



# THE NEWSLETTER

July 2015 / ISSUE 7 / VOLUME 22

## PICNIC TIME!



Please join us for our general meeting on **Monday, July 27** at 7:00 pm at Jewish Family Service, 8788 Balboa Avenue, San Diego.

We will not have a speaker this month so that we can munch and enjoy each others' company. We also thought it would be a great time to discuss the Supreme Court's monumental

decision on same-sex marriage being legal in every state. THE ORDER OF OUR MEETING WILL NOT BE THE USUAL. We will have the potluck first, followed by the support groups. If you are not able to make the potluck, but wish to attend the support groups, they will start around 8:00 pm.

Please bring any type of dish you'd like to share, enough for 8-10 people (main dish, salad, appetizer, side dish, casserole, or dessert). PFLAG will provide the beverages.

## BE PART OF THE PRIDE CELEBRATION

This weekend, **July 17-19**, marks the 41st annual Pride Parade and Festival. **July 17** is the Spirit of Stonewall Awards at 6:00 pm at Marston Point, 6th Avenue and Laurel Street. The Pride Parade, Saturday, **July 18**, begins at 11:00 am. It starts at University Avenue and Normal Street in Hillcrest. The route is 1.1 miles. If you are taking the free shuttle from the old Balboa Naval Hospital located on Park Blvd. across from President's Way, GET THERE EARLY, as the lines will be very long, and you may miss the parade. Don't forget your signs! The entire Trans\* Community is the Community Grand Marshal!

For anyone who is not in the PFLAG contingent and is choosing to be a spectator, a letter was written by Stephen Whitburn, Executive Director of San Diego Pride advising the following: During the parade (beginning, middle, end), the transgender community will be conducting "die-ins" during which individuals will lie on the street, stopping the parade, while others

encircle them with crime scene tape and read the names of trans\* individuals whom we've lost this year to murder and suicide.

After the Parade, and continuing on Sunday, **July 19**, is the Pride Festival located at Marston Point at 6th and Laurel in Balboa Park. All tickets are \$20 and are good for both days of the Pride Festival. To purchase tickets: [www.sdpride.org](http://www.sdpride.org). Please note, there are no discounts for seniors or military.

For additional information, especially if you are marching with PFLAG, please check our website ([www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com)) for helpful hints from the June newsletter. A big thank you to Karen and Mark Thompson for reprising their roles as parade coordinators and to Terrie Vorono and Mike Minnick for assisting.



## PLEASE SIGN UP FOR THE AIDS WALK

Put on your sneakers and get geared up to walk with PFLAG on **Saturday, September 26** for the 26th Annual AIDS Walk San Diego, 7:35 am, beginning at Normal Street and



Harvey Milk Street. The registration fee is \$35 (\$25 for 17 & under and 60+). To register, go to [www.AIDSwalksd.org](http://www.AIDSwalksd.org) and select Register at the top of the page, then Join an Existing Team. Either enter PFLAG San Diego or Search for a Team and find PFLAG San Diego. Click on the Join button and follow the instructions. More info will be in the August newsletter.

The San Diego Gay Men's Chorus will present: "Imagine-- The Music of Lennon & McCartney" on **Saturday, July 25** at 8:00 pm and **Sunday, July 26** at 3:00 pm at the Balboa Theatre. For tickets: [www.sdgmc.org](http://www.sdgmc.org).



## HOT DAMN AND HALLELUJAH!

June 26 is certainly a day to remember (forever!!) – the day marriage equality became the law of the land.

PFLAG National said it best, "Today feels like a wedding that the entire country was invited to, and the whole PFLAG family is right up front with hearts overflowing and tears in our eyes. By affirming the rights of all loving couples to commit to each other with the full weight of legal protection that marriage affords, the Supreme Court has affirmed a founding principle that we must all continue to strive for: a more perfect union."

(Continued on Page 3)

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## Membership Application

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



Join the festivities at South Bay Pride Art & Music Festival on **Saturday, September 12** from noon-8:00 pm at Bayfront Park. There will be live entertainment, DJs and dancing, Art of Pride in the Park, great food, water sports, beverage gardens, children's entertainment, and much more! Bayfront Park is adjacent to "J" Street Marina in Chula Vista.

National PFLAG, Washington, DC  
(202) 647-8180, [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

## FEATURING



**Amber Escobar** is the recipient of the **John Bessemer Memorial Scholarship** awarded by PFLAG San Diego County. Amber was unable to be present for the ceremony; however, Linda Bessemer read part of Amber's essay and accepted the scholarship on Amber's behalf.

Amber is an incoming sophomore at Mills College in Oakland, CA. In her Letter of Recommendation, it was stressed that Amber was quiet and shy and has become a "vibrant, passionate, outspoken young woman." Amber is continually educating and advocating for the transgender community. Her powerful story relays how important it is for everyone to be able to live honestly and openly.

"In September 2010, I challenged a historically oppressive political, and religious social structure. As a 15-year old, I stood in front of an Immigration Judge, attorneys, and gave testimony in support of my petition to seek political asylum as a transgender individual. Although seeking asylum is a costly, time-intensive and emotionally draining process, I felt I did not have a choice to forego this opportunity.

First, I could not return to my country of Mexico for fear of persecution to my family and myself. Secondly, I could not forego my desire to defend the rights of transgender individuals like me who wish to live a life with dignity, respect, and without fear. Lastly, I could not rescind my application

because I am determined to pursue my passion for science and receive a college degree in the United States.

The country of Mexico is where I was born as a male – 'Luis.' Mexico is a country where the religion of Catholicism is embedded into the politics, social norms, and 'moral' code. It is not a country that embraces the LGBT community. It is a dangerous place for transgender individuals like me who physically, emotionally, psychologically, and legally change from 'Luis' to 'Amber.' Because of my change, I could never return to the conservative town of Manzanillo, Mexico.



Ultimately my family and I were granted political asylum. Then, I had a new decision to face—start my new life as a 'normal' woman with no connection to being transgender or be an advocate for the trans community. The answer was simple. I have a social responsibility to share my story. Although there are numerous advantages of staying out of the public eye, I present at various universities, conduct televised interviews, and am featured in a documentary to help struggling trans-teens cope and 'come out' to their families. My triumphant story has been motivating, and sometimes life-saving, to struggling transgender teens.

One of the unlikely, yet highly rewarding aspects of my transition has been my exposure to the medical field. From 2008 to present, I've met with various doctors, learned

about the physiological aspects of Estrogen therapy and Testosterone blockers, and learned how to navigate through the maze of private insurance. While this journey has been eye-opening, I have also learned about the sociological and psychological aspects of being transgender. I have encountered stereotypes and others' views regarding socially constructed 'moral codes'—how boys and girls should behave and feel. For example, although the recent release of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the DSM) removed the term 'Gender Identity Disorder' it replaced it with the term, 'Gender Dysphoria.' This new term has labeled the 'condition' to be associated with clinically significant distress. I, and many others like me, do not feel 'distressed.' Terms like this have a stigmatizing effect, yet without an identifiable diagnosis, it would jeopardize access to mental and physical health care.

It has become my ambition to pursue undergraduate studies that combine biological sciences with a humanitarian approach. My goal is to learn how society, morals/ethics, and politics influence the advancement of medicine. As an advocate for the transgender community, I am determined to advocate for patients who lack social, psychological, and medical support. I've had unique struggles being born in the wrong body, but the process of exploring my identity has been rewarding and liberating, making it something I wouldn't change even if I could."

## HOT DAMN AND HALLELUJAH! (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Of course, we have a long way to end discrimination in employment, housing, schools, and community.

Celebrations at The LGBT Center from the Day of Decision.





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### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**July 16, Aug 20:**  
North County Inland  
Kathie: 858-382-9156

**July 20, Aug 17:**  
Mi Familia Support Group  
Patti: 619-227-6092

**Aug 3:**  
North County Coastal  
Annette: 760-518-3345

**Aug 10:**  
East County Support Grp  
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