



# INDY PFLAG NEWS

NOVEMBER 2009

**PFLAG meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be Sun., Nov. 8 from 2 to 4 pm at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in the Youth Wing (North door), just west of Meridian on 86<sup>th</sup> St.**

## **Our November 8 meeting will be a Spirit & Place Event: *People Make the Place***

Join Indianapolis PFLAG and Indiana Youth Group on a Sunday afternoon in a simple classroom at St. Luke's Methodist Church as we explore how it's possible to change a basic space into an inspiring place that welcomes diversity. In the first hour a panel of parents, relatives and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender loved ones and IYG youth will share stories about how being in a safe place where they find unconditional acceptance and support has inspired them.

Panel members will discuss both how they felt when walking into a PFLAG or IYG meeting room for the first time and how their life is enriched each time they return. The audience will have the opportunity to learn and understand the initial struggle, then the eventual path one takes through education and awareness to a special place of comfort and connectedness with nontraditional families and diverse people.

In the second hour, Barbara Child of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis will help us explore in small groups how people, more than spaces, make places inspiring. Reverend Child will discuss the role of safety and security in a place of sanctuary. Is it the physical location that's most important or what happens there? Can each of us help make places inspiring for others? How can we do that? Each person will be invited to think about specific ways they can make their own common spaces a place where people are inspired to accept and support diversity of all kinds and in all people. Participants will write a self-addressed note (to be mailed out in a few months) with a reminder of their commitment.

An art display of places that have inspired Indiana Youth Group members will illustrate their own personal stories. What would a safe place look like? Might it be as wonderfully diverse as the artists themselves?

Elie Wiesel, a Jewish writer, professor, political activist, Nobel Laureate and Holocaust survivor said, "Sanctuary is often something very small. Not grandiose, but a small gesture toward alleviating human suffering and preventing humiliation. The sanctuary is a human being. Sanctuary is a dream. And that is why you are here and that is why I am here. We are here because of one another. We are in truth each other's shelter."

We hope you'll join us in our classroom and be part of the transformation from an empty space to a sanctuary where families come together, grow together and move toward a greater understanding of what it takes to inspire others. Light refreshments will be served. **Come and bring a friend!**



## **Notes from Annette**

On October 11, 2009, I had the opportunity to attend the March for Equality in Washington, D.C. The night before the March, I attended the National PFLAG Board Meeting.

After the meeting was over, we adjourned to a bar in the hotel to watch President Obama speak at the HRC Dinner. Much to our surprise, President Obama spoke about the formation of PFLAG. Along with Jody Huckaby, PFLAG Executive Director, we huddled around the TV and cheered as the president spoke about the good work of our organization.

Sunday proved to be a lovely, sunny day, perfect for marching. Along with Janet Fox from Silver Spring, Maryland and Judi Egbert from Muncie, Indiana, we took the train to D.C. While on the train, we saw other people riding to the March. There was a party atmosphere on the train and I felt that I was part of something historic. We didn't know how many people would attend. As we ascended up to street level, we saw thousands of people waiting to march. We had to look for the "purple balloons" – this is where we would meet our fellow PFLAG parents. I met parents from D.C. as well as from New York and Boston. Despite having to wait an hour until the March began, we chatted with these PFLAGers and took photos.

Finally, we began to walk. I had never been in such a large gathering before. Everyone was in such a good mood and as I walked, I felt grateful to be able to show my support for my gay son and my GLBT friends. As we walked along, our route took us to the front of the White House. This was a wonderful photo opportunity. I was hoping that President Obama might be watching us. I wanted him to see the large outpouring of love and support for the GLBT community as we walked by. Finally we reached the Capitol. Right after we arrived, Judy Shepherd spoke. The first thing she did was ask the crowd to smile as she took a photo. Judy's message was that we all have to participate and tell our stories. We need to educate ourselves and vote.

As I looked around me and saw thousands of people who came to D.C. to be part of this gathering, I was aware that despite the party atmosphere, there was a serious side to the March. I realized that when we go back home, we have to work even harder to educate our friends, families, co-workers and neighbors. We have to speak to our legislators and urge them to vote for the repeal of DOMA and DADT. We have to urge

**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.**

them to vote for ENDA. There is a lot of work to do. The March was a catalyst that hopefully will energize us all. I hope that the momentum keeps going. I feel so grateful that I could be a part of this huge gathering. I feel grateful that I could march with other PFLAG parents who want equal rights for our children. Our task is not easy, but it is extremely important. I think we're all up for it. As Lt. Dan Choi said in his speech, "Asking is over – we will tell. Silence is not a strategy. My plan for today and my plan tomorrow and my plan forever is to tell, is to tell, and we will tell, we will tell, we will tell."

### President Obama Calls PFLAG's Story "The Story of America"

Washington, DC; October 11, 2009: Last night, President Obama told a part of the PFLAG story, the story of Jeanne Manford walking alongside her son Morty in a parade. This is where the story began, the story that the President called "the story of America." In telling this story, the President signaled his continuing support of the LGBT community and of the issues in which all Americans have a stake.

View the President's remarks here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy24TplyK14>

### Fortunate Families Expands Its Listening Parents Network

Rochester, NY: Only nine months after introducing the Listening Parents Network to help Catholic parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender children, Fortunate Families has expanded its unique "listening ministry" to nearly double the original size. Casey Lopata, president of Fortunate Families, a national resource and networking ministry for Catholic parents of lgbt children, announced this week that encouraging results during the introductory months have prompted the expansion. The Network, according to Lopata, was launched in January, 2009, with 49 Catholic parents volunteering to lend an "understanding and non-judgmental ear to other parents who might be struggling with their child's sexual orientation."

"With our new growth," Lopata said, "the Network numbers 94 Listening Parents in 26 States and three Canadian provinces. We now have Listening Parents in 50 Catholic dioceses in the United States – parents who know what it's like to have a lesbian, gay or transgender child, and who are willing to field phone calls or e-mails from other parents who just need someone to talk to." Lopata said the names, locations and contact information about each Listening Parent can be found on the Fortunate Families website [www.fortunatefamilies.com](http://www.fortunatefamilies.com).

"Our Listening Parents who have received calls or e-mails have emphatically confirmed the need for this initiative," Lopata said. "They have found parents in varying stages of fear, confusion and misunderstanding. One Listening Parent reported a Catholic mother who wished her daughter had cancer, rather than being a lesbian." Lopata added, "The need for compassionate support is real. We hope our expansion will further spread the word about the Network to those who need it, and make it easier for parents to find support from other parents who have walked a similar path."

This year the **Indiana Transgender Rights Advocacy Alliance** will partner with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis to hold a Transgender Day of Remembrance event:

**Saturday, November 14th, 6 to 8 pm**  
**Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis**  
**615 W. 43rd St.**  
**Indianapolis, 46208**

This year's event will begin with a live performance of the compelling short play "Transactions," directed by Jeffrey Barnes, and will include a moderated panel discussion, memorial vigil, and conclude with refreshments and fellowship until 9pm.

*INTRAA works for freedom of gender identity and expression for all Indiana residents. Visit us on the web at:*  
<http://www.intraa.org/>

### Senate Passes Hate-Crimes Measure

Advocate.com October 22, 2009 - The Senate passed a Defense Department funding bill Thursday with a hate-crimes measure attached, sending the legislation to President Obama's desk. The Senate voted 68 to 29 Thursday to pass a Defense Department funding bill that includes a measure extending hate-crimes protections to people targeted on the basis of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

The National Defense Authorization Act now goes to President Barack Obama's desk for his signature. "As the President said back in April, the hate-crimes bill takes on an important civil rights issue to protect all of our citizens from violent acts of intolerance, while also protecting our freedom of speech and association. He looks forward to signing it into law," said White House spokesman Shin Inouye.

The late senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts originally introduced the legislation in 1997 during the 105th Congress. The bill was renamed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in honor of Shepard, a 21-year-old gay man from Wyoming, and James Byrd, a 49-year-old African-American man from Texas, both of whom were brutally murdered in 1998.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, today's vote was the 14th and final floor vote taken on the measure. HRC president Joe Solmonese said the more than decade-long struggle to enact the legislation had almost come to completion. "We're in the home stretch," said Solmonese. "We look forward to President Obama signing it into law; our nation's first major piece of civil rights legislation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people."

Along with expanding the protected groups, the legislation will provide extra resources to state and local law enforcement officials, give the U.S. Justice Department the power to investigate hate crimes that local officials decline to pursue, and direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation to track hate crimes committed against transgender individuals - statistics the FBI already keeps for other groups.

Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said including hate crimes within the defense authorization bill was perfectly logical. "It is highly appropriate for this law to be part of the National Defense Authorization Act," he said. "The values our men and women fight for include tolerance and freedom from hate-inspired violence against our citizens. Indeed, hate crimes represent a dangerous variety of domestic terrorism while our troops fight terrorism overseas."

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

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