



# THE NEWSLETTER

January 2015 // ISSUE 1 // VOLUME 22



## HOLDING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Please join us for our general meeting on **Monday, January 26 at 7:00 pm** at Jewish Family Service (JFS), 8804 Balboa Avenue, San Diego. Please note, we are now meeting in room 101. Follow the foot prints when you are buzzed in!

In 2008, PFLAG San Diego produced a documentary, "Holding Families Together." This was made possible by a grant from the San Diego County Television Network. The film looks at the social problems that result when parents reject their LGBT sons

and daughters. Three very different families are introduced in the film: one who became homeless and turned to prostitution and drugs, one whose family dealt with the news through the help of PFLAG, and one transgender child who many of you may know, Danny Dunne. Danny and his mom, Kathe, were a tremendous help to the producers.

Please join us for our support groups, then our cookie social, followed by the film.

## THE TIME IS APPROACHING

Before you know it, the deadline (**March 16, 2015**) for the PFLAG scholarships will be upon us. The awards ceremony will be in May; the date will be determined shortly. Please spread the word. The change that is most noteworthy is that the GPA for high school students remains at 3.0 and for college students, it is changed to 2.8. The scholarships are open to LGBT high school seniors who will continue their education and to under-

graduate and graduate students who are attending college full-time.

We are excited to be partnering with the San Diego Human Dignity Foundation which have resulted in many positive changes. Visit [www.pflag.com/scholarships/](http://www.pflag.com/scholarships/) for the scholarship application and details of each scholarship. For questions, contact scholarship chair, Kim Martinez at [kmartinez@pflag.com](mailto:kmartinez@pflag.com).

## THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT!

Thank you to those members who have renewed their membership for 2015. If you have not, please do! We have a long way to go. Dues are used to provide support, education, and advocacy on behalf of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community and their families. They enable us to provide monthly meetings, an info line, newsletters, educational brochures, etc.

Your membership is important to us as it strengthens our presence in the community and gives us many opportunities to have our voices heard. We also help support National PFLAG

by sending \$15 of your dues to them which provides you with membership in the national organization. Please don't renew directly with National, as no part of that benefits our San Diego chapter.

The membership application is in this newsletter and also on our web site ([www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com)). We accept PayPal for your convenience. You can also pay at any of the meetings or mail a check made payable to: PFLAG San Diego, P.O. Box 82762, San Diego, CA 92138. All donations are welcomed.

## THANK YOU, PRIDE

PFLAG San Diego applied for a grant from San Diego Pride. We deeply appreciate the \$500 grant that was awarded to us. We apply for these funds in order to expand and develop all of our meeting sites. Included in our goals is to increase our presence in the community and develop new allies.



## WANTED: PFLAG SECRETARY

Due to family circumstances, it was necessary for Linda Espinoza, PFLAG Board Secretary, to resign from her position and the board. If you are interested in filling the position, please contact Board President, Terrie Vorono, [tvorono@pflag.com](mailto:tvorono@pflag.com). Thank you, Linda.

## YOUTH PRIDE CHORUS

The San Diego Gay Men's Chorus believes many young singers who are LGBT are still the objects of bullying and may need a place to express their love for music in an accepting environment. The chorus is also open to their supportive, straight friends. Ages 13-22 are welcomed; there are no auditions or fees. The Youth Pride Chorus will perform at Balboa Theater as part of large concerts with the SD Gay Men's Chorus, as well as other venues and concerts around San Diego. The music that will be sung is primarily contemporary, pop-type music (GLEE). Info night is **February 3 at 7:00 pm** at University Christian Church, 3900 Cleveland Ave. If you know of any young people who would be interested in this exciting opportunity, please let them know. For info, call 1-877-296-7664.

## NEXT IN LINE

**Gabriel Figueroa** was a recipient of the **Rob Benzon Memorial Scholarship**. Gabriel is a student at San Diego City College. He has come by way of this scholarship in a most unusual way, which he explains in his essay. *(continued on page 3)*

## OFFICERS, COMMITTEES & VOLUNTEERS

### President

Terrie Vorono  
619-997-6139  
tvorono@pflag.com

### Past Co-President

Patti Boman  
pboman@pflag.com

### Vice-President

Sherry Cohen-Richards  
858-349-6269  
scohenrichards@pflag.com

### Recording Secretary

Position Vacant

### Treasurer

JoyLynn Murray  
760-525-8256  
jlmurray@pflag.com

### Greeter

Lonnie Brunini  
lbrunini@pflag.com

### Membership

Bobbi Harwood  
858-453-3249  
bharwood@pflag.com

### Info Line

Support/Outreach  
888-398-0006

### Newsletter

**PFLAG San Diego**  
PO Box 82762  
San Diego, CA 92138

**Tax ID #33-0512868**

Sherry Cohen-Richards,  
*Editor*

Linda Bessemer, Laura  
Partido & Pacific Imaging

Jessy Sauchuk, Belladia  
Marketing & Design

### Programs

The Board

### Scholarship

Kim Martinez  
kmartinez@pflag.com

### Spanish Interpreters

Maria Cortinas  
760-758-3294

Patti Boman  
619-227-6092

### Speakers Bureau

### Transgender Coordinator

Courtney Ware  
cware@pflag.com

### Refreshments

Ina Price

### Website

Lisa Smith  
lisa@belladiadesign.com

### Board Members

Sherry Cohen-Richards,  
Bob Dryden, Mary Dryden,  
Kim Martinez, JoyLynn  
Murray, Ina Price, Terrie  
Vorono

National PFLAG, Washington, DC  
(202) 647-8180, www.pflag.org

## Membership Application

- New  Renewal  Change of Address  
 Please contact me for volunteer opportunities

Confidentiality is respected. Your donation is tax deductible (Tax ID 33-0512868)

Make checks payable to:

PFLAG San Diego  
PO Box 82762  
San Diego, CA 92138

### Type of Membership

- Individual ..... \$30  Household ..... \$40  
 Business ..... \$50  Supporting ..... \$60  
 Contributing ..... \$125  Lifetime ..... \$1000  
 Other ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Accept my donation, please do not list.

### Please fill out, clip and mail this form

Name.....

Address.....

City .....

State.....ZIP .....

Email.....

Phone.....Date .....



or go online [www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com) (forms available)

## PFLAG THANKS YOU FOR YOUR EXTRA HELP

### Contributing Memberships

Sunny & Maria Al-Shamma  
Linda & Fred Espinoza  
Jan Garbosky  
Arlene Prater  
Eva Stjernfeldt & Alec Babiarz

### Supporting Membership

Doris Faulkner

### Providing Refreshments

for Meetings  
Erica Jimenez

### Donations to General Fund

George & Annie Beers  
Marilyn Grossman  
Sue & Tom Johnson  
Charlotte Pichney  
L & S Rosenberg  
Family Foundation  
(Leon & Sonia Rosenberg)



## NEXT IN LINE (continued from Page 1)

Gabriel is the epitome of a person who pulled himself up by his bootstraps. To say he is a productive member of society is an understatement.

"Thank you for affording me the opportunity to apply for the PFLAG 2014 scholarship. I am a 23-year-old gay, HIV-positive, Mexican American student currently attending San Diego City College. I am the first in my family to ever receive a high school diploma and attend college. The end of Fall, 2013, I completed my first semester of college as a full time student with a GPA of 4.0. I successfully completed Stepping Stone residential alcohol and drug treatment facility on July 6, 2013 and am now living at Enya House, HIV sober living run by Stepping Stone. I was motivated to continue my education after completing my first semester of college and work towards becoming a social worker in the LGBTQ community. I would like to work with youth affected by alcohol and drug addiction, homelessness, HIV, Hepatitis-C, and the underserved Latino community.

I would like to tell you a little bit about myself and my life, which has gotten me to this point of applying for your scholarship. I was raised in Oceanside, CA and lived there until the age of 14. My parents divorced when I was 9 years of age, which was extremely difficult for me. My mother left my sister and me to be raised by my father. At this point, my life began to fall apart. We were no longer allowed to meet with my mother unless court approved. I became very distant to my father for putting my sister and me in the middle of their battles.

Several years prior to this life-changing event, I began to realize that I was gay and became severely depressed; I had no one to talk to this about. I used alcohol and drugs as a way to suppress these feelings that I felt were abnormal and wrong for

being a gay man. There were times I thought about ending my life. Somehow I was able to graduate Rancho Buena Vista High School in June of 2008, the same month I turned 18, and decided to move in with my mom who lived San Diego.

I was living in San Diego as a young adult with no positive gay role models. Shortly after entering the gay lifestyle, my drug use increased as I sought sex, acceptance, validation, and friendship with older men. By November of 2008 I became sick and was hospitalized at Scripps. My mother came to visit and the doctor came in to talk to both of us privately about me becoming HIV positive. My mom, at that point, had no idea I was gay and using drugs daily. My mother and I were extremely scared and had no one to talk about my HIV and drug addiction. Was I going to die from my HIV? Were drugs the only way to help me address my feelings? Would I ever be loved? Am I damaged goods?

I went back home with my mother and my life spiraled out of control; she had no idea what to do with me. My mother got tired of the lies and my lack of care for her and my sister. The drugs and gay lifestyle had overcome me. Her only way of knowing how to handle the situation was to throw me out of her house. I believe if my mother was aware that PFLAG existed, she may have had the support and guidance necessary to better address my existence as a gay male. The only place I had to go was with the men I would meet on sex hookup sites online. I became angry and resentful at my life and simply didn't care. I was taken advantage of by many men, had sex to get around and be able to stay off the streets, and coped with drugs. I moved in with an ex-boyfriend who introduced me to IV drug using. This was his form of keeping me with him. I was unable to have any sober thoughts and was in a state of high-induced drug affects. This went on for months until I was able to snap out of

it and build a form of tolerance.

Feeling sick and deteriorated, I needed help and my health needed severe care. I was taken to AVRC [AntiViral Research Center at UCSD] where I met Anthony Johnson, a man who would change my life and become my HIV case manager. Although I continued to use drugs, Anthony never gave up on me. I would see him when I was on the streets high and he always came up to check on me. Since meeting Anthony, I was thrown in jail numerous times and tried several times to get into Stepping Stone. Something deep inside me told me that I deserved to live a better life and be happy with who I was. In January 2013 I contacted my case manager and told him I was ready to do whatever was necessary to change my life before I died on the streets. I was admitted into Stepping Stone on February 6, 2013 and my life has forever changed. I was introduced to my HIV counselor, Chris Mueller. With the help of both Anthony and Chris, they were able to provide the constant love and support necessary to have the life I have today. Today I have been one-year and two-months clean and sober. My mother is my best friend and along with other friends who are clean and sober, I have all the support I need in my life.

Today I have a part time job at Urban Body Gym and Juice Bar in the morning, performing gym maintenance and attend school in the afternoon. I volunteer for San Diego AIDS Walk, Transgender Day of Empowerment, talk to newly diagnosed adolescent clients at UCSD mother, child, and adolescent program, take residents from Stepping Stone to medical appointments, volunteer for sober events in the community, and, most importantly, I now sponsor someone in the AA program. I also serve as the Alumni Liaison to the residents of Stepping Stone on the Board of Stepping Stone Alumni Association."

# Building Business Prosperity & Equality

**gsdba**  
greater san diego business association



View our online Business Directory @  
[www.gsdba.org](http://www.gsdba.org)

## LOOK LIKE A BIG FISH

Competition is fierce.  
It's time to get aggressive.



Call for a Free Consult  
858.220.7478  
[belladiadesign.com](http://belladiadesign.com)

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Feb 2:**

Mi Familia Support Grp  
Patti: 619-227-6092

**Feb 2:**

North County Coastal  
Support Group  
Annette: 760-518-3345

**Feb 8:**

South Bay Support Grp  
Patti: 619-227-6092

**Feb 9:**

East County Support Grp  
Bob: 619-334-8214

*Luan D. Andrews, M.A.*

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST  
MFC 19321

3252 HOLIDAY COURT • SUITE 106 • LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92037-1807  
(858) 552-8181 FAX (858) 552-0205



## Psychotherapy for

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Children...

Coming out • School safety • Self-Acceptance  
Self-Esteem • Parent-Child Communications • Siblings

... and their Parents

Crisis Counseling • Religious Issues • Telling Friends & Family  
Safety Concerns • Grief & Loss • Depression n Anxiety

All Services are Completely Confidential

**Stephen White, Psy.D.**

Clinical Psychologist PSY 20739

16496 Bernardo Center Drive, Suite 307 San Diego CA 92128

(619) 922-1579

[swhite@the-rainbow-connection.org](mailto:swhite@the-rainbow-connection.org)

