



Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays NSW Inc.

(Incorporating Western Sydney)

August/September 2008 Newsletter

The next meeting of PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) will be held on **Wednesday 27th August, 2008 at 7.30 pm** – We meet at the Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel, Cnr. Hawkesbury & Queens Roads, Westmead. **Important change: car entry is only from Hawkesbury Rd via a boom gate. Please use key entry number “1111”.** This code is allocated only on PFLAG meeting nights. The Wesley Lodge is very close to Westmead Hospital and Train station.

For Information contact: Judy on (02) 9869 1454 Postal Address: PO Box 3751, Marsfield NSW 2122. Email: jr_brown@bigpond.net.au

August/ September 2008-VOLUME 11-ISSUE 7

President's Report



“As long as there is any law that discriminates against us, we remain second-class citizens in our own country.” – Peter Furness, National Convenor of Australian Marriage Equality.

On August 3rd, PFLAG joined several hundred advocates, supporting same-sex marriage, at the National Day of Action Rally at Taylor Square and the March to Sydney Town Hall (see photo at left).

Emily Gray and Peter Johnson from the Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby commented that, whilst the priority of the lobby was getting

58 in 08, they hadn't lost sight of the fact that the community needs formal relationship recognition as well. Les and Sue, speaking on behalf of PFLAG, echoed the sentiments expressed by Gillian in her SX magazine article of July 30, expressing their desire to be able to celebrate marriages of their gay sons, just as they would be able to do of their heterosexual daughter. I would like to thank Les, Sue, Gillian and all who supported PFLAG in the NDA Rally.

On this same note, Malcolm McPherson, from “Come Out CAAH Northside”, and I met with our local Federal member, Maxine McKew, on Wednesday, 30th July. We were seeking her support for the full recognition of the value and validity of same-sex relationships from the Federal Government. Maxine gave us a good hearing and assured us that she would speak with the Federal Attorney General, Robert McClelland, and Bob Debus on our behalf. Malcolm asked Maxine if she would inform us of the outcome.

Don't forget to mark September 21st on your diaries for the Parramatta Pride Picnic. It will be held at Site 23 Parramatta Park, same as last year, just inside the O'Connell St. pedestrian gates and just past Old Government House, if you are driving. There will be lots of fun activities for young and old from 11am – 4pm. Bring a picnic basket or buy a sausage sandwich from “The Haven's” BBQ. I hope to see many of you at our August 27 Meeting, where Fr. Claude Mostowik will be our guest speaker and at our September 24 Meeting. Remember Rudy's adage: “When you don't need PFLAG anymore, that's when PFLAG needs **YOU** to help others. **Judy**”

Website:-www.pflagaustralia.org.au-Email editor@pflagaustralia.org.au.

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Meeting held 4th Wednesday of each month



Parramatta Queer Forum presents

PARRAMATTA PRIDE PICNIC

For the GLBTQ Community, their friends and family

September 21, 11am – 4 pm, Area 23 Parramatta Park

Activities include – games, drumming, face painting, bbq, tug-o-war, kite-making, story telling, stalls, fun, plus lots more!

Contact **9869 1454** or **9806 5104** for more information.

Parramatta City Council, PFLAG, Cumberland Women's Health, NSW Police, Twenty 10, GLCS, MCC Good Shepherd, Sydney West Area Health, Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, ACON Western Sydney and South West Area Health.

Guest Opinion - SX Magazine - Wednesday, 30 July 2008



Ahead of the National Day of Action, Gillian Maury asks: 'Why should my gay children be treated differently to their straight counterparts?'

My name is Gillian Maury. I am the mother of three children: a son who is gay, a daughter who is lesbian, and a straight, married daughter. My lesbian daughter and her partner of ten years have a divine daughter of 16 months, so I am also a proud grandmother. My husband Jean-Pierre and I are passionate members of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and appreciate any opportunity to seek justice for our children and those of our fellow parents. PFLAG is a support group for parents of same-sex-attracted children. We hold regular meetings, have an information telephone line – (02) 9294 1002 – a website (www.pflagaustralia.org.au) and provide resources to educate parents, educators and young people on issues of homosexuality. PFLAG will be present in force at the National Day of Action on Sunday, August 3, with Sue and Les Mico as guest speakers.

There is simply no logical reason why same-sex couples should not be allowed all the same benefits and rights as heterosexual couples. To legislate otherwise is not only discriminatory, but demonstrates the irrational prejudice against homosexuality that exists among many of our politicians and legislators. Civil unions and partnership registries are certainly a start, but marriage in Australian society gives benefits and status beyond civil unions. Not all same-sex couples want marriage, and nor do all heterosexual couples, but in a fair society, they should all have the same option. At the very least, same-sex couples need to feel reassured that their relationship is understood and respected legally. Why should our same-sex-attracted children live in a constant state of anxiety about situations beyond their control and decisions that heterosexuals take for granted?

Time and again, when talking with same-sex-attracted people, the words 'uncertain', 'insecure', 'anxious', 'worried' and 'second-class citizens' come up. You can imagine how upset we as parents feel about the effect this has on our precious children.

People who argue that children need a mother and a father have not read the evidence that children thrive with parents and extended family and friends who love them, regardless of sexuality. I can honestly say that no one could be better parents than our daughter and her partner, and indeed many of their same-sex attracted friends.

As for adoption: to suggest that same-sex couples should not adopt is, on the basis of all the evidence available, patently ridiculous, and simply highlights ignorance and bigotry.

A last word on marriage: our younger daughter was married in a beautiful ceremony, and as parents, we would really love our other two children, if they wished, to have that same experience, and for it to be widespread, official and legal. We do feel that things are changing, and are optimistic that there is a groundswell of outrage, and that justice and reason will prevail.

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Pilgrims join gay Catholics at youth forum

Written by Adam Bub SX Magazine

Friday, 18 July 2008

Members of the GLBT community and a small contingent of World Youth Day pilgrims gathered to discuss gay youth and their place in the Catholic Church at a forum on Wednesday night.

Organised by Acceptance, the gay and lesbian Catholic support group, the event was attended by around 150 people who

listened to a host of speakers address the question: "Is there a place for gay and lesbian Catholic youth in the Church?"

"To feel we even have to ask this question is hurtful and painful to say the least," Paul Harris, Acceptance Co-Convenor, told the audience at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Harris highlighted that the recent controversy surrounding the forum had only strengthened the community's support.

"The amount of support that Acceptance received from committed Catholics when the future of this forum was in the balance was overwhelming," he said.

The forum went ahead outside of the official World Youth Day (WYD) program after its initial proposal was rejected by WYD organisers. The group's second attempt, as part of the program with MAGIS, a Jesuit group, was quelled when WYD organisers forced MAGIS to withdraw their involvement.

A short play written by young playwright Jye Bryant was performed to the audience, detailing the obstacles a young man encounters when he comes out to his parents for the first time.

Speakers included Sue and Les Mico, the Catholic parents of two gay sons, and Father Donal Godfrey SJ, a Jesuit priest at the University of California, San Francisco.

Godfrey, who has extensive experience with GLBT Catholic communities, said that the nature of the Church is changing.

"More and more parishes are finding a place in their hearts, and at the tables, for those who happen to be gay and lesbian," he said.

Sue Mico said that her children have reaffirmed to her what life is all about.

"To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with my God," she said.

"If it is that you are gay and you are Catholic, accept it as a gift from God. I feel privileged to be the mother of my three children."

Other speakers included Dan Smith, a gay Catholic university student, and David Moutou, from GLBT youth service Twenty10.

"The experience of Twenty10, and a lot of research shows, that if there is not a place [for gay and lesbian youth in the Catholic Church], the cost is high and we all suffer," Moutou said.

The panel of speakers engaged in discussion with audience members about the challenges young gays and lesbians face against a hostile church hierarchy of authority.

A WYD prayer was provided to audience members.

The forum was filmed on DVD, and can be purchased for \$10 from Acceptance Sydney. For more information, email acceptsyd@yahoo.com.au.

PFLAG's Participation in GLLO Training Community Panel

Thanks to Narelle, Vicki and Jye, who took part in the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer training at Parramatta Police Headquarters on Thursday, 14th August. Narelle reported that they spoke to approximately 50 trainees from all over NSW and that the panel provided a great opportunity to raise awareness of the support available from PFLAG and the other GLBT agencies present.

Superintendent Donna Adney, from Surry Hills, remarked that they were concentrating on improving "Customer Service" and reiterated the need for victims to report incidents to the police.

SSAY PROJECTS(Social Groups for same-sex attracted young people under 25 and their friends in the Western Sydney Area)

There are several groups that are currently running in Western Sydney for same-sex attracted young people and their friends.

These groups are based on a social and educational model and run continuously throughout the year. They meet twice a month, one week looking at a particular subject e.g. safe sex, sexual health, relationships, coming out, gender, etc. and the second week is a social activity e.g. bowling, movie, dinner, etc.

Groups are currently being run in the Bankstown, Campbelltown and Parramatta areas.

If you know of people who might be interested in meeting other like-minded young people or who would like to have a safe space to hang out and be themselves, please let them know about these groups.

Call High Street (Parramatta) on (02) 9687 2544

Call Traxside (Campbelltown) on (02) 4625 2525

Call The Corner (Bankstown) on (02) 9796 8633

Call WAAT (Mt. Druitt) on (02) 9881 1230

Call The Warehouse (Penrith) on (02) 4721 8330

Call ACON (Sydney) on (02) 9206 2000

Matthew Vaughan (ACON) mvaughan@acon.org.au

IDAHO – The Exhibition

A fundraiser for the Lesbian & Gay Anti-Violence Project (an ACON project), IDAHO The Exhibition aims to raise awareness of homophobia by inviting people, who have experienced homophobia, to create artworks which explore their experience with homophobia. GLBT artists will be invited to take part in an exhibition which will be run to coincide with the annual International Day Against Homophobia, 17/05/09. Exhibition dates still to be determined.

Artworks can be in any medium and must be able to be sold, with a percentage to the L.&G.AVP.

www.homophobiaday.org

Nick Baldas – Coordinator

If you are on email, please help us reduce our costs by sending us an email with your details (which will remain confidential) and all future information will be emailed.

<p>NSW Inc. PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians of 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 their GLBT children and we work for their civil and human rights.</p>

<p><u>PFLAG NSW: Next Family Meetings</u></p>
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<p>August Wednesday 27th @ 7.30pm Guest Speaker: Fr. Claude Mostowik</p>

<p>September Wednesday 24th @ 7.30pm</p>

<p><u>PFLAG Penrith:</u> Contact Vicki on 02 4730 4660 or Carol 02 47354680</p>
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<p><u>PFLAG Mosman:</u> Contact Maree Ph. 02 99397706</p>
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<p><u>PFLAG Central Coast/Newcastle:</u> Contact Shelagh 02 49773271</p>

<p>contact@newcoastmcc.org.au</p>

<p><u>PFLAG Northwest:</u> Contacts Val Harris 02 6769 7552 or Fay Heywood 02 6785 7325</p>
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<p><u>PFLAG Bathurst/Orange:</u> Contact Tony Sutton 02 6331 7267</p>
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<p><u>NSW South Coast:</u> Contact Catherine Horsley 02 44214752 Email: kkean@aapt.net.au</p>
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