (Thurs., Dec. 18, Associated Press)

Notes from Annette

This is the time of the year when we usually look back and take stock of what we have done in the past and what we want to accomplish in the future. Have we accomplished our goals? What is planned for the coming year?

Here at PFLAG, we have continued to work on support, education and advocacy. Our meetings are well-attended and many new parents have reached out to us for support. Our members have attended the state school counselor's conference, educating school personnel about GLBT kids and their issues. We have spoken at workplace diversity meetings, as well as at university social work and psychology classes. We continue to contact our legislators, advocating for a Hate Crimes Bill and equal treatment for our GLBT citizens. Our chapter also held its first Straight for Equality party this year, with approximately 50 people attending.

There is room for all of our members to participate in these activities. I know it can seem daunting to speak before a class of social work students or workplace group, but it's a very rewarding experience. Other PFLAG members will join you and guide you. We basically tell our story. Or you can join us at Indy Pride, Lobby Day or conferences when we stand at our PFLAG booth and talk to people and hand out literature. It's a wonderful feeling to know you have connected with someone and helped them to learn about the need for diversity.

We have come so far, yet we still have more work to do. I'm hoping that we can go into the schools and speak to teachers and guidance counselors. We need to ensure that all GLBT Hoosiers have civil rights. And we still need to reach out to more parents and families. I hope that you will help us in 2009 to make Indiana a better and safer place for our GLBT kids.

Indy PFLAG offers you the possibility to receive your newsletter as an email attachment. You'll get it sooner, and we will save both work and money. It will come as a pdf file. If you print it, it will be identical to the mailed version. If you are willing to do this, please send a brief email to info@indypflag.org.

Indy PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is a group of people who share common experiences and provide support for each other. We listen and love. We help families have open, positive and loving relationships with GLBT children and we work for their civil and human rights.

By all accounts, Mitchell Gold's book, *Crisis*, should be on your must-read list. Sarah has just finished it and suggested the following quotes to share:

"For my parents and some of my straight siblings, that circle has included moving from rejection to tolerance, from tolerance to acceptance, from acceptance to affirmation, and from affirmation to celebration."

-Jody Huckaby, Executive Director of PFLAG

"I would go to the ex-gay meetings for a while, start feeling defeated because I wasn't getting "healed", and go home and cut myself. Then I would stop going to the meetings, be isolated in my depression--but I would stop cutting myself. (the ministry leaders) said even though cutting wasn't good, it was a positive sign that I was fighting my desires."

-Jared Horsford, student

"I thought about suicide often. I made a pact with myself: If I could not change and want to be with a woman by the time I was twenty-one, I would commit suicide."

-Mitchell Gold, Cofounder and Chairman of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, furniture company

"You need to leave" she said in an eerily calm voice. She turned to my father, "Rolph, we can't have him in the house anymore."

-Brandon Rolph Kneefel, student

You can find this book in our Indy PFLAG library.

National Religious Leadership Roundtable

Condemns Pope's Remarks Denouncing Gender Theory

OIA Newswire, WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 - The National Religious Leadership Roundtable, convened by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, condemns today's remarks by Pope Benedict XVI that denounced gender theory, saying it could lead to humanity's "self-destruction." Gender theory explores sexual orientation, the roles assigned by society to individuals according to their gender and how people perceive their identity. The Catholic Church has repeatedly attacked gender theory. "If tropical forests deserve our protection, humankind ... deserves it no less," said the pope.

Statement by the Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, National Religious Leadership Roundtable: "For the pope to purport that he and the Roman Catholic Church have it all figured out, that no mystery remains, is tantamount to blasphemy. Particularly in this time of war and famine and economic chaos, we as Christians of every gender and sexual orientation ought to be working with our brothers and sisters around the globe to deepen respect for all of creation." [12/23/2008]

Safe Schools, Cultivating Respect National PFLAG Launches New Program

According to statistics compiled by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), 73.6% of LGBT students hear derogatory remarks such as "faggot" or "dyke" frequently or often at school. More than half (60.8%) reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (38.4%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression. An overwhelming 86.2% of students reported being verbally harassed.

Please take a moment to review the ten simple and powerful steps outlined here to help make your local school community safer. As adults and leaders in our communities, we must work for classrooms and schools where students can learn without fear and be safe from harassment and bullying.

From "The Top 10 Ways to Make Schools Safer"

1. *Learn the Facts:* School officials often believe there are no LGBT students in their classrooms and as a result, often fail to take action to protect young people. In reality, however, students report being frequently targeted, bullied and harassed based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
2. *Understand the Language:* Using respectful and appropriate language is important. The goal is to set a tone of fairness with an expectation of respect and understanding.
3. *Stop Bad Behavior:* LGBT youth and those perceived to be LGBT, endure constant bullying and harassment. Bullying is more than disturbing, it is also dangerous and disruptive
4. *Set the Policy:* A strong and inclusive anti-harassment policy not only protects students, it also protects the school.
5. *School-wide Activities:* Once schools have developed and adopted appropriate policies, they must follow through with action.
6. *Be Public:* Taking public stands will send a message to students that their safety is more than just policy, but is a practice emulated by the school community.
7. *Cyber Bullying:* Defined by the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use to mean "being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using the Internet or a cell phone."
8. *Train and Educate Everyone:* It is imperative that the faculty is trained to respond to bullying in ways that support every student.
9. *Comprehensive Health Education:* Comprehensive sexual education that includes age-appropriate and medically sound education is of paramount importance.
10. *Resources, Resources, Resources:* In addition to PFLAG, there are many other resources and organizations available to assist schools as they address issues surrounding harassment, bullying, safe spaces and LGBT youth.

To talk with a parent who also has a gay son or lesbian daughter & to learn more about Indy PFLAG, please contact:

*Sarah (317) 545-7034

*Charlene/Oran (317) 897-0126

*info@indypflag.org

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