



THE BANNER OF THE DESERT
THE NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG PALM SPRINGS/DESERT COMMUNITIES CHAPTER

Our Chapter's 26th Year, August 2021, Volume 26, No. 8

VIRTUAL PFLAG MEETING
SUNDAY, August 15TH 2:30 P.M.

In lieu of our regular monthly meeting at the Cathedral City Library, will be a virtual meeting, via Zoom. This will be a place to discuss your thoughts and concerns and an opportunity to connect with other PFLAGers.

Just email us at info@PSpflag.org prior to 2:00 the 15TH and you will be added to the list. This will be an invitation-only meeting, so be sure to RSVP now! Note: you need to RSVP the July meeting even if you had sent in a request for the June meeting. You can expect an email invitation to arrive Sunday and can join with audio/video or by phone. Facilitated by Sly Zelnys.

Remember, your PFLAG-PS family is here and available to you by phone at 760-202-4430 or via email at info@PSpflag.org if you want to connect.

Visit our Facebook page and share your thoughts, feelings and insights on your individual experience and insights on current events.

SUPPORT FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER EXPANSIVE FAMILIES

Meetings are the first Wednesday of each month. Next Zoom meetings: August 4th and September 1st, from 6 pm - 7:30 pm. Facilitated by Susan Thronson. Please email info@trans.health or call the Transgender Health and Wellness Center at (760) 202-4308 for more information.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

-Mike Balasa

Pride month is now celebrated around the world. I see on Facebook and in news features how Pride Marches are occurring in many places; especially, countries such as Poland where many anti-LGBTQI laws still exist. Also, during this month, a new national holiday was declared, Juneteenth, to honor the time when slavery of Black people was ended.

Katie Carter, CEO of The Pride Foundation located in Seattle, Washington wrote of the new holiday, "As Juneteenth falls within Pride month every year, we reflect on how inextricable interconnected LGBTQ+ movements and movements for racial justice are. On how our modern LGBTQ+ movement was sparked by the courage, boldness and brilliance of Black trans women, or Black trans sex workers. Indeed, so much of the progress we have seen in all movements for justice has stemmed from the leadership and impact of Black people. Whether in the civil rights movement in 60's, in the modern Black Lives Matter movement, and in LGBTQ+ movements - our world and our landscape for equity would look very different without the incredible contributions of Black leaders and communities."

I believe that Carter makes an important point for all leaders in the LGBTQI community - the struggles of all minorities to seek justice and equality must be united. We face the same bigotry, ignorance and religious persecution; and, usually, from the same people.

There are still many states in this country where every legislative session includes the introduction of laws to allow discrimination. There was a time a few years ago when I thought the battle was over and equality was inevitable for all minorities. Amazing how wrong I was. The prejudice and religious hate in this country is strong and persistent. The states that are passing laws to allow barriers to voting are merely an attempt to keep minorities from gaining political power and ending discrimination. We must never give up the dream that this could be a just and caring country.

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT DID NOT GIVE RELIGIOUS SOCIAL SERVICES THE RIGHT TO DISCRIMINATE

In June, the Supreme Court ruled Philadelphia violated the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment by failing to give Catholic Social Services an exemption from the nondiscrimination provision in city contracts. The Catholic group won the ruling only because their contract with the city contained a clause allowing them to practice exemptions. The Catholics choose to exempt LGBTQI parents from the adoption process. Now, to correct the error of allowing discrimination, Philadelphia has to rewrite their contracts to not allow agencies to target minorities.

Shannon Minter, NCLR Legal Director said, "Properly understood today's decision is a significant victory for LGBTQ people. The court ruled in favor of Catholic Social Services, but on the narrowest possible ground, based on language in the City of Philadelphia contract that authorized individual exemptions for any provider. The Court did not change the current constitutional framework, which permits governments to enforce anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ people even when doing so may have a disparate burden on those who hold certain religious beliefs."

While the narrow ruling upheld laws against discrimination some experts are worried the Supreme Court is following a pattern of taking the side of religious organizations and businesses without addressing the major issue of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The ruling was similar to the ruling involving a baker in Colorado who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. In that case, the baker was allowed to discriminate because of procedural errors on the part of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. Jennifer Pizer, Lambda Legal Law and Policy Director, said: "Though the Court has consistently declined to issue a more broad victory for faith-based organizations and businesses, it's going out of its way to find reasons to rule in favor of religious claimants on very narrow grounds.

Research shows that each year over 20,000 youth reach an age that halts assistance from the foster care system. Same-sex couples are seven times more likely than different-sex couples to adopt or foster children. It is not in children's best interest to allow LGBTQI discrimination in adoption.

HOW SHOULD PARENTS NURTURE A TRANSGENDER CHILD

Science journalist, Tara Satora, wrote an article for the Fatherly Newsletter that answered questions from parents concerned about their child's sexual identity. Satora did an excellent job in reviewing the literature to come up with some interesting ideas. She mentions that trans teens have difficult lives having to face substantial violence and even angry parents. More often the trans teen has to live with parents completely unaware of how to support their child.

Here are some of the more important points in the article: Children know their sexual identity from early age. Typically, a child becomes aware of their sexual identity at 18 to 24 months. At that early age they will convincingly announce to anyone who asks whether they are a boy or girl. As the child ages, their conviction of what sex they are strengthens. Research shows trans children are just as certain of what sex they are as cis-gender children.

It is important for parents to fully support their child's belief about their sexual identity. Parents need to listen and affirm their child's statements. It is not easy for a parent to know how to speak to their child about their non-conforming sexuality, and the parent should seek help and education on the matter. Not all communities have a transgender children support group, but help can be found by searching the internet and seeking parents in your area facing the same challenges from their child.

Some parents have a child who is uncertain if they are a boy or girl. Again, the parent should seek out a supportive group. There is little research on this, but most people who experienced this situation would agree that listening and providing support is necessary. There will be issues about clothing; and, especially, about hair styles. Anecdotal evidence suggests that hair styles cause the most turmoil in families facing this situation. Good communication and understanding is necessary.

Finally, there are important medical steps necessary as the child reaches puberty. Medications to delay puberty are important. Studies indicate that trans children who are given puberty blockers have substantial improvement in their mental health. There doesn't seem to be any serious side-effects from taking these medications, but evidence is unclear about future fertility.

Having a transgender child is a challenge for an adult, but parents who love their children are always willing to do what is necessary.

MORE YOUNG PERSONS ARE IDENTIFYING AS LGBTQI

A global market research company, Ipsos, based in Paris, France, published the results of an international internet polling project asking the question: are young people in Generation Z (7 to 22 years old) identifying as LGBTQI at a higher rate than earlier generations? The answer seems to be yes. Gen Z individuals were four times more likely than earlier generations to describe themselves as transgender, nonbinary, gender-non-conforming, or non-cisgender in some way. Previously it was 1% and now the percentage is 4%. The researchers found that there were vast differences from country to country. Much depended on how conservative and anti-LGBTQI the

common culture was in a country. Russia and Poland were countries that had low acceptance and fewer persons willing to declare themselves as LGBTQI.

A previous Gallup Poll from last year found that 5.6% of U.S. citizens identified as LGBTQI, but 16% of Gen Z reported being LGBTQI. A researcher at Ipsos said that the higher figure for Gen Z sexual fluidity was a “global phenomenon”. Worldwide, 1.4% surveyed identified as gender minorities with some countries with rates up to 2.9%.

Worldwide, 42% of respondents reported having an LGBTQI friend or relative. In several countries the rate was much higher; Brazil reported a rate of 66% of people with a LGBTQI friend or relative. Eleven percent of worldwide respondents said they attended a same-sex wedding. Globally, 13% reported attending a Pride Parade or other Pro-LGBTQI event.

Around the world support is growing for legal same-sex marriage. Latin American countries have a high acceptance: 82% of people in Chile and 76% of Mexicans were in favor of same-sex marriage. There is also a worldwide acceptance of equal parenting rights for same-sex couples. People agree that same-sex couples should have all the legal protections of other parents - that figure is at 61%.

Laws banning discrimination of LGBTQI people are supported by a vast majority around the world (except of course in the few countries where strong conservative opposition still exists, such as Russia Poland and Peru). Persons favoring non-discrimination is 51% with only 16% opposing. Also, support for openly out athletes is 50%. There is still confusion and concern about transgender athletes competing in their preferred sexual identity. Worldwide 31% are for openness and 31% oppose.

JUNE MEETING FEATURED MIGUEL NAVARRO

Miguel Navarro, Community Engagement Manager for The Center, discussed the opening of The Center Annex in Coachella. The new location will open in late summer at 1516 6th Street, Coachella, CA (in the Coachella City Hall). The Coachella Center, like the Palm Springs Center will serve the LGBTQI community with social gatherings; mental, emotional and physical health services; food bank; Medicare counseling and many other features including teen drop in sessions. For more information about The Center, visit the web site at www.thecenterps.org

(More on next page)

DEAR FRIENDS — IT IS TIME TO JOIN OR RENEW PFLAG MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to join PFLAG Palm Springs/Desert Communities, print and mail the form below or join online at www.pspflag.org/joindonate.html

All our expenses go to furthering our mission. Our expenses are for materials that we supply to individuals, schools and supporting organizations; the information phone line, newsletter production, support to local schools' Gay Straight Alliances; and, many other occasional expenses such as the Pride Parade.

When you join and support the local PFLAG chapter with a membership of \$30 or more, we send your name and a portion of the fees (\$15) to PFLAG National, making you a member of both the National and our local chapter of PFLAG. You will receive all publications and notices.

Members sometimes don't realize that if you join National PFLAG directly you are not on the membership rolls of the PFLAG Palm Springs/Desert Communities. PFLAG National does not notify us that you joined, and they do not share any of the membership fee.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____ E-Mail _____

Suggested Donation: Family Membership \$50 _____ Individual \$30 _____

Make check payable to PFLAG Palm Springs and mail to:
PFLAG Palm Springs, PO Box 4326, Palm Springs, CA 92263

PFLAG INFORMATION LINE: (760) 202-4430

EMAIL: info@pspflag.org

Chapter Officers

Co-presidents: Christine Hammond, Dan Smith, Sly Zelnys, Treasurer: Peter East
Emeritus members: Mike and Carol Balasa

ANOTHER WAY TO SUPPORT PFLAG

Every time you shop online using AmazonSmile, PFLAG Palm Springs-Desert Communities will receive a donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation.