PFLAG PORTLAND

Parents, Families, Friends and Allies United with LGBTQ People to Move Equality Forward

September 2020 www.pflagportlandmaine.org

PFLAG's Mission

PFLAG Portland, Maine offers compassionate peer support to the parents, families and friends of, and including, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning individuals through group discussion, education, advocacy and creating connections to community resources.

Our chapter reflects the values of PFLAG National: PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through:

Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ…**Education** for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ...**Advocacy** in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.

No September Meeting

Your health is our top priority. Therefore, in accordance with the current state shelter-in-place guidelines, **we're suspending in-person PFLAG chapter meetings until further notice.**

If you wish to get in touch with us, please see the contact information below. We will keep you posted on future meetings via email and our web site.

To contact us:

Email: pflagportlandmaine@gmail.com

Facebook: Facebook.com/PFLAG-Portland-Maine-104456814241950/

Website: www.pflagportlandmaine.org

Regular mail: PFLAG Portland Maine, c/o Equality Community Center, 511 Congress St., Portland, ME, 04101

Email newsletter submissions to Bill Harnsberger at bipm04103@yahoo.com

NOTICE: PFLAG Annual Dues Are Up For Renewal

Please send in your annual dues by October 1. On behalf of PFLAG…Thank You!

2020/2021 PFLAG Membership Renewal

Please help in our efforts to educate and advocate for the rights of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning children, parents, relatives, and friends. Thanks for your support!

Name_____ **Address**_____

City_____ **State**_____ **Zip**_____

Home phone_____ **Email address**_____ **Additional donation:** $_____

Membership dues are $30 per year for individuals and households. Additional donations are always appreciated. Includes subscription to local and national PFLAG newsletters.

WE NOW ACCEPT PAYPAL via our website for dues and/or donations. Just click the "Contact Us" button at www.pflagportlandmaine.org. Mail payment to: PFLAG Portland Maine, c/o Equality Community Center, 511 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101. Or: Bring payment to monthly PFLAG meeting, or e-mail us at pflagportlandmaine@gmail.com for other arrangements.

One year ago...

The Trump administration has filed a brief with the Supreme Court arguing that gay workers are not protected by federal civil rights law. The Bostock and Zarda cases are two of three cases concerning LGBTQ workers' rights that the Supreme Court is expected to hear this fall. **[2020 Update: In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court agreed that LGBTQ workers are indeed protected by federal civil rights law.]**

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"My American dream? I'm living it. A 25-acre organic farm on a lake, a roadside farm stand, and a bed and breakfast. My husband and I aren't corporate tycoons. We just want to make an honest living and feed our community. Small businesses like ours are the backbone of rural economies across America. Maine casts 9 votes for Bernie Sanders and 22 votes for Joe Biden."

—Maine state Rep. Craig Hickman during the nomination roll call at the Democratic National Convention

"I am truly and deeply sorry. You should never be denigrated with crude and hateful language. I failed you, and I cannot say enough how sorry I am. I immediately plan to participate in diversity, equality and inclusion training and have reached out to PFLAG for resources and guidance."

—Suspended Cincinnati Reds announcer Thom Brennaman, after using a homophobic slur over the air during a game

"We are so relieved that the court has recognized our daughter, Simone, as the U.S. citizen she has been since the day she was born. When we brought Simone into this world, as married, same-sex parents, we never anticipated our own government would disrespect our family and refuse to recognize our daughter as a U.S. citizen. ... We are overcome with gratitude."

—Derek Mize, who with his husband Jonathan Gregg won a case in federal court to have the U.S. government recognize their daughter Simone's American citizenship, even though she was born abroad.

Mark these upcoming PFLAG meeting dates on your calendar:

[Meetings are currently suspended]

PFLAG meets at The Equality Center,
511 Congress Street in Portland starting at 7pm

Our Most Critical Election to Date

A message from PFLAG National

Registration. Education. Mobilization. Protection. Whether you commit to working deeply on one of those issues--or want to broaden your efforts across all four--you can count on PFLAG to give you the information, tools, and resources you need to vote, and help others to vote, too.

- Ensure that you are registered to vote and encourage your family, friends, community, and PFLAG chapter members to do the same!
- Learn more about election advocacy, important dates and deadlines, and about what is truly at stake for your LGBTQ+ loved ones this November. This is also where you will find up-to-date information and resources about COVID-19 related changes to the election.
- Help ensure you and others in your community who want to vote have the opportunity - and plan - to cast a ballot in the general election.

Make a #2020VotePlan and stick to it to make a difference for you and your LGBTQ+ loved ones. By making a plan—and encouraging others to do the same and share their plan—you'll be increasing the odds that more people will go to the polls and cast their ballots. (Research shows that having a plan to vote increases voter turnout by over 4 percent.)

Visit **pflag.org/2020voteplan** to learn more.

News in Brief (From page 3)

for nearly two hours until the battery in the demonstrator's megaphone died. His feat earned him the nicknames "Trombone Guy" and "Trombro." "He was saying some pretty hateful stuff, and I just didn't agree with any of it," Hogan told WLTX News, adding elsewhere, "We support everyone here. It's just not okay, and we don't want that on this campus." (LGBTQ nation)

Lesbian penguin "super moms" welcome chick A female penguin couple have become parents to a newly hatched chick at one of Europe's largest aquariums. Penguin "super moms" Electra and Viola adopted, incubated and raised an egg from another couple at Oceanogràfic València in Valencia, Spain, according to a statement on the aquarium's website. They are one of the aquarium's three gentoo penguin couples to welcome a chick during the current breeding season. "Although same-sex couples are common in more than 450 species in both zoos and nature, it's the first time this has happened in our aquarium," Oceanogràfic València stated on its Facebook page. "Welcome to the world, little one!" (NBC News)

News in Brief...

Court victory for trans health protections A federal judge blocked the Trump administration's rollback of an Obama-era regulation prohibiting discrimination in health care against patients who are transgender, a day before it was set to go into effect. U.S. District Court Judge Frederic Block found that the planned rollback, which was announced in June, violates the Supreme Court's landmark ruling that extended federal civil rights law to gay, lesbian and transgender workers. Judge Block wrote in the preliminary injunction: "(The) Court concludes that the proposed rules are, indeed, contrary to [the] Bostock [case] and, in addition, that HHS did act arbitrarily and capriciously in enacting them." (CNN)

Court victory for gay parents
A federal court in Georgia ruled that the U.S. government must recognize the citizenship since birth of Simone Mize-Gregg, who was born two years ago to a married same-sex couple, and issue her a passport. The State Department had refused to recognize Simone as a U.S. citizen, even though both of her parents, Derek Mize and Jonathan Gregg, are citizens, and children born abroad to heterosexual married U.S. citizens are automatically considered citizens themselves. But the State Department considered children born abroad to married same-sex couples to be born out of wedlock and denied birthright citizenship to them, saying citizenship at birth requires a biological relationship with both parents—even though it does not seek proof of this for opposite-sex couples. Simone was born via surrogacy in England; the family now lives in Decatur, Ga. Judge Michael L. Brown found that the requirement for a biological relationship with both parents denies same-sex couples one of the benefits of marriage and therefore is constitutionally questionable, as the Supreme Court marriage equality ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* and a subsequent ruling involving birth certificates both said all these benefits must be available to same-sex couples. (The Advocate)

Court victory for trans student A federal appellate court ruled that public schools cannot prohibit transgender students from using the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity. The 2-1 decision, issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, cited Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch's landmark opinion in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, reasoning that such policies violated federal sex discrimination laws and the U.S. Constitution. The controversy stems from a lawsuit filed in 2015 by Gavin Grimm against the Gloucester County School Board after his public high school refused to let him use the mens' bathroom. "The court rightfully stood with him to rule that trans students deserve to go to school with dignity, respect, and equal protection under the law," said Eden Heilman, legal director for the ACLU of Virginia, which represented Grimm in the matter. (Law & Crime)

Anchorage, Alaska makes history Anchorage has banned conversion therapy on minors. After a two-day hearing, the assembly of Alaska's largest city passed an ordinance barring medical professionals from subjecting LGBTQ+ youth to the harmful practice of trying to turn them straight. The vote was 9 to 2. Anchorage is the first city in Alaska to ban conversion therapy; in doing so, it established the state as the 40th in the United States where some jurisidiction has taken action against the practice, which has been discredited by the American Psychological Association and major medical groups. In total, 20 states and dozens of cities have banned its use on minors. (The Advocate)

Student trombonist drowns out hate Trey Hogan, a freshman at the University of South Carolina who is a member of the school's band, achieved online fame after using his trombone to silence the hate speech of a racist and homophobic demonstrator on campus. His musical intervention earned him the applause of classmates, a local pizzeria, and national media. Hogan used his trombone to interrupt the man's message of hate

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources

Maine Centers for Disease Control
www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/

Gov. Janet Mills Updates
www.maine.gov/governor/mills/covid-19

Maine CDC
Dial 211 or 1-866-811-5695, text your ZIP code to 898-211
or email info@211maine.org.

Newly Added:
Maine Queer Health Community Database
www.mainequeerhealth.org

Here's a Great Way to Support PFLAG-Portland

When you shop at Amazon, use this Amazon Smile link and 0.5% of your eligible purchases is donated to Portland PFLAG!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at **smile.amazon.com**, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

Go to the PFLAG-Portland web site at **www.pflagportlandmaine.org** and click on the link. Thanks for your support!

Advice to parents on raising a happy and healthy LGBTQ child

By Steven Petrow
Excerpted from The Washington Post

When many LGBTQ people look back on their childhood, we remember a mixture of confusingly feeling different; being harassed for our sexual identities; and realizing how important our parents, teachers and other authority figures were in either helping us through those years—or making our lives worse.

Experts say research shows that how parents respond can be fundamental to their children's mental health and well-being, now and in the future. "Family matters most," says Joe Kort, a clinical psychotherapist and author of "LGBTQ Clients in Therapy." "If you're a high rejecting family, you're going to put that child in harm's way. Suicidality will increase the more rejecting the family is."

Thane Holiday, 17, a rising senior in high school in North Carolina…identifies as "queer," an umbrella term that conflates different kinds of sexual and gender identities, and as "a trans guy," he says, meaning transgender, someone whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex. At the start of middle school, he said, "it was just absolute hell. I was just bullied relentlessly" for being open about his identity, "and my mental health took a plunge to the point where I was pretty suicidal in seventh grade."

Fortunately, he says, he has "very accepting and open parents." When he first came out to them in middle school at age 11, he says, "my parents were like, 'We accept you.'" Their response was key, he says, giving him emotional security and the knowledge he wouldn't be rejected, along with making home a safe place.

Kort, who practices in Royal Oak, Mich., says you don't need to understand someone to accept them—or love them. Expressing your love is key, he says: "Start by saying, 'I love you no matter what and I'll be here with you as you work this out and think this through.' " Or: "I'm not sure I completely agree or am open to this, but I'm willing to listen to you."

Of course, parents aren't always aware of their child's sexual or gender identities, especially when they are young and their identities are in many ways just emerging. This is why Kort says family members should consider that any child might be LGBTQ.

Without knowing a child's ultimate identity, parents can be sending inadvertently damaging messages from a very young age, Kort says. As an example, he told me about one teen in his practice whose father didn't know that he was gay, yet the young man painfully remembered the slur his dad had once used offhandedly with him. ("All the faggots go to dance at that gay bar.")

Parents can create healthier environments by being matter-of-fact about—if not openly accepting of and embracing—LGBTQ politicians, athletes and TV characters. When I was a teen and still closeted, my parents often invited an openly gay couple to our family dinners along with heterosexual friends. The implicit message to me: "This is okay." For me, that translated to, "I'm okay."

As for Thane, he has some advice for other LGBTQ kids: "You've just got to have patience with [your parents] because they're trying, trying so hard. Especially since most of them grew up not seeing LGBT people or with a negative viewpoint of LGBT kids."

Still, Thane's own patience goes only so far. "With kids who have parents who are just not supportive and can be pretty cold . . . you shouldn't have to forgive them over and over again. They're choosing not to [accept you]." Indeed, many kids today remain frightened about coming out.

"There are a million reasons they give why they don't feel safe," Joe Kort says. Parents can change that.